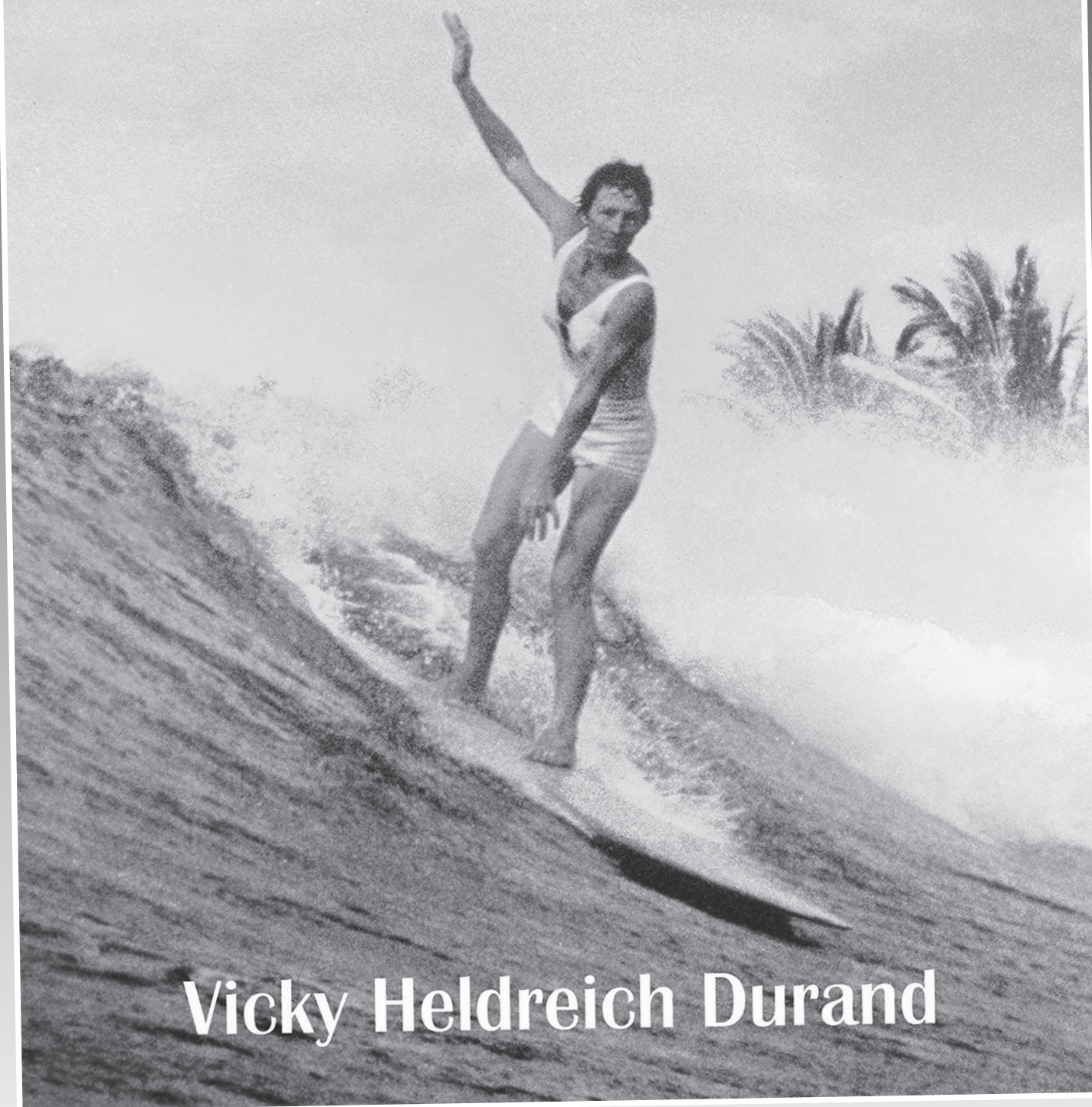


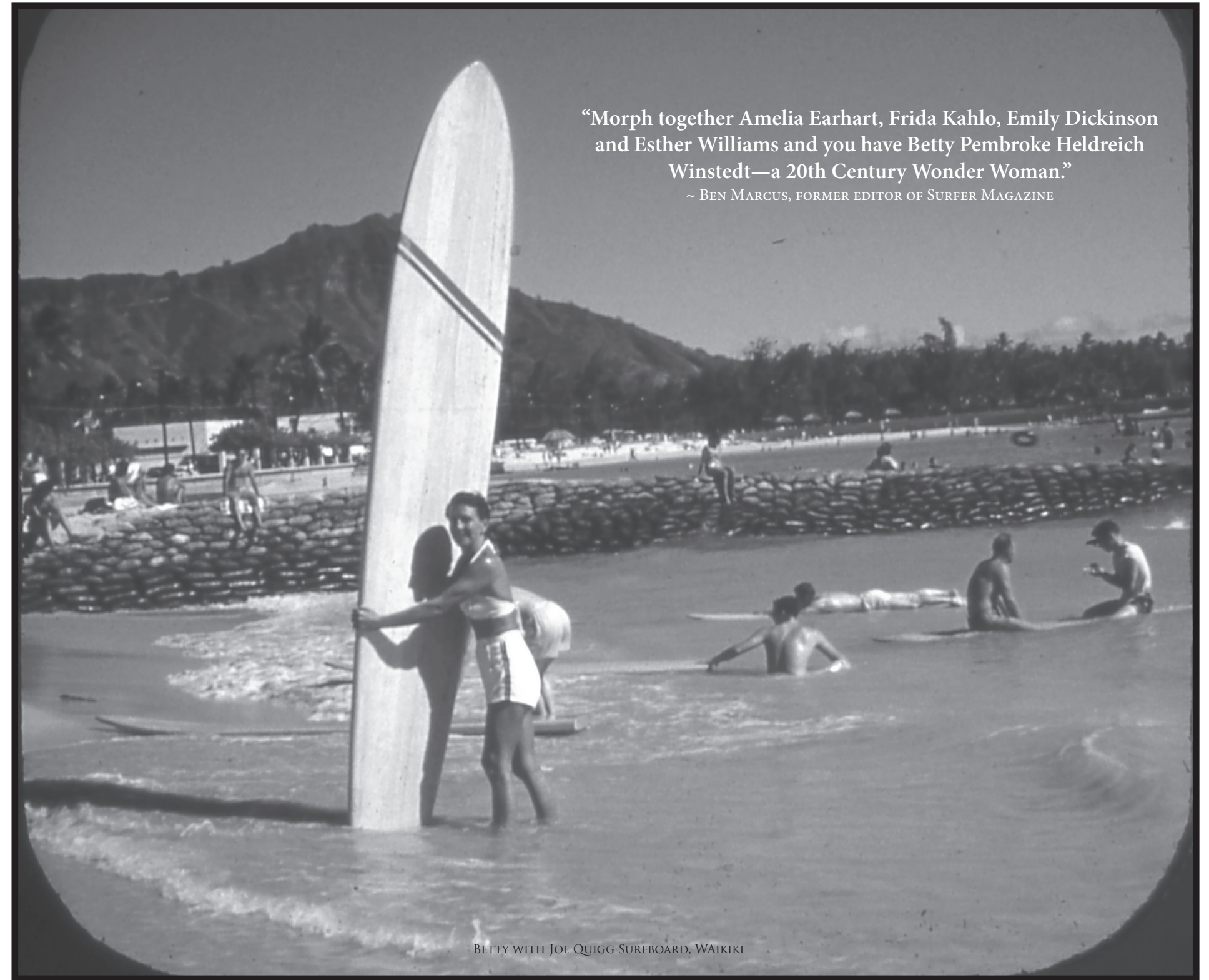
“Betty Pembroke Heldreich Winstedt was a true adventurer at a time when it was much harder to stake out that turf.”
—YVON CHOUINARD, founder of Patagonia and author of *Let My People Go Surfing*

