



REFLECTING ON OUR PAST, FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.

While we entered the year thinking about how far we've come, we exited 2022 with our minds excitedly fixed on the trajectory of our next 30 years.

Thanks to incredibly sound strategic planning from our finance department this year, we were able to rebalance the Aquarium's debt structure and set a new endpoint for the Aquarium's remaining obligations. This places us in a hugely advantageous position from which to reinvest in our facilities and expand our offerings so we can continue to awe visitors and enhance their experiences for decades to come.

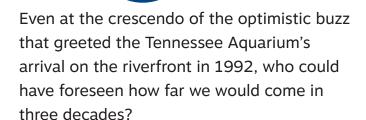
From the addition of the Ocean Journey building nearly 20 years ago to dramatic transformations of our existing galleries, the Aquarium is a place of constant, wondrous change. As 2022 came to a close, we began preparing the way for our next great addition: *Ridges to Rivers*. This dynamic refresh of our aging Discovery Hall gallery will shine a bright light on the vibrant aquatic life found in the rich waterways of Southern Appalachia.

To say that our first 30 years were memorable is an understatement. Without the vision, backing, and faith of so many, we never would have embarked on this adventure, much less traveled so far together. We look forward to where our journey takes us in the coming years.

As always, we thank you for your trust and support.

-Keith Sanford, CEO, and Chris McKee, Chair





Who could have imagined the monumental role we would come to play in our region, the volume with which we would speak on behalf of all freshwater life, or the tens of millions of eyes we would open with our remarkable living collection and our engaging programming?

Entering 2022, it was impossible not to look back with awe — and no small amount of pride — at our first 30 years. By any measure, we have exceeded even the loftiest expectations that surrounded the initial vision for the Aquarium so many years ago.

During our grand opening celebration on May 1, 1992, Chattanooga Mayor Gene Roberts made a bold prophecy about the Aquarium's future: "For decades to come, the people of this place will look back to this day and mark it as a magical moment. This is just the beginning of Chattanooga's renaissance, but oh, what a mighty beginning it is."

Indeed, the years that followed have been full of growth and impact, wonder and remarkable achievements, for us and the city. In 2022, we took a moment to commemorate these milestones and acknowledge the tight-knit bonds with our community that have been at the bedrock of our existence.

On April 30th, we paid homage to this vital relationship with our neighbors and most-ardent supporters with a free, all-day celebration filled with music and laughter capped off by a fireworks display that echoed the pyrotechnic finale of our grand opening 30 years earlier.

To say that we've been a driving force in the community is one thing, but we have the numbers to back it up. On the eve of



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- Former Chattanooga Mayor Gene Roberts

















our anniversary, we received an updated economic impact report prepared by Dr. Rachel Fu, director of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute and professor and chair of tourism, hospitality, and event management at the University of Florida.

Since 1992, Dr. Fu and her team's research found that the Aquarium has driven \$4.88 billion in direct and indirect spending to Hamilton County. This amount is a dramatic increase from the \$3.3 billion in spending reported in our previous economic impact study released in 2017.

During our tenure on the waterfront, outof-town visitors have paid more than \$300 million in state and local taxes, helping support vital municipal services such as schools, police, and fire departments. On our anniversary, we were reminded — as we are every day — how profoundly positive our impact on the community has been, generating tremendous economic growth while opening generations of eyes to the wonders of freshwater life.

Education outreach programs grew in 2022 as more schools welcomed our team back to the classroom. Additional programming was delivered to schools beyond our region through digital outreach. The virtual curriculum that was developed during the pandemic, and continues to improve, remains a popular option for many teachers, especially those who seek content focusing on freshwater habitats and animals.





Our mission is to connect people with nature and empower them to make informed decisions about water and wildlife. We aren't just a showcase for the majesty and beauty of the countless animals that rely on freshwater; we are also their voice.

This year, we trained our sights on raising awareness of a looming menace that could dramatically affect all life, including our own: plastic pollution.

With the remarkable acceleration of global plastic production in the last 60 years, especially of the single-use variety, the volume of this material moving from land into the water is staggering. Helping to turn the tide on plastic is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our lifetime.

