The year was 1964.
A first class stamp cost a nickel.
The Beatles debuted on The Ed Sullivan Show.

Iolani School Headmaster Burton A. MacLean’s poem about President Kennedy’s assassination was published in the yearbook.
And the Iolani heavyweight crew made history by qualifying for the finals at the 1964 Olympic trials held at the World’s Fair at Flushing Meadow in Queens, New York.

ack in the 1960s, only four Hawaii high schools — Iolani, Punahou, Kaimuki and McKinley — had crew teams. The expense of the shell, lack of coaches and other obstacles deterred most schools from rowing. (Today, no Hawaii high school offers crew as a competitive sport.)

Iolani’s coaches were experienced, competitive, and dedicated. Bob LaLime was head coach from 1961 to 1963 with Jim Rizzuto as assistant. Both men had been varsity crew-mates at Rutgers University from 1957 to 1960. When LaLime left Iolani in 1963 to teach at the American School in Paris, Rizzuto took over.

Their knowledge of the oldest Olympic sport resulted in championship after championship. The Red Raiders (today it’s just Raiders) captured the ILH rowing crown in both heavy- and lightweight divisions for four consecutive years (1962 to 1965).

But the rewards of rowing were more than trophies.

*Regardless of your win-loss record, if your athletes finish their experience with an enhanced sense of self worth and a better understanding of their personal value, you have done your job as a coach,” says Rizzuto from his home on the Big Island.

The members of Iolani’s crews were fine athletic specimens, happiest when they were practicing and competing on the Ala Wai Canal. Their event was the four-oared shell with coxswain. The coxswain steers the shell or boat and is the on-the-water coach for the crew. The coxswain is also the person who gets thrown into the water after the crew wins a race.

After their graduation in June 1964, the crew put in five and a half miles of practice daily on the Ala Wai Canal for the four-oared shell with coxswain event. Photo reprinted from Iolani School Bulletin fall 1964.

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The 1964 Olympic trials for rowing were held at Orchard Beach Lagoon in Pelham Bay State Park, New York, near the World’s Fair grounds at Flushing Meadows in Queens. The Iolani heavy weight crew, which persevered against adverse circumstances to compete against the nation’s best teams, proved for a photo near the race course. Left to right: Bruce Facer ’64, Ronald Reynolds ’64, Charles Fraser ’64, Carl “Ric” Vogelsang ’64, John Leeper ’65, Donald MacKay ’64, David Mather ’64 and coach Jim Rizzuto.

Iolani’s coxswains always left the canal dripping.

Once, Iolani practiced with a visiting team from New Zealand, which had stopped in Hawaii on its way to the Royal Henley Regatta in England. The New Zealanders were humbled after Iolani beat them soundly in some practice races. Rizzuto recalls that New Zealand was so shaken by their defeat they considered abandoning Henley and returning home. But they journeyed on to England and won the four-oared event, spreading the word about those boys in Hawaii.

Iolani’s rowing reputation enjoyed a great run. For years, the local newspapers were filled with headlines on Iolani’s consistently topping the competition and setting new records.

How Iolani’s heavy weight crew was led to compete in the 1964 Olympic trials was one of the most talked about Hawaii sports stories. Back then, the Olympic Rowing Committee was charged with selecting and recruiting fast crews from across the country to compete in the trials. (Today, the U.S. has a national crew team and oarsmen try out individually for seats.)

When Iolani received the invitation to compete in the 1964 Olympic trials, Rizzuto discussed the matter with Headmaster MacLean. The trials would be held on the newly widened and dredged 2000 meter course at Orchard Beach Lagoon in Pelham Bay State Park, New York, from August 26 to 29 that year. The winners would represent the U.S. at the summer Olympics in Tokyo.

It was the chance of a lifetime, but one the school budget could not afford.

MacLean gave his thumbs up for a committee to raise the funds to send four oarsmen, two alternates, one coxswain, and their 42-foot shell to New York. Coach Rizzuto and his family paid their own way since he had accepted a position at The Gunnery, a Connecticut boarding school, after that summer and would be moving back East anyway.

