



Inductees Alf Laws, Mike Stevenson and John "Whitney" Guild bask in the sunshine of the Surfers Walk of Fame. Photo by Robb Fulcher

Eight inducted to Surf Walk

by Robb Fulcher

The sun shined down on Hermosa's rich legacy once again as eight new members were inducted into the Surfers Walk of Fame, a series of bronze plaques on the city pier.

"Surfing and water activities have been my life, and I was lucky enough to grow up on the Strand," inductee Alf Laws told an audience gathered at the base of the pier late Sunday afternoon. His remarks followed an informal custom of brief, sometimes shy acceptance speeches by Walk inductees, some of whom pass up their chance to speak

entirely.

Also immortalized in bronze at the Walk's fifth annual induction ceremony were Laws' fellow honorary members John "Whitney" Guild, Mike Stevenson and Donald Takayama, and pioneer members Toby Erlinger, Bev Morgan, Patrick O'Connor and Rosemari Reimers-Rice.

Laws was awarded the Lifeguard Medal of Valor in 1992.

The Strand home in which he grew up became a "pseudo-clubhouse that ultimately spawned the creation of Bay

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Cities Surf Club, one of the premier surfing clubs in the country during the 1960s," induction emcee Roger Bacon told the crowd. Bacon, who owns Ralph's shopping center on Pacific Coast Highway, has spearheaded the Walk of Fame.

"The founding members [of the surf club] formed a lifetime friendship and water sports affiliation that included an elite class of surfing and the highest echelon of lifeguard and service competition for 30 years," Bacon said.

Takayama's "surfing talents were already approaching legendary status when he left his native Hawaii at the age of 12 to build surfboards for Dale Velzy in the South Bay," Bacon said.

"His surfing expertise was matched by his shaping skills, which included popular signature models for Jacobs Surfboards and Bing Surfboards. He was one of the rare competitors who excelled in both the early long board contest and short board competitions, winning three U.S. championships at the masters level," Bacon said.

Bacon praised Guild as a pro surfer with a top 16 AAAA ranking and more than 30 contest victories spanning five decades.

"He was a team rider for Greg Noll, Bing, and Jacobs Surfboards. He is one

of the early tow-in surfers and rode a 50-foot wave in Maui at age 50," Bacon said.

Bacon called Guild "a third generation Hermosan born into a surfing family."

Bacon called Stevenson "an extraordinary ocean athlete and Hermosa Beach native" and "part of a revered surfer-lifeguarding legacy which began with his father, Chief Lifeguard Bud Stevenson."

"Mike, an outstanding surfer, has won contests in California and Hawaii. He was a member of the original Jacobs surf team and a co-founder of Bay Cities Surf Club in the 1960s. He also represented the LA County Lifeguards in both national and international competitions, winning the national paddleboard cham-

ampionship seven times and the national lifeguard Iron Man championship four times," Bacon said.

Bacon said Erlinger once beat out surf legends Greg Noll and Dale Velzy to win

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the Trestles championship in San Clemente, and O'Connor was a key performer in the lifeguards' prestigious Taplin Relay races. Morgan was credited with being the first surfer on record to hang 10 at Surfrider in Malibu, and Reimers-Rice was praised for making important strides for women in competitive surfing as a member of the Dewey Weber team.

Also honored were two elder statesmen among former lifeguards, 97-year-old Nate Shargo and 94-year-old Charles Botsch. **ER**