As with any great undertaking, we cannot — and should not — try to tackle it alone. Throughout 2022, we sought out partners who could expand our efforts, amplify the reach of our messaging about this growing menace and encourage the kinds of lifestyle changes that will reduce the public's dependence on plastic.

In April, we were proud to become temporary host to more than a dozen works by Washed Ashore. This Oregon-based artistic collective creates larger-than-life, whimsical, colorful statues of aquatic animals using plastic items recovered from beaches.

During its six-month residency at the Aquarium, this collection of awe-inspiring, thought-provoking art created countless picture-worthy moments and generated broader discussions about the role we all play in contributing to the influx of plastic into our water.

To commemorate World Water Day, the Aquarium and Washed Ashore co-hosted a special live stream discussing plastic pollution with Fabien Cousteau, the famed filmmaker, author, aquanaut, and torchbearer of the Cousteau conservation legacy.

Although we had to bid farewell to Washed Ashore in October, we were excited to announce that one of these incredible works would find a forever home on our campus. Thanks to a generous grant, Stella the Seahorse is now a permanent fixture in the Ocean Journey building.











Our own team members were so inspired by Washed Ashore that they collected plastic material to create their own masterwork, an enormous, colorful sculpture of a Brook Trout. This piece, nicknamed "Trashy Trout," has been installed in the River Journey building at the entrance to the *Ridges to Rivers* gallery. Now, wherever they go on our campus, guests will never be too far from an eyecatching reminder of the impact plastic has on our waterways.

Our partnership with Tennessee Department

of Transportation and its Nobody Trashes
Tennessee anti-littering campaign found
other outlets last year. Thanks to grants from
the department and Keep the Tennessee River
Beautiful, a Seabin was installed on the river
behind our campus.

Seabins are electric skimmers that continuously filter larger plastic debris from the water's surface. Ours is one of 18 installed on the Tennessee River, connecting the Aquarium to the largest network of these devices on any waterway in the world.

Our decade-long commitment to restoring Brook Trout

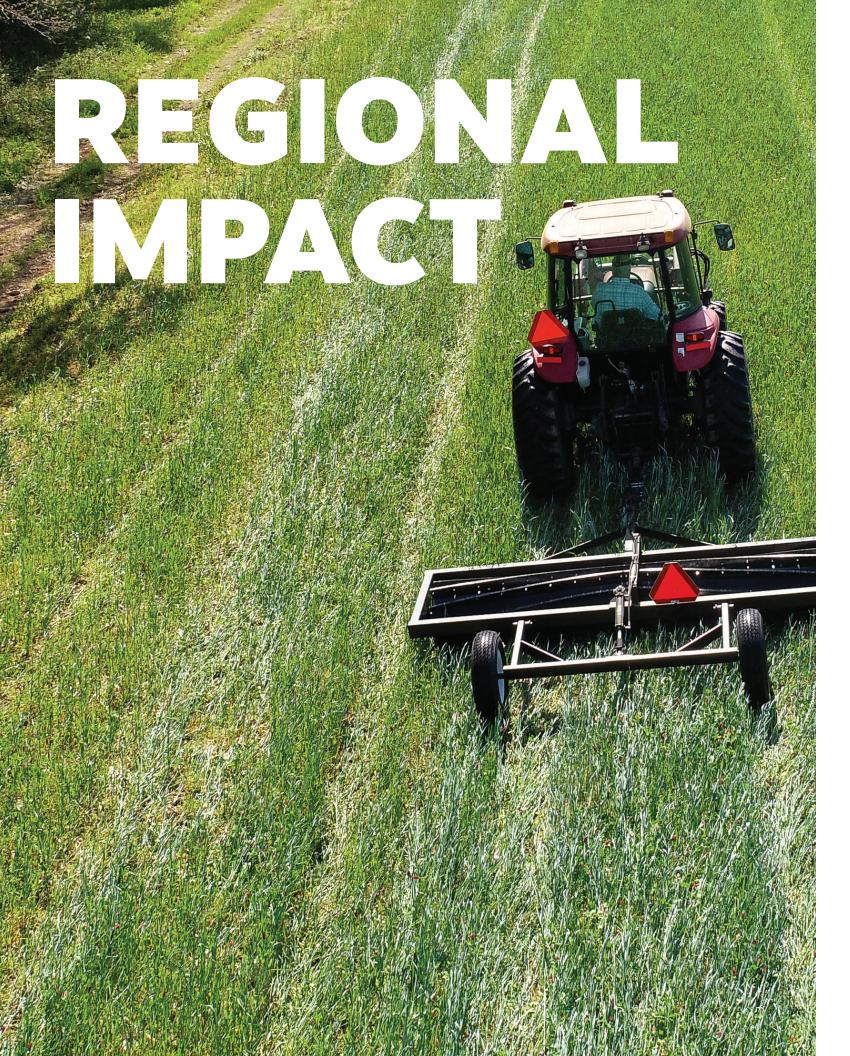
The Aquarium's involvement in the restoration of Southern Appalachian Brook Trout to its ancestral waters ended its first decade in 2022. Our freshwater science team marked the occasion in the spring by releasing more than 1,100 juvenile trout raised at the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute into a stream descending through the southern reaches of the Cherokee National Forest.

