

Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Program Application (2026)



“Oldest Diving Museum in the World”



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WELCOME LETTER	2-3
2. THE LEGACY OF JAMES “JIM” MCCARTHY	4-5
3. QUALIFICATION FOR APPLICANTS	6
4. NOTABLE DATES	6
5. AWARD EVALUATION AND CRITERIA	7
5. APPLICATION DIRECTIONS	8
6. APPLICATION	9-17
SECTION I: Application Information	9-10
SECTION II: United States Military Diver Sponsor Information	11
SECTION III: Essay Questions	12-14
SECTION IV: Additional Supporting Information	15
SECTION V: Required Supporting Document Checklist	16
SECTION VI: Sponsor Signature Page	17
7. MEDIA RELEASE FORM	18-19
8. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS	20
9. CONTACT INFORMATION	20



Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Program

Background

Welcome to the 2026 Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Program. This scholarship, formally named the Mark V Monument Project Scholarship, is an opportunity to support our Military Diving family! We are excited to be able to offer this scholarship to our Military Diving families and are grateful for the donations and volunteer efforts that enable us to continue this amazing operation.

The number and amount of scholarship awards vary each year based on the qualifications of the applicant pool and the funds available. In past years, individual awards have ranged from \$500 to \$3,500, depending on applicant merit. Award notifications are mailed via the U.S. Postal Service on or around June 1 each year. Qualified applicants are encouraged to reapply annually.

As a new element of our Scholarship Program, we will honor heroes of the military diving community whose service, sacrifice, and leadership have shaped our diving legacy. Their contributions and ethos will help guide the scholarship's selection process.

This year, our scholarship is dedicated to celebrating the life and legacy of our hero:

Jim McCarthy, SEALAB III Engineer.

Our Mission

Continuing education, whether through college, university, vocational, or technical training, has been demonstrated to be a significant cornerstone for achieving a successful and fulfilling career. Those who are unable to pursue post-secondary education often lack access to the skills and training needed to achieve their goals. One of the most significant reasons that many of our fellow service members' children often do not have the opportunity to pursue higher or vocational education is the rising cost of education and specialized training programs.

Military Divers are among the most dedicated and hardworking professionals. They willingly undertake one of the most dangerous and demanding professions in our nation. Despite this, many do not earn sufficient incomes to absorb the high cost of college tuition, trade schools, or vocational certification programs for their children without some form of financial assistance. As a result, the children of many Military Divers aspire to pursue higher education or skilled vocational careers but are unable to afford these opportunities or qualify for student loans at increasingly burdensome interest rates.



The Man in the Sea Museum proudly embraces its renewed mission to provide scholarship assistance for college, vocational, and technical education to the children and dependents of U.S. Military Divers. We are committed to supporting diverse educational pathways that lead to meaningful careers and long-term economic stability. We extend our sincere gratitude for the generous donations and volunteer efforts that allow us to operate and advance this important mission.

The Man in the Sea Museum, operated by The Institute of Diving, is the oldest diving museum in the world. The Institute of Diving is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As such, donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Contributions to the Man in the Sea Museum and to this scholarship fund qualify as tax-deductible donations.

Download the current year's application from our website at:

<https://www.maninthesea.org/scholarships>

Signed,

Joe Howard

NDCM (MDV) Joseph Howard, USN (Ret.)
President, Board of Directors
The Institute of Diving
Man in the Sea Museum



The Legacy of James “Jim” McCarthy

James “Jim” McCarthy lived a life defined by service, innovation, and quiet leadership—a legacy that continues to shape both Bay County, Florida, and the global diving and hyperbaric communities. Born on June 14, 1932, in Ogdensburg, New York, Jim first served his nation during the Korean War as a U.S. Army veteran, carrying with him the values of courage and duty that would guide the rest of his life.

After returning home, Jim embarked on a remarkable engineering career with Northrop Corporation, where he contributed to the development of the Polaris and Poseidon missile programs—cornerstones of America’s strategic deterrence during the Cold War. His skill soon intersected with the frontier of ocean science when he joined the groundbreaking U.S. Navy SEALAB program as a communications engineer, supporting the pioneering work that expanded human presence beneath the sea.

When the Navy Experimental Diving Unit (NEDU) and the Ocean Simulation Facility (OSF) relocated to Panama City, Florida in the 1970s, Jim became one of the driving forces behind their transition. In the decades that followed, he served as the lead engineer for the OSF—a seven-chamber complex capable of simulating depths of 2,250 feet of seawater. His work ensured that every piece of U.S. Navy diving equipment was rigorously tested before it ever touched the ocean. From 1970 to 1994, Jim was the sole engineer responsible for the system, helping make it the world’s largest and deepest saturation diving facility.

After retiring from civil service, Jim and his wife, Ginger, founded Gulf Coast Hyperbarics in 1983, an organization that quickly earned international respect for its meticulously engineered hyperbaric medical systems. Jim personally designed, built, or certified more than fifty chambers for military and civilian use, always with a deeply human mission in mind. For him, engineering was never about profit, but about healing. His work touched hospitals, research institutions, NASA collaborators, and countless patients around the world.

