



Scuba Educators International was founded by Tom Leaird after the YMCA chose to sunset the best Scuba training in the world. Tom was the Director of Training and had written all of the materials used by the YMCA. With the blessing of the YMCA, Tom took over the program and changed the name (the name change was required by the YMCA) to Scuba Educators International, using all the same materials, Standards and Instructor Guides. Today, SEI still uses these, now updated, materials, Standards and Instructor Guides.

Tom became certified in 1969 and after becoming an instructor operated as an independent until he opened his Dive Shop in Muncie, Indiana 53 years ago and is still in operation today. Tom has since sold SEI but still acts as the Director of Training and valued advisor to our current CEO and Executive Team.

Kenny Wheeler, SEI's Director of Marketing and Sales, has been diving for nearly 50 years. He has been in retail since he was 10 years old. His background in managing ranges from Assistant Manager at an ice cream parlor, to ultimately owning his own grocery store. While in the grocery business he was introduced to SCUBA on a Resort course in MAUI, Hawaii. It quickly became a passion for him and within two years he became an instructor. After leaving the Grocery business, Kenny went to work at a Dive Center in Louisville, KY in 1973. Kenny worked full time and became the sales manager, lead Instructor and Travel Coordinator. He left Louisville for the Florida Keys and over an 18-year span managed three different Dive Charter businesses, including the largest operation in South Florida at the time, Ocean Divers. Many know Kenny as the co-founder of the SCUBAPRO Regulator Museum and website that he created. After leaving Key Largo, Kenny worked with another Training Agency representing the Midwest and the Southeast regions of the USA. Over the years of diving Kenny amassed over 5000 SCUBA Dives and has never had a bad dive.

Dean Zerbe, Director of IT for Scuba Educators International and our Public Safety Diver coordinator has been teaching at varied capacities for many years. Dean currently, commands a group of Sherrif Deputies PSD team as well as run his IT company.

Scott Earnhardt, the SEI director of Military Affairs, is a retired Green Beret and Military Diver. Scott coordinates with the Veterans Administration on every aspect of the rules and regulations for our Military Career Development program. Scott is an active Instructor working with local South Florida Dive Operations and contracting some commercial diving.

Jim Gunderson, the leader of this team and is the Owner/CEO/President of SEI. Jim over the years has operated mostly as an Independent Instructor but spent some time in a Dive operation in the State of Washington. Jim worked as a Research Diver in Hawaii and has accumulated over 3000 SCUBA Dives. In addition to this SCUBA background, Jim served as the Assistant Director of Training for one of the big three SCUBA training agencies then moved onto Divers Alert Network to become the Director of Training for them.

It is obvious to anyone that reads this that Scuba Educators International has more real-world Dive Shop and Training experience than any other Training Agency management team. There is a major difference in having a college degree and paper credentials and leadership that has college degrees, paper credentials and real-world experiences. This team meets together every week to discuss each of their responsibilities to get input/approval for every aspect of the business. Tom is a sitting Board member of DEMA and the RSTC, Jim is a sitting Board member of the RSTC, Dean is a non-voting member of the RSTC board, Scott a US Army retired and Kenny, well everybody knows Kenny.

Who do you want to lead your training agency?

SEE THE DIFFERENCE