

Sterling divers

Bret Gilliam

Bret Gilliam has led a rich and varied life, encompassing almost every aspect of recreational diving. Originally a member of the US Navy's diving team, he went on to embark upon a number of successful diving ventures.

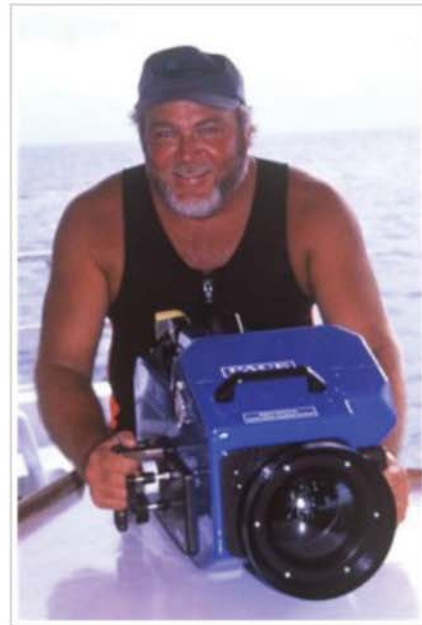
Most significantly for the technical diving community, Gilliam founded Technical Diving International (TDI), which has become the largest technical diver training organisation in the world (he also later founded its sister organisation, Scuba Diving International (SDI)).

An enormously accomplished diver in his own right, Gilliam set the world depth record for breathing compressed air twice in 1990 and then again in 1994 - the latter dive to 490 feet. His record would later be beaten by Dan Manion, but whereas Manion freely confessed to being insensible at depth, Gilliam remained cognisant and able to resolve higher level math problems despite punishing levels of nitrogen narcosis.

Amongst Gilliam's other accomplishments, he was the President of the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), as well as a member of the board of the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (before leaving to form TDI). He was the former President and CEO of UWATEC. Gilliam has published or contributed to over 49 books on diving, including the seminal *Deep Diving - An Advanced Guide to Physiology, Procedures and Systems*, and has also been heavily involved in the underwater publishing industry in various capacities with various organisations.

One of the other highly unusual features of Gilliam's diving career occurred off St Croix in 1972 when he became one of the very few divers who has witnessed a fatal shark attack on a scuba diver. Sadly Gilliam's heroic efforts to rescue his stricken comrade failed.

There are few aspects of modern technical diving which have not benefited from a lasting contribution from Gilliam's efforts.



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