

New Life Member: Peter Balding

By Barbara Del Piano



Peter Balding served as OCC President in 1974 and in 1989.



Peter and May at 1981 Athletic Awards Banquet where they were honored as Club Mixed Doubles Tennis Champions.



Ricky Grigg and Peter Balding compare trophies at OCC Surfing Contest.



In 1989 on the 25th Anniversary of the Club at Diamond Head, Ward Russell, the Rev. Abraham Akaka and Peter Balding reenact the canoe arrival ceremony from the old Club to the new. Ward was President in 1964 and Peter the President in 1989.

You name it, he's done it. Ever since he joined the Outrigger in 1946, at the age of 12, Peter Balding has been actively involved in some phase of the Club's activities. First it was sports.

In fact, his reason for joining the Club was to participate in water sports, and in his first year as a member, paddled on the 12 and under canoe paddling crew. He continued to paddle, progressing from one age group to the next, up to Junior 4, many of them winning crews.

Surfing was also another of his favorite pastimes, and Peter represented Outrigger in Australia as a member of the Hawaii Surf Lifesaving Association Team which placed third in the 1956 International Surf Championships.

In 1970, he competed in the International Surfing Championships in Peru, and on the local scene, was a Club entrant in the Makaha International Championship. He won the Makule Division at least four times in the Outrigger's surfing championship. To this day, he is an avid surfer and swimmer, but presently stays mostly in the area fronting the Club.

Then of course, there was volleyball. Peter was a member of one Open and nine Masters volleyball teams which competed in the USVBA Nationals, and was named All-American Honorable Mention in the Masters 35 division in 1974. His Masters 45 team won the National Championship in 1985. Peter also

played on many OCC championship mountain ball and tennis teams.

In addition to participating in sports, Peter served as Club Captain from 1968 to 1970, a demanding job that includes overseeing all sports teams sponsored by the Outrigger. His contributions to the Club's various programs also earned him the prestigious honor of being selected as a member of the Winged "O," the top honor that can be achieved by an outstanding athlete.

But his activities were not limited to sports. Peter served on various committees, making valuable contributions to each one. His outstanding performance at that level soon earned him a place on the Board of Directors, to which he was elected in 1970. After serving in various capacities, he was selected to the ultimate position of President first in 1974 and again in 1989.

So when Peter casually ran into Tay Perry, Chairman of the Historical Committee, one day late last year, and Tay relayed the news that Peter had been nominated for Life Membership, he could rightfully have said, "Well, it's about time!" But instead, his reaction was one of complete surprise. "I was blown away," he said, expressing the delight and tremendous honor he experienced.

From the day he joined the Outrigger at age 12, Peter felt



Peter with his son Peter Jr. and grandson, Trey (Peter III) at OCC paddleboard race.



Peter and May Balding recently celebrated 57 years of marriage.



Peter, second from left, front, and his teammates on their way to the AAU and USVBA Volleyball Championships in 1960. Pictured with him were, front, Bill Baird, Peter Balding, Art Lange, Tom Haine, Jim Beardmore, Mark Auerbach. Back: Bobby Daniels, Pat Wyman, Bill Cross, Pete Velasco, Ron Sorrell, Bill Heilbron.

a special bonding with the Club and the ocean it borders. As a youngster, he pedaled his bike to the Club from his home on Noela Drive.

Often when he found it difficult to leave, he called his mother to tell her he was spending the night with a friend. The friend would then call his mother to say he was spending the night with Peter. Instead, the boys spent the night on the beach, climbing under the canvas that covered the upside down canoes.

If the moon was full, they went surfing; they were often the last ones out and the first ones in the water at dawn. He remembers his favorite meal at the Club which consisted of a scoop of rice with gravy that cost 15 cents.

Peter's life has revolved around the Outrigger in so many ways. His first job was in the old Club's parking lot when it was located at the site of the now former International Marketplace. He relieved Henry Takemasu and helped out during the busy lunch hour. (As a bonus he got a free employee lunch.) He also worked with Sunshine in the evenings when there were special parties.

He met his wife, May, at the Club one summer when he was working as a volunteer life guard and she was selling catamaran tickets. They met in the month of May, were engaged in June, married in December, and recently celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary. Their two children, Peter Junior

and Gay, also spent their childhood at the Outrigger.

Peter fondly refers to the Outrigger as "his one and only Club" and happily reminisces about "the good old days" and the special feeling of ohana that existed when the membership was half its present size. He chuckles at memories of people walking through the grounds, dodging volley balls, as they made their way to the dining room, and of volleyballs occasionally crashing into the Snack Shop where Richard and Clara held court. He has vivid memories of his paddling coaches and steersmen, Charlie Martin and Chuck Schroeder.

Unlike many old time members, Peter and his family didn't resist the move from Waikiki to Diamond Head. He attributes the excellent leadership of Wilford Godbold, Cline Mann and Ward Russell to the relatively smooth transition, and the fact that his children were young enough not to have become established at the old Club. "When we moved," he said, "they got established here. It was an excellent move."

Indeed, Peter's life has revolved around the Outrigger, and he and May still come down about five mornings each week. He continues to render service to the Club, having served on the Judges of Election Committee for the past seven years. So it is truly an honor for the Club to elect Peter to Life Membership at the Annual Meeting. He is a worthy and deserving recipient.