

# The Koa Log

By Ron Haworth

*Outrigger Koa Log is an endeavor to sift for snippets in the sand of our century glass that we might rediscover the misplaced and forgotten as well as pumice our modern image and achievements.*

It is indisputable that Outrigger Canoe Club has produced scores of Olympic medalists, world and state champions, in both water sports and volleyball; accomplishments far beyond the vision of our founder Alexander Hume Ford.

For example do all OCC members realize two International Surfing Federation (ISF) World Surfing Champions are Outrigger members: Felipe Pomar and Fred Hemmings.

Felipe won the crown in 1965 in his native country at Punta Rocas, Peru and Fred at the 1968 WSC at Rincon, Puerto Rico.

Considering there are but five names on the perpetual (retired) trophy that might be a rare achievement for most clubs but not Outrigger Canoe Club. Hemmings did not defend his title in 1970 at Victoria, Australia.

While Felipe was not an OCC member in 1965, as Duke Kahanamoku was not a member when he won his first gold medal in the 1912 Summer Olympics, one can argue Outrigger is a magnet for existing champions as well as organic grown athletes.

Peruvian Eduardo Arena organized the ISF when attending the 1964 surfing championships in Australia. To create a true world surfing championship he felt the ISF needed to pay travel expensive for the two top surfers and one judge from each invited county. The host country covered accommodations. This achieved a financial moat for all invitees. Hawaii was granted country status!

What piqued this writer's interest in the defunct ISF was my 1969 *Star-Bulletin Surf Spray* column randomly uncovered in recent research. In it I had touched upon the genuine glee Hawaii's Ben Aipa heaped onto Hemmings after his triumph.

Aipa left no doubt it was a team victory. For a brief few moments aloha surfed the Caribbean Sea. And it got me to wondering what became of the beautiful ISF perpetual trophy.

Later referred by some as the Heisman of surfing it depicted a curling wave and riderless surfboard hammered from Peruvian silver at a cost of six thousand dollars. In 1965 dollars that was serious money and likely the most precious surfing trophy ever created.

In late 1969 Hemmings presented the unique trophy to Governor John Burns where it went on display at the State Capitol; previously that year it graced Outrigger's Lobby Display Case.

In 1970 it was won in Australia by American Rolf Aunress and left Hawaii but returned with Jimmy Blears two years later after his San Diego victory and gave Hawaii the distinction of being the only region with two winners. San Diego became the only site to hold ISF twice when Aussie Nat Young added his name in 1966.

In this writer's opinion amateur surfing peaked during the early sixties to the mid-70's. It was a decade which spawned surf publications and color photos, surfboard and fashion signature endorsements, contest television coverage. It also included Hawaii big wave contests such as the Duke Kahanamoku Invitational, Smirnoff World Pro-Am and Haleiwa Sea Spree and the granddaddy of them all: the Makaha International Surfing Championships pioneered in 1954 by Waikiki Surf Club.



Fred Hemmings presents the ISF silver trophy to Governor Burns after winning it in 1969.

An internet search has failed to locate the ISF WSC trophy at such a fitting venue as Surfing Heritage & Culture Center in San Clemente, CA where four of Duke's boards are displayed; two he shaped. Nor is it found at the nearby International Surfing Museum in Huntington Beach, CA.

A perpetual trophy such as yachting's America's Cup, (the oldest trophy in international sports), is by custom held by the winning yacht club (syndicate) until a challenger defeats the defender and becomes the Cup's custodian.

The ISF perpetual trophy is held by an individual, not an organization, but similar criteria should govern. With the demise of the ISF, (now International Surfing Association), shouldn't the trophy, if located, revert back to the ISF founder or a site of his choosing? It was awarded in trust to a winner and not 'given' as is college football's Heisman.

Sadly Jimmy Blears passed away in 2011 and to my limited knowledge the trophy hasn't been seen in 42 years; a mystery, but mysteries are made to be solved as seems overdue for this one. Surely it exists.

Surfers around the world should forever have the opportunity to aspire and view the silver wave and five names inscribed representing world amateur surfing supremacy when at its zenith in a venue fitting and regal as Duke's four boards.

Indeed...a worthwhile quest.

Learn more about Outrigger's history at: [www.occhist.com](http://www.occhist.com) Sponsored by the OCC Historical Committee