Chairing the committee was James C. Castle, member of the Iolani Board of Governors and a former captain of the Yale varsity crew. He was joined by the parents of each of the Iolani crew members, Iolani board member Benjamin Dillingham, Tom Peterson (who had rowed at Harvard), Athletic Director Edward Ramada ’46, Rizzuto and MacLean, according to an article in the Iolani School Bulletin fall 1964 issue.

Donations came in from Iolani parents, faculty, the Alumni Association, and the Hawaii Athletic Sponsors, which helped local athletes vying for the Olympics, contributed $1,750.

The school year ended in June that year, but training for the Olympic trials had just begun. Rowing for Iolani and representing Hawaii were:

Bow Oar - Carl “Ric” Vogelsang ’64, six-feet and four-inches, 165 pounds.

Number 2 Oar - David Mather ’64, six-feet and one-inch, 195 pounds.

Number 3 Oar - Donald MacKay ’64, six-feet and one-inch, 215 pounds.

Stroke - Charles Fraser ’64, six-feet and three-inches, 190 pounds.

Coxswain Ronald Reynolds ’64 - five-feet and three inches, 110 pounds.

Alternates Bruce Facer ’64 and John Leeper ’65.

The team put in five-and-a-half miles of practice daily. Rizzuto held time trials twice a week, gradually stepping up the speed and number of strokes per minute. About a month before the trials, the crew stroked the 2,000 meter course in 7:04. The goal was to lose five seconds a week, reaching 6:50 at an average of 36 strokes per minute, according to an article by Bill Kwon in the Honolulu Advertiser.

When the time came for the Iolani crew to depart, dozens of family and friends, along with several photographers and reporters, turned out at Honolulu International Airport. Wearing blazers like true preppies, the boys were stacked with carnation, orchid and plumeria lei as they climbed the ramp to board their United Airlines flight.

The Iolani crew crested certificates for qualifying in the Olympic finals of 1964.
Iolani • A Story for the Ages


But also working against Iolani was the north eastern weather. The New York summer which was usually hot and humid instead turned bitingly cold. Rizzuto's parents, who lived back East, came out and loaned the team all the sweaters and windshirts they could muster. The cold weather and long haul took a physical toll on the boys. Vogelsang, in particular, was weakened by the flu. The boys were staying in the army barracks at Ft. Slocum. Not only were they farther from their hometown than any other team, they had to catch a ferry to get to practice every day. Iolani was competing against the best rowing clubs in the nation, all of whom were older and more experienced: Harvard, who was the national and eastern champions; Riverside Boat Club - Lake Washington, which produced the 1960 Olympic team; Lake Mirror out of California; Georgetown University, Penn Athletic Club, Schuykill Navy Combination, College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania; West Side; and the New York Athletic Club.

Iolani lost its first heat. But the team began to prepare for the repechage (a second chance race) that ensures everyone has two chances to advance from preliminary races since there is no seeding in the heats). They studied the course, nursed their ailments, checked and rechecked the oars and shell. They were thousands of miles from home, but young and full of vim and vigor. For most, the trip was their first to the East Coast and New York City, a great big adventure land waiting to be explored.

Then, they made history. They qualified for the finals in their division by finishing fourth in the repechage with a time of 6:52.8. They followed College Boat Club (6:32.5), Schuykill Navy (6:38.5), Riverside Boat Club (6:44.1). Iolani became the first high school crew to reach the finals in U.S. Olympic Rowing competition.

Come the final race, the Iolani boys placed orchid lei under the seats in the shell. For spectators, they were the sentimental favorite. The whole experience wasn’t really about a chance to go to the Olympics. It was about friendship, representing one’s school and home state, and making memories that would last long after the trials were over.

It was about the swing of the moment, that impossible-to-define feeling when near perfect synchronization occurs in the boat, when the coxswain, oarsmen and stroke beat as One Team. Certainly I think about those Olympic trial days. They are all part of the tableau of sculling over I see whenever I go to a crew event or talk with people about the things I can count on to bring a smile whenever I need one."

—Jim Rizzato

(Waimea, Big Island of Hawaii)

Iolani had a part in two lifelong rewards for Jim Rizzato.

One was his coaching experience at the 1964 Olympic rowing trials in which Iolani gained the finals by beating the Pennsylvania Athletic Club and the New York Athletic Club in preliminary races.