The campaign to bring Tennessee's only native trout back to the Volunteer State began in the 1980s, and the Aquarium began contributing its propagation expertise to the restoration in 2012.

Our freshwater scientists collaborate with numerous partners in this effort, including Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This propagation work is fueled by grants through the sale of specialty license plates by the Appalachian Chapter of Trout Unlimited. In all, Trout Unlimited's financial contributions to the program have exceeded \$80,000 since it began supporting the Aquarium's work.

Since 2012, we and our partners have seen tremendous success and made substantial forward progress in helping this beautiful native fish. Streams targeted for stocking have seen signs of wild reproduction — welcome milestones that have allowed restoration efforts to shift to new streams over the years. Counting 2022's class of released juveniles, the Aquarium is responsible for raising more than 4,000 trout in support of this cause.





Our impact on water quality will continue to grow for the next five years, thanks to the announcement of substantial funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that will guide Southeast Tennessee farmers toward more productive, sustainable use of their land. In August, we received news we will be assisting USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service with the targeted dispersal of \$10 million to area landowners as part of a Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

This was the largest of more than 40 such appropriations USDA awarded in 2022 and will fund land improvements in Sequatchie Valley and Walden Ridge that will help reduce the impact of farming on nearby streams

while also improving the bottom line of farmers. The area targeted by the grant is of particular concern to our scientists as it is the last known home to the Laurel Dace, which is considered one of the top 10 mostendangered fish in North America.

Our efforts on Walden Ridge ramped up in 2022. Our scientists are continuing an ongoing survey of road culverts here and elsewhere in the region to determine how they affect the ability of fish and other aquatic life to navigate waterways near road crossings.

Thanks to grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a problematic culvert will be replaced in the coming year.







Almost a third of a million Lake Sturgeon released

In 2000, the Aquarium and several hopeful partners began a long-term program to bring Lake Sturgeon back to the Tennessee River. Over the course of 22 years of annual releases, we and our partners in the Lake Sturgeon Working Group have released just shy of a third of a million juvenile sturgeon into the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers.

