

Golden Moments

By Lois Taylor, Star-Bulletin Writer

If you saw them at the airport on their way to Atlantic City for the weekend, they looked like any seven strangers who happened to be getting on the same plane. They were a Kahala socialite, a retired parks department employee, an insurance executive, a young housewife, an orthodontist, a Princeville developer and a physical fitness director.

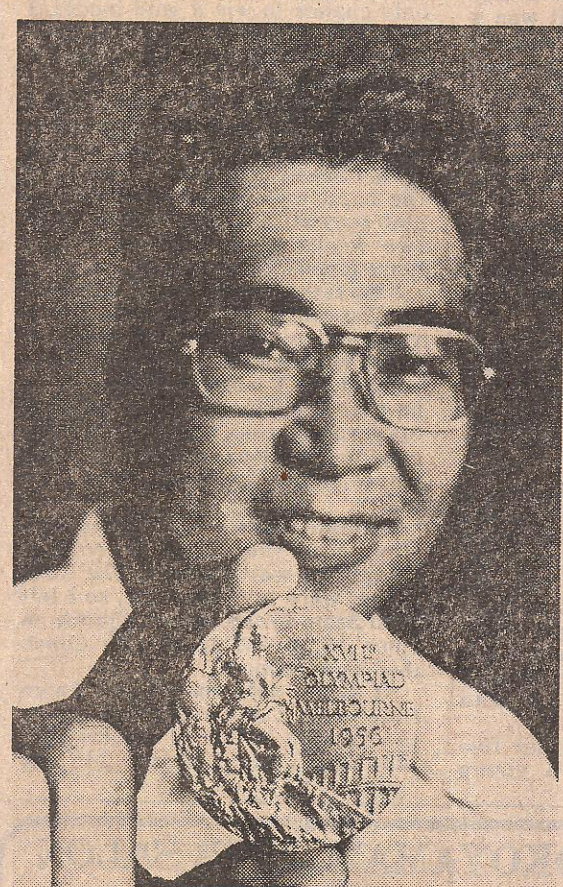
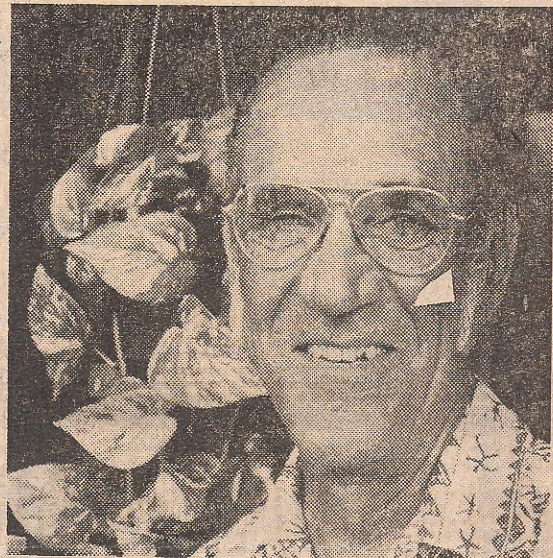
But they weren't strangers and they had in common one unique and unforgettable moment. For each of them, a band struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner," and in front of thousands of people, each was presented with an Olymp-

pic gold medal. At that moment, each was the world's greatest amateur athlete in his own sport. They and about 200 other Olympic gold medal winners were the guests last weekend of Resorts International in Atlantic City, N.J. The free trip included being honored guests at a \$500-a-plate fundraiser for the 1980 U.S. Olympic team. Frank Sinatra was master of ceremonies, there was a parade and fireworks and a group picture taken at sunset that will be a Life magazine centerfold. Before they left, the seven Olympic athletes talked about their memories of the games and their lives since.



