



WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Women Divers Hall of Fame to Welcome Six New Members in 2016

Dedicated to recognizing and honoring the contributions of women divers, the Women Divers Hall of Fame™ (WDHOF) is an international, non-profit, professional honor society whose members' achievements span a wide variety of fields including: The Arts, Science, Medicine, Exploration & Technology, Marine Archeology, Business, Media, Training & Education, Safety, Commercial & Military Diving, Free Diving, and Underwater Sports.

The Hall is proud to announce the selection of six new Members who will constitute the Class of 2016:

- **Patti Kirk Gross** – Florida
Marine Conservation Educator, Ocean Advocate, Coral Ambassador
- **Laura James** - Washington
Environmental Advocate, Filmmaker, Public Speaker
- **Dawn Kernagis** - Florida
Diving Biomedical Researcher, Educational Outreach Advocate, Cave/Technical Diver
- **Chantelle Newman** - Great Britain
Educator, Publisher, Public Speaker
- **Ruth Petzold** – Florida
Photographer, Conservationist, Public Speaker
- **Cody Unser** - New Mexico
Disability Awareness Advocate, Adaptive Scuba Medical Crusader, Peer Mentor

(See biographies of these women below.)

These extraordinary women will be officially inducted into WDHOF on April 2, 2016 at the Beneath the Sea (BTS) Awards Banquet in Secaucus, New Jersey (www.BeneathTheSea.org).

WDHOF, a 501(c)(3) corporation, was founded in 2000. WDHOF's mission is to recognize the contributions of outstanding women divers and to offer financial assistance and mentorship to women and men interested in pursuing diving careers. As such, WDHOF offers numerous scholarships and training grants each year. For more information about or to contribute to the WDHOF scholarship program, log on to www.wdhof.org/scholarships.

WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME, CLASS OF 2016

The following summary provides a glimpse into the exciting and diverse backgrounds of the newest class of WDHOF members:



Patti Kirk Gross – Florida

Marine Conservation Educator, Ocean Advocate, Coral Ambassador

A highly regarded conservation educator, Patti integrates science into marine conservation practices by developing diving specialty programs to educate, inspire, and cultivate passionate ocean stewards. She volunteers with the Coral Restoration Foundation training Coral Ambassadors, or diving in a nursery or transplanting nursery-raised corals. A member of the CRF International Team, she installs coral nurseries around the globe while training "Citizen Scientists." With 30 years of experience as an instructor for PADI, NAUI, SSI, and DAN, she has certified over 900 students and has more than 9,000 logged dives. She co-founded an endowment underwriting the only hospital-based hyperbaric chamber in the Florida Keys. Patti is an officer with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and serves on the Board of Directors for the History of Diving Museum and Coral Restoration Foundation.

Recognizing the contributions of women pioneers, leaders and innovators in the many fields of diving; Promoting careers and opportunities for women in the dive community.

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WDHOF FOUNDERS

BENEATH THE SEA, INC.
UNDERWATER SOCIETY OF AMERICA

HILLARY VIDERS, PH.D.

CAPT. KATHY WEYDIG

WOMEN'S SCUBA ASSOCIATION

WOMEN UNDERWATER

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Laura James - Washington

Environmental Advocate, Filmmaker, Public Speaker

Laura is an Emmy Award-winning cinematographer, technical scuba diver, marine conservationist, and citizen scientist. She works as an independent filmmaker, and founded Beneath the Looking Glass, LLC, a production company specializing in underwater videography, educational outreach, and environmental advocacy work. In more than 25 years of diving, she has acquired considerable first-hand knowledge of threats facing our ocean planet, and uses multi-media and virtual reality technology to share them. Laura has worked with many leading network teams and her footage has been seen on Discovery Channel, Travel Channel, Military Channel, PBS, KCTS9, BBC, China America TV and many other outlets.



Dawn Kernagis - Florida

Diving Biomedical Researcher, Educational Outreach Advocate, Cave/Technical Diver

Dr. Dawn Kernagis is a research scientist in the area of undersea human performance and protection. Dawn completed her Ph.D. at Duke University, where she studied the genetics of decompression sickness and mechanisms of oxygen toxicity in divers. Dawn has worked on diving physiology research projects through IHMC, Duke, DAN, and Karolinska Institute in Sweden, including studies focused on decompression sickness, immersion pulmonary edema, oxygen toxicity and carbon dioxide retention in divers. She founded Project Pink Tank in 2010, and is a Mentor and Grant Writer with Water Women, Inc. Certified to dive in 1993, Dawn has been a diver and leader of numerous underwater exploration, research, and community projects around the world.



Chantelle Newman - Great Britain

Educator, Publisher, Public Speaker

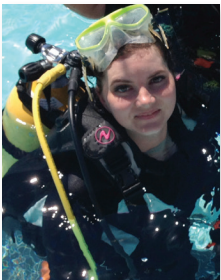
In South Africa Chantelle became the youngest female diver to be NAUI certified and qualified in 1985. She has brought together her passions for diving and medicine to increase diving safety awareness worldwide. She founded the Diver Medic Facebook Group and the magazine *Diver Medic*. She was the second female to develop a Diver Medic Technician (DMT) Course accredited by IMCA for commercial divers and DAN Europe for recreational divers, a course which Chantelle remains the only female able to teach. She is on the DAN Europe Training Committee and is a regular speaker at the UK dive shows. Chantelle continues to work on projects related to Dive Safety and Education.



Ruth Petzold - Florida

Photographer, Conservationist, Public Speaker

Ruth Petzold is a long-time scuba diver and professional underwater photographer. She played a major role in the research of Dr. Eugenie Clarke, traveling with her on over 50 expeditions and serving as her research photographer. A member of the Explorers club, she has been recognized as a Champion of the Sea due to her philanthropic work in seeking to promote the welfare of the seas and the protection of the marine environment through her generous donations. Her philanthropic actions have reached a number of marine-oriented organizations including SHARK SAVERS. She attended the University of Michigan Hospital and Rockefeller University to do Immunology Research. She turned to full time underwater photography and dive travel in 1985 and has made diving her life ever since. In addition to her skills as a scuba diver, Ruth is an airplane pilot.



Cody Unser - New Mexico

Disability Awareness Advocate, Adaptive Scuba Medical Crusader, Peer Mentor

Cody Unser, a scion of Indy 500 racing greats, founded the Cody Unser First Step Foundation at age 13 to raise awareness, foster medical collaboration, and develop quality-of-life programs for those with transverse myelitis, the autoimmune condition that left her paralyzed. Her foundation's focus on mainstreaming adaptive scuba for over a decade and its potential as a therapeutic tool in exercise science is creating a buzz in the medical and dive industries. Through her foundation, Cody's Great SCUBA Adventures and Operation Deep Down, Cody pioneered the way to the first conventional SCUBA-Medical study with her doctors from Johns Hopkins on the Neurological and Psychological effects of SCUBA on paralysis, gaining the notoriety and attention needed for future studies. Cody (a PADI advanced OWD), Albuquerque, NM native, currently lives in Washington, DC to pursue her Master's in Public Health at George Washington University.

For more information about the Women Divers Hall of Fame, log on to www.wdhof.org.