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## International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame Opens in Grand Cayman

by [Scott D. Jones](#)


### Diving Pioneers, Scientists, Influential Figures Honored

There's the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Bowling Hall of Fame, the Fishing Hall of Fame and even the Quilters Hall of Fame. But until recently, there's never been a place dedicated to the history and appreciation of recreational scuba diving.

In October, the [Cayman Islands](#), one of the leading scuba diving destinations in the world, unveiled the [International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame](#) at a lavish island ceremony. The list of inaugural inductees reads like a virtual "who's who" of diving and includes the obvious (Lloyd Bridges and Jacques Yves Cousteau, Dr. Sylvia Earle and Al Giddings, who filmed 'Titanic') and the not-so-obvious (Dr. Jefferson Davis, Jack McKenney, Al Tillman, Bob Soto). All have one common characteristic – each inductee has been instrumental in the growth and promotion of scuba diving around the world.



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(From left to right, above) Lito Dalla Valle (son of the late Gustav Dalla Valle/Italy); ISDHF Board Chairman Honourable Thomas C. Jefferson, O.B.E., Cayman Islands Minister Of Tourism, Commerce, Transport & Works; ISDHF Board member Jean-Michel Cousteau (son of the late Jacques Cousteau); Cathy Church (ISDHF Board Member accepting for Hans and Lotte Hass); Helen Davis (wife of the late Dr. Jefferson C. Davis, Jr.); ISDHF Board Member Paul Tzimoulis (accepting for Stan Waterman); Pat McKenney (accepting for Jack McKenney); Dianna Cross (wife of the late E.R. Cross); Bernard Eaton; Rhonda Friend (accepting for Sylvia Earle, Ph.D); Lucinda Bridges Cunningham (accepting for her father, the late Lloyd Bridges); Albert Tillman; Ben Cropp; Bob Soto.

*Photo courtesy Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. All rights reserved.*

"The people we have selected have done great things, but many have never been truly recognized for their contributions," said Paul Tzimoulis, a member of the Board of Directors for the Scuba Diving Hall of Fame. "This is the first time an actual permanent site has been established where people can go and see tangible items and various historical documents related to the birth and growth of our sport. It's exciting to see the progress we've made since the sport began."

Numerous organizations have worked together to develop the Scuba Diving Hall of Fame including the Historical Diving Society, which is represented on the Board of Directors by Lee Selisky. The Hall of Fame project was spearheaded by the Honorable Thomas Jefferson, Minister of Tourism for the Cayman Islands. Mr. Jefferson has consistently supported scuba diving travel and tourism to the islands.

"We believe this will be an exciting development for the entire scuba diving community," Jefferson said. "Many other sports and recreational activities – and even rock and roll – have their own Hall of Fame. Scuba diving's increasing popularity and the sport's importance in raising awareness about the beauty and significance of our oceans reminds us to honor the pioneers and innovators who made exploration of the underwater wonders possible and safe."

Following the gala event October 6, a special ceremony was held the following day on the water near the Hyatt Regency Resort honoring inductees that have passed away. In a unique presentation, representatives of the seven deceased inductees made short statements, dropped flowers into the ocean and then symbolically released a turtle from the Cayman Islands Turtle Farm as a remembrance of their loved ones.

A permanent home for the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame is currently in development. According to tourism officials, the site should be ready to open to the public sometime next year. Current plans call for new inductees to be added to the Hall of Fame each year.

Scott D. Jones is a freelance writer covering adventure sports, recreation and travel. He's a contributing editor to *Skin Diver* magazine and has recently written for *MS Fitness*, *NFL Insider*, *EGO* and *Real Edge* magazines. For other stories and projects he has been involved with, go to [www.scottd.jones.com](http://www.scottd.jones.com)