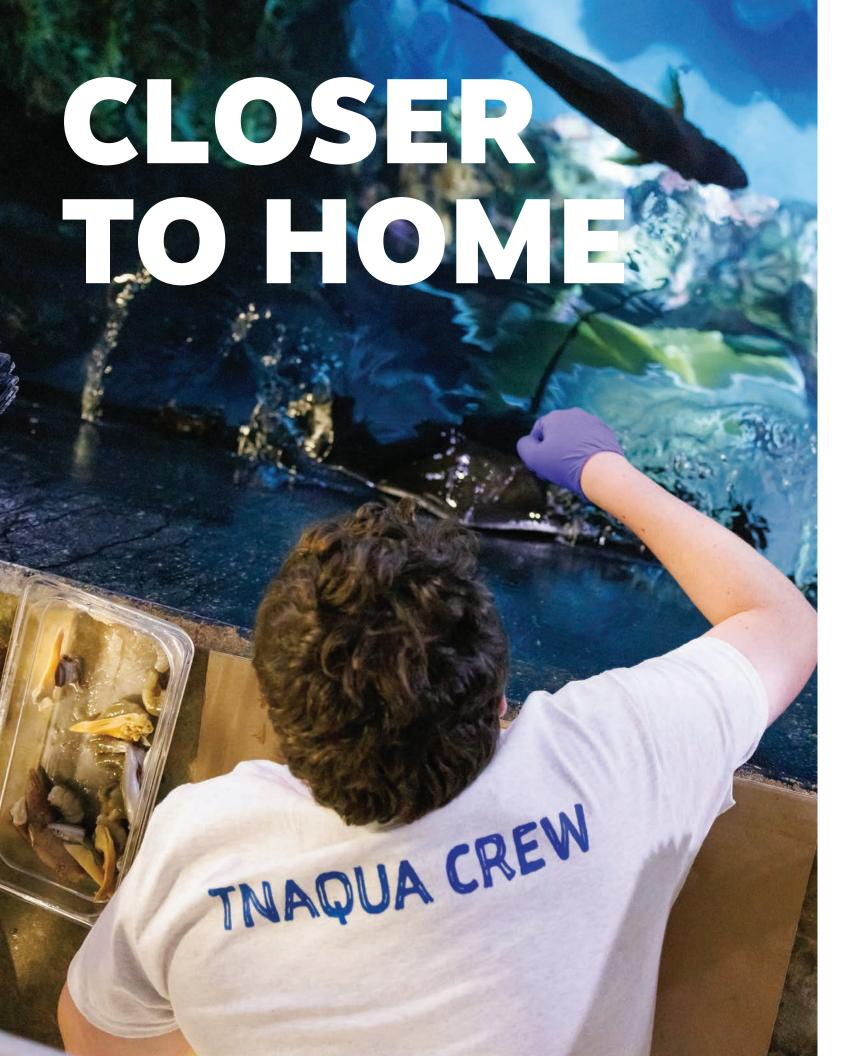
Female sturgeon cannot begin to reproduce until reaching at least 20 years of age.

Because of the long delay between hatching and any possible wild reproduction, the pursuit of creating a self-sustaining population in the river has become a generational undertaking.

To ensure continued interest and community support of this effort into the future, we invited the public, our staff, and representatives from our partners to take part in a series of sturgeon releases this year. By taking a hand in these events, participants enjoyed a memorable experience that will hopefully stoke interest in the survival of these living fossils for years to come.















The Aquarium is far more than just a world-class tourist destination. One of our fundamental roles is to serve as an educational resource for students and teachers. In 2022, we reaped the benefits of our recent education department build-out, which began the return of much-missed programming and amplified our impact on under resourced populations.

Throughout the year, our enthusiastic team of community engagement educators were hard at work escorting our animal ambassadors to area schools and community centers and reviving offerings like Sleep in the Deep

overnight visits and Deeper Dives behind-thescenes tours.

Our summer camps returned fully. For six weeks, thousands of campers explored our campus, engaged in fun learning opportunities and, in some cases, even worked alongside our scientists in the field. These exciting experiences undoubtedly gave birth to many lifelong memories and forged strong connections between these young people and the natural world.

Shark Conservation

In the summer, we were delighted to announce the successful hatching of a trio of Short-tail Nurse Shark pups on our campus. The arrival of these critically endangered animals in an off-exhibit incubation system conveniently dovetailed with the onset of Shark Week and the accompanying worldwide fervor for any and all shark-related news.

The pups hatched from eggs laid at the Aquarium by adults who were sent to the Aquarium in 2021 — along with numerous juveniles and previously fertilized eggs — by a Canadian collector. Short-tail Nurse Sharks are only found in the Indian Ocean along the eastern coast of Africa. These three pups are the first individuals of this critically endangered species to hatch from eggs laid

at our facility. According to the Species360 Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) database, the Aquarium now is home to half of all Short-tail Nurse Sharks currently being cared for at zoological institutions.

