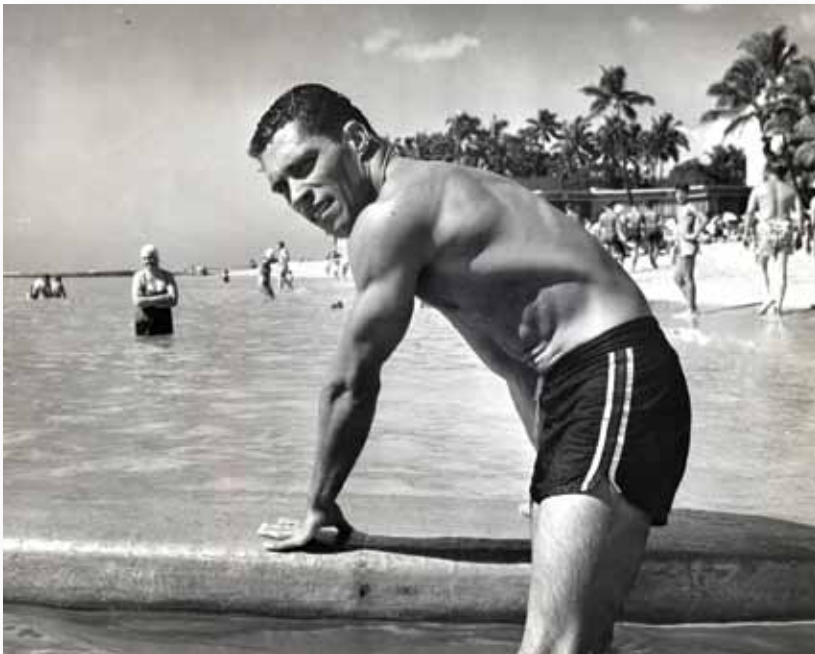


Past President and Winged "O" Ron Sorrell Elected to Life Membership

By Barbara Del Piano



Ron Sorrell getting his board ready to surf at the Old Club.



Open 4-Man Volleyball winners in 1966 were Ron Sorrell, Tom Haine, Bill Heilbron, Bill Baird.

From rascally kid to exceptional surfer, to champion volleyball player . . . from committee member, to the Board of Directors, then on to Club President. Wow! You've come a long way, Ron Sorrell. And now you have been selected for the highest honor the Club has to offer . . . Life Membership at the Club's Annual Meeting on February 13.

For more than seventy years, Ron has been a contributing member of the Outrigger Canoe Club, serving in a broad range of capacities. Born in Vancouver, Washington, Ron and his brother Dennis moved to Hawaii with their father, Victor Sorrell, in 1939. His father joined the Club soon after and Ron accompanied him to the beach where he taught himself to surf at an early age.

After spending most of the war on the mainland, Ron returned to Hawaii in 1945 and was then old enough to become a Junior member. Ron chuckles at memories of kolohi pranks he and his friends pulled, but he soon straightened out and became a serious surfer.

With friends such as Fred Noa Sr. and Bobby Witham, Ron surfed around the island. When the big waves called, they answered, taking off with their boards on the car to the North Shore and Makaha. The south shore was their favorite, however, from Portlock to Ala Moana.

They also enjoyed "full moon surfing" so whenever the moon was full, Ron and his buddies surfed well into the night. In 1956 he not only won, but set a record for the Diamond

Head Surfboard Race. Ron admits his speed was partly induced by his fear of sharks. He sums up his feeling for the sport when he says "Surfing is the best, for people of all ages."

In addition to spending twelve years paddling for Outrigger, Ron participated in the Club's major non-water sport, volleyball, being chosen all-American for three years. In 1960 he played on the first team Outrigger sent to the USVBA National Championship tournament in Dallas, Texas.

In 1967, he played on the Outrigger team that won the AAU National Championship in Detroit, Michigan, against twenty-two outstanding teams. Ron was also a member of the Golden Masters in 1982 which competed in the USVBA National Tournament which featured one-hundred-thirty top teams from around the country. They played for three days without a single defeat.

Ron was also an outstanding coach, heading the OCC's open volleyball teams for ten years. In 1961 Ron's team won the State Championship, the Hickam Invitational and Citywide tournaments. He is proud of the fact that his teams received more medals than any other.

In addition to his participation in sports, Ron also took on the demanding role of Club Captain from 1957 to 1960. The job included assisting and overseeing all Club athletics. As a reward for his athletic prowess Ron was among the first group selected for membership in the newly-formed Winged "O" in 1968.



Ron coached the Masters 45 team to a national championship in 1985: Row 1: Tom Haine, Peter Balding, Coach Ron Sorrell, Bill Baird. Row 2. Hugh Foster, Dan Ordeson, Dave Hendrickson, Bob Kashare, Rich Riffero, Fred Hiapo.



Ron was one of the original eight Winged "O"s in 1968 and has remained active with the group. Here he welcomes Charlie Jenkins as a Winged "O" in 2003.

He remains one of the hardest working members of the Winged "O" where he researches athletes for possible membership and spearheaded the recent replacement of the Winged "O" plaque which features the photos and years elected of each Winged "O" member.

Ron also served on the Club's various committees before being selected to run for the Board of Directors, to which he was elected and on which he served five years before becoming Club President in 1979.

One of Ron's major accomplishments was establishing the Outrigger Foundation. The Club's athletic budget had been strained for years and with teams traveling to the outside island and all parts of the mainland more frequently, it became a serious problem. While fundraisers and donations helped, it was apparent that there was not enough money available. The teams often took to selling Portuguese sausage and sweet bread to raise the necessary funds.

After a great deal of thought, Ron came up with the idea of a tax-free foundation to help support the athletic program. It took several years and the help of several attorney-members to finally make it happen.

Then in 1981, Ron, with the help of his wife and Bill Capp, wrote a fund-raising letter which was sent to over 1,000 members. They spent an entire week-end folding them, placing them in envelopes and sealing them: the effort brought

in \$23,000. By 1985, the Foundation had raised more than \$100,000.

Ron was also involved in initial discussions leading to combining the Outrigger Foundation with the Duke Kahanamoku Foundation which supports Hawaii's young men and women athletes and furthering their education; he also served as first chairman of the ODKF's athletic grants committee.

Another of Ron's accomplishments was making the International Professional Surfers Association a reality. Ron served as first commissioner of the IPSA, wrote the charter, created a ride-by-ride scoring system and spent a lot of time selling the concept to potential sponsors of events. The IPSA's kickoff event was the 1970 Smirnoff which was won by Nat Young of Australia. Four plus decades later, professional surfing is still going strong thanks to Ron and others who nurtured it in its infancy.

Retired from his profession as an investment consultant, Ron is a familiar face around the Club. Although he has given up his favorite sport as a back problem prevents his standing on a surfboard, he keeps in shape, working out three days a week in the Fitness Center and walking three days a week.

His dedication to the Outrigger Canoe Club remains an important part of his life; Ron says it's "the best beach Club in the world." He is certainly deserving of Life Membership.