Jim’s love for the diving community endured long beyond his professional accomplishments. As a board member of the Man in the Sea Museum, he championed the preservation of undersea exploration history and nurtured the next generation’s appreciation for the science and sacrifice behind it. He also maintained lifelong friendships with fellow SEALAB pioneers—men like Robert “Bob” Barth—who remembered Jim not only as an engineer, but as a man of humility, humor, and heart.



The Legacy of James “Jim” McCarthy (con’t)

Beyond his technical brilliance, Jim was a devoted family man. He shared a deep and enduring love with his wife, Virginia “Ginger” McCarthy, and after her passing, he continued to honor the life they built together. He was an avid reader, a loyal fan of the University of Michigan Wolverines and the Atlanta Braves, and a grandfather whose wisdom and warmth left lasting imprints on those who knew him.

Jim McCarthy passed away peacefully on June 11, 2025, just three days before his 93rd birthday. Yet his legacy—etched into the steel of hyperbaric chambers, the history of Navy diving, and the memories of countless friends, colleagues, and family members—continues to shine. His life stands as a testament to humility, service, and the quiet power of a man committed to making the world safer, deeper, and better.





The following pages have been developed to explain the application process and to answer common questions.

Applications will be available for download from our website starting January 30, 2026. All scholarship submissions must be e-mailed to the Man in the Sea Museum at info@maninthesea.org. The deadline for receipt of application materials will be April 30th, 2026.

Late materials and incomplete application packages will not be considered for an award.

QUALIFICATION FOR APPLICANTS

1. Applicants must be the child, adopted child, or foster child who is a current dependent of a United States Military Diver.
2. Applicants must be 24 years of age or younger.
3. Applicants must be accepted and enrolled in a nationally accredited educational instruction undergraduate college, university or trade school program. Applicants must provide proof of registration.
4. Current Service Academy Cadets, Midshipman, Active-Duty service members and Veterans are not eligible.
5. All scholarship application packages must include all the required documentation to be considered by the Man in the Sea Museum Board of Directors.
6. Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship recipients may reapply every year for the scholarship award. This scholarship does not automatically renew.

NOTABLE DATES

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Jan. 30, 2026 | Applications will be available from the Man in the Sea Museum website. |
| April 30, 2026 | Scholarship application packages must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. (CST/L). |
| June 1, 2026 | Award notifications will be sent via U.S. mail. |



AWARD EVALUATION AND CRITERIA

A committee of 5-7 volunteers representing current, former and retired Military Divers, both officer and enlisted, and their spouses will carefully read and evaluate each completed application package across the following 8 categories:

1. Grade Point Average
2. Volunteerism and Community Involvement
3. Extra-Curricular Activities
4. Awards
5. Employment
6. Essays
7. Letters of Recommendation
8. Overall Impression

Successful applicants will demonstrate strong academic and effective writing ability, combined with community involvement and an ability to manage their time effectively.

This application is a résumé to the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee. Make sure you express yourself as a great candidate by making sure that they understand what your goals are and what you have done for your community.

The amount and number of awards will vary annually due to the number of qualified applicants and the funds available in the scholarship program.

Award notifications will be sent via U.S. mail on or about June 1, 2026.

The information submitted will be treated in strict confidence and made only available to the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-380.



APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

1. Applicants shall complete the Scholarship Application in full and provide all required signatures. Additional pages may be attached as necessary to clarify responses or to expand upon essay questions.
2. Applicants will submit the Sponsor Signature page which must include both the applicant and sponsor signatures. A Servicemember death certificate is acceptable in lieu of signature.
3. Academic transcripts must be included for high school grades 9-12. Dual enrolled high school and college students should also provide academic college transcripts. PDF copies of high school, college, university, or trade school transcripts will be accepted.
4. Applicants shall provide three (3) signed Letters of Recommendation from individuals who are not family members. Each letter must include the recommender's full contact information.
5. Applicants will provide a copy of the service member's Military Diver graduation certificate. If a graduation certificate is unavailable, provide a copy of the member's DD-214 or training records that provide evidence of the member's service in the Military Dive community. Applicants must redact all Privacy-related information, such as Service numbers or social security numbers.
6. Applicants will submit a current photo and a signed media release form.

NOTE: The Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee may use the image on the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship webpage and in other forms of communication.

Examples may be found on the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship page at:

<https://www.maninthesea.org/scholarships>

7. Applicants will submit their completed application and all attachments as one combined PDF document. Applications will be emailed to INFO@ManintheSea.org



APPLICATION

SECTION I: APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Applicant's Name (Last, First, Middle):

2. Street Address:

3. City, State and zip code:

4. Phone Number:

5. Email Address:

6. Birth Date:

7. Are you currently a high school senior, a high school graduate, or a recipient of a GED?

Yes

No

8. Do you currently attend or plan on attending a regionally accredited educational institution undergraduate degree or trade school program prior to December 31, 2026?

