Kai Heʻenalu Hoʻilina
(The ones who are the legacy of surfing)
He kāʻeʻaʻeʻa pulu ʻole no ka heʻe nalu.
(An expert on the surfboard who does not get wet.)


This Hawaiian proverb was said in praise of an outstanding surfer by the kūpuna (ancestors). You can easily say that this Ōlelo Noʻeau (Hawaiian proverb) refers to all of the following kānaka heʻe nalu (surfers) because of their proficiency in the surf. Yet, what makes these Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) truly outstanding is the way they carried themselves on land and became leaders of their communities. Some are still alive and are continuing to raise the bar with their performance on waves and their kindness on land. The others have ua hala (passed on), and the way they rode the waves of life will forever be an inspiration to us all. They have all contributed immensely to Hawaiian culture and the global surfing community with their ʻano (nature), ʻohana (family) and hoʻoilina (legacy).

This is a list of legendary Kānaka Maoli watermen and waterwomen who are not depicted in this exhibition.

Clyde Aikau, b. 1949
Akila Aipa, b. 1970
Larry Bertlemann, b. 1955
Keone Downing, b. 1953
Clement “Tiger” Espere, 1946-2005
Sunny García, b. 1970
Snake Ah Hee, b. 1946
Derek Ho, 1964-2020
Mike Ho, b. 1957
Lance Hookano, b. 1965
Kaipo Jaquias, b. 1971
Bill Kahanamoku, n.d.
David Kahanamoku, n.d.
Sam Kahanamoku, 1902-1966
Louis Kahanamoku, n.d.
Sargent Kahanamoku, n.d.
Kealoha Kaio, 1935-2005
David Kalama, b. 1964
Ilima Kalama, b. 1943  
Noah Kalama, 1904-1979  
Thomas “Tubby” Kalama, 1940-2021  
Montgomery Ernest Thomas “Buttons” Kaluhiokalani, 1958-2013  
Barry Kanaiaupuni, b. 1945  
Dane Kealoha, b. 1958  
Brian Keaulana, b. 1961  
Rusty Keaulana, b. 1966  
Titus Kinimaka, b. 1955  
Kainoa McGee, b. 1975  
Dino Miranda, n.d.  
Joseph Momoa, b. 1955  
Kelia Moniz, b. 1993  
Toni Moniz, b. 1959  
Anona Naone, b. 1941  
Nanette Napoleon, b. 1952  
David Kawaikoolihili Nuhiwa, b. 1948  
Maile Orian-Collins, n.d.  
Bonga Perkins, b. 1972

STONE SURFBOARD COLLECTION LABEL

Tom “Pōhaku” Stone  
Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian), b. 1951  
Papa heʻe nalu kahiko (traditional-style surfboards), 2022

This collection of *papa heʻe nalu kahiko* (traditional-style surfboards) was handmade by *heʻe nalu* (surfing) practitioner Tom “Pōhaku” Stone. The boards are connected to the present, since the traditional designs influenced the modern-day short boards, long boards and bodyboards that his family members currently use for surfing. Surfboard innovations over time also inspired and influenced both skateboarding and snowboarding.

In 1993, Stone made the momentous decision to return to school, going on to complete a bachelor’s degree in Hawaiian studies, a master’s degree in Pacific Island studies, and a Certificate in Historic Preservation, bringing him back full circle to his roots on the beach at Waikīkī. It was through his studies that Stone would reconnect with his family’s traditional Hawaiian cultural knowledge, such as *heʻe hōlua* (land sledding) and other traditions. Today, Stone is recognized as the foremost expert and crafter of traditional styles of *papa heʻe nalu*.
Labels - SECTION labels

(surfboards) and papa hōlua (land sledding boards), focusing on the traditions of the past and sharing them with the next generations and the world community.

Stone family collection

THREE PRINCES LABEL

The Three Princes: Kawānanakoa, Keliʻiahonui and Kūhiō

Three decades before Duke Kahanamoku would popularize heʻe nalu (surfing) in California, the three Hawaiian princes surfed Santa Cruz on the weekends as a break from military school. All three were brothers, hānai (adopted) sons of Queen Kapiʻolani, the wife of King David Kalākaua. In 1880, King Kalākaua had championed the Hawaiian Youths Abroad program to provide a broad education to future Hawaiian leaders. In 1885, the three princes attended St. Matthew’s Hall, a military academy in San Mateo, California.

On Sunday, July 19, 1885, David Laʻamea Kahalepouli Kinoiki Kawānanakoa, 17, Edward Abnel Keliʻiahonui, 16, and Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole, 14, paddled out onto the mouth of the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz to heʻe nalu (surf). These Hawaiian teenagers all rode 150-pound, 17-foot olo, finless papa heʻe nalu (surfboards) that were the traditional surfboard shapes of Hawaiian aliʻi (royalty). The princes’ papa heʻe nalu were made of California redwood, milled by the Grover lumber company in Santa Cruz. Eventually, the princes would return to Hawaiʻi with their Redwood olo and would become a catalyst for importing redwood to the Hawaiian Islands.

