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RICHARD DAVIS / 1920-2004

Hiker built many trails on Oahu

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Richard "Dick" Harding Davis, called the "Duke Kahanamoku of hiking on Oahu," died Sunday at Castle Hospital. He was 84.

One of the former Army civil service worker's nicknames was "Mountain Goat." He built and maintained miles of Oahu mountain trails including Kaneohe's Likeke Trail, which was named for him using the Hawaiian word for "Richard."

Among his exploits was descending the sides of mountains so steep that he scraped off all his fingernails clinging to rocks and brush.

Because he knew Oahu mountain trails so well, he was often called on to help search-and-rescue parties, said his oldest daughter, Joyce Jacobson.

Meanwhile, his own survival stories, from the time he moved to Oahu in the mid-1940s until he stopped hiking a few years ago, were legend.

In 1950 while hiking on Mount Kaala, Oahu's highest point, he fell 400 feet and broke his back. Doctors said he would not walk again, but within six months he was hiking again, Jacobson said.

"It was definitely do as I say, not as I do," Jacobson said of her father's propensity for hiking alone and getting into dangerous situations.

Dayle Turner, a fellow member of the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club, called Davis "the Duke Kahanamoku of hiking on Oahu."

After retiring in 1975, Davis hiked the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. In 1984 he hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine.

Davis is survived by his four daughters -- Jacobson of Washington state, Ramona and Anne Marie of Kaneohe, and Marilyn of Volcano -- and five grandchildren. A celebration of his life will be held at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow at the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club in Waimanalo.



Richard Davis: His knowledge of trails made the hiker an asset in search-and-rescue efforts