Yes

No

9. Have you previously received an award from the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship program?

Yes

No

10. Will your 25th birthday take place prior to December 31, 2026?

Yes

No



SECTION I: APPLICANT INFORMATION (Continued)

12. Please list your GPA (on a 4.0 scale) for the three most current years during which you have attended school.

13. Please list your paid employment experience (employer, position, and dates of employment) for the past three years.

14. Please describe any volunteer or extracurricular activities that you have or actively participate in (including number of seasons, years, or hours of activity) for the past three years.

15. Please list any awards or special recognitions you have received during the past three years. (Include award title, date awarded, reason for the award, and awarding organization).



SECTION III: ESSAY QUESTIONS

REQUIRED: Please answer the three essay questions provided, limit response to 500 words or less per essay. *Use a separate sheet for essay responses as needed.* Use of IA as tool for formatting and corrections is allowed, but IA should not be used to write the answer to your essay questions.

Essay Question # 1: Resilience and Adaptability: “Describe how growing up in a military family has shaped your ability to adapt to new environments, overcome challenges, and thrive in uncertain situations. Provide specific examples of how these experiences have influenced your goals and aspirations.”



SECTION III: ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay Question # 2: Leadership and Service: “What leadership traits are the most important in terms of team unity and a team’s ability to accomplish goals?”



SECTION III: ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay Question # 3: Future Goals and Legacy: “How has your family’s military legacy influenced your career or educational aspirations? In what ways do you hope to honor or extend this legacy?”



SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This space is provided for any additional information you think would be relevant or of interest to the selection committee.



SECTION V: REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION CHECK-LIST

Submit this checklist and all supporting documents with your application. Incomplete packages will not be considered. Applicant must Redact or erase all Social Security numbers on all documents. The information submitted will be treated in strict confidence available only to the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-380.

- Supporting documentation of Sponsor's service as a United States Military Diver.
(DD-214 or Graduation Certificate)
- Include PDF copies of all academic transcripts for high school grades 9-12 and for any college or trade school courses completed.
- List of schools and dates of transcript provided.
- Letters of Recommendations: Provide 3 letters of recommendation from current or former Teachers, Employers, Coaches, and Mentors, etc., who are non-family members.
- Photo of Applicant (preferably with sponsor but not required)
- Additional supporting documentation may include awards, special recognitions, certifications, or letters and logs verifying volunteer service.

Submit the completed application and all attachments as one combined PDF document.



SECTION VI: SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

Student Applicant's Name:

United States Military Diver Sponsor Name:

Authority to request the information contained in this application is granted under Title 5, United States Code, Section 301, and applicable Departmental Regulations.

The information you provide will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating eligibility for educational financial assistance through the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Program. All data submitted will be reviewed to assess personal qualifications, scholastic achievement, and overall suitability for award consideration.

By signing this application, you affirm that all information provided is true, accurate, and complete to the best of your knowledge. Submission of false or misleading information may result in disqualification from scholarship consideration.

If the United States Military Diver Sponsor is deceased, please state date of death in place of the sponsor's signature and provide a copy of the death certificate.

Applicant Signature:

Date

Military Diver Sponsor Signature:

Date



MEDIA RELEASE FORM

I hereby grant the Man in the Sea Museum, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee, the irrevocable right and permission to use the photograph submitted with the 2026 Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship application for use on the Man in the Sea Museum website and social media, for the sole purposes of communicating about the museum, the scholarship program, the scholarship committee, and related events. The duration of this use is indefinite.

The information submitted will be treated in strict confidence and made only available to the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-380.

Furthermore, I understand and agree that these photographs, may be used by the Man in the Sea Museum for non-profit purposes, including but not limited to:

- Educational and informational materials
- Man in the Sea Scholarship program promotion and outreach
- Fundraising and development efforts
- Print publications and reports
- Websites, social media, and electronic communications
- Grant applications and annual reports

I understand that these materials may be used in any media now known or hereafter developed and may be edited, duplicated, or distributed without further notification.

I acknowledge that I will not receive compensation for the use of such media and that all rights to the media belong to the Man in the Sea Museum.



MEDIA RELEASE FORM (Cont'd)

I hereby release, discharge, and hold harmless Man in the Sea Museum, its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, agents, and assigns from any and all claims, demands, or liabilities arising out of or related to the use of the media, including but not limited to claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

Participant Information:

Full Name (Print):

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Signature:

Date:

If included in picture:

Military Diver Sponsor Name (Print):

Military Diver Sponsor Signature:

Date

For Participants Under 18 Years of Age

I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor named above and hereby consent to the terms of this Media Release Form on behalf of the minor.

Minor's Name:

Parent/Guardian Name (Print):

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:



SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please retain a complete copy of this application and all supporting documentation for your personal records.

Applicants must compile the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Application, and all required supporting documents into a single PDF file. This PDF will serve as the final submission. All documents must be properly signed and dated where indicated. Incomplete application packages will not be reviewed or considered.

Completed Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Application packages shall be submitted via email in PDF format to:

info@maninthesea.org

All application materials must be received by the Man in the Sea Museum Scholarship Committee no later than 11:59 p.m. (CST) on April 30, 2026. Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Man in the Sea Museum

17314 Panama City Beach PKWY

Panama City Beach, FL 32408

(850) 235-4101

E-mail: info@maninthesea.org

Website: <https://maninthesea.org>