



By **RON HAWORTH**

## **Duke belongs to the ages**

The mortal Duke is dead; his memory will go on forever.

Many of us will long remember Duke Kahanamoku as the last of the Hawaiian monarchy. Duke was that kind of man.

We were his people and these were his islands. Duke can never be lost.

When Duke was a young man he swept aside swimming records and gathered Olympic gold medals using a version of the Australian crawl he invented. They say it began in the calm waters of Honolulu Harbor.

In his latter years Duke wore a crown of silver - white and played in the tropic - warm seas that lapped the shores of his kingdom.

He was that kind of boy.

Perhaps, in a world ravaged by hate and mistrust, by cold wars and hot wars, racial strife and religious intolerance, the Duke stood above us all.

If Duke bequeathed us one gift more important than any other, it was love and humiliation.

He was that kind of athlete.

Our Duke was a brown man. He was not white and thereby born with a degree of immunity; nor was he black and faced with a birth defect.

But in his lifetime he came to know how white and black can feel. Mainland restaurants refused him service . . . while foreign kings felt humble in his presence.

## **A tribute to all**

But Duke was Hawaiian and a tribute to us all. His handshake was a promise, his smile a treaty.

How many of us — those who passionately love Hawaii — would proudly open our veins and hearts for a drop of the Hawaiian blood which flowed so purely through Duke?

How are champions measured? How will Duke withstand the erosion of time?

Well. He was to swimming what Jim Thorpe was to track and field and what Babe Ruth was to baseball.

Duke was Abe Lincoln. He was even America — the America we dream of.

Duke was the greatest salesman of Hawaii we ever had or can hope to have again.

And Duke was to surfing what Ghandi was to India.

The oldtimers will tell you "nobody could surf 1st Break and Castles like Duke.

"To watch him make his graceful turn and then knife across the wave with the freedom of a wild thing . . ."

Tales of Duke and the huge Waikiki surf will always be a topic when surfers settle beneath a hau tree to reminisce.

And surely Duke will always be a pinochle game in the lengthening shadows of a Waikiki hotel.

## **Lasting as koa**

And the koa canoes he paddled, will they ever again obey a command as soft and firm as Duke's? And what memories would the canoe Leilani speak of as she rests proud and ready on the sands of the Outrigger Canoe Club, her paddles at wait and a white carnation lei across her stern?

Duke was not unlike a koa canoe. The koa log like Duke, was conceived in some high place by a miracle, then brought to the sea where it was fashioned into a thing of beauty and speed.

And as it aged, so did it become priceless until it was a creation all men looked after with pride.

The array of honors awarded to Duke in a lifetime of athletics stretch from the cherished glory of an Olympic gold medal to the cobwebbed and forgotten. Dignitaries from every walk of life, from kings on down, shook Duke's hand in recognition of one achievement or another.

But none gave the grand old man more genuine, personal pleasure than his most recent honor, the Outrigger Winged O.

"Duke appeared happier in these last months than he had for years," say many of his cronies.

"And how grateful he was to wear the Winged O."

Duke Kahanamoku died within feet of the sea he loved. And we know the breeze that filled his sail must have whispered — "Duke was that kind of Hawaiian."