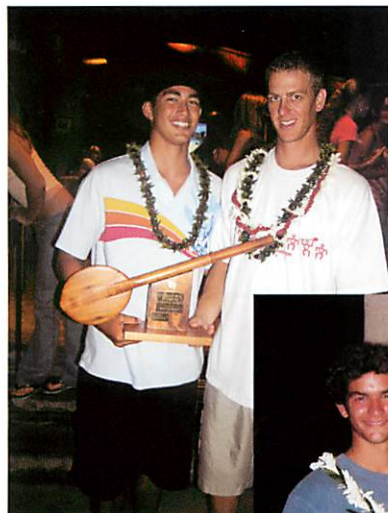
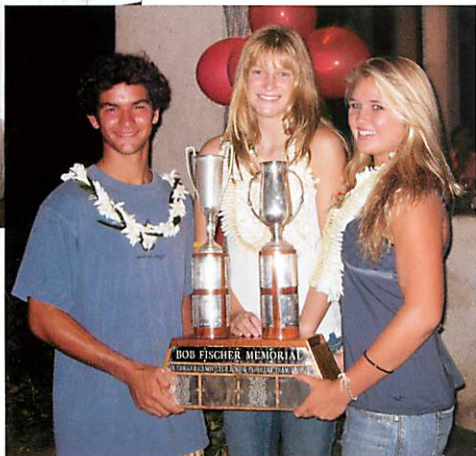


The Bob Fischer Memorial Trophy: Rewarding Junior Paddler Participation

By Kawika Grant



Austin Kino received the first Bob Fischer award in 2005 from Canoe Racing Chair Jimmy Austin.



Winners of the Bob Fischer Memorial Trophy in 2006 were Nainoa Basdavanos, Julia Behrens and Malia Schimmelfennig.

In 1991, Anita Brightman established a memorial in honor of long-time Club water sport athlete and coach Bob Fischer. She donated two silver cups Bob had won as a junior Outrigger athlete with the understanding they be awarded annually to the Club's outstanding junior paddlers of the year; one for boys and one for girls.

With no other guidance given for the silver cups, the Canoe Racing Subcommittee initially attempted singling out entire junior crews for recognition. The subjective nature of selecting one crew's performance over another made choosing winners difficult, to say the least, and in some years no award was given due to a lack of consensus.

In 2005, the Canoe Racing Subcommittee decided to correct this by recasting the purpose of Bob Fischer Memorial as they believed it was intended; as an award recognizing outstanding individual merit. Specifically, they chose to retain the original committee's primary criteria for the award: participation.

Bob Fischer was a giver: of his love for water sports, of his talents at them, and in his desire to share those talents with others. He was there. And he cared.

This is what the Canoe Racing Subcommittee saw as the perfect quality to recognize in our young paddlers and to reward.

To be selected Junior Paddler of the Year would not be dependent simply on the number and color of medals garnered, or the points earned for the Club toward the state championship. What counts is participation:

- Being there, no matter what the obstacles.
- Always striving, seat or not.
- Always helping, whenever and wherever help is needed.
- And being supportive of one's team and teammates, one's fellow paddlers, and of the paddling program overall.
- Giving back. Being an active part, the lifeblood and heart beat of what Outrigger is today and will be tomorrow.
- In other words, exhibiting the essence of what group sports are all about.

The Bob Fischer Memorial Trophy is an award recognizing these qualities in the best junior paddler, boy and girl, competing in the racing categories 12 through 18 during each regatta season, as selected by the coaches of those divisions and the members of the Canoe Racing Subcommittee.

The standards are high indeed - and the very first recipient of the award in 2005 exhibited all of them in full measure, Austin Kino. In 2006 the junior boys award went to Nainoa Basdavanos, and two gals split the girls award: Julia Behrens and Malia Schimmelfennig.

Age and experience are no lock on this trophy. What counts is participation. Every one of you junior paddlers out there, regardless of age and experience, is capable of doing that.

And when you do, Bob Fischer will be cheering for you to join your name with his on this perpetual trophy meant just for you.

