

# Eddie Sherman



## Duke & Son

My 4½ year old son Shawn was on the floor of our living room playing with his new train set last Christmas, when Duke Kahanamoku and his wife

Nadine arrived . . .

"Aloha, aloha," smiled Duke, shuffling in, "Mele Kalikimaka!" . . . For the next two hours, Duke sat fascinated, absorbed with my son in the mechanical wonder of the train . . .

They played, laughed and communicated . . . Ever since Duke first became acquainted with my part-Hawaiian adopted son when he was a year old, he reacted to Shawn in a grandfatherly fashion . . . And every Christmas, he came to be with him . . .



**THE DUKE**  
On his 75th birthday

A few weeks ago,

watching the two, the beautiful simplicity of the man shone—as always—like a beacon . . . In this day of pseudo ultra-sophistication, this unaffected quality was a joy to behold . . .

It was honest. It was true. It was majestic. It was Alii . . .

## King In Texas

Despite the great acclaim, honors, awards Duke received in his lifetime, I only realized the full extent of his fame when I was away from Hawaii . . .

Some years ago, at the opening of the Sheraton Dallas in Texas, the who's who of that state was out in full force for the gala banquet . . .

Dignitaries were a dime a dozen . . .

Every man was attired in black tie and tux. But when Duke walked into the ballroom (in the only white dinner jacket at the affair), every eye seemed to be on him. It was as if a king had arrived. I honestly felt I was standing beside royalty . . .

Leaders from every walk of life came to pay their respects, to shake his hand, and to ask for autographs.

## No Time For TV

When Arthur Godfrey came to Hawaii to do a TV special, he wanted to film Duke riding an outrigger over which Godfrey planned to narrate highlights of his life . . . But Duke turned down the offer to appear on national television, much to Godfrey's surprise . . . Not that he didn't want to cooperate with his friend Arthur. Duke was leaving on a trip. "We'll do it some other time," he said . . .

At cocktail parties, Duke enjoyed quietly sitting in a corner, fielding the avalanche of well wishers who invariably streamed by for a handshake or a hello . . . And so often a tourist was heard to say, after meeting Duke, "This made my trip. Just seeing him in person" . . .

That Duke was completely unaffected by the fame heaped upon him is probably best illustrated when he was guest of honor at the Haw'n Village Dome, where his "This Is Your Life" TV episode was shown. After the lights went up, there was Duke sitting on stage—sound asleep . . .

## Thoughts Of Congress

Once, in New York to attend the World's Fair, we were having dinner, when Duke idly mentioned he didn't think enough was being done for his Hawaiian people. Half facetiously, I said, "Why don't you run for Congress." "Say, bruddah, that's a good idea. I think I will." And for the next few days Duke seriously considered it . . .

Duke wasn't an articulate man. He didn't have to be. Once, while trying to enjoy the show at the club named for him, an inebriated woman bent his ear continuously without letup. Duke smiled, nodded and remained polite. When she finally left, Duke whispered, "Boy, that wahine sure can't talk" . . .

## Devoted Friend

Before Duke was to have a brain operation, his friends weren't too sure he'd make it. After the surgery of Dr. Maurice Silver saved his life, the competitive spirit deep within Duke pulled him through. He proved again his championship form . . .

There are those who've said that Duke was commercialized. But it was Kimo McVay who stepped in a few years ago and literally took the Duke over with the protectiveness of a loving son for his father—seeing to it that every need and comfort was taken care of, showing more devotion to him than almost anyone. Frequently Kimo was criticized, even when he gave Duke two Rolls Royces.

"Nobody can ever repay Duke for what he's given Hawaii. What I'm doing is little enough for the greatest Hawaiian of them all. And I'll continue to do everything I can to make him happy as long as he lives," Kimo said . . .

## Aloha, Duke

In this newspaper business, I have been privileged to meet celebrities in all walks of life. But the humble, warm, generous, simple and lovable Duke will always head the list as the finest human being of them all . . . The legend of Duke Kahanamoku will never die . . . It has only begun . . .