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Program

# The Future of the Blue Economy



February 26-29, 2024



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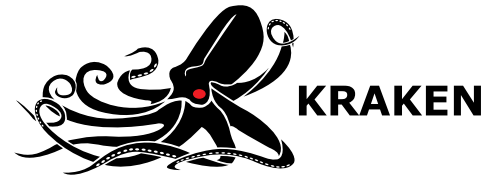
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# Welcome

To Our 9th Annual  
**Blue Innovation Symposium**  
and Our 3rd Semi-Annual  
**Blue Venture  
Investment Summit!**



This year, we have worked hard to put together a conference that, we hope, continues to stay true to our original mission to educate, connect, and facilitate partnering opportunities within the marine technology industry.

**We want to thank our sponsors, without you this conference simply would not be possible.**

Co-organizers this year include Erin Donahue, Consulate General of Canada in Boston, Roger Race, Dartmouth Ocean Technologies, and the teams at UTIC, SENEDIA, and Boston Engineering Corp.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

Tobias (Toby) Stapleton, PhD, Co-Founder

## **Blue Venture Forum**

By the Industry, For the Industry

## Optional Rhode Island Blue Economy Ecosystem Tours

Monday, February 26, 2024  
University of Rhode Island

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<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>URI is at the heart of the region's blue economy ecosystem. This tour will include the newly constructed College of Engineering.</b>
<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>Quonset Point</b> The 3,200-acre Quonset Business Park is home to the Port of Davisville, 239 companies and over 14,000 employees, nearly half of which are employed in a Blue Economy industry. During this tour, you will gain insight into how the Park was developed, visit blue-tech start-up REGENT Craft, and get a glimpse of the many, varied Blue Economy businesses that utilize the Park's world-class infrastructure. <i>Attendees will be required to sign an NDA at Regent.</i>  – Please be advised that there will be a fair amount of walking on both tours.  – Attendees are responsible for their own transportation.  – For details and to register for this event, please contact Jessica Gardner, RI Commerce Corp., <a href="mailto:jessica.gardner@commerceri.com">jessica.gardner@commerceri.com</a>
<b>1:00AM - 4:00 PM</b>	<b>Exhibitor setup, Wyndham Hotel</b>

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## Blue Innovation Symposium Kick-off

Sponsored by the Consulate General of Canada in Boston

Monday, February 26, 2024 – 4:00 - 6:30 PM  
Innovate Newport 513 Broadway, Newport, RI

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<b>4:00 - 4:30 PM</b>	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Toby Stapleton, Director, Blue Venture Forum</li><li>• The Honorable Bernadette Jordan, Consul General of Canada in Boston</li></ul>
<b>4:30 - 5:00 PM</b>	<b>Panel</b> A Rising Tide Lifts all boats: Lessons Learned in Building and Scaling a Regional Ocean Cluster  <b>Moderator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Erin Donahue, Canadian Consulate General in Boston</li></ul> <b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Martin Beaulieu, La Zone Bleue/Novarium</li><li>• Emily MacPherson, Center for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship</li><li>• Christian Cowan, URI foundation/401 Tech Bridge</li></ul>
<b>5:00 - 6:30 PM</b>	<b>Networking Reception</b>

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# Blue Venture Investment Summit

Tuesday, February 27 – 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Newport Wyndham Hotel, 240 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI

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**8:00 - 8:30 AM**

**Registration**

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**8:30 - 8:40 AM**

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Dr. Toby Stapleton, Blue Venture Forum
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**8:40 - 9:30 AM**

**Blue Technology Investing Today**

**Moderator**

- Dr. Toby Stapleton, Blue Venture Forum

**Panelists**

- Rhiannon Davies, Sandpiper Ventures
  - Anthony Bellafiore, Katapult
  - Jake Russell, Propeller VC
  - Julie Niedzwiecki, Great Mountain Partners
- 

**9:30 - 10:00 AM**

**Flashtalks, Global BlueTech Innovators and Entrepreneurs**

- SeaAhead
  - Jaia Robotics
  - Seatrac
  - OceanAID
  - GC Lipid Tech
  - Apeiron Labs
- 

**10:00 - 10:15 AM**

**Networking Break**

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**10:15 - 11:00 AM**

**Defense & Dual-Use Investing**

**Moderator**

- Nate Walton, Sachem Strategies

**Panelists**

- Stephanie Bellistri, New North Ventures
  - Eric Horan, Decisive Point
  - John Chait, In-Q-Tel
  - Nelson Mills, VATN Systems
- 

**11:00 AM - 12:00 PM** **Fireside Chat: Space and Oceans, Final Frontiers of Investing?**

**Facilitator**

- Ted Janulis, Investable Oceans

**Speakers**

- Chad Anderson, Space Capital
  - Lisa Marrocchino, Proteus Ocean Group, Ltd.
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**12:00 - 1:00 PM**

**Economic Update Luncheon**

Rhode Island's designation as an Ocean Tech Hub, what does it mean for the Future of the Blue Economy in Rhode Island and beyond?

**Facilitator**

- Dr. Toby Stapleton, Blue Venture Forum

**Speakers**

- Secretary Elizabeth "Liz" Tanner, Rhode Island Commerce  
*In collaboration with the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce*



GREATER NEWPORT  
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# Blue Innovation Symposium

**Tuesday, February 27 – 1:00 - 6:30 pm**

**Newport Wyndham Hotel, 240 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI**

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**1:00 - 1:15 PM**

**Maritime Communications Challenges and Opportunities**

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Dr. Toby Stapleton, Blue Venture Forum
  - Molly Magee, CEO, Undersea Technology Innovation Consortium (UTIC) and SENEDIA
- 

**1:15 - 2:00 PM**

**Challenges and requirements for communication in maritime environments under extreme or challenged circumstances.**

**Moderator**

- Lee Silvestre, NavalX Northeast Tech Bridge Coordinator, SENEDIA

**Panelists**

- CAPT. Hennings, Commanding Officer, NUWC Division Newport
- Scott Bewley, NavalX
- Bob Smith, DoN SBIR
- Vic Ricci, NUWC HQ
- Bill Craig, NUWC Division Newport

**Audience Q&A**

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**2:00 - 2:45 PM**

**Flashtalks from pre-selected, industry participants who will describe their solutions, technology, and funding, including SBIR/STTR's received to-date.**

**Facilitator**

- David Shane, Boston Engineering Corp.

**Flashtalks**

- Aquaband Marecomms
  - AI Vigil Inc (formerly DT Digital)
  - Fortify
  - Hydronet/Bionet Sonar
  - iQ3Connect
  - JPAalytics
-

- Kinnami
- OceanComm
- Saltenna
- Skyline Nav AI
- Vermeer

**2:45 - 3:15 PM**

**Networking Break**

**3:15 - 4:30 PM**

**One-on-one meetings between Navy POCs and selected industry participants.**

**3:15 - 4:00 PM**

**Ocean AI**

**Moderator**

- Justin Manley, Just Innovation

**Panelists**

- Martin Beaulieu, La Zone Bleue
- Ian Wilms, Seafarer AI
- Yuan Yao, Marine Thinking

**4:00 - 4:35 PM**

**Flashtalks, Global BlueTech Innovators and Entrepreneurs**

- Keefe Robotics
- nU-Boats LLC
- Real Time Data
- Teem Fish Monitoring, Inc.
- Marine Thinking
- BlueGrid (by RIMOT)
- EcoMarine

**4:35 PM**

**Annual Awards Ceremony**

**Rising Tide Awards**

- Nick Rotker, Chief Blue Tech Strategist, The MITRE Corporation
- Jose Vazquez, Director Defense and Security, Boston Engineering Corporation
- Roger Race, Director of Innovation, Dartmouth Ocean Technologies