The other was meeting his wife of 44 years. The Rizzutos now live in the town of Waimea in South Kohala on the Big Island. In 1980, he took a sabbatical and taught at St. Andrew's School in Delaware, where he was in charge of the novice rowing program. Back at IHPA, he also served as department head, director of studies, head of the Lower and Middle Schools, director of faculty development and director of college counseling. He retired from IHPA in 2000.

He also had begun writing Barron’s books on how to prepare for the math SAT when he was at The Gunnery. He revised the book every four years until 2000.

In 1970, he started penning a weekly fishing column for the Kona newspapers. Those columns spurred another career: writing books on fishing in Hawaii (www.fishinghawaiioffshore.com). Iolani became the first high school crew to reach the finals in U.S. Olympic Rowing competition. The Rizzutos now live in the town of Waimea in South Kohala on the Big Island.

Rizzuto rowed for Rutgers University. He graduated in 1960 and moved to Hawaii in 1961. He coached the crew at Iolani under Bob LaLime and later became head coach.

“...and they were married in 1961. He coached the crew at Iolani under Bob LaLime and later became head coach."

“My college rowing experience was one of the three or four most formative events of my life,” he says. “Sports are always a vehicle by which you find out who you are. They are always a part of person’s journey.”

At Iolani, Rev. David P. Coon introduced him to Shirley Ozaki, and they were married a year later.

Following the summer of ’64, Rizzuto moved his wife and young daughter from Hawaii to Connecticut, where he taught math at The Gunnery and coached rowing for five years. They returned to Hawaii in 1969 and Rizzuto taught at Hawaii Preparatory Academy on the Big Island.

1964 receded further into the past, and they lost touch with one another.

But today none have forgotten the Iolani passage they shared 42 years ago.
O
t the 1964 Olympic trials team, Carl Frederick "Ric" Vogelsang '64 was the bow oarsman, which meant he was the first in
the boat to cross the finish line. Born in Hawaii, he entered Iolani in the ninth grade and was part of four championship

"I wanted to go out for sports and thought crew would be fun and I liked the water," he says by phone from California. Also, most of his friends went out for crew.

At Iolani, he never lost a race. He remembers throwing coxswain Ronald Reynolds '64 into the canal an awful lot, thanks
to that victory tradition, unless, of course, the tide was too low. When Iolani traveled to New York for the Olympic
trials, the other teams were bigger, more mature and disciplined. "We were focused but we also had fun," he says.

Funn included making up a song about Sergeant Kincald, who was in charge of the barracks at Ft. Slocum, and running
through the main fountain on the grounds of the World’s Fair. He also recalls the guys joking about the threat to clean the
army's urinals should anyone on the team act out-of-line.

After the trials, Vogelsang entered Menlo College. He graduated in 1968 with a degree in accounting. He served in the military for
three years and was stationed in the Philippines and aboard the U.S.S. Midway.

"Iolani School left a huge mark with me. It was a great academic institution even back then. It was such an important part of my
upbringing. I'm proud to say I'm an alumnus of Iolani."

—Ric Vogelsang '64
(Mendo Park, California)

He later earned his master of business administration degree from San Jose State University and became a certified public
accountant in the state of California. He also worked for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as an auditor in San Francisco.

Today, Vogelsang works in San Jose, California, as regional comptroller for Underwriters Laboratories, a non-profit
safety certification company, overseeing California, Oregon and the Denver areas.

He and Mary Jo have been married 36 years and live in Mendo Park, south of San Francisco. They have two grown daughters,
Bridget, 29, and Eleanor, 26.

Three years ago, he added road cycling to his pastimes of tennis, running and working out at a fitness center. He puts on 80 to 100 miles
a week through Northern California's hills and bike roads.

For a long time, Vogelsang hadn’t thought about his rowing days. But when his daughters were younger, he shared with them his scrap books
and momentos. They jokingly called his old high school trophies “door stops,” he admits, but were also inspired by their father’s stories. One of his daughters went
out to be a Division 1 swimmer in college.

“Iolani School left a huge mark with me,” he says. "It was a great academic institution even back then. It was such an important part of my
upbringing. I'm proud to say I'm an alumnus of Iolani."

—David Mather '64
(Albuquerque, New Mexico)

David Mather '64, now living in New Mexico, recalls to his grandsons, Kyle, 5, and Ian, 3.