WAVE WOMAN

THE LIFE AND STRUGGLES
OF A SURFING PIONEER



Vicky Heldreich Durand



“Morph together Amelia Earhart, Frida Kahlo, Emily Dickinson and Esther Williams and you have Betty Pembroke Heldreich Winstedt—a 20th Century Wonder Woman.”
~ BEN MARCUS, FORMER EDITOR OF SURFER MAGAZINE

BETTY WITH JOE QUIGG SURFBOARD, WAIKIKI

Philosophy defines the dynamic and hard-fought life of Betty Pembroke Heldreich who believed that anything exciting was worth trying at least once. When her airplane went down, the young pilot got back up.

Wave Woman is a charming and intimate biography, a love letter from a daughter to her progressive mother who broke glass ceilings with simple curiosity and desire. Betty trained to swim in the 1936 Olympic Games. She eloped on a hunch and learned the tough lessons of love. With an entrepreneurial creativity and a drive for self-sufficiency, Betty found meaning as a sculptor, a dental hygienist, a jeweler, a fisherwoman, a potter and a poet.

In Hawaii, the thrill of big waves crashing at Makaha Beach inspired the 41-year-old mother to pick up a surfboard, conquer her fears and compete as a champion!

Wave Woman speaks clearly to all women—and men—searching for self-confidence, fulfillment and true happiness.

The following is an excerpt from the book.
www.wavewomanbook.com

THE MAKAHA BREAK

Waikiki offered visitors and islanders alike a variety of waves, and the tourist mecca was dotted with breaks popular for their summer swell: Castles, Publics, Cunhas, Queens, Canoes, and Populars. But it was the big winter-swell surf of Makaha that enticed those of us who were up for a more bracing experience. From October to March, the waves at Makaha were at their best. They could be mild in the morning and turn into twenty-five-to-thirty-foot behemoths by afternoon.

Generally, Makaha has four main breaks. Three are right slides, and one starts out as a left but continues halfway in as a right. Each break depends on the size of the swell and varies slightly. At Kepuhi Point, on the Ka'ena Point side of the bay, eighteen-to-twenty-foot-high waves break; in the bowl, farther inside, the swell starts as a left and midway in the bowl turns into a right with fifteen-to-twenty-foot waves; there's a midsection with ten-to-twenty-foot waves, and farther in is the blowhole with six-to-ten-foot waves—the hole in the coral bottom provides a lift and steepness that

make it easier to catch the wave. Finally, there's the inside break, with smaller waves. We were never quite up to the point or the bowl-size surf. It was just too big for us.

My mother and I surfed Waikiki and Makaha together for about seven years. Surfing was not just a sport; it was our lifestyle, something that brought us together during a precious time in our lives. Surfing dominated our thoughts and conversations: When could we get away to go surfing; where should we surf; and, afterward, how had each ride played out? Some of the people who shared our obsession became lifelong friends. We were all enthralled with the physical thrill, the chance to flirt with danger, and the self-satisfaction that grew from mastery. Surfing gave us strength, physical stamina, and mental toughness as we continually challenged ourselves. The ocean's beauty and the feeling of being one with nature gave us a sense of well-being. Just as important, it released us from our quotidian lives.

