

Dick Zingula

[Jack Krohn](#): The Houston diving community lost one of our VERY bright lights last week with the passing of Dick Zingula.

[Ja Van Pruett](#): Last night at Bay Area Divers Meeting I tried to talk about a man that most of you young divers did not have the privilege to know, but, you have had the privilege to experience what he was responsible to introduce to the dive community. In 2005, Bay Area Divers posted on the website that “Dick Zingula will present his day-long seminar, ‘Biology of Coral Reefs’.



The seminar, fully illustrated with underwater slides, video, books & specimens, is designed to show you what is there in both of these areas, make some contrasts, compare sand and mud areas with reefs, and to improve your awareness and understanding of the various animals and plants and how they interact. The seminar is also designed to introduce you to many you missed seeing or didn't know what they were, and make your reef diving more enjoyable.”

I was blessed to have dove with him, I appreciated him for all that he taught me, and I will always miss him.

“Now for the Rest of the Story”

[This was on the back of the Memorial folder](#): Richard “Dick” Zingula, PhD, was born in Marion, Iowa, earning degrees from Iowa State and Louisiana State Universities. He and his wife moved to Texas for his work as a Geologist/Paleontologist for the old Humble Oil Company, later Exxon, from which he retired in 1986.

Dick was active in the sport diving community for many decades. His positions of leadership include Board of Director member for SeaSpace; founding member and past-president, Board of Directors for Houston Underwater Club (HUC); HUC representative to Texas Gulf Council of Diving Clubs (TGCC); President of TGCC. Dick was an avid diver and underwater photographer/videographer, and was a member of the Houston Underwater Photographic Society (HUPS). He was a founding member of Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. Dick was selected by the National Ocean Service as one of NOAA's Environmental Heroes for 2008. Dick volunteered for the Flower Garden Banks for over four decades and was one of the driving forces behind sanctuary designation.

Dick was an active and faithful member of Grace Episcopal Church Houston and Braes Interfaith Ministries, where he was a Board member and volunteer, Dick tirelessly served the church and the wider community.

[From: "Jennifer Morgan" Subject: Dick Zingula, previous FGBNMS Advisory Council member, to receive award! Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008 2:16 PM Thanks goes to Emma Hickerson for submitting the first draft of the nomination.](#)

Dick was one of those rare people who make you feel good, just by his presence. His smile and enthusiasm was 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.

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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 88 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.