“Racing is the ultimate team sport. It’s total coordination. It’s working together. You’re in the
boat and you can’t get out.”

—David Mather '64
(Belen, New Mexico)

Football’s loss was crew’s gain when it came to David Mather '64. When he moved from Washington, D.C., to Hawaii
just before his ninth grade year, he planned on wearing a Red Raider helmet and jersey.

“I had played football on the East Coast, but when I got (to Hawaii), the football was a lot more sophisticated," Mather says by
phone from New Mexico. "I couldn’t stand the heat and humidity of Hawaii in the puds.”

Fall semester was about to begin, and he had to pick an activity. Mather chose rowing. His father had rowed at Exeter Academy and liked it. The
Iolani coaches took one look at Mather and made him a permanent member of the varsity team. He had a natural affinity for the
water.

“The Ala Wai Canal was an absolutely beautiful course,” Mather remembered. “I hated to quit practice. I could have practiced all
day.”

Of the crew’s 1964 trip, Mather recalls unforgettable moments. One was pulling up to the curb of the prestigious New York
Athletic Club for lunch with Iolani Headmaster Burton Maclean. When the boys got out of the van, the club’s doorman
looked over and blurted, "What’s this? The Beatles?”

“They weren’t used to seeing guys with mops,” Mather suggests, referring to their relatively long locks.

When Mather now looks at the photo of the Iolani crew boarding the plane, it reminds him that the trip marked the end
of a special time in his life.

“After New York, I didn’t go back to Hawaii,” he says. “If I had to do it over again, I would have gone back to Hawaii and never left.”

Mather attended the University of Redlands in Northern California. He transferred to and graduated from the University
of Southern California with a degree in business in 1968. He went on to Naval Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island,
and was commissioned an officer, serving on the U.S.S. Midway. He married during his junior year of college and divorced four
years later.

Over the years, Mather worked in commercial banking in the Los Angeles, Seattle and the Oakland areas. But his favorite pastime always lured him back to the
water.

“My love has always been boats,” he says. “When I was in California and Seattle, I always had a sailboat or a power boat.
That’s why I fell in love with rowing back at Iolani.”

From 1999 to 2001, he served with the Peace Corps in Ukraine, assisting farmers and agricultural bankers with U.S. foreign
aid loans.

Now retired, he resides south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, near his daughter, Kimberly Dods, her husband, and their two
boys, ages 5 and 3. Helping to care for his grandsons became his top priority.

“Family comes first,” he expresses, “and as long as they’re here, I’ll be here.”

Mather’s son, David, is working on his Ph.D. at the University of California at San Diego.

In New Mexico, Mather is a long way from the ocean, but those "magical and wonderful" Iolani rowing days are fresh in
his memory.

“I think about them all the time,” Mather says.

—Ric Vogelsang '64
(Albuquerque, New Mexico)
As Donald MacKay ’64, the 1964 trip to New York City confirmed Mother knows best. “My mother told me years ago that Hawaii had a P Factor you will not easily find,” he says. “P being the Paradise Factor. I have been many places around the world and Hawaii always calls for your return.”

New York City taught him Hawaii is truly no ka ‘o i. Likewise, sports have taught him the value of teamwork, something he has relied on as an airline pilot for nearly 40 years.

“The Olympic trials were a great experience,” he adds. “We got our tails whipped, but we made a pretty good showing considering our age and experience.”

After New York, MacKay jumped around between three different colleges before receiving his business degree in 1969 from the University of Southern California. He was also fueling an interest in aviation and did his senior thesis on starting an airline in Hawaii.

That thesis turned into a reality. He and his college roommate started a small air taxi company that provided services to Oahu and the neighbor islands. MacKay also earned flight time through Cessna Flight School at Honolulu International Airport.

In 1977, he was hired by Hawaiian Airlines and sold his interest in the air taxi business to his partner. He flew for Hawaiian for 15 years. Then he moved to Japan and flew for Japanese Air System for 11 years. He was selected to fly the Airbus A-300, a twin engine wide body jet that holds 300 passengers.

Recently, he retired from the airline and now flies a corporate jet for a Jamaican chain of hotels located in the Caribbean and South America.

Don MacKay ’64 and his wife Nobuko stand inside the GE engine that powers the Airbus A-300.