Their historic surf session was documented the next day in the article “Beach Breezes – Some Scenes a Surf Reporter Saw on Sunday” in The Santa Cruz Surf newspaper. This led to Santa Cruz becoming known as “Surf City USA.” Although Duke Kahanamoku is known as the father of modern surfing around the world, it was actually these three princes – Kawānanakoa, Keliʻiahonui and Kūhiō – who were the first Hawaiians to heʻe nalu in Amelika (America). Today, the olo that Kawānanakoa and Kūhio rode at Santa Cruz on that fateful summer day in 1885 is still preserved by the Bishop Museum. A monument to the three princes is located at the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum, which is inside a lighthouse on the Monterey Peninsula.
The three Kānaka Maoli princes (left to right): Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole, David Laʻamea Kahalepouli Kinoiki Kawānanakoa and Edward Abnel Keliʻiahonui, taken while they were attending St. Matthew’s Hall military school at San Mateo, California, c. 1886.

**INNOVATION LABEL**

**Innovations of Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians)**

_E lawe i ke a’o a mālama, a e ‘oi mau ka na’aauao._

(Those who take their teachings and apply them increase their knowledge.)

– ‘Ōlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings #328 by Mary Kawena Pukui, 1983

*Kānaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiians) were innovators from the first voyage from Kahiki (Tahiti) to Hawai‘i. Consider poi, the staple food of Native Hawaiians. All of Polynesia ate the starchy, superfood _kalo_ (taro). Yet, it was only the Hawaiians who steamed _kalo_, pounded it and added water to turn it into the gelatinous paste called poi. Taro in the form of poi can be kept for long periods of time—like a trans-Pacific voyage on a double-hulled sailing canoe. As poi gets older and ferments, it increases its nutritional value with probiotics. Furthermore, poi is a nutritious paste that does not require chewing to be consumed, so it can be fed to everyone, from babies to the elderly. Poi was an intrinsic part of daily life for the *Kānaka Maoli* and had a direct influence on the prosperity of Hawai‘i before Western contact.

The ocean has always been a teacher for the *Kānaka Maoli*, and the lessons from the water helped Hawaiians innovate sports like swimming and surfing as well as lifeguarding throughout history. Olympian Duke Kahanamoku invented the Kahanamoku Kick, also known as the double-flutter kick, which is still practiced in freestyle swimming today. Waikīkī Beach Boy Albert “Rabbit” Kekai is credited for inventing noseriding—the quintessential maneuver of longboard—where the surfer perches on the nose of the surfboard to stylishly gain momentum down the line of the wave. Master surfboard builder Ben Aipa invented the swallow tail, the 2
+1 fin setup and The Sting, a surfboard design that allowed surfers like Larry Bertlemann to influence the Z-Boys and high-performance skateboarding. Pro surfer Dane Kealoha created the backside tube riding stance called the “pig dog,” which is still used today by surfers from intermediate levels all the way to the professional ranks. Kealoha was also the first competitor to surf Backdoor (the right-breaking wave from Pipeline) in a surf contest when many believed the wave was too dangerous to ride. Legendary water safety officials Brian Keaulana and Terry Ahue were the first lifeguards to use jet skis for ocean rescues. Archie Kalepa and his friends were the first surfers to use the jet skis to tow-in to giant waves at the surf spot Pe‘ahi (Jaws), while Terry Chung and a lot of the same friends were figuring out foil boarding at the same time.

OLYMPIANS LABEL

Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) Olympians

Pihaʻā moe wai uka.
(Stones that lie in the water in the upland.)

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings #2630 by Mary Kawena Pukui, 1983

The Hawaiian proverb quoted above is said in reference to experts in strenuous sports. They are compared to stones that not even a torrential downpour can wash down to the lowland.

Hawaiʻi is the most isolated island chain on Earth, and its subtropical climate and warm waters are the perfect ʻāina (land) to cultivate Olympic athletes. In the early 1900s and through five Olympic Games, numerous medals were awarded to Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) swimmers Duke Kahanamoku, Samuel Kahanamoku, Warren Kealoaha and Pua Kealoha.

Duke Kahanamoku was a six-time Olympic medalist in swimming and water polo. At the 1932 Olympics, Duke was an alternate for the U.S. water polo team who was awarded the bronze medal. His younger brother Sam Kahanamoku won one Olympic medal in 1924. Unlike the Kahanamoku brothers, Warren Kealoha and Pua Kealoha were not related. Warren and Pua were each recipients of two Olympic medals.

