



CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

Ron Zander Williams



Summary

Ron Zander Williams, world-traveler, acknowledged as the father of Outrigger in Brazil, has been residing in Ontario since 2015. [01] Ron has raced outrigger canoes in BC, California, Brazil, Mexico, France, and Ontario. Ron brought a Pacific Islander "kit" to Brazil that became the model for 200+ outrigger canoes in Brazil and Argentina. Ron also brought a Moana Nui V1 to Brazil that became the model for Brazilian first-generation V1s. Ron also brought Canadian made Kalai Custom Paddles to Brazil to outfit the first Brazilian outrigger canoe crews. Ron founded Rio Outrigger Clube, the first outrigger club in South America, and served as its President and coach for many years. Ron founded Rio Outrigger Clube, the first outrigger club in South America, and served as its President and coach for many years. Ron created the first Brazilian race regulations based on the Australian, Hawaiian and California associations. Ron brought several personal outrigger canoes to Eastern Canada in 2015 and has used those canoes to offer coaching and racing opportunities for paddlers in Sudbury, Mississauga, Ottawa and Toronto Ontario. Please see the "Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Legacy" document in the CORA website Cultural Continuity section for further details. [02]

Early Career

It was during the CORA Historical Committee research in the early days of the COVID Global Pandemic when it was determined that there were 3 "Ron Williams": Ron Williams (the senior) Molokai Hoe Blazing Paddles legend of Smithers; Ron Williams (the younger) White Raven Georgia Straight Crossing legend of Nanaimo; Ron Zander Williams (Brazil / Canada) South America Outrigger Canoeing legend of Rio / Nanaimo. Ronald Zander Williams was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1965. Although Ron grew up there, he frequently visited his relatives in Canada until he finally moved to Vancouver in 1990. And so began the BC outrigger canoeing saga of Ron. Ron was brought up in Brazil and Canada graduating from high school in both countries (Qualicum Secondary in 1983). After getting his BA in Architecture and Urban Design from Instituto Metodista Bennett in Brazil, Ron moved to Canada to work on the Vancouver Skytrain project as an architect. Ron spent time at the University of British Columbia Environment Systems and Control program (1991), the British Columbia Institute of Technology AutoCad Autolisp and AEC program (1992), and the Emily Carr University of Art and Design Gouache Painting and architectural rendering program (1993). A few years later, working at Soren Rasmussen Architects, Ron was inspired by a colleague to enroll in the Vancouver Film School's 3D animation program (1994) for a year that changed the future of Ron the building architect Ron the visual effects artist. [11]

Ron was on vacation in Brazil in September 1994 after competing in the 1994 Catalina Crossing with FCRC Bladerunners when Ron began his first contacts in order to bring Va'a, or Polynesian canoeing to Brazil. And so began the South America outrigger canoeing saga of Ron.

Ron has travelled the world extensively. Ron grew up between Rio de Janeiro and Vancouver Island (Qualicum / Nanaimo), lived in Vancouver (West End / Kits / Burnaby) / Deep Cove, lived in Banff and Canmore constantly visiting Calgary on weekends, lived in Ontario (Toronto / Sudbury / North Bay), started visiting Montreal (including Expo 67) and Toronto at an early age, but only moved to Toronto in 2015 after 20 years in Brazil. Ron worked in over 20 countries including all of South America, Europe, Northern Africa, and Middle East. [05] In 2015, after working on "Os Dez Mandamentos" (10 Commandments) for Reconv Studios, Ron relocated to Toronto as Senior Visual Special Effects (VFX) Supervisor at Stargate Studios. Ron currently has a sister and all his nieces and nephews in Toronto and his mother and all his family in Rio de Janeiro. Ron brought 2 Brazilian made Bradley Lightning OC6s and a V3 to Sudbury Canada in 2015. And so began the Ontario outrigger canoeing saga of Ron. [12] [13] [14] [15] [16]

Pioneering Achievements

Fabio Pavia, 15 times Brazilian champion in paddling and Frederico Dies Peres, partners in adventure and Brazilian 4-time champion, had the idea to introduce the sport to Brazil when they were returning after they had placed 7th in the Camel White Water Challenge competition in South Africa. They knew Ronald Zander Williams, who had lived and competed in outrigger canoeing abroad and who was looking for partners and help to accomplish an old dream of bringing the outrigger to Brazil. In 1999, already back in Brazil, Ron purchased a Pacific Islander 'kit', later named 'Lanakila', from Dennis Campbell. After months of shopping around for an affordable shipping rate and a vessel that would accept 'on deck' cargo, the canoe was finally transported from Newport Beach to Brazil via Houston, where she finally arrived in September 2000. Lanakila was then finished at a canoe building shop in Santos and displayed at the Adventure Sports Fair in São

Paulo in December 2000. After the show, Lanakila was shipped to Rio de Janeiro for her debut in the waters of the South Atlantic Ocean. [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] The Pacific Islander is still made in Brazil. Ron came up with a new design derived from Lanakila for the first outrigger canoe in Argentina, purchased by Mariano Larghi. Mariano made his own versions of the outrigger canoe but kept the new "Mako" ama design which is found not only in Brazil but also in Argentina and Peru. [27] [28] According to the Outrigger Rio Clube website, Lanakila was the plug for over 200 outrigger canoes including the first Va'a in Argentina and subsequently other countries around South America. If this is true, this would make the Pacific Islander one of the most prolific outrigger canoe models in the world.