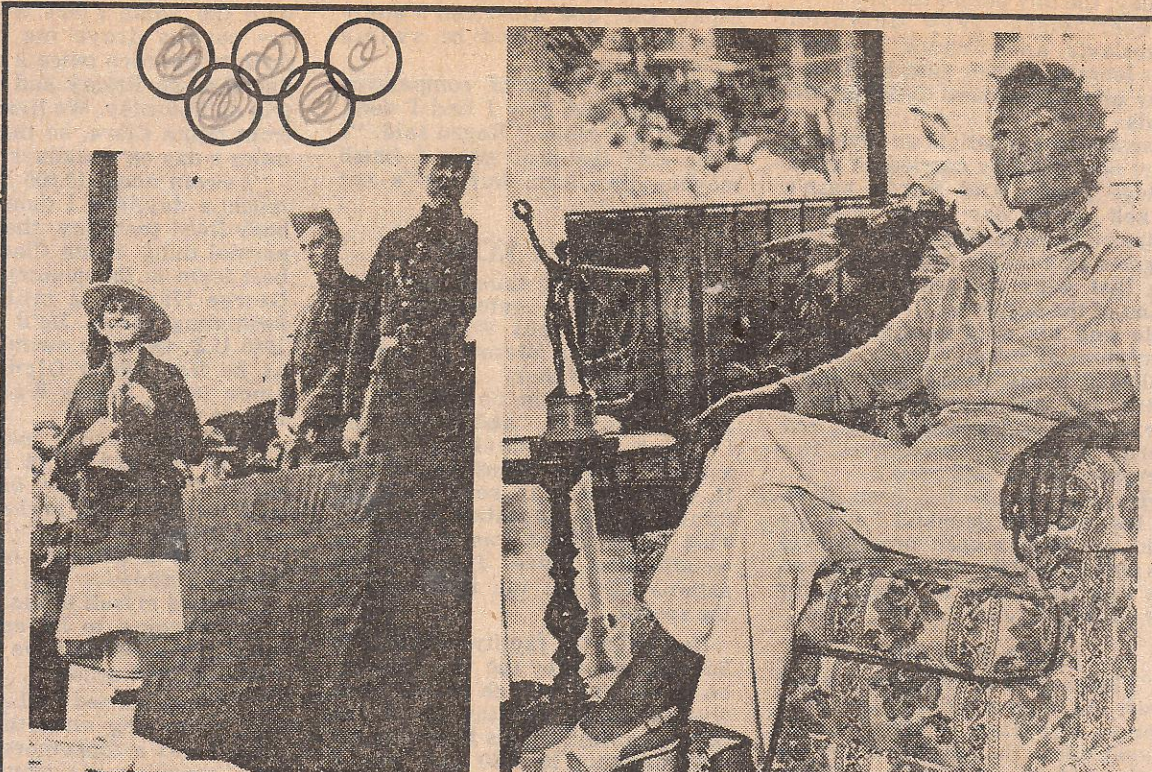
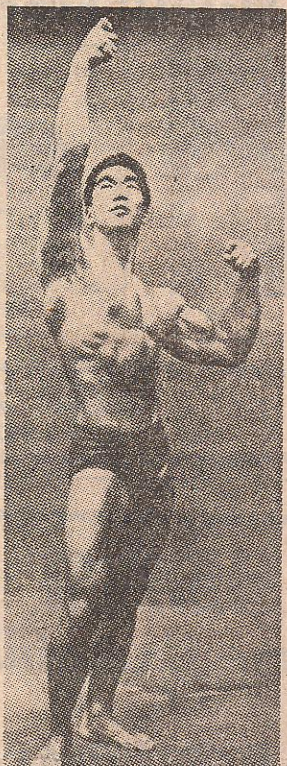
James Hardy

As a member of the University of California crew, James Hardy (fourth from left in photo above) won a gold medal in 1948 in the eight-oared shell event. Today, Hardy is retired and lives on Kauai.



