

# 'If I were young today, it would be even better'

## Duke's own story of life

"If I were young today, it would be even better. I would try real hard to break records and I would be in every sport just like I was, but there's no opportunity today. There's no end to the good things for young people there's no end to what a young boy can do here today."

Kahanamoku fondly hazy can do a lot of things on his bedroom wall as the interviewer got under way. "I was just a big dumb kid when King Gustaf of Sweden came to the Islands and I know what it was really and almost threw it away. But now it is my most prized trophy."

"The wreath was won in the 1921 Olympics, when Duke was being heralded as the Bronze Duke of Waikiki, the world's greatest swimmer."

"I wouldn't be surprised to see the hotels at Waikiki so close together pretty soon that you won't be able to see between them."

"Old days better. I liked the old days better. Now the place is cluttered with people. People all over the place. Not going to stop. There's no end to it."

"It's good economically, but it sure makes it crowded here. It is now a bank at the corner of Bishop and King streets downtown."

"At Waikiki there weren't any hotels. . . very few buildings. . . trees all over the place and the beach was shaped different."

"Now the sand is all in front of the hotels. It used to be more spread out back to the boat lagoon. . ."

"But the sand has covered with seaweed. . . That still the same. . . Duke had a heart condition for more than 18 years."

"His brain illness in 1962 prompted friends to get to work and decide on some fitting tribute to Duke. . ."

"Rather than any marble monument, they decided on a living memorial in the form of the Duke Kahanamoku Foundation, which would provide scholarships or support for athletes or sportsmen of the future."

"The first benefit is Sandra Jones, who is studying police science at the University of Hawaii. . ."

### Duke P. Kahanamoku was not a talkative man.

He said only a few words needed to be said at a given moment.

Only once on for a newspaper records show, did he sum up his life. The following quotations are from that extensive interview, which appeared in *The Star-Bulletin* on Aug. 23, 1965.

### Liked Makaha

"I can't really say where the best surfing place is. I might say Makaha but I've seen more of that than any place else."

"I think it is necessary for us to provide better places for these visiting surfers to stay if we want to continue attracting them here for the meets."

"They don't have any reasonable place to stay so they wind up sleeping on the beaches. . ."

"Surfing has worked Hawaii financially by attracting more people here and we have to take care of the boys and girls who take part in the sport."

"Surfing is good for them. . . It keeps them off the streets. . . My father was an uncle then threw me into the water from an outrigger canoe and I had to swim all the way to the shore."

"That's the way the old Hawaiians did it. . . I don't know exactly how old I was, but real young. . ."

"I broke someone else's record. . . I broke my own record. . . I broke my own record. . ."

"I said, 'Jimmy, I've seen you run, jump, throw things and swim the ball. You do everything you wish don't you swim?'"

"I saved for you? . . . 'Jimmy just grined at me with that grin he had for me. . ."

"I had a gold medal. . . I had a gold medal. . . I had a gold medal. . ."

"I played chess. . . I played chess. . . I played chess. . ."

"I was in Hollywood. . . I was in Hollywood. . . I was in Hollywood. . ."

nothing but official cleaner at least I was my own boss. . ."

"Anyway, my mother sort of helped me get some of the Democrats were running things down there. . ."

"Francis Brown and I asked her if there was anything he could do for me. . ."

"I wasn't working at the time, so she said, 'I'll just one thing. Please see that my oldest boy—that's me—' taken care of. . ."

"So, Francis got me the and I sort of became a Democrat for a while. . ."

"I know the beauty of these islands and I want them to know it too. . ."

"I have been encouraging visitors to go to the Neighbor Islands too. . ."

"I don't have nearly the stamina any more. . ."

"I don't hurt at all when the doctor was drilling those pulps in my head but it felt sort of funny because I could hear the bit drilling into the bone."

"After the operation and after I got out of the hospital, I was ordered to take it easy. . ."

"Everyone was going swimming on I jumped in too. . ."

"They had to help me out because I'm not racing. . ."

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ROYAL PUPIL—Queen Mother Elizabeth of England danced the hula with Duke when she stopped over in Honolulu in 1966. The occasion was a reception at Host International Restaurant where the Queen was the guest of Gov. John A. Burns.

# Hawaii's Duke greatest Olympian of them all

By Jozz Belknap

WAILUKU, Maui—Figuratively speaking, the flag of the Olympic games will be flying at half mast this week over all the sports stadia around the world, for the greatest Olympian of them all has returned to the Garden of the Gods.

Duke P. Kahanamoku (if you insist, the "P" stands for Pualu), the bronze Polynesian, Halawar, who churned up waves of frenzied waters from Honolulu Harbor in 1911 to Sweden in 1912 to Antwerp in 1920 to Paris in 1924 to Amsterdam in 1928 to say nothing of scores of swimming pools along the route, has lost his final race to Father Time.