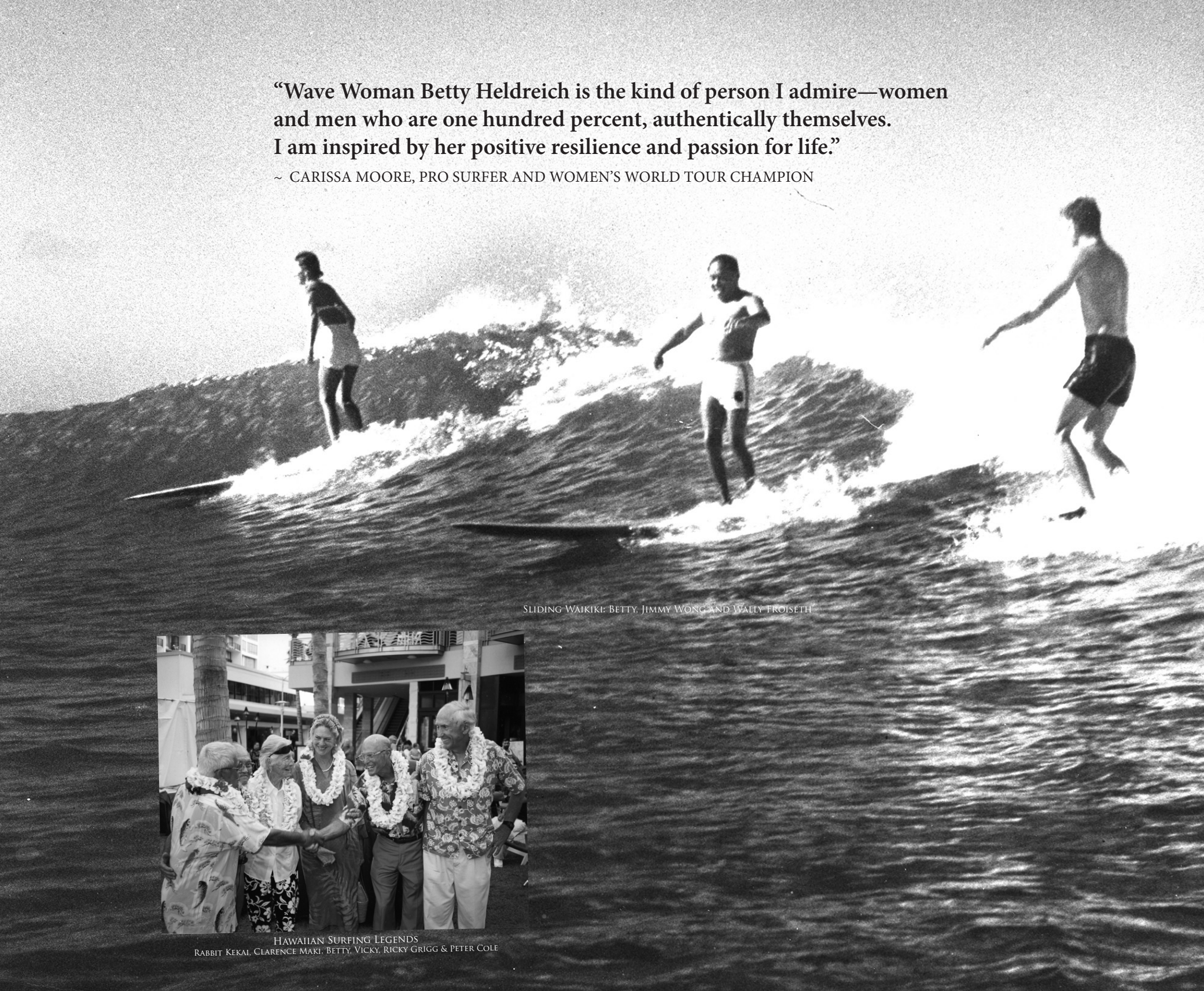
Despite our enthusiasm, we were spooked by the unsettling stories of the monster waves on the North Shore at Waimea Bay in 1943, when Dickie



VICKY DURAND, CARLOS DOGNY, BETTY

“Wave Woman Betty Heldreich is the kind of person I admire—women and men who are one hundred percent, authentically themselves. I am inspired by her positive resilience and passion for life.”