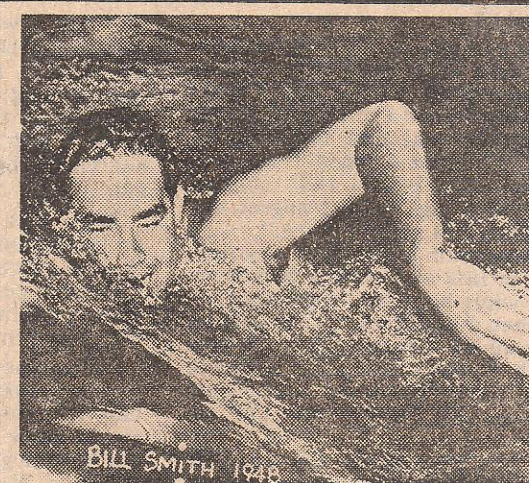
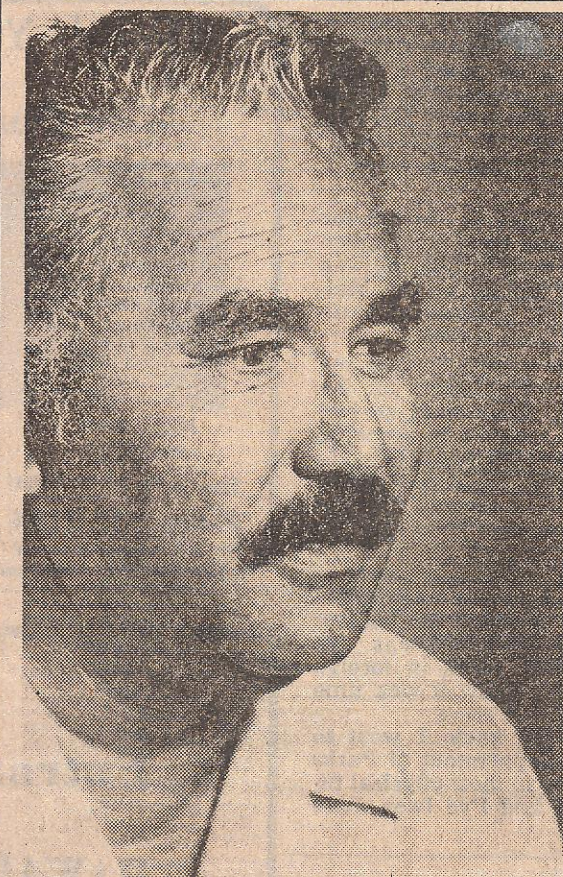
Tommy Kono

Kono won two gold medals for weightlifting—in 1952 and in 1956 (which he holds above). At right, Kono as "Mr. World," a title he picked up between Olympic meets.



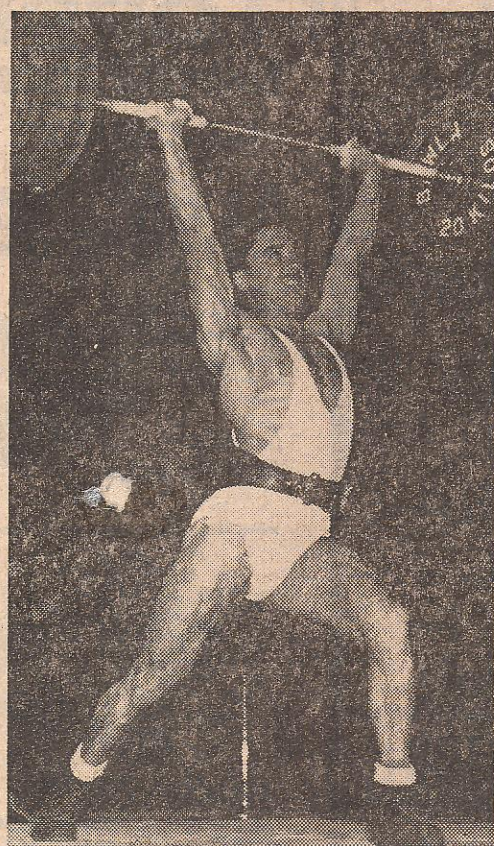
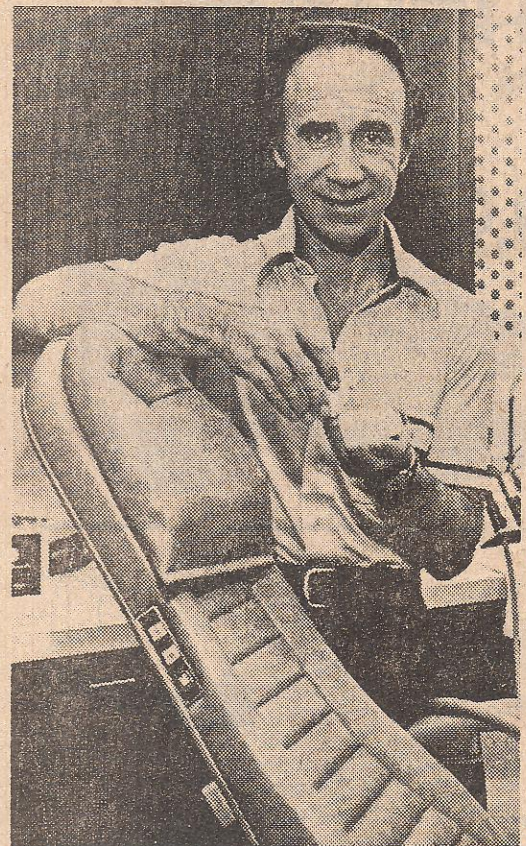
Aileen Riggin Soule

