



BENEATH THE SEA[®]

DIVERS OF THE YEAR

CLASS OF 2024

Since its inception, the Beneath the Sea Diver of the Year Award Program has singled out for honor men and women whose presence in the dive industry has made significant and lasting contributions to the diving community. By selecting for honor only those divers of eminence who rank at the top of their field, Beneath the Sea has created a fraternity of men and women whose visions remain fixed on the future, a future connected to each other. Following this tradition, it is with immense pride that Beneath the Sea presents the Divers of the Year: Class of 2024.



Becky Kagan Schott is a 5-time Emmy Award winner whose work can be seen on major television networks worldwide. She is a photojournalist, artist, and filmmaker. Her passion is creating compelling imagery that captures the imagination and tells a powerful story. Becky specializes in shooting in the world's extreme environments, including diving under ice, in caves, and documenting deep shipwrecks. Working in these challenging locations and on expeditions has earned her a reputation for being able to bring back inspirational images from rarely seen places on the planet. Her obsession is artistically shooting shipwrecks in the Great Lakes and connecting the viewer with powerful stories of tragedy, mystery, and survival. Wooden sailing ships, side-wheelers, and freighters capture her imagination. Becky's participated in many projects, earning her a place as a Fellow in the Explorers Club. She was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame in 2013. Becky is a Technical Diving Instructor and has been actively diving for 23 years everywhere from the Caribbean to the Arctic & Antarctic. **We proudly honor Becky Kagan Schott as Beneath the Sea's Diver of the Year in Arts.**



Evan Kovacs began his work with subsea imagery in 2003 while working with the History Channel. He is one of few photographers to film the R.M.S. Titanic and her sister ship, H.M.H.S. Britannic. Throughout his career, he has participated in and led expeditions to survey and film wrecks, caves, and archaeological sites across the United States, to the islands of the South Pacific, the English Channel, the jungles of Mexico and the Dominican Republic, the D-Day beaches of Normandy, the Mediterranean, Thailand, and Antarctica. In 2009, he was nominated for an Emmy in videography for the NOVA program Lost and Found: Legacy of the USS Lagarto, and in 2013, the underwater cinematographer and camera engineer on the Apollo 11 Rocket Engine Recovery with Jeff Bezos. Since 2006, he has partnered with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Advanced Imaging and Visualization Lab to build and

operate imaging systems for filming above for broadcast television, archaeological expeditions, and esteemed research institutions. 2010, Kovacs formed Marine Imaging Technologies, LLC (MITech), a subsea imaging company headquartered in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to develop innovative ideas for subsea imaging systems and robotics. **We proudly honor Evan Kovacs as Beneath the Sea's Diver of the Year in Science.**



James Sears has served and supported the dive community by promoting and sharing the underwater world with both divers and non-divers alike. First certified in 1977, he has spent more than 45 years pursuing his passion for diving. After learning to dive on North Carolina wrecks and in Florida springs, James moved to the NY Finger Lakes in 1980 and was a founding member and later president of the Finger Lakes Diving Association dive club. In 1985, he joined the New York State Divers Association and has served as Webmaster, digest editor, and NYSDA President since 2003. In this role, he has worked for the promotion of exploration, education, history, safety, conservation, and protection of our underwater world. James is involved in the planning and participation of numerous dive events, sharing his enthusiasm for wreck

diving, UW photography, marine archeology and history with various groups through diving and shipwreck presentations. **We proudly honor James Sears Beneath the Sea's Diver of the Year in Service.**