

For Immediate Release  
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**Mary Alice Cerrito Fettis, Chair of Whalefest Monterey and President of Fisherman's Wharf Association to Receive Sea Star Award from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation at 2020 Sanctuary Sea Stars Awards Brunch to be held on Sunday, December 6, 2020**

Monterey CA. November, 2020. Mary Alice Cerrito Fettis, Chair of Whalefest Monterey and President of Fisherman's Wharf Association has won a prestigious Sea Star Award for Education and Outreach from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Wendy Brickman, Executive Director of Fisherman's Wharf Association has also received Special Thanks.

The awards will be given out by Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Board Co-Chairs Hilary Bryant and Secretary Leon Panetta at the Sanctuary Sea Stars Brunch.

The 2020 Sanctuary Sea Stars Brunch is a virtual event this year and will be held on Sunday, December 6, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 am.

It is free to attend by registering at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/national-marine-sanctuary-foundation/monterey-bay-national-marine-sanctuary-foundation-6beda088-d262-49c0-8ca1-7d450368591f/sea-stars-brunch>.

Donations are appreciated and can be made at <https://montereycountygives.com/marinesanctuary>

Don't miss out on this chance to support ocean conservation along California's Central Coast. For more information, contact Ginaia Kelly, 831-359-7071, [ginaia@marinesanctuary.org](mailto:ginaia@marinesanctuary.org)

**More About the Sanctuary Sea Stars Brunch**

In celebration of the 28th anniversary of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Foundation will present awards to 5 people and organizations who have contributed significantly to the sanctuary through education, conservation, research, and business. Foundation Board of Directors co-chairs Hilary Bryant and Secretary Leon Panetta will present the "Sea Star" awards, including bestowing the highest honor, the Panetta Sea Star Award, to Mark Silberstein of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation. In addition to Mary Alice Cerrito Fettis for Education and Outreach, the other Sea Star Award recipients include for Research: Dr. Jim Barry, Research Chair and Senior Scientist at MBARI; Resource Protection: Cowell Beach Working Group; Business and Tourism: Dream Inn, Santa Cruz;

The community is invited to attend this engaging and educational virtual event featuring awards presentations, a keynote speaker, the premier of a new Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Film, and an online auction.

The Keynote speaker will be Haben Girma. The first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, Haben Girma is a human rights lawyer advancing disability justice. President Obama named her a White House Champion of Change. She received the Helen Keller Achievement Award, a spot on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, and TIME100 Talks. President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Chancellor Angela Merkel have all honored Haben. Haben believes disability is an opportunity for innovation, and she teaches organizations the importance of choosing inclusion. The New York Times, Oprah Magazine, and TODAY Show featured her memoir, Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law. Haben was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she currently lives. She will be discussing her life, career, and experiences surfing in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Learn more about Haben at her website.

The Sanctuary Sea Stars Brunch is a benefit for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

### **About Mary Alice Cerrito Fettis**

As Chair of Whalefest Monterey, Mary Alice Cerrito Fettis has helped bring world recognition to Fisherman's Wharf and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, through the annual "Whalefest Monterey," which celebrates the sanctuary, and empowers and inspires the public to preserve our oceans. Mary Alice has been the lead organizer, fund-raiser, and facilitator of this free, fun and educational/interactive family event for ten years! She is also the current President of the Board of Directors of Fisherman's Wharf Association.

Mary Alice graduated from Santa Catalina School and earned a BA and Master's at Teaching History from Santa Clara University. After graduating from college, she became an international charter flight attendant with Trans International Airlines and traveled to more than 45 countries, giving her a very broad view of life. Mary Alice's other activities include past President of the Monterey Hotel & Restaurant Association (precursor to the Monterey County Hospitality Association), Past President and current Board of Directors of the North Fremont Business District. She served on the board of the Hellenic Cultural Institute, on the Board of Directors of Monterey History & Art Association, and serves on La Merienda Committee as past chair.

At Pan American Real Estate, she sold commercial and residential real estate for over 25 years. Currently she is a real estate property manager representing family interests.

For several years, she was President of Monterey Fisherman's Wharf Association and has been reelected as President for the 2020/2021 Board. In her capacity, she works with the City of Monterey, State of California, Harbormaster, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and 36 Wharf merchants.

### **About Whalefest Monterey**

Whalefest Monterey has been held as a free, fun and educational interactive public event for all ages on Old Fisherman's Wharf celebrating the biodiversity of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Traditionally, the event features a 2-day Symposium with world-renowned marine experts and dozens of exhibit booths, and benefits many local and national marine organizations that educate, inspire, and empower the public to protect the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). There is always a variety of live musical entertainment at the head of the Wharf. In 2021, the event will go virtual with

scientific presentations; videos from local marine, environment and sustainability oriented non-profits; art and history demonstrations; and an eclectic array of music performances; all to be shown on four nights: January 26-29, 2021 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at [www.facebook.com/whalefestmonterey](http://www.facebook.com/whalefestmonterey).

People come from around the world to view the many whales, orcas, dolphins, seals and sea lions, and pelicans in Monterey Bay. Chairing the Whalefest committee since 2011, Mary Alice has been passionate about ensuring that these visitors know and appreciate they are in a national marine sanctuary.

For more information about Whalefest Monterey, go to the Whalefest page on [www.montereywharf.com](http://www.montereywharf.com) or call (831) 238-0777.

### **About the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the local non-profit partner for NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and its chief advocate. A healthy Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is recognized as a national treasure for its unique and abundant biodiversity, and widespread community support. Their mission is to inspire the public to protect Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary through participation in and support of sanctuary programs, projects, and partnerships. They work in partnership with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to: engage the public through public outreach and education programs.; advocate on behalf of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; and develop and strengthen partnerships to protect biodiversity and enhance ecosystem health in the sanctuary through coordinated action.