*Sponsored by Boston Engineering Corp*



**5:00 - 6:30 PM**

**Opening Reception**

**Welcome**

- Honorable Xaykham (“Xay”) Khamsyvovong, Mayor, Newport, RI

*Sponsored by Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Agreement, a federal/provincial agreement between the Government of Canada and the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.*



# Blue Innovation Symposium

Wednesday, February 28 – 8:00 AM - 6:30 PM

Newport Wyndham Hotel, 240 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI

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<b>8:00 - 8:30 AM</b>	<b>Registration and Continental Breakfast</b>
<b>8:30 - 8:40 AM</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Toby Stapleton, Blue Venture Forum</li><li>• Jeff Smith, Autonomous &amp; Undersea Systems, SAAB, Inc.</li></ul>
<b>8:40 - 9:00 AM</b>	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee</li><li>• Congressman Gabe Amo, U.S. Representative (D-RI-01)</li></ul>
<b>9:00 - 10:00 AM</b>	<b>Unlocking the Power of Our Oceans</b> <b>Opening Keynote &amp; Facilitated Q&amp;A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fabien Cousteau, Chief Oceanic Explorer, Co-Founder &amp; Chairman, Proteus Ocean Group</li><li>• Dr. Brian Helmuth, Chief Scientific Officer, Proteus Ocean Group</li></ul>
<b>10:00 - 10:30 AM</b>	<b>Networking Break</b>
<b>10:30 - 11:15 AM</b>	<b>Blue Technology Success Stories</b> <b>Moderator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Millicent Pitts, Ocean Exchange</li></ul> <b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Julie Angus, Open Ocean Robotics</li><li>• Niru Somayajula, Sensor Technology Ltd.</li><li>• Sue Molloy, Glas Ocean Electric</li></ul>
<b>11:15 AM - 12:00 PM</b>	<b>Growing the Blue Economy by Enabling Access to Data</b> <b>Moderator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nick Rotker, MITRE Corp</li></ul> <b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joy Callaway, National Weather Service Office of Observation and National Data Buoy Center, NOAA</li><li>• Levi Morrison, Center for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE)</li><li>• Jake Kritzer, NERACOOS (Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems)</li><li>• Stephen Piper, IBM</li></ul>
<b>12:00 - 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:00 - 2:15 PM</b>	<b>Artificial Intelligence and the Blue Economy: Innovation at the intersection of the Maritime Domain- AI - Autonomy</b> <b>Moderator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jose Vazquez, Boston Engineering Corporation</li></ul> <b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phil Magnuszweski, Infused Innovations</li><li>• Carl Kaiser, Spear AI</li><li>• Dan Shropshire, Teledyne Marine</li><li>• Chris Hixenbaugh, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Newport</li></ul>

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**2:15 - 3:00 PM**

**Flash Talks: Global Bluetech Innovators and Entrepreneurs**

- Real-time Innovations (RTI)
- Ingenuity
- Pure Marine
- Ocean State Sensing
- Hefring, Inc.
- T-Omega Wind
- SeafarerAI
- Marine Institute of Memorial University
- Atlantic Marine Energy Center
- Traxe Technologies
- Deep Blue Composites

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**3:00 - 3:30 PM**

**Networking Break**

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**3:30 - 4:15 PM**

**Benefits of Connecting with the Right Resources to Grow Your Blue Tech Company: Demonstrations and Experimentations**

**Moderator**

- Linda Larsen, 401 Tech Bridge

**Panelists**

- Christian Cowan, 401 Tech Bridge
- Julie Kallfelz, Northeast Tech Bridge
- Rob McGurrin, BluelQ
- Mike Flanigan – Seasats
- Joey Fiore, Powerhouse

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**4:15 - 5:00 PM**

**Creating Opportunities in the Blue Economy**

**Moderator**

- Jim Hanlon, Convergent Consulting

**Panelists**

- Jeff Smith, SAAB, Inc.
- Jerry Sgobbo, formerly Dive Technologies (Anduril Maritime)
- Atle Lohrmann, General Oceans
- Kevin Lopes, ThayerMahan

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**5:00 - 6:30 PM**

**Closing Reception**

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## Optional Ecosystem Tours

**Thursday, February 29, 2024 – 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Optional Tours – New Bedford Ocean Cluster

<https://secure.n boc.org/np/clients/newbedfordoceancluster/event.jsp?forwardedFromSecureDomain=1&event=53>





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[oceansconference.org/halifax-2024/](https://oceansconference.org/halifax-2024/)

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# Save the Date(s)!

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## 10th Annual Blue Innovation Symposium

February 10-13, 2025

Wyndham Newport Hotel  
240 Aquidneck Ave., Middletown, RI  
[info@blueventureforum.org](mailto:info@blueventureforum.org)



# Thank You

## To Our Speakers and Moderators



**Chad Anderson** Described by TechCrunch as “among the best-positioned people on either the investment or the operator side to weigh in on the current and future state of the space startup industry,”

Chad Anderson is the founder and managing partner of Space Capital, where he has been pioneering investment in the Space Economy for over a decade. He is also author of *The Space Economy: Capitalize on the Greatest Business Opportunity of our Lifetime*, now available from Wiley. Regularly featured in the media as an expert, Anderson has appeared in outlets including CNBC, Bloomberg, CNN, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and the Financial Times. In addition to his work at Space Capital, Anderson serves on boards including that of the Satellite Applications Catapult, which supports the United Kingdom’s national strategy to grow its space sector. Anderson has served as director of the board of the Explorers Club, a nonprofit that promotes the scientific exploration of land, sea, air, and space. He was also a member of the User Advisory Committee for the International Space Station U.S. National Laboratory. Before founding Space Capital, Anderson led a successful career at JPMorgan Chase, where he managed a \$50-billion real estate portfolio through the Great Recession. He has an MBA with a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation from the University of Oxford.



**Julie Angus** Julie is the CEO and co-founder of Open Ocean Robotics, a marine robotics company providing safe, affordable, and sustainable oceanographic data collection and management. Their autonomous robotic data collection platform and cloud-

based software system provides real-time data acquisition with AI driven analytics.

She is also a bestselling author, scientist, and explorer who received National Geographic’s Adventurer of the Year award when she became the first woman to row across the Atlantic Ocean from mainland to mainland. Julie has written three books, has a graduate degree in microbiology, and is a serial entrepreneur who co-founded two previous ocean-focused businesses. Julie is a director on NATO’s Maritime Unmanned

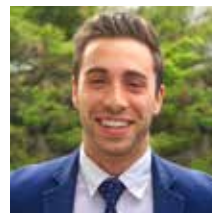
System Initiative Innovation advisory board and the Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies (COAST) advisory board.

Julie has an honorary doctorate from McMaster University and is a Royal Canadian Geographic Society Fellow. In 2020 she was awarded Innovator of the Year by BC Business and in 2021 she was recognized as Industry Icon by the BC Cleantech Industry.



**Martin Beaulieu** is Chairman and CEO of la Zone Bleue and Founder-CEO of Novarium. He is also Chairman of the Board of the Institut des Sciences de la Mer (ISMER) and a member of the Regional Development Committee of

Investissement Québec. He holds a master’s degree in protein chemistry and a Ph.D. in polymer physical chemistry (Laval University). Prior to joining the team of la Zone Bleue, he held the positions of CEO of the Société de promotion économique de Rimouski (SOPER), Director of Operations at InnoVactiv (Rimouski, Quebec) and prior to that, Research Coordinator at the Nestlé Research Centre (Lausanne, Switzerland). He is also a scientific advisor for various Canadian research organizations and a member of several boards of directors, including the Société portuaire du Bas-Saint Laurent et de la Gaspésie. He has done research at the Departments of Food Science of the University of Guelph (Canada) and the University of Georgia in Athens (USA).



