



BENEATH THE SEA®

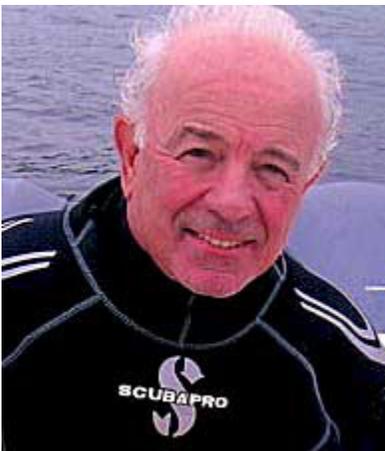
DIVERS OF THE YEAR CLASS OF 2026



Certified as a YMCA diver in 1972, Mary rose to PADI Dive Master and SDI Assistant Instructor. She retired in 2019 as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Massachusetts Lowell after 32 years. Mary enjoyed a 40-year career in Higher Education, developing expertise in community development, strategic planning and event management. Mary was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame in March 2013. She has served on the WDHOFF Board of Directors from 2008 to the present -- as Trustee (2008-2014, 2020 -present); Chairman of the WDHOFF Board of Directors (2011-2014, 2022-present); WDHOFF Vice President (March 2015-March 2016); WDHOFF President (March 2016-March 2020). Mary continues as the WDHOFF Liaison to Beneath the Sea, her first assignment as a WDHOFF Trustee and a position she has held since 2008. Mary's leadership and organizational skills have helped her to envision and implement activities and traditions which focus on supporting WDHOFF's goals and bringing the membership together. Mary's active involvement with WDHOFF started in 2003 when the Connelly Family established the Cecelia Connelly Scholarship in Underwater Archaeology, in memory of their mother, WDHOFF member Cecelia Connelly (2001). **Beneath the Sea is proud to honor Mary Connelly as their Diver of the Year for Service.**



Anna and Ned DeLoach are acclaimed underwater naturalists, photographers, and authors whose work has shaped marine life education for decades. Ned's **Diving Guide to Underwater Florida** spanned 40 years and 11 editions. In 1989, Ned and co-author, Paul Humann, published the landmark Reef Fish Identification series and co-founded the marine conservation nonprofit REEF, Reef Environmental Education Foundation. Anna began shooting underwater video to assist Ned in documenting fish life for their co-authored book, **Reef Fish Behavior: Florida, Bahamas, Caribbean**. Over the past 30 years they produced marine life columns for Ocean Realm, Skin Diver, Scuba Diving and Alert Diver magazines. The couple continues to serve on the REEF's Board of Trustees. **Beneath the Sea is proud to honor Anna & Ned DeLoache as their Diver of the Year for Arts.**



John Stella is a distinguished writer, explorer, and diving industry professional whose journey began in the waters surrounding Cape Ann, Massachusetts. John's extensive diving experience took him to Greece in 2015, where he joined a Greek marine archaeological dive team. The team's remarkable discoveries have been featured in the documentary "Out of the Blue," which highlights their identification of 58 ancient shipwrecks spanning an impressive 2,700 years. In July 2025, the Discovery Channel's Expedition Unknown featured the team's work in an episode titled "The Greek Triangle of Shipwrecks," further highlighting the significance of their findings. In 2024 and 2025, John joined a Sicilian dive team to continue documenting ancient shipwrecks. The film project stemming from this expedition, presented as a docudrama, is currently in production and is scheduled for release in 2027. Currently, John Stella serves as a technical advisor and senior member of the dive team at the Korseai Institute of Historical & Archeological Marine

Research. In addition to his professional responsibilities, John is an active member of The Explorers Club and The Boston Sea Rovers, further exemplifying his commitment to underwater exploration, research, and exploration. **Beneath the Sea is proud to honor John Stella as their Diver of the Year for Education.**