



IRON GAME HISTORY



THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

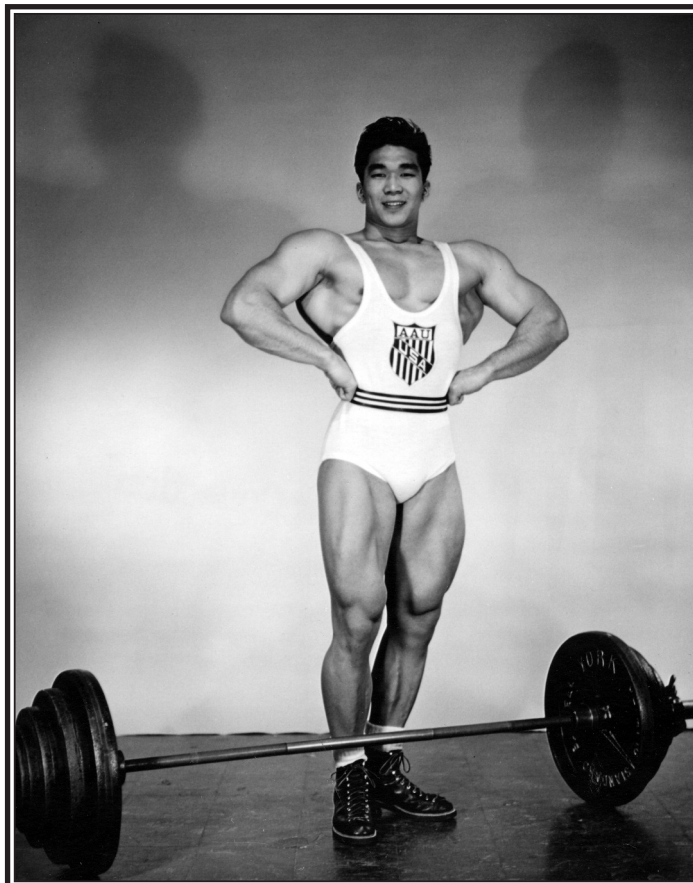
Volume 14 Numbers 2 & 3

July/August 2017

SPECIAL ISSUE:

REMEMBERING AMERICA'S GREATEST WEIGHTLIFTER—TOMMY KONO

Tamio “Tommy” Kono passed away on 24 April 2016 at the age of 85. It was fitting that the first official news of his death appeared on the website of the International Weightlifting Federation, which had named him “Lifter of the Century” in 2005. Almost all of Tommy’s early adult life was spent either training for, competing in, coaching others in, photographing, or writing about weightlifting—the sport in which he won three Olympic medals and set 26 world records in four bodyweight classes. In the days following the IWF’s announcement, obituaries extolling Kono’s achievements appeared in major newspapers around the world, and The Honorable Doris O. Matsui, Representative from California, gave a speech before the US House of Representatives declaring Kono an Ameri-



Tommy Kono in his prime. Described by *Sports Illustrated* as the “Most Beautiful Athlete in the World,” Kono won three Olympic medals in weightlifting (two gold and one silver), and also won four international bodybuilding titles sponsored by what is now known as the International Weightlifting Federation.

can hero. Iron Gamers took to the web to share their personal stories of Kono, posting for all to see how he inspired them, what it had been like to watch him lift; and what a humble, gracious man they’d found him to be when running into him at a gym or talking with him at a meet or a clinic. Walter Imahara and David Meltzer even decided to publish a tribute book in his honor, the *Book of Remembrance for Tommy Kono*, through the print-on-demand service at Lulu.com.

Here at the Stark Center, we also pondered how to respond to the sad news of Tommy’s passing, and decided to do something for him that we have done for only two other people (John Grimek and Steve Reeves) in the 27 years we’ve been publishing *Iron Game History*.

Our decision was to create the special issue you're holding in your hands—a journal devoted to only one person. To create this issue, we asked John Fair, the reigning historian chronicling the history of competitive weightlifting, to edit this special tribute. John, as you may recall—if you read last issue's editorial about Tommy's death and the gift of his collection to the Stark Center by his wife, Flo, and the Kono family—went to Hawaii on the Stark Center's behalf and packed the large collection (with considerable help from his wife, Sarah, and long-time Kono friend and fellow lifting legend Pete George). Once the collection was here, Fair spent most of the last winter and spring going through the Kono Collection, interviewing Tommy's

friends and weightlifting colleagues, and asking people to share their memories and thoughts about Kono's life and his matchless legacy. This issue is the result of John's efforts to preserve the memory of "America's Greatest Weightlifter" and to do what historians are trained to do—to drill down into the primary sources and reveal the character of this true gentleman, in the old sense of the term. (The photos in this issue are also from the Kono Collection.) On behalf of the Stark Center and fans of the strength sports we say, "Thank you" to John, to Pete George, to the other contributors, and, most especially, to the Kono family for making this issue possible.