**Anthony Bellafigliore**, Investment Manager, Katapult Ocean: Anthony is a veteran VC investor with experience stemming from institutional funds such as LaunchCapital and Entrepreneur First. Additionally, he has significant

experience as an early-stage operator, having been on the foundational team of GoingVC, where he grew the firm’s customer base and annual revenue by 15x and 35x, respectively, in his time as COO. He has also been involved in building both venture scout networks and angel syndicates, and has managed processes for private investments across a range of verticals, most prominently within the bluetech / ocean space, where, as part of his current role with Katapult Ocean, he has led 22 investments over two years in industries

such as offshore energy, maritime decarbonization, and alternative foods.



**Stephanie Bellistri** is Operating Partner at New North Ventures, a specialist fund focused on dual-use early stage companies operating at the intersection of national security and commerce.

Stephanie is a 22-year veteran of the CIA, where she held senior leadership and inter-agency positions, managed multi-million dollar enterprise and overseas operations, and traveled globally in support of counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, counterintelligence and military operations. Stephanie has since worked for over a decade advising early-stage and venture-funded security technology companies, including Palantir, Sairdrones, and Evolv Technology.



**Scott Bewley** Principle Deputy Director, NavalX A retired Navy Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) of 20 years. Mr. Bewley is a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School Combat Systems department with a Masters in Applied Physics. He

entered the acquisition community in 2006 serving in PEO IWS. In 2019, he established and led as the Program Manager the Digital Integration Support Cell (DISC) chartered to accomplish digital transformation activities across the DoN. Currently serving as the Principle Deputy Director for NavalX, developing and applying the Naval innovation business model to deliver capability rapidly and with agility to the warfighter.



**Joy Callaway** is an Information Technology (IT) Specialist (GS-2210) with the National Weather Service's (NWS) Office of Observations (OBS) and National Data Buoy Center (NDBC). In her current position as the Information

System Security Officer (ISSO), her focus is on Cyber Security and Privacy of the NDBC information system. She also serves as the Cybersecurity Manager for the OBS portfolio of FISMA systems. Joy's began as an Airman in the US Air Force as a Satellite, Wideband, and Telemetry Journeyman. During a six (6) year active duty tour, Joy received an Associate of Science (AS) degree from the Community College of the Air Force in Electronics Technology in 2006 and in January 2010 began a career with NOAA as an Administrative Assistant to NDBC's Director. Continuing her education at Park University, Joy received a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Management

Information Systems (MIS) in 2012, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a concentration in MIS in 2015, and a Master's Certificate in Global Communications in 2016. In addition, Joy has earned IT security certifications to include a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) and a CompTIA Security+



**Fabien Cousteau** Fabien's first experience with scuba was at the age of 4, and his life since then has led him on a path of ocean exploration and conservation.

In June 2014, Fabien led a team of aquanauts on Mission 31, the longest science expedition to take place at Aquarius, the world's only remaining underwater marine laboratory located in Florida. The mission broke new ground in ocean exploration and honored the 50th anniversary of his grandfather's underwater living experiment (Conshelf Two) by going deeper, longer and further, while broadcasting live on multiple channels, educating and exposing the world to the adventure and mystique of our blue planet.

After Mission 31, Fabien was inspired to change the nature of humanity's relationship with and understanding of the ocean. He founded Proteus Ocean Group to advance this vision and is working toward launching a state-of-the-art modular habitat - PROTEUS™ - off the coast of Curacao. From 2000-2002, Fabien was an Explorer-at-Large for National Geographic and collaborated on a TV special aimed at changing public conceptions about sharks called, "Attack of the Mystery Shark". In 2003-2006, he produced the documentary, "Mind of a Demon", that aired on CBS. For the next four years (2006-2010), Fabien was part of a multi-hour series for PBS called, "Ocean Adventures" with his father, Jean-Michel Cousteau, and sister, Céline, inspired by his grandfather's famous 1978 PBS series, "The Cousteau Odyssey". In the following years, and as a member of multiple cause-driven and charitable boards, Fabien has been working with local communities and children worldwide to help restore local water ecosystems.

Early in 2016, he founded the Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center (FCOLC) to create a vehicle to make a positive change in the world. Currently he is working on multiple projects and dedicates much of his time to Proteus Ocean Group and to the initiatives of the FCOLC, including a coral reef resilience program, beach clean-ups, sea turtle and mangrove restoration projects and an Ocean Discovery Educational Curriculum Program.



**Christian Cowan** is a senior executive with more than 20 years of experience in technical manufacturing operations and marketing in the IT networking, energy and textile industries. He brings both domestic and overseas hands-on

manufacturing experience to the University of Rhode Island Research Foundation (URIRF), Polaris MEP's parent organization. He most recently served as the Center Director of Polaris MEP. Christian earned his BSEE degree from Villanova University and his MBA from the University of Rhode Island.



**William P. Craig** is the Technical Project Manager for Advanced Technology for the Undersea Warfare Electromagnetic Systems Department (Code 34) at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) in Newport, Rhode Island. He has been

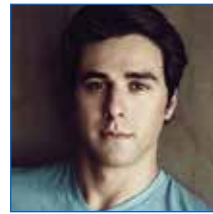
at NUWC for over 33 years and has been actively involved with the development of advanced technologies to improve submarine communications for most of his career. He has led several efforts addressing submarine communications at speed and depth, including investigations into advanced buoyant cable antenna technology, expendable buoys, and optical communications, as well as technologies supporting connectivity with unmanned undersea vehicles and undersea nodes. He also oversees the development and execution of all internal investment efforts in Code 34. Mr. Craig holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from Union College and a Master of Science in EE from Northeastern University.



**Rhiannon Davies** – Co-founder and Managing Partner, Sandpiper Ventures: Rhiannon has created, acquired and led companies in Europe, Asia, South and North America, including the GVSC B.V, which became a \$2 Billion revenue subsidiary of GrandVision N.V.. She was COO and Board

Director, taking the \$ 5.5 Billion revenue eyecare company with businesses in 45 countries, through a period of rapid growth expansion into 20 new markets through multiple acquisitions, JVs and organic growth, to a successful IPO on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. The GrandVision IPO ranked in the global top 10 IPOs in 2015. This was her second exit, following the acquisition of Royal Numico N.V. by Groupe Danone in 2007. As an active investor and mentor for early-stage technology companies, Rhiannon is motivated by the

enormous untapped opportunity of investing in women and non-binary technology entrepreneurs as an underrepresented demographic that is over-performing.



**Joey Fiore** developed and then led the first solutions engineering program and the corresponding team at Netflix. There, he lead a first-principles approach to operational challenges, a model that's since been replicated broadly across the

company. He's worked between D.C., Boston, and L.A., in technology, and holds degrees in geology and history.

During his college years as Northeastern's first directly elected Student Body President, Joey helped lead pioneering climate initiatives across campus. Working across the continental United States, Joey has 12 years of experience at the intersection of science, technology, and media. Staring at the vast empty parking expanses during Covid, he left his role spearheading the development of Netflix's 'solutions engineering program' to return to his environmental roots as the founder, CEO, and principal of PowerHouse.

At the outset of the pandemic, Joey decided to leave his role at Netflix spearheading the development of the solutions engineering program and get back to his roots in environmentalism. Growing up with his brother in rural Central Massachusetts, he forged a lifelong passion for protecting the planet, with a healthy distrust for the status quo, in the built environment and beyond. During his time at Northeastern, Joey served as the university's first directly elected Student Body President and helped lead various climate-related initiatives; before co-founding the cornerstone of Northeastern's entrepreneurship ecosystem, the IDEA business accelerator. From there, he spent the next 10 years between D.C., Boston, and L.A., working at the intersection of technology, science, and media.



**Mike Flanigan** is a co-founder and CEO at Seasats, a San Diego company that manufactures and operates uncrewed surface vehicles. In that role, he has worked with Task Force 59, Navy Special Warfare, the Scripps Institution of

Oceanography, and other organizations. He previously worked as an automation consultant at DMC Inc, serving clients including Tesla and P&G.

