



Beneath the Sea® Proudly presents their Legend of the Sea

Capt. Barbara “Bobbie” Scholley, USN (ret.)

Photo: U.S. Navy



It is said by those who know such things, that the best two days of your life are the day you were born and the day you found out why. “Bobbie” Scholley has enjoyed both of these days and the full and satisfying life that comes from knowing this intimate secret of life. The Navy acknowledges this with a very full page of small type listing her achievements, but such a list misses the charm, wit, and people skills, of Captain “Bobbie” Scholley, not to mention the strong heart of the woman and mother beneath that dry suit and helmet.

A 1980 graduate of Illinois State University with a BS in Biology, “Bobbie” was commissioned May 1981. After Surface Warfare Division Officer School, Scholley reported to USS CANOPUS as the Electrical Officer. She graduated from US Navy Diving Officer school in October 1983, returning as the Diving Officer. “Bobbie” was assigned to the United States Naval Academy as Ninth Company Officer. Next came Surface Warfare Department Head School and service as the Operations Officer and Navigator aboard USS VULCAN. Scholley transferred to the Special Operations Community reporting to USS HOIST as Executive Officer. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander, she took command of USS BOLSTER. While CO, she conducted tows of two decommissioned nuclear submarines and several decommissioned surface combatants. “Bobbie” was the fourth woman to have command of a US Navy ship. She then was assigned to Commander, Combat Logistics Group TWO as the Diving and Salvage Officer. During the TWA Flight 800 Salvage and Recovery Operation from July to November 1996, she was assigned as the Diving and Salvage Officer for the Officer in Tactical Command.



“Bobbie” was assigned to Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, as the US Navy’s Supervisor of Diving, the first woman to hold that position. She attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University. She had command of Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit TWO, another first for a woman. During her assumption of command, she led a detachment in the recovery operations on USS COLE in Aden, Yemen after it was bombed by terrorist in Oct 2000. While in command, she led the USS MONITOR Expeditions, recovering the historic civil war “ironclad’s” unique steam engine and famous revolving turret.

Promoted to Captain, she took command of Naval Weapons Station, Earle NJ., served as Public and Ordnance Safety Program director for Commander, Navy Region Northeast, then as Commander, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group TWO as the Chief Staff Officer. She retired from the U.S. Navy in August 2005.

It was no secret, “Bobbie” Scholley knew why she had been born, she was born to lead men into dark places, accomplish dangerous tasks, and bring them safely home. Captain Scholley’s decorations include the Legion of Merit Medal, six Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, two Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Achievement Medals and the Navy Expeditionary medal. She has a Master of Science Degree in National Resource Strategy from ICAF, an honorary Doctorate of Science from Illinois State University, and is inducted into the ISU College of Science and Arts Hall of Fame. She is a member and former President, followed by Chairman of the Woman Divers Hall of Fame. In 2012 Beneath the Sea took public notice of this exceptional woman awarding her Diver of the Year for Service. Today we recognize her exceptionalism naming her our Legend of the Sea. To cite Eleanor Roosevelt: “A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.”

Photo: Dr. David Charash