~ CARISSA MOORE, PRO SURFER AND WOMEN’S WORLD TOUR CHAMPION



SLIDING WAIKIKI: BETTY, JIMMY WONG AND WALLY TROISETH



HAWAIIAN SURFING LEGENDS
RABBIT KEKAI, CLARENCE MAKI, BETTY, VICKY, RICKY GRIGG & PETER COLE

Cross lost his life and when Woody Brown barely survived being washed up onshore with his swim trunks ripped off. Both Betty and I aspired to bigger, better waves, though not quite as big as what we witnessed Buzzy Trent, Peter Cole, George Downing, and others ride. The contemporary big-wave surfer Andrea Moller describes the feeling at the start of riding a big wave: “It’s almost a moment of silence because it’s just you and this huge volume of water and this pat-pat-pat of your board on the surface.” Moller rides much larger waves than we ever dared, but she puts into words what we experienced. Once you make the drop and turn up into the wave’s wall, she adds, “you’re in this silent glass world of water, and you’re in so much risk, and yet you’re so driven that it almost feels like there’s a pause.”

One early spring morning in 1959, shortly before I was to graduate from high school, my mother and I got up at dawn and went out to the lawn to check the surf. We could see from where we stood that there was a good six-to-eight-foot swell running, with glassy waves. Both of us were

born tall—she was five feet, eight inches; I was five ten. An eight-foot wave would tower above us. We couldn’t resist. We waxed our boards with extra fervor—on waves like these, we couldn’t afford to slip—then hoisted them up under our arms and headed out the front lawn and down the beach. We walked a quarter mile along the bay, side by side, our bare feet crunching on the cool morning sand. I recalled how, during my childhood, I had longed to spend time with my mother, but she was always busy working. I had plenty of diversions (a horse, a swimming pool, and ten acres of space), but there was always something missing—Mother. Finally, in my late adolescence, I found that time with her through surfing. Now I was walking into adulthood and a life of many unknowns. There was a comfort in walking with her that morning, of sharing the anticipation of the surf—which contained its own unknowns.

To minimize paddling, we walked past the sandy channel to the edge of the reef. Back on our right, a golden disk was just coming up over the mountain, and a delicate breeze was flowing down