Mike grew up in Tiverton RI and learned his way around boats (both robotic and traditional) in the Sakonnet river. He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and an M.S. in

Computer Science. When he's not at work, you'll typically find him running or climbing.



**Kim Gavin** is the CEO and Co-founder of BLUEiQ, a pioneering women-owned startup dedicated to developing low SWaP-C passive acoustic sensors for biodiversity protection and port safety and security. With extensive expertise in

sensors and sensing technology, her impactful contributions have successfully transitioned prototypes and translated emerging science into operational use across government, industry, and FFRDCs. Formerly Vice President of Emergent Technologies at Systems & Technology Research and Raytheon BBN Technologies, Kim led strategic business development for advanced technology R&D programs addressing national security challenges. As a Senior Government Executive at ESRI, she earned the USG Exceptional Performance Award for spearheading GIS solutions in global Intelligence & Defense missions. Kim commenced her career as a Scientist and Intelligence Officer for the U.S. Government and RAND in special programs and technological advancements within the global commercial space and satellite industry. Kim serves as a Mentor Ambassador for MIT's Minority Education Program and IEEE, and is a Founding Member of CHIEF. An alumna of MIT Sloan School, Boston College, and Villanova University, Kim is dedicated to driving innovation and leadership to propel advancements in science and technology.



**Dr. Ulaş Güntürkün** is the founder and CEO of Marecomms Inc., which is a Canadian company founded in 2017 to provide advanced wireless communication and remote sensing solutions for maritime environments

based in Halifax, NS, Canada.

Dr. Güntürkün studied his Ph.D. degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada between 2003 and 2008 with full bursary and scholarship. His dissertation addressed novel signal processing and probabilistic learning algorithms for remote sensing, with applications to cognitive radar.

For his post-doctoral work, he joined Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium in 2008, where he worked on the development of low-complexity, battery-efficient satellite communications.

He served as a research faculty in the department of Electrical

and Computer Engineering at Dalhousie University, between 2015 and 2018, where he worked on the development of large-scale MIMO-OFDM techniques. He also taught Communication Systems during this appointment.

In 2017, he founded Marecomms Inc. to design and implement a robust and broadband underwater acoustic communications solutions, which is his current full time occupation.

Dr. Güntürkün is the author of various scholarly articles published in IEEE and Elsevier journals and proceedings. He has also served as a reviewer for several IEEE transactions.



**Jim Hanlon** P.Eng. MBA FCAE LL.D. (Honoris Causa) Jim Hanlon is an experienced technology entrepreneur with specialized knowledge of marine and naval defence markets. He was the founding CEO of the Centre for Ocean

Ventures & Entrepreneurship (COVE), a \$30 million 70 tenant ocean technology hub in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Jim is a 40-year veteran of the tech industry, having lived and worked in Atlantic Canada, Ontario and New England. He has experience in the defence sector as well as the marine environmental monitoring field. He has held senior roles in engineering, marketing and general management.

Jim has worked in management positions with several large publicly traded multinational companies (Cobham PLC and Ultra PLC). He has also owned and operated two high-tech companies that have successfully grown and been purchased by multinationals.

Jim was formerly the President of Ultra Electronics Maritime Systems in Halifax; he and his partners having sold their company to Ultra in May of 2008. Ultra Electronics Marine Systems is one of the oldest continuously operating electronics design and manufacturing operations in Canada and the largest electronics product design company in Atlantic Canada.

In May of 2012, Jim assumed the role of initial CEO of the Halifax Marine Research Institute, a not-for-profit company established to foster collaborative ocean research among universities, government labs and private companies. This organization later became what is now COVE – The Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship which Jim continued to lead until his retirement in the Fall of 2020.

Jim is a graduate of Dalhousie University's Faculty of Engineering with a degree in electrical engineering. He also

has an MBA in marketing from Saint Mary's University in Halifax and he is a registered professional engineer in Nova Scotia. In 2020 he was elected a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering in recognition of his contributions to ocean technology in Canada. In June of 2022 Dalhousie University awarded Jim an Honorary Doctorate degree in recognition of his contributions to the global ocean economy. He serves on many Boards and Advisory Councils including the National Research Council of Canada's Ocean, Coastal & River Engineering Advisory Board, the Ocean Tracking Network Council, and Ignite Labs Board. He also serves as the Vice President Industry & Technology of the Marine Technology Society (MTS) based in Washington DC. He continues to invest in ocean technology start-up companies.

Over the course of his career, Jim has traveled to and done business throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia and New Zealand. Jim and his wife Anne have three adult children, one grand daughter and enjoy sailing and life on the water in Nova Scotia.



**Dr. Brian Helmuth**, Chief Scientific Officer Proteus Ocean Group, Professor Dr. Brian Helmuth is the lead scientist with Proteus Ocean Group, the company behind PROTEUS™, envisioned as the International Space Station of the

Ocean. Dr. Helmuth is a marine biologist and underwater explorer based at the Coastal Sustainability Institute at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. His research and teaching lie at the interface of multiple disciplines and focus on better understanding the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and on co developing solutions to those problems with diverse stakeholders. He has published over 125 scientific journal articles, is an author on the 5th US National Climate Assessment, and was named a Google Climate Science Communications Fellow. A veteran of multiple saturation missions using the Aquarius habitat and science advisor to Fabien Cousteau during Mission 31 in 2014, Helmuth has led scientific research expeditions across the planet, and is a Fellow National of the Explorers Club.



**Captain Chad F. Hennings** CAPT Hennings was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in Berwyn, Illinois and Lucerne, Indiana. After receiving a degree in Aerospace Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology he received his commission at Officer Candidate School in December 1994. After the initial training pipeline his sea tours included USS

TOLEDO (SSN 769), USS MICHIGAN (SSBN 727) (GOLD), USS COLUMBIA (SSN 771), and USS HAMPTON (SSN 767). He commanded the USS NEVADA (SSBN 733) (GOLD) and USS PENNSYLVANIA (SSBN 735) (BLUE). Throughout his sea tours he has supported several Western Pacific and Mediterranean deployments and conducted nine strategic deterrent patrols. Many of the teams he served with earned Battle Efficiency "E" awards. His shore tours include staff positions at Submarine Squadron TWO, Submarine Squadron SEVENTEEN, Submarine Squadron NINETEEN, and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency. During his shore tours he also earned a Master's degree in Modeling, Virtual Environments, and Simulation from the Naval Postgraduate School and a Masters in National Policy and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College. In September 2017 he became an Acquisition Professional and served as the Requirements and Testing Head for the PMS 397 COLUMBIA Class Program and as the Deputy Program Manager for PMS 415, Undersea Defensive Weapons Systems. He recently completed a tour as Program Manager of PMS 401, Submarine Acoustic Systems. He currently resides in Newport, RI with his wife, Caroline (Worcester, Massachusetts) and five children serving as the Commanding Officer at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Newport, RI since May of 2020.



**Eric Horan** is a General Partner at Decisive Point, a Venture Capital firm investing in technologies to protect our national security. Previously, Eric spent 10 years as a government Contracting Officer for the Navy's major weapons systems at NAVSEA. He also worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense Acquisition Policy (DPAP), creating policy and establishing streamlined acquisition authorities that was passed in the 2016 NDAA. Eric received his BBA from Emory University and his MBA from the University of Maryland.



**Ted Janulis** is founder & principal at Investable Oceans LLC, an ocean investment hub that accelerates market-based sustainable ocean investing across all asset classes and sectors of the Blue Economy. Over a 30+ year business career, Ted has served in various executive positions, including CEO, at financial institutions involved in Capital Markets, Banking and Asset Management. He is President Emeritus of The Explorers Club in New York City and serves on numerous for-profit and not-for-profit boards.