The arrival of the pups wasn't the only shark-tastic news we shared in 2022. The Secret Reef became the focus of national attention this year when the always-live web cam into our largest exhibit captured footage of Sand Tiger Shark mating behavior. Clips featuring this rarely documented activity made waves around the country.

Moments like this reflect the valuable contributions online resources such as our web cam and educational video series make to fueling public interest in and curiosity for our animals, specifically, as well as the rest of the natural world.









The Aquarium's many successes this year continued across the street from our main campus at the IMAX 3D Theater.

This fall, we welcomed our 9 millionth guest to the theater and upgraded its massive, six-story screen just in time to serve as the host facility for the Giant Screen Cinema Association's annual conference. This event attracted production companies and filmmakers from around the globe to Chattanooga, where we hosted sneak peeks at many exciting upcoming releases and inprocess projects.

Throughout the year, our theater has continued to present first-run showings of many feature films. Combined with our upgrade to an IMAX with Laser projection system in 2016, this shift to expanding our offerings has firmly secured our place in the

minds of many moviegoers as a mustvisit facility.

In all, the IMAX 3D Theater's schedule included 19 current blockbusters and special re-releases. Many of these films were so well-received that we extended their showings to accommodate uptick in demand from giant-screen film fans.

Toward the end of the year, we successfully dipped our toes into the realm of IMAX Live event streaming by offering local music fans an exclusive invitation to digitally attend iHeartRadio's enormously popular Jingle Ball concert in Madison Square Garden. This event gave us the experience necessary to seize future opportunities to leverage our theater's cutting-edge technology and Chattanooga's best-in-class internet service.

A big year for our big screen

In 2022, the Tennessee Aquarium IMAX 3D Theater served as an embarkation point for a quartet of stunning giant-screen adventures to North America's vast, bird-filled prairie wetlands (Wings Over Water 3D), into the rugged wilds of the Aussie outback (Australia's Great Wild North 3D), rocketing through kelp forests (Sea Lions: Life By a Whisker 3D), or along colossal underwater superhighways (Ocean Odyssey 3D).

To ensure audiences connected more fully with these films and to help their messages resonate more strongly, we filmed online discussions with and hosted on-site visits by numerous experts, including:

Dr. Sylvia Earle, a legendary oceanographer and marine life advocate featured in Ocean Odyssey 3D

Marshall Johnson, the Chief Conservation Officer of the National Audubon Society and a featured expert in Wings Over Water 3D

Andrew Young, the Oscar-nominated director and cinematographer of Wings Over Water 3D

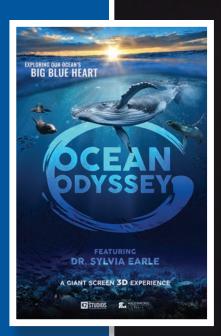
Nick Robinson, the writer/director/cinematographer of Ocean Odyssey 3D and Australia's Great Wild North 3D

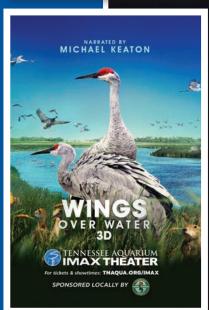


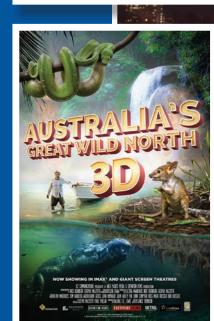
Dr. Sylvia Earle



Marshall Johnson







Celebrating milestone anniversaries

River Journey wasn't the only 30th anniversary celebration in 2022. The success of the Aquarium is a direct result of the dedication and commitment of its greatest resource — its staff. Many Aquarium employees have been on the waterfront as long as — or even longer than — our buildings.

