



John A. Knauss: Did You Know?

1925 – 2015

Dr. John A. Knauss was nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in oceanography and marine policy and has had a lasting impact on marine science, policy and management in the United States. In partnership with Senator Claiborne Pell and Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus, Knauss was instrumental in the formulation and development of the National Sea Grant Program in 1966 and was the founder of the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship program. Learn more...

- John A. Knauss was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1925.
- Initially, he had planned on being a liberal arts major and received an English scholarship from Oberlin.
- Knauss received a Bachelor of Science in meteorology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- He received a Master of Science from University of Michigan in physics.
- After working with the Navy Electronics Laboratory in San Diego, Knauss decided to pursue a Ph.D. in oceanography from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
- While working in an assistantship at Scripps, he wrote a play about the administrative failings regarding an expedition at sea, called *Endless Holiday*.
- In his Ph.D. dissertation, he made the first comprehensive measurements of the Pacific Equatorial Undercurrent and demonstrated this to be a major component of the Pacific Ocean circulation.
- A similar current in the Indian Ocean was discovered by Knauss.
- The observations from his Ph.D. dissertation were published in *Science*, *Scientific American* and *Nature*.
- In 1962, he founded and became Dean of the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island—served there until 1987.
- His involvement in the Sea Grant Program at URI was considered by Knauss to be his biggest political contribution.
- He strongly believed that scientists have a role, and a responsibility to be involved, in public policy.
- Knauss had a profound sense of humor: he created the Albatross Award for unusual contributions to the field of oceanography and marine policy while engaged in the American Miscellaneous Society (formed “to see the lighter side of heavier problems”). He granted himself the first award.

- He served on a commission that led to the creation of NOAA (1970) and the Coastal Zone Management Act.
- Knauss served on many government and scientific panels, including his position as President of the Association of Sea Grant Program Institutions, and was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Geophysical Union and the Marine Technology Society.
- He was NOAA administrator from 1989 to 1993.
- In recognition of his leadership role in the development of Sea Grant, the flagship program of Washington, D.C., an internship was named for him in 1979: the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship.
- Knauss was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame in 1983 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science from the University of Rhode Island in 1992.
- Learn more at <http://www.gso.uri.edu/blog/gso-bids-farewell-to-dr-john-knauss/> or at <http://seagrants.gso.uri.edu>

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