



SAND TO STONE

***CARLSBAD LOCALS WANT TO MEMORIALIZE
THE CITY'S SURF HISTORY WITH A WALK OF FAME.***

WRITTEN BY WENDY HINMAN

On any given day, there is a coffee squad in the Tamarack parking lot talking about surfing. There is a similar posse at Ponto and a crew at State. The chatter is about wind and heights and barrels and wipeouts. The stories told, of course, being half the camaraderie of surfing. Often, stories bubble to the surface of the pioneers, the masters, the culture changers of Carlsbad surfing. When Joey Buran won the Pipe Masters, when Banning Capps dominated the lineup at The Rack and it made everyone's day, when Taylor Knox took the ISA World Surfing Games. When these stories come up, there is a desire that feels like an obligation to remember because we too easily forget. There is an impulse to take the great stories out of the parking lot and into the world, to record our history, to memorialize those in whose wake we paddle out.

Jim Baird and Scot Threlfall went on social media to announce their idea for a Surfer's Walk of Fame like Huntington Beach and Hermosa Beach have. There was an immediate groundswell of affirmation in the comments. HB's walk gathers in all the greats of surf history, while Hermosa's honors the locals. Baird and Threlfall are thinking locally: the Carlsbad legends. They are researching how to make this happen with the city and the state, and establishing a 501c3 so we can all take part. They are planning on annual nominations, with the inductees announced at the State Beach Classic.

While they work at bringing their ideation into reality, Carlsbad Magazine would like to suggest these pioneers from the 1940s-'60s for the first class of the Carlsbad Surf Walk of Fame.



PHIL EDWARDS

Edwards loved the summer surf reef at Terramar. This was back when the slang name was Guayule's for the shrubs grown on the bluffs to make rubber during WWII. He was known as the Guayule Kid. LJ Richards said of Edwards, "We surfed together every day in high school. He was becoming known as the best in the world."

DOUG TICO

"We wanted to surf so bad in the winter," Doug Tico said, "that we'd dig a pit in the sand and burn tires." This was before wetsuits. "We caught as many waves as we could before we had to paddle in to warm up by the fire." Tico was also an Oceanside lifeguard. He remembers the beaches were so big and bare (before all the jetties) that at low tide he and his buddies would drive on the beach from the pier to Carlsbad and beyond, looking for the best breaks.



HARRY SCHURCH

Harry Schurch was a gentle man with an artist's soul. He was a celebrated teacher at Carlsbad High School. While Greg Noll was bragging about being the first to surf Big Waimea in the '50s, Schurch knew the truth. He'd been sent photographic, timestamped evidence that he beat Noll to it by a few hours. If you asked him about it, he'd smile a "yes" instead of using words, but then add, "I am sure some Hawaiian was years before Greg or me."



LITTLE JOHN "LJ" RICHARDS

In 1963, Richards took the men's title at the U.S. Championships in Huntington Beach. He did it walking a Phil Edwards plank, back when longboards without leashes or wetsuits was all the gear you needed. Richards became an Encinitas fireman because "it suited my surf schedule." Once asked in the Tamarack parking lot why he was still surfing in his 70s while his compadres had retired, he said the secret was "yoga every day."



CARL MILLER

Carl Miller was also a celebrated Carlsbad High School teacher, football and track coach who surfed. He was an Oceanside lifeguard before teaching and paddled out, sometimes all alone, into Carlsbad's best breaks. "Carlsbad was kind of a desolate place." Once you made it down the dirt bluffs with a log under your arm, "You had to watch where you walked because back then there were birds still nesting in the dunes."



LEROY GRANNIS

The young Leroy Grannis loved two things: surfing and photography. He was a protégé of Doc Ball. He built his own water casing to get into the waves with his subjects. Grannis surfed some of California's best, long-gone breaks with some of the sport's best, long-gone surfers. As the '40s turned into the '50s, Grannis realized that surfing was becoming its own American subculture. He turned his camera on woodies, baggies and bikinis to capture not just the action but the era.

For more info and to help Baird and Threlfall commemorate Carlsbad surf legends and the local lore, visit carlsbadsurflegends.com.