In Antwerp, Aileen Riggin won a gold medal for diving. Above left, Riggin with her Olympic trophy (behind her stand Prince Leopold and King Albert of Belgium). Above, Aileen Riggin Soule with her trophy.



Bill Smith

In 1948, Bill Smith won the gold medal for the 400-meter freestyle event (above) at the games in London at the age of 24. He retired last year as head of the city's lifeguard program.



Peter George

In Helsinki in 1952 (left), Peter George won a gold medal for lifting 881½ pounds, four years after picking up a silver medal in London. He's now an orthodontist (far left).



PETER GEORGE

"I started lifting weights when I was 11 years old in Akron, Ohio," Dr. Peter George said. "I had no plans to be a weight lifter—I was trying to build myself up so I could go out for football. But I became so interested in the sport that I stuck with it. By the time I was 14, I was thinking about going to the Olympics some day." George won the Ohio State Championship at 14, the National Junior Championship at 15, the National Senior Championship at 17 and the World Championship at 18. He lifted as a lightweight, a middleweight and a light heavyweight, and held world records in all of these classes. At 19, in 1948, George was named to the U.S. Olympic team that would compete in London. He won a silver medal there and determined to do better. He entered Kent State University, graduated in 1952 and went to the summer Olympics in Helsinki, Finland. There he lifted 881½ pounds and won his gold medal. "I came home and went to dental school," George said. "When I graduated, I joined the Army Dental Corps and went to the 1956

Olympics in Melbourne. I won a silver there, and then won the U.S. championship in 1967. "The world championships were in Iran that year, and we were invited to a reception at the shah's palace. We were advised by the U.S. Embassy not to eat anything, but I did. The newspapers said I had Asian flu, but actually it was diarrhea. I didn't enter the championships, and at that point I retired from competitive weightlifting." When he finished his military service, George went to Columbia University for two years to earn his orthodontist specialty certificate, and has been in private practice here ever since. "I've been invited to be second coach for the U.S. weightlifters going to the Moscow Olympics. The latest word from Moscow, though, is that they've only got housing for one coach from each team. "These guys are all accomplished lifters, the best in the country, so all I have to work on is last-minute strategy and mental attitude. It's not only in lifting, but in most endeavors of life—without the right mental preparation and an intense desire to win, you're licked before you start."