In 2022, the following staff members commemorated their 30th year of employment at the Aquarium:



Gordon Stalans,
Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Information Officer



Gene Dwyer,
Senior Manager of
Visitor Services



Darleene Cole,
Senior Manager of
Volunteer Services



Todd Stailey,

A/V Technician and

Staff Photographer



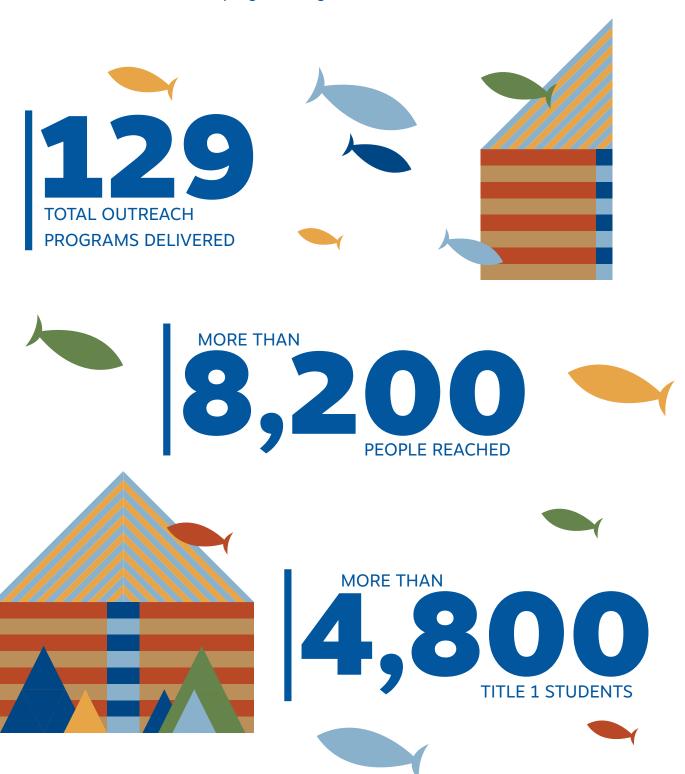
Charlene Nash,
Senior Horticulturist



Jeff Worley,
Senior Manager of
Exhibit Services

2022 Education Outreach Achievements:

*Numbers do not include on-site programming or tours.







A Year to Celebrate

Late in the year we received an update on our key performance indicators from IMPACTS Experience.

Over the past 10 years the public perception of the Tennessee Aquarium as a conservation organization has grown steadily both regionally and nationally. More than 70% of those surveyed trust the Aquarium to act in the best interests of the public, will support our mission, and would like the Tennessee Aquarium to recommend certain behaviors or ways to support our work.

And for the second year in a row, our team was ranked number one in hospitality from a field of 224 visitor serving organizations. We were in the 99th percentile of all assessed organizations.











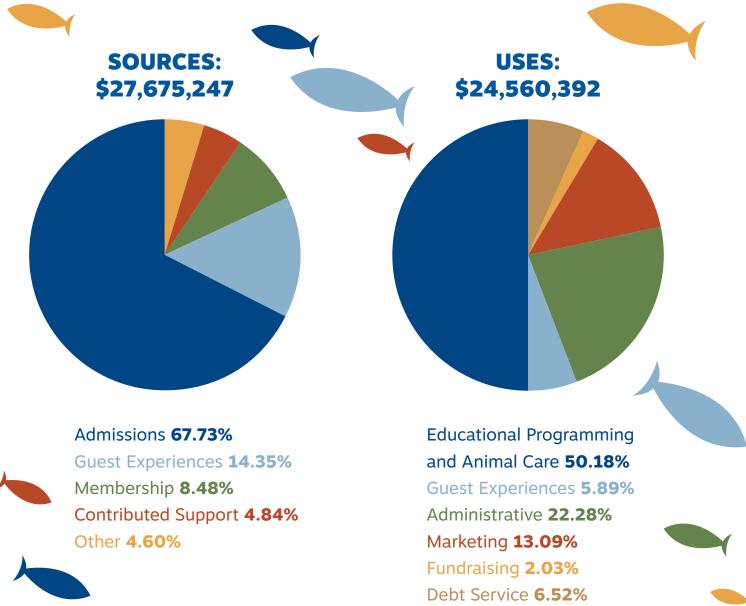
The Aquarium experienced strong attendance and revenues last year, finally rising back to almost normal business levels. And while school groups began to return in 2022, those numbers are still slow to reach pre-pandemic volumes.