At the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, surfing and skateboarding made their debut. Kanaka Maoli surfer Carissa Moore and skateboarder Heimana Reynolds continued the proud tradition of Hawaiian athletic excellence, with Moore winning the inaugural gold medal in women’s surfing at the Tokyo games.
OLYMPIC MEDAL WINNERS LABEL

Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) Olympic Athletes Through the Years

Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku, 1890 – 1968

1912 Summer Olympics, Stockholm
100-meter Freestyle: Gold Medal
4x200-meter Freestyle Relay: Silver Medal

1920 Summer Olympics, Antwerp
100-meter Freestyle: Gold Medal
4x200-meter Freestyle Relay: Gold Medal and new world record of 10:04.4 in the event final along with teammates Pua Kealoha, Perry McGillivray and Norman Ross

1924 Summer Olympics, Paris
100-meter Freestyle: Silver Medal

Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku, 1902 – 1966

1924 Summer Olympics, Paris
100-meter Freestyle: Bronze Medal

Warren Daniels Kealoha (Kanaka Maoli), 1903 – 1972

Two-time Olympic gold medalist and a world record holder.

1920 Summer Olympics, Antwerp
100-meter Backstroke: Gold Medal

1924 Summer Olympics, Paris
100-meter Backstroke: Gold Medal

Pua Kealoha (Kanaka Maoli), 1902 – 1989

1920 Summer Olympics, Antwerp
4x200-meter Freestyle Relay: Gold Medal
Heʻe Nalu: The Art and Legacy of Hawaiian Surfing

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100-meter Freestyle: Silver Medal

Carissa Kainani Moore (Kanaka Maoli), b. 1992

2020 Summer Olympics, Tokyo
Women’s Short Board Surfing: Gold Medal

Heimana Reynolds (Kanaka Maoli), b. 1998

2020 Summer Olympics, Tokyo
Men’s Skateboard Park: 13th place

Photos included on label:

Brothers Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku (Kanaka Maoli) and Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku (Kanaka Maoli), 1924. Courtesy of Bettmann/CORBIS.

Warren Daniels Kealoha (Kanaka Maoli), 1920. Historical Photo Collection, Flickr.
Heʻe Nalu: The Art and Legacy of Hawaiian Surfing

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Pua Kealoha (Kanaka Maoli), 1920. Historical Collection, Alamy.

Carissa Moore (Kanaka Maoli) shortly after winning her gold medal at the 2021 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. Ryan Pierse/Getty Images.


SKATEBOARDING LABEL

Sidewalk Surfers

*Ua lehlehu a manomanao ka ‘ikena a ka Hawai‘i.*
(Great and numerous is the knowledge of Hawaiians.)

– ‘Ōlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings #2814, Mary Kawena Pukui, 1983
Heʻe Nalu: The Art and Legacy of Hawaiian Surfing

The influence of heʻe nalu (surfing) on skateboarding is indisputable. Three Hawaiian princes – Kawānanakoa, Kūhiō and Keliʻiahonui – brought heʻe nalu to California in 1885. Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) surfing icons Duke Kahanamoku and George Freeth spread surfing up and down the Californian coast in the early 1900s. In the 1950s, Californian surfers invented the skateboard as a means to “sidewalk surf” when the waves were flat.

In 1975 at the Del Mar Nationals, the Z-Boys, a group of young skateboarders from Santa Monica and Venice, showcased their ability to transition a style of surfing to skateboarding by skating low to the ground and dragging their hands against the concrete as if they were riding a wave. The Z-Boys’ inspirations were Kānaka Maoli surfers Larry Bertlemann and Montgomery “Buttons” Kaluhiokalani, who surfed stylishly low and springy with an open-knee crouch on the Sting surfboards shaped by Native Hawaiian board builder Ben Aipa. The Z-Boys paved the way for modern skateboarding.

Much like skateboarding, snowboarding shares similar roots that trace back to heʻe nalu. In pre-Western contact Hawaiʻi, Kānaka Maoli practiced a sport similar to snowboarding called heʻe hōlua (land sled sliding). In this ancient Native Hawaiian sport, the athlete goes down the slope of a kahua hōlua (a man-made or naturally occurring course of rocks) standing up, kneeling or prone on a papa hōlua (wooden land sled). These sleds are approximately 12 feet long and 6 inches wide and can reach speeds that exceed 50 miles per hour.

Whether it’s snowboarding, skateboarding, windsurfing, kite surfing or foilboarding, all of the action sports on a board can trace their genealogy back to heʻe nalu – the beloved pastime of Kānaka Maoli.

Photos included in label:

Heʻe Nalu: The Art and Legacy of Hawaiian Surfing

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Larry Driving, photo of Larry Bertlemann (a.k.a. “the Rubberman”) surfing in Hawaii, 1970s. Photo by Dan Merkel.