

National Marine Sanctuary Program
SITUATION REPORT
March 26, 2008

Sanctuary Volunteer Named NOAA Environmental Hero
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary volunteer, Dr. Richard "Dick" Zingula was recently selected by National Ocean Service as one of NOAA's Environmental Heroes for 2008. Dick has been volunteering for the Flower Garden Banks for four decades, well before they were designated as a marine sanctuary. He was, in fact, one of the driving forces behind sanctuary designation. Dick will be honored during the dedication ceremony for the sanctuary's new research vessel. FMI, contact Shelley.DuPuy@noaa.gov.

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From: "Jennifer Morgan"
Subject: Dick Zingula, previous FGBNMS Advisory Council member, to receive award!
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008 2:16 PM

I am pleased to announce that NOS selected Dick Zingula to receive the 2008 NOAA Environmental Hero Award! We plan to present the award to Dick during the R/V Manta dedication ceremony. (June 30, 2008 in Galveston)

FYI...portions of the nomination that was submitted to NOS are pasted below. Thanks goes to Emma Hickerson for submitting the first draft of the nomination.

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\*Accomplishment\*

First explorations of future Flower Garden Banks NMS; led the charge to have the sanctuary designated; countless hours volunteered to education and research on behalf of the sanctuary and oceans in general

\*Paragraph or two as to why this individual or organization is being nominated

\*RICHARD PAUL "DICK" ZINGULA, Ph.D. is one of those rare people who make you feel good, just by his presence. His smile and enthusiasm are

contagious. He takes great joy of giving to others, rather than receiving. In fact, he has been freely sharing his time, knowledge, and experience on behalf of NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary for four decades.

Dick began giving to the Flower Garden Banks well before the site obtained Sanctuary status. He was a volunteer diver on the historic expeditions that first explored the banks in the 1960's to determine if there really were living coral reefs present. Since 1968 he has logged 2,160 dives with over 150 of those within the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. As a leader in the Houston Underwater Club, Dick led the charge to have the Flower Garden Banks designated as a National Marine Sanctuary, personally ensuring that key congressional leaders had an opportunity to see underwater photographs of the proposed sanctuary.

Dick's volunteer contributions to Sanctuary education and science continue. He is a predictable favorite of participants in the Sanctuary's Down Under, Out Yonder and other professional development workshops for educators, where he shares his knowledge and experience through lectures, slide presentations, and lab exercises on land, and through casual conversation between dives. Dick has interpreted the geology of Stetson Bank, and has written numerous pieces for interpretation and education for the Flower Garden Banks NMS – all on his own time, and initiated by him in many cases. He has donated his records of the Sanctuary (slides and notes) one-of-kind historical items of value that are not easily replicated. He recently completed a term as a founding member of the FGBNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council.

Dick also continues to be an active leader in the recreational dive community. In all of his dive related activities, Dick contributes to NOAA's mission by educating divers and promoting protection of fragile marine environments. He attacks marine debris, for example, by helping to organize and participating in annual river cleanups, where according to his fellow club members, "Dick has worked tirelessly for many, many years to help make Trashfest a success." He has provided support to researchers and encouraged young people to pursue careers in ocean sciences through his leadership and support of SeaSpace, and administration of the SeaSpace scholarship.

Dick also leads an annual trip to observe mass coral spawning events in the Caribbean reefs of Cayos Cochinos, a marine reserve off the coast of Honduras. Participants in his trips report having their heads filled with information about the ecology of the reef along the way. He contributes to management of those reefs by sharing his observations. Dick has volunteered his time to teach an annual full day course on

marine invertebrates for divers and other interested individuals. Always the consummate educator and advocate, Dick routinely carries his microscope set up on dive trips to introduce participants to the part of the marine world not visible to the naked eye.

At 80-something years young, Dick has given generously of his time, sharing his dive experiences with hundreds of divers and non-divers through words, pictures, and presentations.

The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary asks that you help us celebrate Dick's contributions by recognizing him through the Environmental Hero Award.

\*Short biography on the nominee\*

Richard "Dick" Zingula, PhD, worked as a Geologist/Paleontologist for the old Humble Oil Company until it was taken over by Exxon, from which he retired in 1986. He has been active in the sport diving community for many years. His positions of leadership include Board of Directors member for SeaSpace; founding member and past-president, Board of Directors for Houston Underwater Club (HUC); serves as HUC representative to Texas Gulf Council of Diving Clubs (TGCC); Past president of TGCC. Dick enjoys underwater photography and video and is a member of the Houston Underwater Photographic Society (HUPS). He is also a founding member of Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council.

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