

70-Year-Old Volleyball Trophy Makes Its Way Home

By Kawika Grant

It all began about three years ago with an anonymous phone call to the Club's Front Desk. A nonmember Good Samaritan walking down Bishop Street had spotted an old silver trophy in a store window with Outrigger Canoe Club's name on it, and was calling to ask if we were aware the trophy was for sale. No, we didn't know, said the receptionist thanking him, and promptly notified the Historical Committee of the find.

Committee member Marilyn Kali went downtown the following day to check out the report. In the store was a full-size silver volleyball, sans pedestal, with Outrigger Canoe Club Six-Man Volleyball Perpetual Trophy prominently engraved across the top.

Beneath it were etched the names of its winners for the years 1943-1947, including Dad Center, Duke and David Kahanamoku, Thad Ekstrand, Waldo Bowman, Vic Kahn, Harry Shupak and many other Club notables. The store manager told Marilyn the trophy was part of an estate sale but would not divulge the owner's name.

When Marilyn reported to the committee that the trophy appeared to be a significant Club historical artifact, Mahi Riley, a committee member, went to the store immediately and bought it on the spot to prevent its sale to anyone else. And much to her surprise she found her uncle's name, Harry Berger, listed as a winner on the trophy.

The ball was in sad shape, yet dented as it was, and shedding silver plating in many places, it remained impressive to see - clearly intended to be a marquee Club award. The Historical Committee recommended its purchase and restoration to the Board, which endorsed the proposal, and the trophy began its journey home again in earnest.

The first task was finding a silversmith willing to take on the job. None were available locally, but an antique silver restorer in Glendora, California by the name of Rick White was intrigued by the uniqueness of the trophy and the challenges it presented.

He made no promises, saying he could do nothing if it was an actual volleyball that had been plated like baby shoes are. Once

he had the ball in hand, however, it proved to be a pewter sphere, and the work became a labor of love.

In the process he also came up with some interesting historical tidbits, including the maker of the ball - a Connecticut company - and the fact it isn't a replica volleyball but a basketball. Apparently, when the trophy's donor - Fort Street jeweler and Club member H. F. Wichman, went to this company to buy the ball, they had replica basketballs but not a volleyball, so Mr. Wichman, not to be dissuaded, took the larger ball instead and, as they say, the rest is history. (Wichman may also be remembered as the man who donated the Club's beach clock and numerous swimming trophies.)

While Mr. White's restoration is beautiful to behold, the story doesn't end there. Former Club President Anthony Hunt, a strong supporter on the Board for bringing this treasure back to its rightful place, took the lead in creating a pedestal worthy of this shining piece of Club history.

Which brings us to the next chapter of this trophy's unfolding saga. Marilyn Kali, who has researched much of the Club's athletic history, took on the challenge of finding the history of the trophy.

She discovered in June 1943 that a call went out for a six-man senior tournament. "No keiki" the announcement said. The story went on, "This will cover the old guard, Chase, Tulloch, Dad, Duke, and the other also rans. Call for sign-ups at the office. Let's go and show these here young squirts how it's done."

This was the beginning of a 6-man volleyball league that played several times a week (one week night and Sundays) with as many as ten teams competing. The tournament was in the fall, and ended with a volleyball banquet in January each year where "the contests were again fought over at the dinner table."

If anyone has in their family history any photos of this trophy being presented (the time frame is 1943-47), or any kind of written memorabilia, or stories told about the tournaments it represented, please step up to the net and spike that ball home!



Names on the Trophy are:

1943

Waldo Bowman
Gordon Tilley
Peter Howe
George "Dad" Center
Lloyd Chiswick
Victor Kahn

1944-1945

Waldo Bowman
Donald Denhart
Robert Dolan
Thad W. Ekstrand
Duke P. Kahanamoku
David P. Kahanamoku
Melvin Paoa
Ernest A. Thomas
P. Parker
Gordon Tribble

1946

Lloyd Chiswick
E. Nash
Harry Shupak
Tom Kiakona
P. Parker
B. Bush
B. Moriarty
H. Berger
F. Logsdon

1947

Lawrence Ackerman
William Cook
R. Hubbell
P. Howell
Melvin Paoa
H. Berger
H. Blom
P. Caricof
J. Gomez