

'Imua Outrigger! The Sweet *Leilani* Is Back!'



TOP LEFT: The Sweet *Leilani*

BOTTOM LEFT: Renovators Domie Gose and Joshua Dang, with the Koa Canoe Committee: Steve Scott, Jen Bossert and Walter Guild.

TOP RIGHT: Members brought lei for the blessing ceremony by Kahu Sherman.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The *Leilani* makes her first trip to the water in more than 10 years.

By Marilyn Kali

Many people believe that koa canoes are living things. During her recent renovation the Outrigger Canoe Club's 80-year-old koa canoe *Leilani* proved time and again that she is indeed alive.

Master Craftsman Domie Gose knows it for a fact. When the canoe was brought to the bottom level in the parking garage for her overhaul, Domie talked to her and told her that he was going to fix her up so the members could take her out to the ocean and race in her again.

It took a little persuasion to get her out of retirement and some carefully placed drops of wine everyday on her hull to get her full cooperation, but after that canoe and carpenter worked in harmony.

Old koa was removed and replaced, and she got a new bow and stern. She was given a more calabash shape and lengthened in the back by three feet. She now weighs 387 pounds and with weights will hit 401 to make the HCRA rule standard. She is now compliant with all current racing standards.

On May 31, paddlers gathered on the beach to bless the *Leilani* and sing her praises. Kahu Sherman performed the rites, led by Athletic Coordinating Directors Keahi Pelayo and Jen Bossert.

Following the blessing, paddlers hoisted the *Leilani* and

carried her in all her shimmering koa glory to the water for her baptism.

Jumping in the canoe for the inaugural run were Bossert, Gose and his assistant Joshua Dang, Kenny Bailey, Cole Pelayo and veteran steersman Mark Haine.

The ocean was flat as they paddled out, but if anyone can find a wave, Haine can. And sure enough he spotted a bump which became a wave and as everyone cheered, the *Leilani* surfed to shore in a blaze of glory.

You could hear her loud and clear: "Imua Outrigger! The Sweet *Leilani* is back!"

Haine sang her praises, "she steers like a dream," he said. Bossert was thrilled to see her work of 10 years come to fruition. "She was the women's canoe originally so I can't wait to use her in the Na Wahine this year."

Members will be able to enjoy her during the regatta and long distance seasons.

A big mahalo to Jen Bossert who as Canoe Racing Chair, Club Captain and Coordinating Director for Athletics pushed for the renovation of the *Leilani*; to the OCC Koa Canoe Committee composed of Bossert, Walter Guild, Steve Scott, Joe Quigg and Tay Perry who provided insight for the design and renovation; and to the carpenters who did such masterful work, Domie Gose and Joshua Dang.