



WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Women Divers Hall of Fame to Welcome Six New Members in 2017

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 member contributions span a wide variety of fields including: The Arts, Science, Medicine, Sports, Exploration, Underwater Archaeology, Media, Service, Dive Training and Education, Safety, Business, Marine Environment and Conservation, Free Diving, Commercial Diving, and Military Diving.

The Hall is proud to announce the selection of six new Members who will constitute the Class of 2017:

- **Heather Armstrong** - Hawaii
Technical Diving Educator, Explorer, Diving Project Manager
- **Gail Chapman** - Florida
Microbiologist, Non-Profit Leader, Ocean Advocate
- **Szilvia Gogh** - California
PADI Course Director, Dive Trip Leader, Underwater Stunt Woman, Youth Mentor
- **Rebecca Jones** - Virginia
Navy Deep Sea Diver, Diving Safety Expert, Technical Diving Supervisor
- **Laura Rogers-Bennett** - California
Marine Conservation Ecologist, Fisheries Biologist, AAUS Research Diver
- **Susan Speck** - California
Author, Underwater Film Producer, Ocean Conservationist and Educator

(See biographies of these women below.)

These extraordinary women will be officially inducted into WDHOF on March 25, 2017 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 2017

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



Heather Armstrong - Hawaii
Technical Diving Educator, Explorer, Diving Project Manager

Heather Armstrong is a technical diver and instructor with 7,000 career dives, including 2,000 in overhead environments, and over 1,230 using staged decompression and mixed gas. She has extensive experience exploring deep caves, and is also an accomplished wreck diver who has participated in multiple projects and television productions, as well as scientific specimen collection projects. Heather serves as Technical Diving Safety Officer aboard the MV *Spree*, and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Abe Davis, Wakulla and Sheck Exley Awards for safe cave diving. Heather is a member of several exploration projects, including the Woodville Karst Plain Project; she is a NAUI Lifetime Member and Course Director, and serves as the NAUI Hawaii Regional Manager.

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.
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WOMEN UNDERWATER



Gail Chapman - Florida

Microbiologist, Non-Profit Leader, Ocean Advocate

Gail Chapman, CDR, USN (ret), Ph.D., MBM, an award-winning, highly-published microbiologist for the Navy, took her first dive course while stationed in Egypt. She traveled regularly to the Sinai region where she engaged extensively in shore and boat trips to improve her diving capabilities. She has logged over 1,000 dives worldwide since that first plunge. Gail volunteers in teaching and with various non-profits, having served as a Trustee on the WDHO Board of Directors for two terms, including heading up WDHO's participation in the Wyland Icon Award even while deployed to Afghanistan, and providing annual reviews for the scholarship and training grant program. Commander Chapman retired from the U.S. Navy in 2016 after 43 years of service.



Szilvia Gogh - California

PADI Course Director, Dive Trip Leader, Underwater Stunt Woman, Youth Mentor

Szilvia Gogh, a Platinum Pro 5000 diver, was the first female PADI Course Director in Hungary and the youngest female PADI Course Director in the world, having certified over 1,300 students. For the last 15 years, she has worked with and provided internships for disadvantaged, at-risk youth in Los Angeles, and is trained to provide Boy Scout SCUBA merit badges. Szilvia organizes female-friendly dive trips and her website serves over 6,000 women divers from 20 countries. Her articles have been widely published in many international publications. A safety diver and stunt double for the film industry who has also trained LAPD Dive Team leaders and Sheriff Dive Team members, Szilvia was recently named a PADI Ambassador.



Rebecca Jones - Virginia

Navy Deep Sea Diver, Diving Safety Expert, Technical Diving Supervisor

Chief Rebecca Jones, USN (ret), began her diving career having graduated at the top of her dive school class and was the first female in the Navy to be promoted to Navy Diver Chief Petty Officer and only the second female diver in the Navy ever to attain the rank of Chief Petty Officer. She was a member of the 2004 USS *Monitor* mission, the Joint Recovery Team for Hurricane Katrina relief, and served as a Naval Diving Safety Inspector for Special Operations, Naval Special Warfare and Fleet diving commands. Rebecca retired in 2016 as a highly-decorated Chief Navy diver with over 24 years of naval service, and she is an accomplished SCUBA and Surface-Supplied air and mixed-gas diving supervisor.



Laura Rogers-Bennett - California

Marine Conservation Ecologist, Fisheries Biologist, AAUS Research Diver

Dr. Laura Rogers-Bennett used SCUBA during her B.A., M.S., and Ph.D. studies, and during two post-docs at U.C. Santa Cruz and the University of Washington. A NAUI Assistant Instructor and Dive Master, she completed her commercial diver/tender and Nitrox certifications in support of her dive research and is now the chair of the U.C. Davis Diving Control Board. For 25 years, Laura has been a project and dive leader, stressing dive safety, including being the lead diver on the team that collected endangered white abalone for the captive breeding program. She is a Senior Environmental Scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and has more than 50 articles in scientific publications.



Susan Speck - California

Author, Underwater Film Producer, Ocean Conservationist and Educator

Susan Speck, certified in 1977, owned two dive stores in California and one in Mexico. She developed the first shark cage in southern California and the first Humboldt Squid cage used by recreational divers in the Sea of Cortez. The author of two books, *Diving Baja California* and *Diving and Snorkeling the Sea of Cortez*, her articles and photographs have been published in numerous newspapers and magazines. She has worked as a Location Manager and Diving Safety Officer for BBC's Animal Planet Series on Humboldt Squid and in the underwater film and TV industry as a producer and actor. She was a member of the "Hydrosphere Expedition Team" and was a member of the Board of the Coalition for Enhanced Marine Resources.