

# soul surfing

Harnessing the healing powers of the ocean.

By **Hayley Musashi**

A pillar of the Hawai'i Island surfing community, you'll recognize Stan Lawrence as the radio voice sharing the day's surf reports on three Big Island radio stations or as the friendly owner of Orchidland Surf Shop, now in its 45th year of business in Hilo.

For Lawrence, each day begins with an early morning surf session before opening his beloved shop with his wife Maud, a ritual he knows is imperative to his physical and mental health.

"Surfing is a spiritual cleanse for me," says Lawrence. "Being in Mother Nature and flowing with the ocean gives me a peace of mind that makes me a very happy person. After a good session in the surf, nothing can go wrong the rest of the day."

However, as he paddled out on Easter Sunday morning 2016, his years of surfing finally caught up with him. Already surfing with a partially torn rotator cuff, Lawrence completely tore it while over-paddling for a wave he didn't want to miss.

"When you do an activity over and over again for 60 years, something is eventually going to wear out. An MRI confirmed that I needed surgery and I was warned not to get back into the waves for at least six months."

While Lawrence's body was recovering, it was his mind that he needed to keep at bay. Being out of the water for so long, he needed to find a way to stay connected to the ocean.

"Mind surfing is what really helped in my recovery. Visualizing being in the surf and riding waves kept my mind in tune. Because I work in the surfboard industry, I was still very involved in the sport, but the most important factor in my recovery was religiously going to physical therapy twice a week."



Stan Lawrence

Now back in the water, Lawrence spends his time giving back to the surfing community; a group with a special set of challenges that other island surfers don't often face.

"The Big Island isn't known for being a surf mecca like some of the other islands, but it does have some diamonds in the rough. The island is a baby in geologic time, so we don't have as many surf spots. But surfers have learned to share waves and surf with aloha and respect."

To give these surfers the opportunity to shine on a larger stage, Lawrence founded the Big Island Quiksilver–Big Island Toyota Surfing Trials competition, now in its 33rd year.

Though his years in the water may have brought on his shoulder injury, Lawrence is quick to credit his time in the ocean for maintaining his youthful spirit. He shows no sign of stopping any time soon.

"Surfing is one of the main reasons I still have a zest for life. At 69 years young, I really don't want to grow up. Because when you stop being a kid and stop playing and enjoying the things you love to do, you'll become old for sure." 