

CALIFORNIA

FORTHCOMING FROM

A Fascination for Fish

Adventures of an Underwater Pioneer

DAVID C. POWELL

WITH A FOREWORD BY SYLVIA A. EARLE



“In most any conversation among professionals involved with problem-solving and American aquariums, the name David Powell will ultimately arise. The conversants will then pause, look knowingly at each other, and tacitly realize that either it’s been done, and Powell did it, or it hasn’t been done, so let’s ask Dave to help us solve it. Dave’s fingerprints abound on the specimens, successes, and innovations of the Sea Worlds, the Steinhart Aquarium, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and so many others for which he has consulted or served as mentor to their managers. This autobiography is a charming and accurate telling by a modest man whose brilliant career has allowed millions to venture into the sea and feel what Dave feels when he’s underwater—without getting wet!”

—Dr. John E. McCosker, Steinhart Aquarium

“Dave Powell is one of the giants in the development of the modern public aquarium. His great talents and skill have come from years working with the technology of public aquariums, and also from a great love of the sea. This book is a wonderful tale of his adventures (and misadventures) as he worked to capture the essence of the ocean and bring it to public view. Until this book was written, few would ever have known of the adventures and grief behind the remarkable aquarium exhibits that have been the hallmark of David Powell’s career.”

—Bruce Carlson, Waikiki Aquarium, Honolulu

“Gobies, jellyfish, Coelacanth, white sharks—it’s all here. A delightfully written book detailing the experiences of the most innovative aquarist of our time. This book is a must read for anyone fascinated by looking through an aquarium viewing window.”

—Jeff Goldsmith, Vice President,
Sea World of California

This engaging memoir describes one man’s lifelong love of the ocean and gives a highly personal, behind-the-scenes look at California’s magnificent and innovative aquariums. David Powell, for many years curator of the world-renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium, tells the story of his life as a pioneering aquarist. From handling great white sharks to transporting delicate fish on bumpy airplanes to night diving for fish in the dark of the Indian Ocean, *A Fascination For Fish* describes many of the mind-boggling challenges that make modern aquariums possible and gives a fascinating glimpse beneath the ocean’s surface.

Powell’s career in diving and aquarium development goes back to the very beginning of modern methods in both areas. He describes his invention of many techniques to get fish into aquariums alive and healthy, such as his early adoption of a home pressure cooker to decompress colorful rockfish. From that amusing incident to his later exploratory dive to a depth of eleven hundred feet in a two-person submarine, Powell inspires laughter, wonder, and philosophical musing in this action-packed narrative. *A Fascination For Fish* also includes many stories about Powell’s diving adventure in the California coast, in the Sea of Cortez, and in many remote and exotic locations around the world.

At the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Powell devised many innovative and dramatic exhibits, including the world’s first living kelp forest. He also played a key role in developing naturalistic aquarium exhibits at other great aquariums in California such as Sea World, San Francisco’s Steinhart Aquarium, and Marineland of the Pacific.

David C. Powell continues to consult on aquarium design around the world. He was Director of Live Exhibit Development at the Monterey Bay Aquarium until his retirement in 1997. He was also Curator of the Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco and Curator of Fishes at Sea World in San Diego.

Distinguished oceanographer Sylvia Earle is Chairman of DOER Marine Operations, designer of manned and robotic sub-sea systems.

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