

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING . . . IS WONDERFUL

Presentation by Dr. Joe MacInnis
At the Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society®
41st Annual Awards Program
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Three years ago I was the expedition journalist and safety physician on the James Cameron-*National Geographic Deepsea Challenge* project. Sponsored by *National Geographic* and Rolex, our objective was to dive Jim's radical new research sub deeper and deeper until we had the team and technical confidence to make a seven-mile, science dive into the Marianna Trench.

It was the toughest project of my entire professional career. We had a new and untested sub. We had a new and untested team. The western Pacific is a place of hurricane winds and ship-breaking waves. We had injuries from heaving decks, slippery stairwells, and cables under tension. After our second test dive, two of our teammates were killed in a helicopter crash.

But after sixty days at sea, sixty days of overcoming technical failures and setbacks, Jim climbed into his new sub and made the first solo science dive into the deepest, darkest place on the planet. He spent three hours on the seafloor. He travelled two miles across a flat, featureless plain gathering scientific samples, making observations, and taking majestic 3D images.

We succeeded because Jim Cameron and his team had exceptional personal and professional leadership. Our leadership principles included deep empathy, eloquence, and endurance. A deep empathy for the team, the task, the technology, and the ocean. A profound eloquence in our words and actions. A deep endurance in our response to setbacks and failures.



Left to right:
Dr. Joe MacInnis, Founding Patron
Michele Felberg,
2015 North American Rolex Scholar
Danny Copeland,
2015 European Rolex Scholar
Ben Buchan,
2015 Australasian Rolex Scholar
Mike Emmerman, President,
Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society®

Forty-three years ago, on a ship under the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the concept for our Rolex scholarship was born. We had a new and untested idea. We had a new and untested team. As time passed, especially during the early years, we overcame setbacks and failures. Today, we have 89 interns and 91 scholars. And a splendid team of volunteers, supporters, partners, and sponsors.

We're successful because our chairman, president and team have strong personal and professional leadership. Our leadership principles include empathy, eloquence, and endurance.

A deep empathy among our scholars, interns, and partners and what they learn from each other.

A profound eloquence in the words and images we use to tell our stories.

A sustained endurance in overcoming our setbacks and challenges.

Thank you Jim, Stewart, Mike, and everyone in this room. Scholars and interns. Officers and directors. Partners and corporate sponsors. You confirm what can be done when good people are generous with their time, talent, and tenacity. You have made it possible for young men and women to explore the rainbow edge of knowledge and imagination—and share the joy of their discoveries.

As you prepare for the coming decades, remember the immortal words of the great scholarship society philosopher Jim Corry who—paraphrasing his occasional muse Mae West—said:

“Too much of a good thing . . . *is wonderful.*”