Frazer reflects on how the trip to New York City confirmed Mother knows best. “It was a fun reunion pulling out the old Class of ’64 yearbook and seeing if we still resemble the guys in the pictures with our names below,” he says.

After the Olympic trials, Frazer went to Rutgers University where he continued with crew. But rowing at Rutgers was not as satisfying to him. The weather was much colder, and the esprit was not nearly on the same level as at Iolani.

In 1968, Frazer graduated from Rutgers and married a young graduate from Douglass College. Frazer then earned his master’s degree from Fairfield University in Connecticut in 1972. He taught for a year and then earned his doctorate in mass communications from the University of Illinois in 1976.

He taught at the University of Washington and the University of Colorado at Boulder before he was offered an endowed chair at the University of Oregon. He has been the Chambers Distinguished Professor of Advertising for 16 years and retired this past June. He now plans to teach part-time.

Frazer is a co-author of a widely used advertising textbook and has written several scholarly articles. He has also worked with major advertisers and advertising agencies, and has researched qualitative approaches to studying consumer behavior and advertising strategy.

Still a water sports enthusiast, he likes to kayak and canoe through Oregon’s western rivers.

After the Olympic trials, Frazer went to Rutgers University where he continued with crew. But rowing at Rutgers was not as satisfying to him. The weather was much colder, and the esprit was not nearly on the same level as at Iolani.

“When reminded of Iolani crew, Frazer remembers. “He bought us a beer! Back then it was a big deal because the drinking age in New York was 18.”

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“After the Olympic trials, Frazer went to Rutgers University where he continued with crew. But rowing at Rutgers was not as satisfying to him. The weather was much colder, and the esprit was not nearly on the same level as at Iolani.”

— Dr. Charles F. Frazer ’64 (Eugene, Oregon)
Ronald Reynolds ’64

Ronald Reynolds ’64 says he got involved with crew at Iolani because the team needed a “little guy” to steer the boat.

The coxswain had to weigh a minimum 110 pounds. For a few races, he needed to hold sandbags to increase his weight.

But his former coach clarified that Reynolds’ ability as coxswain was about much more than just size.

“Ron showed a remarkable character trait back then,” Jim Rizzuto says. “He had a guaranteed seat on an Olympic team if he wanted it. Other teams at the trials saw him and realized he was probably the best coxswain in the event. One crew in the pair-with-coxswain division approached him about becoming their coxswain. They eventually won their qualifying place and went to Tokyo. If Ronnie had jumped ship and coxed for them, he would have been on the Olympic team. Instead, he chose to stay with the rest of the Iolani crew.”

Reynolds’ parents had worked hard to put him through Iolani. He grew up in Wahiawa, a small town in central Oahu, and today still has his late mother’s scrap book containing dozens of newspaper clippings and photographs from his rowing days.

“Iolani was about One Team,” he said. “I still remember how if your mom brought you juice after practice, you couldn’t have juice unless everyone got juice.”

After the Olympic trials, Reynolds went to Creighton University in Nebraska and played baseball, developing an interest in the relatively new field of sports vision. He got married in 1969 and went to Pacific University’s College of Optometry in Oregon. After completing his residency, he returned to Hawaii in 1974 and started his private practice. He also became the optometrist for the University of Hawaii athletic program in 1975.

He and Sharon have two sons. Their eldest son, Geoffrey ’90, is also an optometrist and joined Reynolds’s practice. In addition to their office in Mililani, they see University of Hawaii athletes in their exam room at the Stan Sheriff Center on the UH campus. Reynolds also holds seminars, lectures and is involved with community service projects.

Geoffrey and wife Mily have a three-year-old son, Peyton. Reynolds’s younger son, Matt ’94, is married to Jeanine.

When his sons were students at Iolani, being on campus brought back memories of his own time in high school.

Of the experience with the Iolani crew, Reynolds reminisces, “We didn’t realize, until, I think, maybe after we all became real adults, how lucky and fortunate we were to be put in that position. We were just 17- and 18-year-old guys who just thought it was kind of neat to go to New York.”

“I rowing gave me a real sense of pride. We earned things. Nothing was just given to us. Back then, everything we got we earned.”

—Dr. Ronald Reynolds ’64

(Mililani, Hawaii)