

## **Scripps Oceanography Marine Ecologist To Receive Prestigious Diving Award**

*NOGI Award will be presented by the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences*

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Mario Aguilera

Paul Dayton, professor of oceanography at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, has been selected as winner of the 2004 NOGI Award, science category, by the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences.

NOGI recipients will be presented with their award statuettes at the annual NOGI Awards Dinner in Las Vegas on October 6, 2005.

The NOGI (New Orleans Grand Isle) Award is the oldest award in the diving industry, dating back to the 1950s when it was initially presented to world-class spearfishing champions. In the 1960s, the award began to be presented to top achievers in the underwater world by the Underwater Society of America. Each year it is presented to distinguished divers, as selected by their AUAS peers, in the categories of arts, science, sports/education and distinguished service. Past winners of the NOGI Award include diving luminaries Jacques Cousteau, Robert Ballard and Sylvia Earle, as well as Scripps diving officer emeritus, James R. Stewart.

"The 2004 NOGI Award recipients are truly outstanding individuals of whom the academy is very proud," said AUAS President Hillary Vidars. "They uphold AUAS's tradition of excellence."

A biological oceanographer in the Integrative Oceanography Division at Scripps, Dayton's research focuses on coastal and estuarine habitats, including seafloor (benthic) and kelp communities, as well as global fisheries. He studies California kelp communities, Antarctic benthic communities and the impacts of overfishing on marine ecosystems.

He has served as a director for the Ocean Conservancy and the National Research Council Panel on Marine Protected Areas. He received the 2004 E. O. Wilson Naturalist Award from the American Society of Naturalists and was awarded a Scientific Diving Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Underwater Sciences in 2002. He is the only person ever to be awarded both the George Mercer (1974) and William Cooper (2000) awards from the Ecological Society of America. In 1990, he was appointed a member of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission by President George H. W. Bush.

Founded in 1993 by NOGI honorees as an affiliate of the Underwater Society of America, the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences is an international, multidisciplinary, nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing the pioneers and leaders who have made a global impact on the exploration, enjoyment, safety and preservation of the underwater world and to passing the stewardship of the sea on to future generations.

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