**Bernadette Jordan** (BA [Political Science], St. Francis Xavier University, 1984) was raised on the South Shore of Nova Scotia in a small fishing community. Her love of her community and desire to see it grow and thrive started at a young age when she became a community volunteer while in junior high school.

Bernadette started her working career in the field of economic development and built an extensive network. She then went on to a career in community news, spending almost 12 years as the special projects manager for the award-winning newspaper publisher Lighthouse Publishing. She received multiple awards in the areas of advertising, promotion, business campaigns and volunteerism. During this time, she also served as the president of the Atlantic Canadian Newspapers Association and as a member of the board of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association.

In 2006, Bernadette left community news to take on a new role in fund development with the Health Services Foundation of the South Shore. Her work helped the foundation raise millions of dollars for health care in her community. She was an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, received their Rising Star Award and led a campaign that won their Ten Star Chapter Award.

In 2015, Bernadette ran for and won the federal riding of South Shore-St. Margarets by the largest margin ever in the riding and became the first woman to hold the seat. In her first years in government, she was the chair of the Atlantic Liberal Caucus, a member of the standing committees on the Status of Women and on the Scrutiny of Regulations, and the chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. During that time, she introduced a motion calling on the government to deal with abandoned and derelict vessels in Canada's waterways, which led to legislation passed in 2018 to address this ongoing problem. She was then appointed parliamentary secretary to the minister of democratic institutions. In 2019, she became the first minister of rural economic development. Later that same year she became minister of fisheries, oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. This made Bernadette the first woman elected in Nova Scotia to hold a seat at the Cabinet table.

After leaving politics in 2021, Bernadette went back to her fund development roots, accepting a position as the national director of philanthropy with Shelter Movers, a volunteer-powered charity providing free moving and storage services to people, primarily women and children, leaving abuse.

Bernadette and her husband, David, live on the beautiful South Shore. They have raised 3 children and enjoy the beach, kayaking and their dog Alfie. She continues to volunteer with organizations in her community. Bernadette was recently the recipient of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal (Nova Scotia) for service to Nova Scotia and Canada. In her spare time, Bernadette is a fabric artist and speaker at many events involving women in leadership.



**Carl Kaiser** is VP of Hardware at Spear AI where he is charged with starting a hardware division to complement the existing software and services lines of effort. He has a Ph.D in Mechanical Engineering/Robotics from Colorado

State University, a Systems Engineering certification from Cornell, and is a certified Project Management Professional. Carl started his career at Agilent Technologies setting up manufacturing in Southeast Asia but quickly returned to the research world at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI).

Upon leaving WHOI after 7 years, Carl went to work for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center, division Newport where he operated as TPM for the All Warfare Center portion of an Acoustic AI project (Harbinger) as well as a SME for PMS 406 and the technical lead for a ~\$35M UUV related JCTD. Carl then went to Saildrone where he was the Senior TPM for Acoustics and Undersea. Among other projects, he was the principal investigator for a government/industry consortium sponsored acoustic project for offshore wind and marine mammal monitoring, as well as the lead engineer for the in-house designed and built passive acoustic array. When not working, Carl enjoys diving, gourmet cooking, and a wide variety of DIY projects. He lives on Cape Cod Massachusetts with his wife and 105lb Goldendoodle.



**Julie Kallfelz** Julie started her career as an active duty officer in the Navy, then went on to work in the private sector in program management with companies ranging from tech start-ups to the Fortune 500. She joined the team at the

Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Division Newport (NUWC DIVNPT) in 2014, working on the Advanced Processor Build (APB) program and then the MK48 MOD8 heavyweight torpedo upgrade to the guidance and control section. Julie is currently the Director of the Northeast Tech Bridge and Engagement Officer, in the Chief Technology Office (CTO) at NUWC DIVNPT.



**Jake Kritzer** is the Executive Director of the Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems, or NERACOOS, having joined the organization in June 2020. With the stellar team of NERACOOS staff and

partners, Jake works to implement the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System from Long Island Sound through the Gulf of Maine, ensuring that communities, agencies, industries, and researchers have the information they need for critical decisions. Prior to joining NERACOOS, he held a series of progressively senior positions with the Environmental Defense Fund. There, his primary focus was fisheries science and policy in the U.S., Cuba, China, and elsewhere. Jake has served as Chair of the New England Fishery Management Council's Scientific & Statistical Committee and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Habitat Committee; as a Conservation Commissioner for the City of Boston and the Town of Durham, New Hampshire; on the Boards of Directors of the Alewife Harvesters of Maine, Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation, and IOOS Association; and a number of other technical, advisory, and regulatory appointments. The author of more than 50 peer-reviewed publications, he earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Middlebury College in Vermont and a Ph.D. in marine biology from James Cook University in Australia, and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Windsor in Canada. Jake lives in the seacoast of New Hampshire with his wife, two daughters, and three dogs, where he enjoys running, hiking, cycling, skiing, and paddling.



**Linda Larsen** Operations Manager, Linda is a proven leader in creating and executing projects and programs. She's passionate about innovation, workforce development, building strategic partnerships, and developing communities of practice. Linda earned a BS in Business Administration from Northeastern University, and a BS in Education from Rhode Island College. Linda also currently serves as the Chair of the RI Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees.



**Atle Lohrmann** is the CEO of General Oceans, a group of subsea technology companies started in 2021 that includes three underwater acoustic companies, a ROV company, and a company that provides subsea manipulators. General

Oceans has grown to 350 employees and operate with twelve subsidiaries across the globe. The company is private and mainly uses its own bottom line to fund new initiatives.

His educational background is a Master of Science in Applied Mathematics from the University of Oslo and from Sorbonne in Paris. Before venturing into the commercial world, he spent five years as an oceanographic research scientist.



**Dr. Kevin Lopes, CAPT/USCG (Ret)** Before assuming his current position, Kevin served as ThayerMahan's Director of Maritime Operations, where he planned operations, assessed risk, executed plans, and produced contract deliverables. He managed autonomous unmanned vehicle tactical operations, supervised 24-7 piloting, acoustic intelligence, and electronic intelligence teams, and delivered tailored analysis and near-real-time customer reporting. Kevin oversaw operational test planning and coordinated logistics including shipboard mobilization, system launch and system recovery.

During his 27-year career in the U.S. Coast Guard, Kevin held positions, including: command of a USCG cutter; Chief of Planning at Sector New Orleans; Chief of Response at Sector New Orleans; Incident Commander for oil spill and HAZMAT response; Operations Section Chief for the DM-932 barge spill response; and Finance Section Chief for the Deepwater Horizon unified response. His wide-ranging responsibilities have included: port/waterway/coastal security, maritime commerce, incident response, search and rescue, marine environmental response, drug interdiction, law enforcement, living marine resources enforcement, migrant interdiction, defense readiness and hurricane response.

As a Certified Defense Financial Manager, Kevin oversaw the Coast Guard's enterprise financial policy when the Department of Homeland Security earned its first clean audit opinion. In the academic realm, he was a Professor of Management and lectured on leadership, organizational development, change management, negotiations, and conflict management.

Kevin earned a doctorate from Boston University, in Business Administration & Management, a Masters in Business Administration from Loyola University in New Orleans, and a B.S. in Management from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.



**Molly Donohue Magee** is the Chief Executive Officer of SENEDIA, the alliance for Defense Tech, Talent, and Innovation. The alliance is a catalyst for thought leadership and enables the development of critical defense

technologies while facilitating economic and workforce development opportunities. She created SENEDIA's nationally recognized annual event, Defense Innovation Days. She also serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Undersea Technology Innovation Consortium (UTIC), a nonprofit organization focused on providing resources to accelerate the transition of undersea technology to market. UTIC was awarded an Other Transaction Agreement from the Department of Navy for Undersea and Maritime Innovative Technology in June 2018. She is a member of the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council, the Rhode Island Defense Economy Planning Commission, and the Rhode Island Governor's Workforce Board.