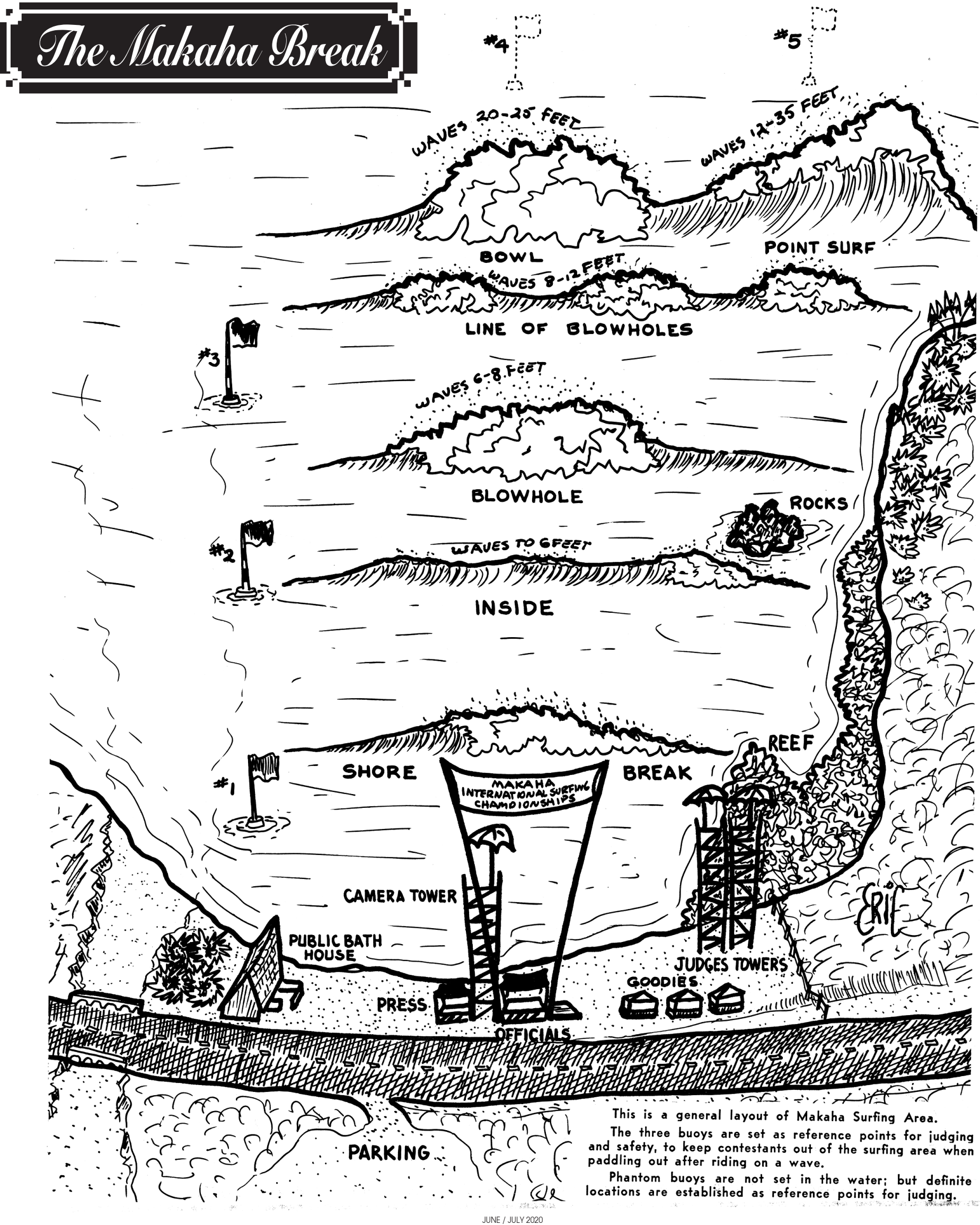


BETTY BEHIND THE WHEEL, IDAHO

the valley. The air was filled with the pungent, musty smell of kukui nuts that had washed onshore. We paddled out, dodging a set of incoming waves, to a spot we knew well, the break area. It was just past the underwater coral heads, and our preferred place to wait for a wave. Fred Van Dyke and Johnny McMahon, the manager of an upscale Waikiki men’s store, were already sitting there, waiting. We arrived at our spot and sat upright, our bare legs straddling the boards and plung-

ing into the cool morning sea. We both thought there was no better way to start a day than being immersed in clean, blue-green salt water, looking up to the emerald Mākaha Valley in the distance, and feeling the ocean’s liberating and healing powers. It was exhilarating and peaceful at the same time. We exchanged “howzits” and chatted about the beautiful surf conditions, my mother’s building project, and Fred’s eighth-grade science class. Then we waited, looking out to sea, watching for new mounds of water forming on the horizon—the first sign of a set of incoming waves.

A set approached. Adrenaline flowed. My mother and I stayed put, letting Fred and Johnny take the first wave—after all, they’d gotten there first. We claimed the next one for ourselves. We jockeyed for position with a few little paddles and the foot motion needed to turn our boards toward shore. As the wave approached, we each lay flat, readying ourselves. I paddled like mad to catch the wave and felt my board rise in the water. My mother did the same. In a few seconds, the power of the wave replaced our paddling and propelled



This is a general layout of Makaha Surfing Area. The three buoys are set as reference points for judging and safety, to keep contestants out of the surfing area when paddling out after riding on a wave. Phantom buoys are not set in the water; but definite locations are established as reference points for judging.



