



Lee H. Somers, Ph.D.
Founding Director and Director Emeritus
Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society®

Dr. Lee H. Somers was a Founding Director of the society and upon his retirement from the board of directors several years ago, he was honored with permanent Director Emeritus status. Dr. Somers attended every annual meeting of the society for the first 40 gatherings of the society family.

Dr. Somers passed away quietly on New Year's Day, 2015 in Flagstaff, Arizona where he had retired with his wife, Martha Somers, who survives him. Lee was born on February 18, 1938, in Champaign County, Illinois, and raised on a farm there. He discovered his love of water and knack for teaching in the Boy Scouts of America where he earned his Eagle Scout award. After working as a commercial, hard-hat diver in Florida, Lee earned a Master's degree in Geology from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in Oceanography from the University of Michigan. He was on the University of Michigan faculty for 30 years teaching oceanography, scuba diving, and diving technology while serving as the university's diving safety officer. He also established a hyperbaric chamber for treatment and research at the University of Michigan. Lee was deeply involved in improving diving safety for recreational divers, public safety search and rescue personnel, and commercial divers.

Working with the NOAA-National Sea Grant Program, Lee gave countless presentations and field demonstrations across the country and wrote dozens of books, papers, and leaflets. In 1972, Lee wrote the *Research Diver's Manual*, used worldwide. He was a major contributor to the *NOAA Diving Manual*, the research text for all working divers and diving scientists. Lee was one of the earliest members of the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) and a founder and the first president of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences.

Lee received many prestigious national awards, most recently the 2013 *DEMA Reaching Out Award for Education*. Lee helped shape the way the world dives, and he was an inspiration and mentor to many. Lee was a powerful advocate for the Society, served as Chairman of the Board for several years, and felt strongly about the internship program, especially the AAUS internship which he personally helped fund for many years. Dr. Lee H. Somers is and will be sorely missed by the Society, his family, his friends, and the thousands of students, audience members, interns, and Rolex Scholars whose lives were touched and impacted by his lectures, leadership, and support.

In honor of Dr. Somers, the boards of directors of both AAUS and the Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society both voted unanimously in April, 2015 to rename the AAUS internship of the society, "*Dr. Lee H. Somers American Academy of Underwater Sciences Scientific Diving Internship.*"