Expenses were compressed last year which helped improve our balance sheet. In our 30 years of operation, 2022 was the second

most successful year financially. Net cash flow for the year was \$3.6 million, which was about \$2.7 million better than our budget.

These reserves will enable us to make future investments in our facilities, staff and programs that allow us to more effectively deliver on our mission.

-Gordon Stalans, Vice President-CFO, CIO



Complete audited financial statements are available at tnaqua.org/about-us/financials-and-annual-report.

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The Tennessee Aquarium recognizes donors who make a planned gift by welcoming them into The Watershed Society. which ensures the Aquarium's success for future generations.

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Thank you to the following donors who contributed to the Aquarium's Annual Fund with gifts of \$1,000 or greater.

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Serve & Protect is an evening highlighting sustainably caught seafood and is the largest fundraiser for the Aquarium. The Aquarium's 30thanniversary donor celebration was supported in part by the sponsors of the 2021 Serve & Protect event (which was canceled due to the pandemic).

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We are grateful to the

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Todd Arrants David Green Anne Atkinson Terry Gruber Andy Avel Randy Haines Dan Backlund Sarah Hefner John Baldwin Wendy Hill Angela Ballard Brenda Hodges Mike Ballard Michael Hooper **Bentley Bamburg** Wendy Hooper Steve Bamburg Savannah Howard Kelly Barkwell Dale Ingram Richard Barnes **Charity Johns** Keith Barnes Jerry Johnson Linda Black Michael Jones John Boatner Christopher Kay Kathy Bougie Kelly Kirkland Barry Bullard Amanda Korous Todd Burkhart Darin Lang Alex Burroughs John LaVoy **David Butler** Jon Law Matthew Cain Megan Lott Benjamin Chambers Tim Lott **Howard Charnell** Jimmy Lowrey Tim Chastain Rob MacDonald **Greg Clements** Lee Mann Jim Clemmer Jeff Marcinek Lisa Coble Kevin Martin Doug Cogswell Jere Matty Shawn Coulter Paul Mayer Mary Beth Crook Bryan McConkey Robert Crook Marissa McConkey Jon Culver Eric McDade Jeff Cunningham Adam McDaniel John Dandelski Susan McElhannon **Robert Davis** Matt McLelland Marie Dement Sarah McMahon Jeffrey Duncan Andrew Meador Ed Dunlop Michael Miller Tony Dwornitski Roy Miller **Buddy Edging** Sue Minton Peter Erickson Will Mitchum Karen Estes Marcia Murray Veronica Fallin Lorye Nichols Frank Feather Mark Norwood Mary Fedde **Greg Olivares** Bernie Flank Brian Osgood **Greg Foster** Doug Overdeer

Joe Pope, Jr Tony Porter Tish Pritchett **Butch Reese** Chris Rice C. J. Rice Robin Rice **Ed Ripley Nelson Rodriguez** Wanda Rodriguez David Romba John Salter Mack Schmidt **Bob Scire** Peter Sestak John Shaffer Haley Shealy Melody Shekari Lisa Shier William Sisk Bernadette Slater Graham Slater Paull Slater Deborah Smith Bo Smith Wade Taylor Rebecca Thomas Jerry Thompson George Tomlinson Chris Tucker Jason Turner Al Underbrink Sonny Vick Craig Walker John Walker **Andrew West** Jackie Whitlock Ann Williams Craig Williams Mike Wilson Pete Winkler Vonda Wooten Robert Zielke **DIVE SUPPORT** Joe Pope

Butch Reese Martha Summa-Chadwich

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Associates

Perry Payne

Leif Peterson

Jose' Pinacho

Mike Poe

Joe Pope

EDUCATION

George Bartnik Chip Bell Ian Brunetz CJ Carter

Marion Cook Joe D'Agostino Jack Danner

Debbie Donohue Jenny Etheridge Denise Gammel Joan Hoskins

Diana Jacobsen JoAnne Kittle

Minh Le Jenn Lehman Peggy Mynatt Dean Sanders

Bonnie Wassin Kent Webb

ENRICHMENT

Robbie Fife Stephanie Fife

FOOD PREP CHEF Jennifer Avery Beth Brellenthin Leslie Brown Lisa Clayton Beth Estlick Ann Giebert Julia Grubb Hideo Kawakami Emma Mabry Phyllis McAdams Van McAdams Ava McBryar Brady McGowan Jay Sutter Tamie Suzuki Kawakami Deb Williams