BETTY & VICKY'S ARRIVAL IN LIMA, PERU

our boards. Putting both hands on our boards, we both popped up to a standing position and angled to the right, heading down a wall of water that was starting to crest and feather with ocean spray. It almost felt like flying. I was gliding down the face, keeping as close as possible to, yet just ahead of, the breaking wave as it crested with white water. My mother was doing the same, standing on my right side, closer to the outer edge. Several times throughout the ride we both slowed down, stalling before turning and cutting back toward the breaking wave, shooting down the wall of water closer to the curl for added acceleration. The ride went like that, both of us slowing down, cutting back, speeding up, always in tandem. It was one long, unforgettable moment. Not one of symbiosis, exactly, because we had parity as we rode that wave. It was more simpatico, or deep sympathy—a kind

of knowing each other and each other's styles and moves. It was an experience of elemental connecting with the waves, with the ocean, and with each other.

In six months, my view toward surfing would change. I lived through a heart-wrenching and harrowing day of surfing in Hale'iwa. In a few more months, my mother and I would leave Makaha to travel internationally as a mother-daughter surfing duo. A few more months after that, I would leave Makaha again, for life in San Jose, California, as an awkward young bride. My life and my mother's would soon start to flow in their own directions, sometimes diverging, sometimes converging, sometimes just running in parallel. But that morning, as we sped across the wave together, I couldn't help thinking how lucky we were.



Five Set For Peru Surfing Meet

Two men and three women ships. To raise funds a benefit surfing movie will be shown at the Long House in Hawaiian Village Friday at 7:30 p.m. and a professional wrestling show will be sponsored at the Auditorium Sunday evening. Fifty per cent of the wrestling tickets sold by the fund raising committee will be contributed to the fund. Reservations for either event may be made by phoning 999094 or 729421. The Advertiser is also accepting contributions to the fund. George Lamont will accompany the surfers to Peru. In the photo are, left to right, Duke Kahanamoku, who wished the surfers good luck, Rabbit Kekai, Conrad Canha, Ethel Kukea, Betty Heldreich, and Anne Lamont. Funds are being raised for Mrs. Kukea, Canha, and Kekai. The others will pay their way to and from the championships.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR & CHAMPION SURFER

Vicky Heldreich Durand first fell in love with Hawaii at age twelve, when she spent a summer with relatives on the island of Molokai. Returning home, she talked her mother Betty into a Hawaiian trip the following summer. By the following winter, the adventurous Betty had moved her two young daughters to Honolulu.

Vicky spent her teenage years surfing with her mother. They competed in the annual Makaha International Surfing Championships. Together, they were invited to Lima, Peru, to promote women's surfing.

Looking back at Vicky and Betty's evolving relationship, Betty always told Vicky that every day was an adventure. Never afraid of the difficult challenges ahead, Betty inspired Vicky to take new challenges and share her mother's story. Wave Woman is her first book.

www.wavewomanbook.com

SURFING HERITAGE CIRCA 1940



RAIL PROFILE

LA JOLLA Balsa PLANK

SHAPER UNKNOWN

LENGTH: 9 feet -10 inches WEIGHT: 34 pounds
THICKNESS: 3.375 inches NOSE: 16 inches TAIL: 17.25 inches



Maynard & Marion Heatherly at Windansea Beach, La Jolla

History

Made in La Jolla, this is an early 1940's board, before the discovery of fiberglass and resin. During this period, trying to make boards lighter by using mostly balsa and less redwood, but not being able to protect the soft balsa was a huge dilemma. Around 1947, thanks to advances in aviation technology, fiberglass and resin came into being, solving this problem. This board features twin redwood stringers and no fin. It was restored by Don Stewart around the year 2000.

Not many balsa wood boards from this period have survived due to the fact that unsealed balsa wood, when dinged, will take on water like a sponge.

Source: Dick Metz

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BOTTOM

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