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**AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC HONORS VICE ADMIRAL PAUL G. GAFFNEY II,  
U.S. Navy (RET) AND MARGARET S. LEINEN Ph.D. AS THE 2015 OCEAN  
CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Approximately 420 guests attended the Blue Whale Gala, which raised \$377,000 for the nonprofit Aquarium and its ocean conservation education initiatives**

**June 17, 2015, Long Beach, CA**—The nonprofit Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, honored Vice Admiral Paul G. Gaffney II U.S. Navy (Ret) and Margaret S. Leinen Ph.D. as the recipients of its 2015 Ocean Conservation Award during the Blue Whale Gala event on Saturday, June 13. The Ocean Conservation Award is given annually to those who contribute significantly to ocean conservation and environmental education.

Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney's naval career has spanned more than three decades in executive and command positions within naval research and oceanography. His service at home and abroad has supported efforts to defend the nation from naval threats and increase the safety and security of our global ocean. Today he serves as a fellow in Monmouth University's Urban Coast Institute. He was appointed by the President to the United States Commission on Ocean Policy in 2001 and was named chair of the Ocean Research Advisory Panel in 2009. In 2014 he was appointed as the chairman of the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board.

Dr. Margaret Leinen is a distinguished, award-winning oceanographer. She currently serves as the vice chancellor for marine sciences, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and dean of the School of Marine Sciences at the University of California, San Diego. She is president of the American Geophysical Union Board of Directors and has been elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Geological Society of America. Dr. Leinen is one of the nation's most distinguished science administrators, and has played key roles in the evolution of each of the institutions she has led.

Attendees of the Aquarium's black-tie Blue Whale Gala enjoyed an elegant cocktail and hors d'oeuvre reception on the front plaza, gourmet dinner in the Great Hall of the Pacific, inspirational conversations, delectable desserts, and after-dinner drinks and dancing under the stars on the outdoor Harbor Terrace and Veranda. Special thanks to the Blue Whale Gala's premier sponsors The John W. Carson Foundation, Esther S.M. Chui Chao, David and Kathy Cohen, and Mario and Therese Molina.

The nonprofit Aquarium of the Pacific is a community gathering place where diverse cultures and the arts are celebrated and where important topics facing our planet are explored by scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders in search of sustainable solutions. The Aquarium is dedicated to conserving and building nature and nature's services by building the interactions between and among peoples. Home to more than 11,000 animals, Aquarium exhibits include the June Keyes Penguin Habitat, Ocean Science Center, Molina Animal Care Center, the interactive Shark Lagoon and Lorikeet Forest exhibits, and the new *Jellies* exhibits. Beyond its animal exhibits, the Aquarium offers educational programs for people of all ages, from hands-on activities to lectures by leading scientists.

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