—Jan and Terry Todd

IRON GAME HISTORY

Vol. 14 Nos. 2 & 3

July/August 2017

Tommy Kono Special Issue Guest Editor John Fair

- 1. Remembering America's Greatest Jan & Terry Todd
- 3. My Hero/My Friend: Tommy Kono Lou DeMarco
- 5. Kono and The Power of Positive ThinkingJohn Fair
- 40. A Tribute from His Hawaii Teammates Mike Harada
- 41. Kono World Record Performances John Fair
- 42. Kono Record of Achievement John Fair
- 44. Kono: Greatest of All Time. Pete George
- 46. What Manner of Man Is This? David Webster
- 47. Tributes to Tommy Kono Various Authors

Co-Editors Jan & Terry Todd

Associate Editor Kim Beckwith

Assistant Editors Florian Hemme & Thomas Hunt

Editorial Staff Ben Pollack & Jason Shurley

Editorial Board: John Balik (Santa Monica, CA), Jack Berryman (Univ. of Washington, Seattle), Simon Bronner (Penn State, Harrisburg.), David Chapman (Seattle, WA), Paul Dimeo, (University of Sterling, Scotland), John Fair (University of Texas at Austin), Charles Kupfer (Penn State, Harrisburg.), Joe Roark (St. Joseph, IL), Jason Shurley (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater), and David Webster (Irvine, Scotland).

Iron Game History is published under the auspices of The HJ Lutchter Stark Center at The University of Texas at Austin. US subscription rate: \$25.00 per four issues, \$40.00 per eight issues. McLean Fellowship subscriptions \$60.00 per eight issues; Patron subscriptions \$100.00 per eight issues. Canada & overseas subscriptions: \$30.00 per four issues and \$45.00 per eight issues. US funds only. **Address all correspondence and subscription requests to:** *Iron Game History*, H.J. Lutchter Stark Center, NEZ 5.700, D3600, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 78712. Or, go to: www.starkcenter.org and select *Iron Game History* to subscribe online. *Iron Game History* is a non-profit enterprise. **Postmaster:** Send address corrections to: *IGH*, NEZ 5.700, D3600, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. (ISSN 1069-7276)

PATRON SUBSCRIBERS

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| John Balik | Daniel John | Harold Thomas |
| Neil Ballard | Werner Keiser | Tom Townsend |
| Regis Becker | Irving Kirsch | Stephen R. Turner |
| Laszlo Bencze | Norman Komich | Ron Tyrrell |
| Dean Camenares | Jack Lano | Betty Weider |
| Kevin Collins | George Lock | Steve Wennerstrom |
| Robert Conciatori | James Lorimer | Kim Wood |
| John Corlett | Don McEachren | John Wood |
| Michael Corlett | Lou Mezzanote | |
| Chris Dickerson | Richard Migliore | |
| Lucio Doncel | David Mills | In Memory of: |
| Dave Draper | Ben Mitcham | Joe Assirati |
| Colin Duerden | Graham Noble | Tommy Kono |
| Salvatore Franchino | Ben Oldham | John Leitgeb |
| Pete George | Rick Perkins | Jim Murray |
| Mike Graham | Pittsburgh Sport | Steve Reeves |
| Bill Henniger | Barnet Pugach | Terry Robinson |
| Caity Henniger | Frederick Schutz | Chuck Sipes |
| Chester Hicks | David Small | Les & Pudgy Stockton |
| John V. Higgins | Bert Sorin | Dr. Al Thomas |
| Jarett Hulse | Richard Sorin | Jack "Bronco" Woodson |
| Ivanko Barbell Co. | Edward Sweeney | |

FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIBERS

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bob Bacon | Daniel Kostka | John T. Ryan |
| Clarence Bass | Thomas Lee | Tom Ryan |
| Alfred C. Berner | Patrick J. Luskin | George Schumacher |
| Bill Clark | Robert McNall | Travis Smith |
| John Coffee | Carl Miller | Dr. Victor Tejada |
| Anthony Corradini | H. Movaghar | Zenta Thomas |
| John Crainer | Bill Nicholas | Lou Tortorelli |
| Alton Eliason | Kevin O'Rourke | Michael Waller |
| Judy Gedney | David Peltó | Ted Warren |
| Roger Gedney | William Petko | Dan Wathen |
| Don Graham | Earl Riley | |