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*American Masters* Explores the Life and Legacy of Surfing Legend, Racial Pioneer and Olympic Champion Duke Kahanamoku May 10 on PBS

New documentary features narration by Jason Momoa, rare archival footage and new interviews with Laird Hamilton, Carissa Moore, Jack Johnson and others

Five-time Olympic medalist Duke Kahanamokushattered records as a swimmer and brought surfing to the world while overcoming rampant racism in a lifetime of personal challenges. ***American Masters: Waterman — Duke: Ambassador of Aloha*** explores his life, career and struggles with prejudice. As a dark-skinned Pacific Islander, Kahanamoku broke through racial barriers with athletic accomplishments before Joe Louis, Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson; yet relatively few outside of Hawaii know the details of his inspiring story and considerable impact. Narrated by Jason Momoa (*Aquaman*, *Game of Thrones*, *Dune*), this new documentary reveals Kahanamoku’s influence on surfing’s global spread, his life-saving achievements and the obstacles he conquered both within and outside the sporting world. ***American Masters: Waterman — Duke: Ambassador of Aloha*** premieres nationwide Tuesday, May 10 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS ([check local listings](http://www.pbs.org/tv_schedules/)), <http://pbs.org/americanmasters> and the [PBS Video app](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/).

Using rare archival footage, contemporary visuals and new interviews with Laird Hamilton (big wave surfer), Kelly Slater (11-time world champion surfer), Carissa Moore (Olympic surfing gold medalist), Jack Johnson (musician), David Davis (author, “Waterman”), Moses Goods (playwright and actor, “Duke”), Dr. Isaiah Helekunihi Walker (author, “Waves of Resistance”), Fred Hemmings (world champion surfer), Kelia Moniz (world champion surfer), Kai Lenny (big wave surfer) and others. The documentary presents Kahanamoku’s rise to fame and how he became the face of a changing Hawaii as it evolved from an isolated island kingdom to a multi-ethnic American paradise.

After his appearance in the 1924 Olympics, Kahanamoku began dabbling in Hollywood and started to appear in movies by 1925. Unlike other Olympic champions who went on to further glory by starring in blockbusters, Kahanamoku’s dream of playing Tarzan in the movies never materialized. Instead, the role went to his friend and Olympic swimming rival Johnny Weissmuller. Though he represented Pacific Islanders in minor Hollywood roles, Kahanamoku became best known as the “Ambassador of Aloha” playing a vital role in supporting the burgeoning tourist industry.

By the time Hawaii became the 50th state, surfing had spread throughout America and around the world because of Kahanamoku’s influence and celebrity. Through his popular surfing exhibitions, he brought the sport to both coasts of the United States and to Freshwater Beach near Sydney, Australia. Additionally, he famously used his surfboard to save eight people from a shipwreck off Newport Beach in California, which was highly documented in news media.

Now in its 36th season on PBS, ***American Masters*** illuminates the lives and creative journeys of our nation’s most enduring artistic giants — those who have left an indelible impression on our cultural landscape — through compelling, unvarnished stories. Setting the standard for documentary film profiles, the series has earned widespread critical acclaim: 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special — two News & Documentary Emmys, 14 Peabodys, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, an Oscar, and many other honors. To further explore the lives and works of more than 250 masters past and present, the [***American Masters*** website](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) offers full episodes, film outtakes, filmmaker interviews, the podcast American Masters: Creative Spark, educational resources, digital original series and more. The series is a production of The WNET Group.

***American Masters***is available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](http://pbs.org/) and the [PBS Video App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](https://www.pbs.org/passport/videos/). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/5000121793) website.

***American Masters: Waterman — Duke: Ambassador of Aloha*** is a production of Sidewinder Films, a division of The Foundation for Global Sports Development and Ungerleider-Ulich Productions in association with American Masters Pictures. Directed by Isaac Halasima. Produced by David Ulich and Dr. Steven Ungerleider. Michael Cascio is executive producer. Chet Thomas is Co-Producer. Michael Kantor is executive producer of ***American Masters***.

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**Websites**: [http://pbs.org/americanmasters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters,), [http://facebook.com/americanmasters](http://www.facebook.com/americanmasters), [@PBSAmerMasters](http://twitter.com/pbsamermasters), <http://youtube.com/AmericanMastersPBS>, <http://instagram.com/pbsamericanmasters> #AmericanMastersPBS

**About The WNET Group**

[The WNET Group](http://wnet.org/) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s [THIRTEEN](http://thirteen.org/) – America’s flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](http://wliw.org/), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](https://www.mynjpbs.org/), New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](http://allarts.org/), the arts and culture media provider; and newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/). Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, ***PBS NewsHour Weekend*** and ***Amanpour and Company***and trusted local news programs ***MetroFocus*** and ***NJ Spotlight News*** ***with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

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