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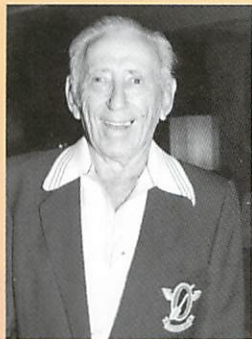


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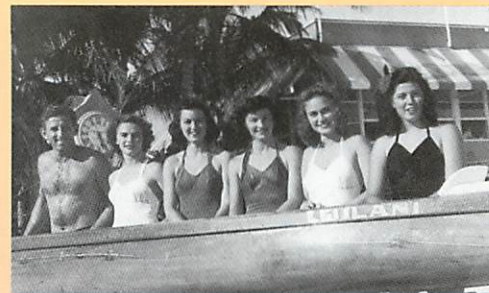
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Who Was Bob Fisher



Bob Fisher was elected to the Winged "O" in 1982.

The 1988 OHCA Championship was dedicated to Bob Fisher, pictured with companion Anita Brightman, for his untiring support of the sport of canoe racing.



Bob Fisher coached and steered the OCC's winning Senior crew at the 1943 Macfarlane Regatta. From left, Greta Ross, Nita Hayes, Clare Cross, Anna Morris, and Roselle Robinson.

Bob Fisher arrived in Hilo from Warren, Ohio as a 13 year-old school boy with his parents in 1924 and from 1927-1931 was active in the racing and rowing of barges in Hilo Bay. In those days, canoe racing was a relatively minor sport generally practiced in Honolulu Harbor and off Kealahou in Kona.

Canoe racing almost died off before World War II and the last race of significance took place in 1938 in Kona.

Bob moved to Maui as one of the first radio telephone operators in the Territory, and then to Honolulu in 1935 where he became a member of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

If you had asked Bob about his accomplishments, he would always tell you that he worked with someone else who deserved most of the credit. What he wouldn't tell you was that other people achieved what they did because he worked with them so well, so diligently, and so thoroughly.

This is true in his efforts with Tommy Kiakona when they began to teach the first women's crew in Hawaii in 1935 to paddle, steer and surf outrigger canoes on their own.

This continued until 1943 when as Club Captain, Bob worked with Bill Mullaney and John D. Kaupiko to begin modern canoe racing as we know it. They put six crews together, and along with Hui Nalu, held the first Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta at Waikiki Beach on July 4, 1943. The event was successful and other groups became interested in forming canoe clubs.

Bob then helped the military, and others begin racing on both Oahu and in Hilo Bay. There was always someone who needed his help, and used it as the catalyst to make things happen.

Bob worked with Bill Capp to form what was first called the Hawaiian Canoe Racing and Surfing Association, later to become the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association. The Waikiki Surf Club, again with Bob's help, organized to handle many of the surf events.

For 16 years Bob's title with the HCRA was race starter. Anyone who knows the facts will tell you that he was not just the man who fired the starting gun, but the arbiter of disputes, the organizer of events, the able and willing coach, especially for women's crews who could find no help elsewhere, and the chief advocate of the sport with the county, territorial and later state governments.

Quietly and without a lot of fanfare, Bob helped the

Outrigger to take a leading role in modernizing the sport. It was he who was in the first battle over the use of fiberglass canoes. It was Bob, again, along with Louis Kahanamoku, who quietly helped establish Moku O Hawaii, the canoe racing association on the Big Island.

Bob was instrumental in helping others to set the minimum weights for racing canoes at 400 pounds. This kept the koa canoe from being compromised to the stronger, lighter fiberglass canoes.

As president of HCRA he presided over many hours of debate even after the rule was established, where the members of the association argued over which was heavier, one pound of koa or one pound of fiberglass.

In 1975, 1976 and 1977, with sadness, he watched canoe racing outgrow the original structure he had helped to establish in the HCRA, and again with only the best interests of the sport and our Club in mind, he was instrumental in fighting a tough political battle to unseat the entrenched leadership of the HCRA, and allow the formation of the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, while elevating the HCRA to a statewide organization.

In every one of these activities, Bob helped build a bridge between other canoe clubs and OCC. He was responsible more than any other individual for the long term good relationships that exist between Outrigger and the other individuals who made up the real leadership of the canoe racing association.

Bob was a stalwart supporter of our own programs, in addition to helping others. He never considered a job too demeaning, and never failed in an undertaking. He was a swimming coach, surfing coach, organizer of countless other Club events, as well as the first president of the Hawaiian Surf and Lifesaving Association.

He was the glue that held organizations together, always working, never tiring, and never asking for compensation.

Bob was elected to the elite Winged "O" at OCC in 1982.

Bob moved to California to live near his adult children in 1989 and died there in 1991 at the age of 80. He exemplified the true meaning of sportsmanship, leadership, team and giving.

All of our Club athletes should strive to walk in Bob's shoes.