After completing a 30-year civilian career in the government, she started a woman-owned and managed small business focused on providing value-added engineering and financial management services to the Department of Defense. After two years, the business was acquired by another company. Her last assignment in the government was as the Chief Financial Officer for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, RI, a one-billion-dollar Department of Navy research and development activity. Her government career included managing product assurance engineering for submarine systems prior to transitioning to senior leadership of the organization where, in addition to CFO, she held the position of Director of Corporate Operations.



**Justin Manley** is a technologist and executive with experience in startup, public corporation, academic, and public sectors. After professional roles at MIT, supporting NOAA and in the private sector he founded Just Innovation Inc. in

2015 to support diverse clients with a focus on robotics and oceantech. His primary work is as a Senior Advisor to Oceankind (an ocean tech/conservation philanthropy) and Venture Partner with AiiM Partners (an ocean/climate impact fund). He is also an advisor to numerous oceantech startups. Mr. Manley has demonstrated accomplishments in numerous professional organizations and is currently the President of the Marine Technology Society. He is a member of the NOAA Ocean Exploration Advisory Board and Co-Chairs the Technology & Innovation Working Group for the UN Ocean Decade.



**Lisa Marrocchino**, CEO Lisa presently serves as CEO of Proteus Ocean Group, Ltd, a Fabien Cousteau company, Ocean-focused social enterprise, building Proteus: an in situ research habitat and lab, the International Space Station of

the Ocean, to accelerate R&D, drive solutions, create businesses and engage the global community with our Ocean. Lisa brings her experience from Goldman Sachs, where she created in depth earnings models for tech co's such as Microsoft, Oracle, SAP; Ziff Brothers Investments, where she researched, analyzed and made investment decisions in technology private and public entities; LiGit Solutions, business development outsourcing, where she helped early to mid-stage disruptive companies prepare to raise capital primarily in the social impact sector, and as CEO of Gifts That Give, an ecommerce company giving back to charity, where she raised significant funds from existing and new high-profile investors. She is expert in raising capital, business optimization, strategic planning, research and public, private and alternative investments. Lisa is versed in identifying cutting-edge tools and capitalizing on emerging trends, such as social impact, brand and influencer marketing, blockchain and crypto.



**Rob McGurrin** Robert McGurrin is the CTO and Co-Founder of BLUEiQ, a women-owned blue tech startup building low power passive acoustic sensors to protect biodiversity. BLUEiQ is developing technology that can

detect, classify, and track marine mammals and other underwater objects of interest. Rob is an experienced technical leader in all phases of applied research and development programs from prototype to production. Using a combination of entrepreneurial and DoD research experience, Rob has transitioned several R&D projects into innovative field-able products. Rob's experience in technical development and team leadership spans across multiple domains, including low power wearable HR sensing at WHOOP, low SWaP-C acoustic localization of snipers at Raytheon/BBN (Boomerang Warrior X and Boomerang Air), and low power distributed underwater sensor network DARPA research at STR. Rob received his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from Tufts University and holds Master of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering from The Georgia Institute of Technology and Engineering Management from the Tufts Gordon Institute.



**Nelson Mills**, the founder and CEO of Vatn Systems, led hull development at Pure Watercraft, a boating startup that secured over \$170 million in funding. With a background spanning operating and venture capital roles at Link Ventures, Lux Capital, and Global Founders Capital, Nelson brings a wealth of experience in product development and fundraising to his leadership at Vatn. Nelson holds both a BA and MBA from Columbia University.



**Dr. Sue Molloy**, P.Eng., FCAE, holds a PhD in Naval Architectural and Ocean Engineering (Memorial University) and is the CEO of Glas Ocean Electric (GOE), a Nova Scotia-based company using their electric propulsion and AI-enabled navigation systems to reduce maritime carbon emissions. Sue and her team won the Lieutenant Governor's award for Excellence in Engineering.

Sue is a Chair of the board for the Council of Canadian Academies, elected Vice President of the Engineers Nova Scotia Council and past co-chair for Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Discovery Grant program.

Sue's professional service work includes being an active reviewer for the US Department of Energy and national Canadian Government programs, serving as Canadian Chair of ISO TC 8, Ships and Marine Technology and as the international convenor for the IEC committee focused on river turbine performance. In 2022 Sue was elected as a fellow to the Canadian Academy of Engineering.

Prior to GOE, Sue was president and general manager of Black Rock Tidal Power (a subsidiary of Schottel GmbH). Sue teaches about sustainable energy and related marine topics at Dalhousie University in Halifax.



**Levi Morrison** is the Director of Innovation at COVE where he leads and directs the development of on-shore and off-shore infrastructure to support commercialization efforts of clients. He is responsible for leading the advancement of innovative, technical projects that serve to enable the development of new products and services in the marine sector. Levi stays current with cutting-edge technologies that are transforming marine industries and seeks to integrate these ideas into COVE's programs and services.

Previously, Levi worked with Ulnooweg Education Centre overseeing the successful development and delivery of community-first, two-eyed seeing curriculum. During his time with Lloyd's Register, he worked collaboratively to successfully deliver over 60 projects in the marine space. Levi is professional engineer licensed in Nova Scotia and a certified project management professional. He holds a Bachelor of Civil Engineering and a Master of Applied Science from Dalhousie University where he is also a part-time lecturer in the Civil Engineering Department.



**Victor Nardone** is an executive account manager at iQ3Connect. With over a decade of industry experience, he has guided countless manufacturing organizations in automating their manufacturing process and executing their digitalization strategy. Passionate about education and preparing students for their upcoming career in manufacturing, Victor has also used his experience to assist educational institutions by creating course curriculum, configuring lab spaces, and sitting on advisory boards. With an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for transformative technologies he has joined the iQ3 connect team with one mission, to assist enterprises and educational institutions in operating more effectively and efficiently through iQ3s extended reality platform.



**Julie Niedzwiecki** is a Managing Director of Great Mountain Partners. Prior to this, she was a Managing Director in the Private Equity group at Barings, a \$300+ Billion institutional asset manager. During her time there, she was a member of the group's Investment Committee and headed up the Digital Infrastructure and Media & Entertainment investing efforts. Before joining Barings, Julie was a member of the investment team of Wood Creek Capital Management. Julie began her career at Babson Capital Management where she worked in both the Quantitative Management and the Investment Grade Fixed Income groups with a focus on the credit analysis of asset-backed and mortgage-backed securities. She also served on the Board of MassMutual Federal Credit Union and chaired their Asset & Liability Management Committee. Julie holds a B.S. in Business Management from the University of Rhode Island and an M.B.A. from the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts.



**Stephen Piper** is a Partner in IBM Consulting and is IBM's Senior Executive for the State of Rhode Island. Over his nearly 25 year career with IBM, Stephen has held executive leadership positions in Consulting Services, Sales Operations,

Supply Chain, Marketing and the office of the CIO. Stephen earned his MBA from the IE/Brown executive MBA program in 2012.



**Millicent Pitts** Milly is the executive director of Ocean Exchange (OE), giving non-dilutive funding to innovative start-ups that support healthy oceans and a sustainable Blue Economy. Ocean Exchange is in its 13th year aggregating

corporate and family philanthropy to redistribute it based on an evaluation process focused on solution impact, level of innovation, and founders' ability to execute. Milly is part of steering committee at Ocean Visions, is a Creative Destructive Lab mentor, and represents OE in 1000 Ocean Startups. She previously was an executive in the chemical/materials industry for 30 years and holds an MBA from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.