Ron also took a Moana Nui Seahorse V1 to Brazil inside Lanakila and it became the first V1 design ever produced in Brazil for a few years. [31] [32] Brien Kalai Foerster had moved to Hornby Island in 1997 and started an online outrigger canoe paddle business making Kalai Custom Paddles, which flourished internationally. The first Va'a paddles ever in South America were made on Hornby Island BC by Kalai Custom Paddles and purchased by Ron which equipped Lanakila's first crews. [33] [34]

In somewhat the same spirit which moved the Polynesian cultures and the native Tamoio Indians in Rio, the Outrigger Rio Clube and Ron planned the 2001 Rio-Angra 135KM challenge. The distance was covered in 13.5 hours by a crew of 8 men and 2 women. In July 2002, the Outrigger Rio Clube with Ron sent the first team ever to represent Brazil in an international outrigger competition, namely La Porquerolaise (Toulon, France) which was a fairly new addition to the European outrigger race circuit. Nicolas Bourlon, then president of the Outrigger Rio Clube, made the connection between the Brazilian Outrigger 'Ohana' and the French Polynesians currently living in France. Nicolas had also lived in Hawaii for several years and is a strong outrigger canoe enthusiast and very active participant in the development of the sport in Brazil. [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] December 28, 2002 was a landmark for the city of Rio de Janeiro as it hosted the first international outrigger canoe competition in Latin America (Rio Va'a 2002). The 30KM race circuit covered most of Rio de Janeiro's coast line, starting at the base of Sugar Loaf Mountain going past Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, back to Praia Vermelha and over to Botafogo inlet and back. The December 12, 2023 weekend marked the 22nd consecutive edition of the Rio Va'a Race, one of the few Polynesian canoe races that currently take place in the city of Rio de Janeiro, while the majority of the state has taken place in Niterói, thanks to the support given by the city hall. It is the oldest competition in South America that has been held uninterrupted since 2002. [47]

Coach-Builder Achievements

For a year the Outrigger Rio Clube which was formed by Ron in 2000 and for which he was the first president made the most of its one V6 and one V1 by paddling in the Barra da Tijuca waters, a district on the western side of Rio de Janeiro. In 2001, the Club moved from 'Barra' to Praia Vermelha near the famous Rio Yacht Club. The new location at the base of the Sugar Loaf Mountain provided easier access to all beaches in Rio's southern district (Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon) and also to the Cagarra Islands and the neighbouring city of Niteroi about 4 miles across the Guanabara Bay from Rio de Janeiro. The club and its members have always tried to challenge themselves to the maximum by bringing new and diverse experiences to the club. [51] [52] [53] [54]

Ron moved to Ontario in 2015 after 20 years in Brazil and has lived in Toronto, Sudbury, and North Bay. Along with his arrival to Ontario, Ron, brought 3 personally owned outrigger canoes to several venues in Ontario. The Outrigger Rio Clube social media indicates that Ron has established outrigger canoe venues at Ramsey Lake Sudbury Sailing Centre and Mississauga Lakefront Promenade. Ron was involved 12 years over the course of 32 years from 1992-2024 with Canadian outrigger canoeing. Ron relocated from Brazil to Ontario in 2015 and brought the first 2 Halau Brazilian Bradley Lightning OC6s (plus a V3) to Canada (Ontario) in 2015, and then assisted H2O Outrigger in Montreal with importing their own Halau Brazilian Bradley Lightning OC6s. Ron had his 3 outrigger canoes in Sudbury where he provided outrigger canoe coaching / training services at Sudbury Sailing Club on Lake Ramsey 2015-2019, and organized an OC6 race 15KM (3x5KM Loop) hosted by Sudbury Canoe Club on Lake Ramsey 2015-2019. [55] In 2021 after Year 1 of Covid, Ron relocated one of his 3 outrigger canoes to Mississauga and provided outrigger canoe coaching / training services at Mississauga Sailing Club from 2021-2024. TIOC & Wai Nui event photos from 2019 onwards confirm Ron had a trailer that could carry his 2 Bradley Lightning OC6s when they were disassembled and that he would tow his 2 Bradley Lightning OC6s to Ontario races (Wai Nui Why Not; TIOC) to share / provide OC6s to crews without canoes. Ron would steer a TIOC 2023 team named "Motley Crew" in a Bradley Lightning Spec OC6 appropriately named 'Pua Ipanema' to an eighth place in the Mens OC6 Division. This was one of the 3 outrigger canoes owned in Ontario by Ron. [56]

In 2022, Ron started helping Julio Villarreal start the first outrigger club in Cancun, Mexico. Ron met with Julio on several occasions and trained the locals how to rig and paddle the 2 Bradley Lightning OC6s which Julio had purchased in California. Ron also equipped Julio's crew with Brazilian paddles made by Rumo. It is worth noting that the "*Web Guide to Outrigger Canoeing*" document (printed in 2005) is referenced by many outrigger canoe clubs on their websites. On page 51 of this document, there is a photo of the Outrigger Rio Clube (Brazil) 'Lanakila' Pacific Islander OC6 used as a visual reference for all the canoe parts. [57]

Exemplary Achievements

Ron has a career as a visual effects artist that spans 30 years. Ron has worked as a digital compositor and visual effects supervisor for countless daily shows and mini-series that have seen him do film shoots in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Peru, Toronto, and Vancouver. [61]

References

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