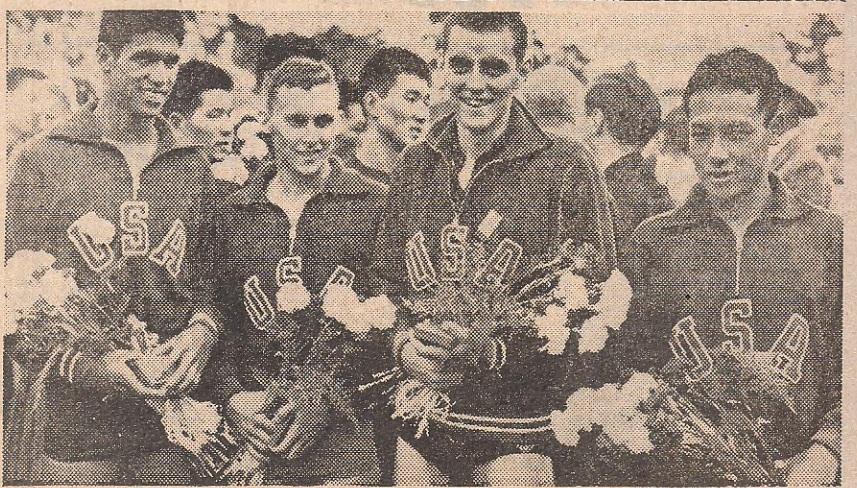
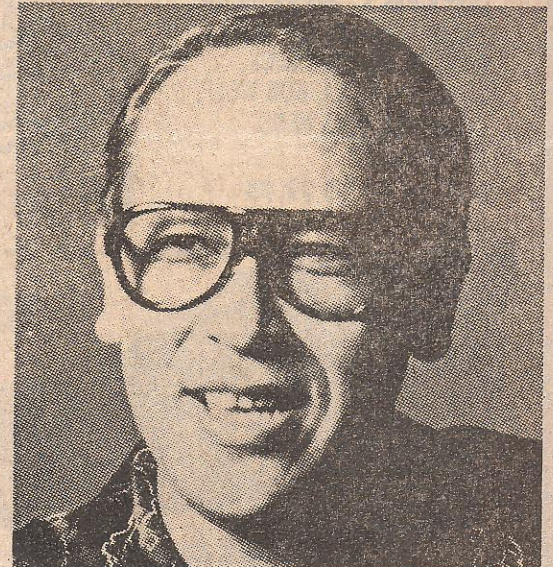
JAMES HARDY

The only one of these seven Olympians to have won his gold medal in a team sport, James Hardy rowed with the winning U.S. crew in the London Olympics of 1948. Hardy was a member of the University of California's championship team that defeated Harvard in the national trials. "In those days, the eight-man winning crew was sent to the Olympics as a team," Hardy said. "Now they have tryouts for each seat and a single school no longer rows together as the Berkeley crew did in 1948. "When we got to London, the war had ended only three years earlier and things weren't running smoothly yet. We were housed at an old evacuation camp at Peinmore Woods, and they put us on the bus to Henley where we were supposed to practice. "When we got out on the river in our boat, there were so many teams in the water that there was no room for the coaches' launches. Our coach had to ride a bicycle on the towpath alongside the river and holler at us, but we could row faster than he could ride his bike. So he moved us downstream to Mar-

Turn to Page C-2

Ford Konno

Ford Konno won two silver medals and two gold medals in swimming events at the Helsinki and Melbourne Olympic games. Below, Konno (at far right) with relay teammates at Helsinki in 1952.

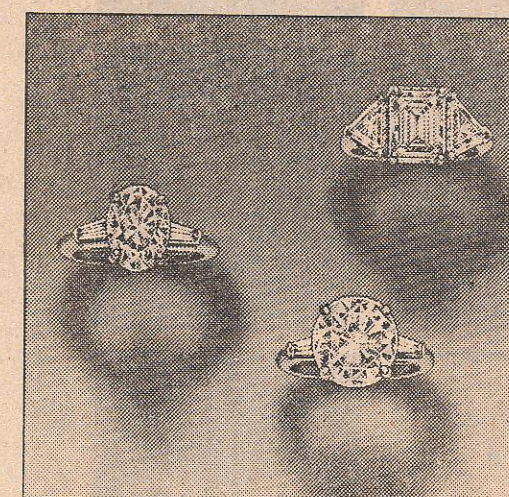


Pokey Watson Richardson

In 1964, Pokey Watson, at the age of 14, won a gold medal in swimming and another four years later (in photo above left). Above, Pokey today.

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