The darling of the sport fans, the idol of his people, the toast of Hollywood, the ambassador of aloe, and Hawaii's First Gentleman, he possibly had more friends and more people around the world than any citizen of Hawaii.

His was the golden age of swimming in Hawaii and it was his example, kindly spirit, and his keen sense of competition that inspired a racy crew of mermaids and mermen that carried the name of Hawaii to the four corners of the world.

Warren and Pua Kealoha, Bill Harris, Ludy Langer, Stubby Kruger, Buster Crabbe, the Kailua boys, to say nothing of Marcehen Wehsley, Lily Bommer and Helen Jones kicked waters of derision in the faces of competitors around the world.

I landed in Hawaii in the midst of a great hoop-dee-do, the Mission Memorial Centennial, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the missionaries in 1820.

One of the big features of the event was a great swimming meet with top talent imported from the Mainland. Charlotte Boye and Ethelba Blietner came down for the event. They were the old Matosina with me.

Of course, Norman Ross, another great Olympian, was on deck. Norman came down to Hawaii so often you might say he was a continuing kamama.

Boy! Howdy! Those jousts between Duke and Norman were something to write home about, with Duke usually taking the nod.

This swim meet was held at the foot of Bishop Street at Park 7. In the slip between the piers was blocked off at the makai end. The spectators were on the docks and each side and on the barges of the makai and makoua ends.

My first remembrance of Duke was on the Oregon. A fasthanded iron chair was crushed over the wheel marks of an overland wagon party. . .

He was a better looking kid in the film "Covered Wagon." He was much in demand during the heyday of silent movies but I did Duke slugging in the "White-eyes Gerontino."

All 11 months during the late 1920s and the 30s, usually "first" Duke asked by the visiting tourist was, "where's that?" Most of them didn't understand that the state of Hawaii was defined as one Kahanamoku.

Meanly they believed from him that Duke was of Hawaiian royalty. Wishful, Duke never lost his common sense, innate dignity and aloha for an infidel man. A diving boy was just as important to Duke as a prince of Siam and he treated them both alike.

### THIS IS YOUR LIFE—Ralph Edwards saluted Duke on the "This Is Your Life" show. The scene is in Hollywood sound stage version of Waikiki Beach.

## Operation saved Duke from death in May, 1962

Duke's closest brush with death until yesterday came in May, 1962, when he underwent surgery to remove a blood clot on the brain. Dr. Maurice Silver performed the operation at Kaiser Hospital and it saved Duke's life. Duke was on the "critical" list for about four weeks.

His health returned, but in October, 1962, he returned to Kaiser Hospital for a prostate operation. Then in February, 1967, he returned there again for surgery for ulcers. Among those who visited him was Sweden's Crown Prince Carl Gustaf.

He had been hospitalized in Kaiser for strokes in 1959 and 1961. The boards these kids are using today are okay but they're too light for me. . ."

"I had redwood bars. . . My board was 1 1/2 feet of solid redwood and I made it myself without calipers to shape it. . ."

"I would just feel and say I need a little of here, that's pretty good, little bit here and so on until I was like I wanted it. . ."

"I thought it was the water after putting two coats of shellac on it. . ."

"I finally it was just right. I took it out and caught a wave. I could feel it. I said, 'O-o-o-p-s, this is it, Duke. This is just what it's more. . ."

"When I caught a wave with that board, I rode a long way. . ."

"The longest ride I ever had was on a 35 foot board and I rode for about a mile and had eight. It was from the old Castle home to where Queen's Sur in today. . ."

"We couldn't maneuver as well as they do today and it's good to see the progress that . . ."

## Duke Kahanamoku dies in Waikiki

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freestyle and the 100 meter freestyle.

Sportswriters of that period had commented that his records might have been broken by Duke's swimmer friend, Duke Kahanamoku.

Along with his spectacular victories, Duke did much to revolutionize the sport of swimming by helping to introduce the freestyle stroke to the world.

Duke later went to Hollywood in 1925 and stayed until 1935. He was involved in all kinds of chiefs. . ."

When he missed qualifying for the 1932 Olympic swimming team—"I missed by a fraction of a second," he said, "I switched to water polo."

Duke was camping on the beach with a party of actors when the yacht Thelma capsized under the bathing of a heavy group of swimmers off the coast of California.

Saved again  
Duke captured the heart of the country by making three tries on his 40-foot board during the giant waves to rescue the shipwrecked sailors.

Seventeen lives were lost that day and 12 persons rescued. Duke returned to Hawaii in 1928 and was selected for the Union Oil Co. for a while and then entered politics. He became the closest thing to a politician in the unstable cabinet. . ."

HAPPY COUPLE—Duke posed with his wife, Nadine, in 1962 after serious illness and surgery.