The AUAAS is an international, multi-disciplinary, non-profit organization dedicated to recognizing pioneers and leaders who have had a global impact on the exploration, enjoyment, safety, and preservation of the underwater world. AUAAS is committed to supporting its members as they pass on the stewardship of the sea to future generations.

2017 NOGI Recipients

Jill Heinerth | NOGI, Sports & Education

Whether beneath Antarctic icebergs, or diving deep into networks of underwater caves, Jill’s expeditions have advanced our understanding of the hidden geography of our planet. An acclaimed photographer, filmmaker and author, Heinerth enthusiastically shares her passion for discovery with the world. In recognition of her lifetime achievement, Jill was appointed as the inaugural Explorer in Residence for the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. Jill is a motivational speaker, prolific author of numerous books on technical diving and pioneer in the field of rebreather and cave diving. Jill is a veteran of over twenty years of scientific diving, filming/photography and exploration on projects with National Geographic, NOAA, various educational institutions and television networks worldwide. She is a frequent online guest educator, leveraging tele-presence to inspire classrooms full of young people from Anchorage, Alaska, to Mumbai, India. Jill is a contributing editor and video columnist for DIVER magazine and writes for numerous periodicals around the globe. Over 1.4 million people have learned about climate change, water, adventure, and exploration by viewing Jill’s passionate TED Talk.

Dr. Gerald R. Allen | NOGI, Science

Gerry Allen is an international authority on the classification and ecology of coral reef fishes. His expertise also encompasses freshwater fishes of the Australia-New Guinea region. The author of 35 books and over 500 scientific publications, Gerry has described 520 new species of fishes. Underwater-based field studies form an integral part of his research with various expeditions to all the world’s tropical seas. Gerry is also an avid underwater photographer, using his photographs to illustrate scientific and popular publications, most recently a three-volume monograph, Reef Fishes of the East Indies. After receiving a PhD and having worked as the Curator of Fishes at the WA Museum, Gerry migrated to Australia. He now spends most of his time researching coral reef fishes in his home laboratory and conducting marine biological surveys in Southeast Asia for Conservation International. He is the recipient of several awards for lifetime contributions to the knowledge of fish biology including the K. Radway Allen Award (Australia), Bleeker Award (Indo-Pacific Fish Society) and Joseph Nelson Award (American Society of Ichthyology and Herpetology).

Chuck Davis | NOGI, Arts

From Arctic Alaska and Greenland, to Antarctica and the Amazon, Chuck Davis has worked for nearly four decades as a marine/underwater cinematographer and still photographer. For some 20 years, he was a freelance contractor with the Cousteau filming teams working with the late Jacques-Yves Cousteau and his son Jean-Michel aboard vessels Alcyone and Calypso. Davis’ work in producing and directing numerous IMAX feature films including the Academy Award-nominated, Alaska: Spirit of the Wild and The Living Sea (underwater/marine scenes of Monterey Bay). Davis’ documentary experience also includes projects for the BBC, National Geographic Television, NBC/Universal, Discovery/Learning Channel, and the dome theater production, Who We Are, filmed for the Smithsonian’s National Museum for the American Indian. Davis’ still photographs have been widely published and are included in several private and corporate collections including the permanent collection of the national Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, VA. He is also the author/photographer of California Reefs (Chronicle Books) and has earned degrees in fisheries biology from the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and in filmmaking from the Brooks Institute.

Tom Ingram | NOGI, Distinguished Service

Ingram has more than 40 years of experience in the recreational diving industry, working in virtually every sector from retail stores to dive boat operations, training, manufacturing, and re-compression chamber operation. He joined DEMA in 2002 and serves as the President/CEO. Before joining DEMA, Ingram worked for Scubapro as Director of Technical Marketing, Marketing Manager for Aqua Lung, and was a Business Counselor for the US Small Business Administration.

Dr. Enric Sala | NOGI, Environment

Dr. Enric Sala is a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence dedicated to restoring the health and productivity of the ocean. His more than 120 scientific publications are widely recognized and used for real-world conservation efforts such as the creation of marine reserves. Enric is currently working to help protect the last pristine marine ecosystems worldwide, and to develop new business models for marine conservation. He founded and leads National Geographic’s Pristine Seas, a project that combines exploration, research, and media to inspire country leaders to protect the last wild places in the ocean. To date, Pristine Seas has helped to create 13 marine reserves—some of which are the largest on the planet—covering an area of over 4.5 million square km.

Enric has received many awards, including 2008 Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, 2013 Research Award from the Spanish Geographical Society, 2013 Lowell Thomas Award from the Explorers Club, 2013 Hero Award from the Environmental Media Association. He is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.