**Roger E. Race** has years of Engineering experience with such companies as Rolls Royce, BOT USA, YSI and now innovation director at Dartmouth Ocean Technologies. Directing all phases of the research, planning, design, testing, and

construction of technically challenging oceanographic projects. Mr. Race started and ran successfully two small businesses, which produced patented products for the Global Marine Market.

Mr. Race has more than 35 years of experience designing and bringing to market products for the marine and oceanographic industry. At Endeco Inc., Mr. Race created underwater designs that contributed to the oceanographic company. While Chief Engineer at Edson International Mr. Race created successful marine hardware designs sold worldwide. As a director at YSI, and Dartmouth Ocean Technologies, Mr. Race was responsible for design, construction, and project management of numerous marine product lines, including towbodies, floating platforms, ocean instruments, and cable and mooring systems. Mr. Race was also responsible for marketing these systems worldwide.

Roger lives with his wife Margo in South Dartmouth, and

you can find him out sailing on his restored Bristol 35 sloop on Buzzards Bay all summer long.



**Dr. Vic Ricci** is Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Headquarters. Dr. Ricci is the senior advisor for Undersea Science and Technology (S&T) for NUWC Commander and Executive Director.

From 2015-2020, Dr. Ricci concurrently served as CTO Division Newport. Prior to this, Dr. Ricci was the Director of S&T for the Sensor and Sonar Systems Department at NUWC Newport. He also served as the Technical Manager for the SPARTAN ACTD, which provided operational unmanned surface vehicle capabilities to the warfighter. At NUWC, he has also served as Assistant Tomahawk Program Manager and Tomahawk Test and Evaluation Project Manager. Dr. Ricci holds BS in Aerospace Engineering from Syracuse University and an MS and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics from University of Rhode Island.



**Nick Rotker** is MITRE's Chief BlueTech Strategist and manages the Underwater and Acoustic Systems department within MITRE Labs. He leads MITRE's efforts to solve big challenges in the BlueTech space, including internal R&D,

partnerships, and government work programs. He has experience developing and leading solutions in underwater acoustics, SONAR, signal processing, algorithm development, and distributed sensing systems. Nick facilitates maritime innovation-related collaboration across the government, industry, and academic stakeholders, and provides connection and mentorship to early-stage entrepreneurs looking to accelerate the nation's Blue Economy. Nick is currently an executive board member and chair of the New England Chapter of the Marine Technology Society (MTS). Prior to MITRE, Nick worked as an Acoustic Research Scientist at Scientific Solutions, Inc. He holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Vermont and a M.S. in Electrical Engineering from Tufts University.



**Dr. Jake Russell** is an Operating Partner at Propeller, working with portfolio companies and WHOI teams to identify and execute robust commercialization strategies.

Previously, Jake was a Fellow at ARPA-E, the Department of Energy's moonshot tech innovation

agency. During his 2-year term in Washington, he worked to develop multimillion dollar funding programs in ocean carbon measurement and freight logistics, and also spent time studying maritime decarbonization, macroalgae cultivation, and superconductors. He is an alumnus of the Clean Energy Leadership Institute DC 2022 cohort. Jake earned his PhD in materials chemistry at Columbia University, studying the energy storage properties of polymers and inorganic clusters. During this time, he also worked with Columbia Technology Ventures, helping to assess academic inventions and bring them from lab to market. He completed his bachelor's degree at the University of Chicago with a major in chemistry and minor in molecular engineering.

In his free time, Jake enjoys hiking, biking, baking bread, and playing the guitar and French horn.



**Jerry Sgobbo** is a 1994 graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy. He studied Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, rowed lightweight crew, and served on active duty as a career naval engineer for 20 years retiring at the rank of Commander in 2014.

Leveraging his Coast Guard experience in the surface domain, Jerry turned his attention to the world of subsea technology, taking a program manager position at Bluefin Robotics located in Quincy, MA. At Bluefin, Jerry was the PM for Knifefish, a U.S. Navy program of record that utilized a Bluefin autonomous underwater vehicle, known as an AUV, to perform the mine counter measure mission onboard the Navy's littoral combat ship. In 2018, after serving as the Knifefish PM for four years, Jerry and two co-workers decided to start their own AUV company.

In 2018, Jerry became a co-founder of Dive Technologies, a start-up focused on developing a long-range, deep-rated large AUV that is reliable and highly customizable at a disruptive price point to serve fast growing defense and commercial markets. At Dive, Jerry served as CFO and CEO, overseeing the company's product launch in 2020 and subsequent go-to-market success.

In January of 2022, Dive Technologies was acquired by Anduril Industries located in Costa Mesa, CA. Jerry was a key member of Dive's M&A team, guiding the successful transformation of Dive to Anduril Maritime, where he served as Head of Finance.

Recently, Jerry transitioned from Anduril and now serves as an advisor to several startups and small businesses focused

on blue technology and national security innovation.

In addition to graduating from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Jerry holds engineering graduate degrees from the University of Michigan and an M.B.A. from the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia.



**Dan Shropshire**, Vice President of Business Development and Project Execution at Teledyne Marine: Dan Shropshire is Vice President of Teledyne Marine Vehicle Business Development and Project Execution in North Falmouth,

Massachusetts. In this role, Dan oversees business and strategic development, community engagement, business acquisitions, program management, and product development for a variety of Teledyne Marine products which include: gliders, profiling floats, acoustic communication and positioning systems, AUVs, ROVs, and ASVs. He holds a Bachelors and Master's degree in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an Executive Management certificate from UCLA's Anderson School of Management. Dan started his career as an attitude control systems engineer working for Hughes Space and Communications on Geo Communications Satellites and later worked at TRW and Northrop Grumman at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics as Program Manager for NASA's Chandra X-Ray Observatory. After leaving Northrop, Dan started his own business developing software solutions for the tourism industry. He came to work for Teledyne in 2013 and has held several different positions including Program Manager, Director of Product Line Management and Vice President of Global Sales and Marketing for Marine Vehicles. While at Teledyne, Dan has managed multiple subsea vehicle design and development projects and development of a low frequency acoustic source for the marine seismic industry. He currently serves as Vice Chair of the New England chapter of the Marine Technical Society and is on the technology subcommittee for the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind.



**Lee Silvestre** has decades of experience in the Defense sector, commercial technology markets, and non-profit space; with roles focused on technology innovation and transition, programmatic and operational execution, strategy development, and high performing teams. Currently Lee is the NavalX Northeast Tech Bridge Coordinator. She works with companies – from new starts, small

businesses and entrepreneurs to nontraditional defense companies and large system integrators to progress solutions that contribute to Naval missions and support pressing needs of national defense. Her focus is on optimizing value through multiple use applications and complementary commercial and defense mission challenges. In her previous role, she stood up and managed the Undersea Technology Innovation Consortium, a national organization that was awarded the Navy's undersea technology OTA (Other Transaction Agreement) focused on undersea and maritime technology prototype projects. Prior to this, Lee was part of a small group of senior entrepreneurial leaders recruited to transform innovative light and color laboratory technology into product lines in a new start, profitable business call Performance Indicator. Earlier, Lee and her colleagues served in senior leadership roles in the \$6.2B Integrated Defense Systems Business in Raytheon where Lee was a Vice President leading Mission Innovation, the group chartered with identifying dual use applications for Raytheon's defense technologies. Lee's early career experience with KPMG Peat Marwick embedded her professionally within the maritime defense community where her passion for addressing issues of National Defense became a passion.



