

# They Mourn for Joe Miner

## Waikiki Mates Miss Him

By DANA MERRILL

No one who knew and loved the old Outrigger club can watch the colorful opening of the new club today without giving an affectionate thought to Joe Miner—who died a year ago almost to the day and who was one of the best loved "boys" of the beach patrol.

A friendlier soul never rode a surfboard. Ever since 1929 Joe's contagious grin, his courtesy and his fine character endeared him to everyone, child or adult, kamaaina or malihini, who put in any time at Waikiki.

Joe had left a special request that his ashes be scattered on the water off Waikiki at sunset. His friends carried out his wishes faithfully. The result was a ceremony so full of unconscious beauty, so dramatic in its simple dignity, that no one who stood on the sands of Waikiki that June evening will ever forget it.

That day had been gray and windy and overcast.

Instead of the usual sunset blaze of color on the blue water, there was only a somber light from leaden skies on wild gray surf.

A wide circle of people, six or seven deep, stood silently on the sand in front of what had been the old Outrigger club.

It would have made Joe very happy to see how many of his old friends came to say goodbye. Many of them were youngsters Joe had taught to swim and surf, who stood soberly as if they did not understand why their good friend had left them.

In the center, facing Diamond Head, stood the minister, the Rev. Henry Judd, his long black robes blowing in the wind. In front of him on a stand lay the tapa wrapped ashes. To his left, a small group of relatives were weeping silently.

On the opposite side of the packed circle, their backs to the ocean, clustered all the beach boys who had worked and laughed with Joe through his years of service on the beach, strangely silent and unsmiling now.

They were still in their swimming trunks—anything else would have been out of place in that setting.

Joe's guard of honor—Duke Kahana-moku, Walter Macfarlane, Bill Hollinger, Joe Akana, Hiram Anahu and John De Kaupiko—wore strands of crownflower leis to distinguish them as pallbearers.

Every now and then the minister would pause in the reading of the service, and the beach patrol would sing, softly, one of Joe's favorite songs. He had asked for simple, familiar Hawaiian melodies—The King's Serenade, Akahihoe, Ua Like No a Like. It is impossible to imagine any church hymn more compelling in its beauty than the poignant harmony of those voices with the soft pounding of the surf as accompaniment.

Then, after the last prayer there was a little stir. Everyone knew what was coming. And no one who has ever heard Aloha Oe sung by Hawaiian voices needs to be told of its effect in that setting upon emotions already keyed to top pitch.

Before the services started more than a dozen outriggers had been drawn up on the beach, their leidedecked prows pointing significantly out to sea.

As the last notes of Aloha died unforgettably away, the beach patrol sprang into the canoes and pushed off without a word. Steadily, silently and in perfect rhythm the long line paddled out toward the reef. Joe's ashes, heaped high with white leis, went in the canoe manned by the guard of honor.

Far out, the canoes halted while the ashes and flowers were scattered on the waters Joe had loved so well. No music now; only the rhythmic song of the surf as a final requiem.

Suddenly it was over. The canoes wheeled around, started for shore. And as the perfect final dramatic touch, the setting sun broke through the clouds just then. Its last rays softly touched the flower strewn water like a benediction and tipped the flying paddles with flashing, exultant light.

Aloha, Joe Miner!