GUEST AMBASSADOR

Onawa Henson Martha Quezada Miranda Quezada

Jamie Wilson

HERPETOLOGY

Jared Burns Sharon Klein Jade Lecker Dane Williams

HORTICULTURE

Lauren Bailey Cami Baldivid Alayna Best Beth Brellenthin Scott Chambley Tracy Craddock Diana Davies Arona DeSure Donna Deweese

Steve DuBose

Janet Dutto

Lisa Fischer

Patti Giles

Ilene Gould

Kay Hagaman

Alicia Hamilton Fran Hiestand

Susan Holden

Mary Holland

Fiona Hubbard

Mark Issenberg

Fort Jones

Linda Keown

Sharon Klein

Bev Kriewald

David Long

Patti Long

Edmond Long

Emma Mabry

Heidi Mahlum

John Mathna

John Miller

Linda Miller

Allan Parris

Betsi Pryor

Elizabeth Monson

Richard Ralston, III

Shannon Lorenzo-Rivero

Andrew London

Trieu Le

Susan Garrett

Joe Dutto

HUSBANDRY

Ana Rico

Jackie Rico

Susan Schott

Louis Spencer

Jerry Steiner

Eileen Thai

Kirstin Tucker

Bonnie Wassin

Nancy Williams

Sharon Steiner

Christine Schneider

Charlene Simmons

Daniel Stubblefield

Rosemary Whitaker

Cody Beavers Brian De La Torre Karah Nazor Tim Policicchio Shelly Simpson Karen Spence Martha Summa-Chadwick

Deb Williams

MARKETING Brenda Carson Wes Hasden Heidi Kelly Kay Wallace Les Wallace

NAIADS

Scott Chambley Mark Issenberg Ruth McMahon Rhonda Palmour Charlene Simmons

PENGUINS

Eli Burgess Jane Corn Angela Dillard Jessica Green Michelle Henderson Nick Henderson Taylor Hixson Morgan Iverson

Laura Moses Ronette Oller Ari Saveh Jes Southern Karen Spence Catherine Stoddard

Shawn Stoddard

PLAZA

Lucas Cintron Wilder Lopez Malyki Taylor

REGISTRAR

Jeff Riehl

VETERINARY EXTERN

Danielle Arnold Stephanie Caviglia Darbi Jones Matt Pickens Cheryl Theile Jillian Western

Jake Blake Anna Chen Em Couch Zayda DeJong Tia Eaves Onawa Henson Michele Jiang Harper Kelly Caroline Klotz Caroline Kokan Cooper Lockwitz Chloe Mondido Abby Smith Ryan Taylor Aaron Williams

Cody Wilson

Beth Anthony

Sandy Caldwell Bill Caldwell Donna Faulkner Charlie Fox* Iola Fulgham Bill Godsey, Jr. Sibyl Gore Betty Hale Dennis Harris Gwen Harris Arthur Hendrixson Marty Hershey Li-Hwa Huang Douglas Jack **Charles Jennings** Judy Leach Jim Lewis Joyce Lewis Ann O'Connell Don Priddy Richard Ralston Eva Rock Arlene Rucker Crystal Rymer Alice Sallee

Sylvia Saloshin*

Clara Shepherd

Zelta Tinkham

Wanda Wilmoth

*Deceased

Katherine Whiddon Nan Williams

Claudia Zaborowsky*

Sandra Standefer Clifton Tinkham

YOUTH VOLUNTEER

Leya Alani

EMERITUS

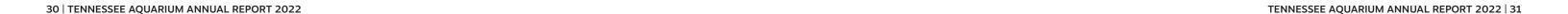
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