**Robert L. (Bob) Smith** is the Director of the Navy's SBIR/STTR and Special Programs managing numerous activities designed to assist small businesses in getting their technologies fully developed, tested, and inserted into products and services used by our Naval warfighters. Prior to his current assignment, Mr. Smith was the Director of Disruptive Technologies in the Office of Naval Research. The mission of the Disruptive Technologies program is to provide game changing technical options for the future Navy. Mr. Smith was also the Program Manager for the Department of the Navy's Rapid Innovation Fund, which supports small business concerns rapidly inserting their technology solutions into acquisition programs of record. Mr. Smith was lucky to have previously spent 22 years as a Marine helicopter pilot. Mr. Smith has a BA in Accounting from Whittier College and an MS in Systems Management from the Naval Postgraduate School. He was the recipient of the 2013 Department of the Oreta B. Stinson Advocacy Award (formerly Small Business Advocate Award), one of the annual Navy Acquisition Excellence Awards. The award is given by the Department's Office of Small Business Programs as recognition of a non-small business professional within the DON that demonstrates direct strong support for the DON

Small Business Program, and through their documented actions contributed significantly to improving the opportunity for small business success.



**Jeffrey M. Smith** Jeff is the VP/GM for Autonomous and Undersea Systems at Saab, Inc. responsible for growing a new US division focused on UUVs, ROVs, and Autonomy. Since starting this division in 2022, Jeff has led the successful

capture of over \$200M in new development and production contracts, established new facilities and grown a strong team of undersea vehicle experts. Prior to joining Saab, Jeff was a Chief Scientist for UUV Systems for BAE Systems FAST Labs. Jeff was the president and founder of Riptide Autonomous Solutions, a major market disruptor in the small unmanned undersea vehicle (UUV) market and brought the company to acquisition by BAE Systems in 4 years. Jeff has spent 30 years supporting the US Navy through his industry roles at General Dynamics, Bluefin Robotics, Riptide, BAE Systems, and now Saab. Jeff also holds patents in UUVs, robotics, electro-optical systems, rapid prototyping, subsea battery safety systems, biomedical devices, and in a counter-sniper system. Jeff was formerly an advisor for Open Water Power, an innovative seawater energy system developer, prior to their acquisition by L-3 Technologies. Jeff is also a member of the Board of Directors for Areté Associates, the New England Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association, and Blue Venture Forum.



**Niru Somayajula**, BSC, CEO of Sensor Technology Ltd., Niru Somayajula is a passionate supporter of Blue Economy growth, while seeking to become a world leader in acoustic tools and systems. Her company ethos, "What you

send out comes back", demonstrates a desire to become better global citizens. Niru actively adopts this philosophy to both company and career.

Niru has taken on the family legacy and remolded it. As a second-generation owner she has been ambitiously expanding the business, adding a second location in Atlantic Canada. Outside of work she likes to ride the waves as a paddleboarder, musician and photographer. She avidly supports others as a mentor, charitable board member and a mother of two. Her favourite atelier is a toss up between the kitchen, her gravel bike, or the locally owned café.



**Dr. Tobias (Toby) Stapleton, PhD, MBA** is a recognized leader in New England's Blue Economy ecosystem. He is the co-founder and director of the Blue Venture Forum, Inc. the first blue technology focused venture capital forum in the United States and is the co-founder of the Blue Innovation Symposium.

Toby is an experienced executive and entrepreneur who assists founders and c-level executives to raise investment and commercialize technology. He also advises policy makers, economic development officials, and legislators on issues related to growing and sustaining blue economy eco-systems. Toby serves as an Assistant Professor, in the Decision & Information Sciences Department, at UMass Dartmouth's Charlton College of Business.



**Elizabeth (Liz) M. Tanner, Esq.** Liz was appointed Rhode Island Secretary of Commerce in June 2022, under Governor Daniel McKee. In that role, she administers the Executive Office of Commerce, the state agency charged

with promoting commerce and fostering an economic environment in which Rhode Island's businesses can grow and prosper. Elizabeth Tanner was appointed Director of the Department of Business Regulation in November 2017 under Governor Gina Raimondo. She oversaw the regulating and enforcement of all Financial Services, The State Fire Marshal's office (including the Bomb Squad), The State Building Office, Office of Cannabis Regulation, Gaming and Athletics and a wide variety of professional licenses. She serves as a board member to Rhode Island Housing and was believed to be the only female Boxing Commissioner in the United States. Known as a problem solver and a fierce advocate for governmental efficiency, Liz is well recognized for her efforts to make it easier to do business in Rhode Island. Liz began her governmental career in 2015 with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation where she worked closely with small businesses. She was known for listening to and working to resolve the concerns raised by businesses in hundreds of events and meetings she attended or hosted. Prior to civic duty, Liz owned and operated her own law firm focused on real estate and corporate law. She was also a part owner of a title clearing business which was acquired by its national competitor and served as an auditor and trainer in the title insurance industry while she raised her two children. A graduate of the University of Rhode Island and Western New England University Law School, Liz has also received

training from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Liz resides in Bristol with her husband, where she is a proud host each year in celebrating the country's oldest 4th of July celebration.



**Jose Vazquez** Director, Defense and Security- Boston Engineering, As Boston Engineering's director for Defense and Security, Jose leads the company's engineering design and development efforts for DoD programs. Jose's public

sector career includes 15 years leading technology development programs at the Office of Naval Research and Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate that fielded advanced technologies for Sailors and Marines, and the Nation's First Responders. Jose has spearheaded the commercialization of more than a dozen product. Additionally, he served 20 years in the U.S. Navy in various engineering and combat systems jobs that culminated as second in command of an AEGIS cruiser. Jose holds a B.S. degree from the U.S. Naval Academy, and an M.S. degree from the Naval Post Graduate School. While serving at DHS, he was awarded the 2014 Secretary of Homeland Security Excellence Award for fielding technologies.



**Nate Walton** is the founder and principal of Sachem Strategies, a consulting firm that provides business development and government relations services. The firm's client focus are innovative firms in the defense, technology, financial services,

and energy sectors. In his role leading Sachem, Nate has sought to advocate not just for individual businesses at the forefront of innovation, but also for the broader technology ecosystem in New England. In 2020, Governor Charlie Baker appointed Nate to serve on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, which works to promote business formation and growth in the Commonwealth's technology sector. Nate has also served as a thought leader in the government innovation sector. He has organized coalitions within Congress to address challenges such as intellectual property threats, contract acquisition obstacles, and regulations that hinder the growth of emerging technologies. Nate has also partnered with industry leaders to design reform proposals that would more efficiently integrate innovative firms into the defense industrial base. Nate holds a B.A. in political science from Bates College and a M.P.P. from Brown University. He is an avid sailor, and lives with his family in Marblehead, Mass.





**Ian Wilms** was raised in Hamilton, ON Canada. Upon graduation from McMaster University he joined the Navy Reserves and became a qualified Naval Warfare Officer.

While still in the Reserves he joined IBM where he spent 14 years leading Procurement departments in Latin America based in Mexico City and then transitioning to sales as a Business Development Executive specializing in Public Safety and Cyber Security. After IBM he transitioned to the Entrepreneurial world and, over the past 15 years, has co-founded 3 successful companies.

SeafarerAI is his 4th company and combines his passion for the ocean with technology. Ian lives with his wife Kim of 30 years (also a Navy officer and IBMer) in Saint John, New Brunswick and they have 3 grown children.

**Fun fact** - Ian is an Award winning children's author of *Brushalot - The Tale Of Tooth Fairy*.



**Mr. Yuan Yao** is a seasoned software engineer, a graduate of the University of New Brunswick, Canada, boasting 15 years of experience in Mobile, Robotics, and AR/MR systems. His entrepreneurial spirit has led him to co-found successful

ventures in robotics, manufacturing, and trade development. In 2022, Yuan assumed the position of Director of Products at Marine Thinking, spearheading a diverse team focused on AI-powered marine autonomy. In 2023, he transitioned into the role of Business Development, further expanding his impact on the company's growth and innovation.

**Note**

Try as we might, there are few speakers from whom we just were not able to obtain their bios or head shots in time for production of this document. Their participation and support of everything BLUE is greatly appreciated.

# See You Next Year at the 10th Blue Innovation Symposium

February 10 - 13, 2025

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