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## **International Whitewater Hall of Fame Announces 2017 Honorees**

Induction ceremony planned for October 21, 2017 in conjunction  
with ACA National Paddlesports Conference

**BRYSON CITY, N.C.** (July 27, 2017) – The International Whitewater Hall of Fame (IWHOF) announced today its inductees for the Class of 2017. The selected honorees join an esteemed group of the world's most accomplished whitewater pioneers, explorers, champions, and advocates.

"We are extremely excited to honor this year's inductees with our partners at the ACA," said IWHOF Board of Governors Chair Risa Shimoda. "This year's voting was extremely close and very competitive, and should make for a special induction ceremony at the Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) on October 21."

As with years past, this year's nominations were submitted through IWHOF Affiliate Organizations around the world, whose leaders confirmed their validity and screened the candidates before electorate voting in June, 2017. Following are this year's winners:

### **Advocate: Bunny Johns**

Bunny Johns won this year's Advocate category for her sport-changing facilitation of how the process, technique, and safety of whitewater paddling instruction was taught and shared across the USA. Johns supported and guided a period of profound transformation of whitewater kayaking instruction in her roles as an ACA Instructor Trainer (1979-2000), ACA Chairwoman of the Training Committee (1979-1981), Department Head, and VP and President of NOC (1976-2000), one of the largest and most famous whitewater paddling schools in the world. She was also an accomplished racer, winning the Gold Medal in C2 Mixed at the 1981 World Wildwater Championships in Bala, Wales, with partner Mike Hipsher.

### **Explorer: Nikki Kelly and Julie Munger (Tie)**

In one of IWHOF's closest-ever vote tallies, this year's Explorer honors go to both Nikki Kelly of New Zealand and Julie Munger of the USA.

Julie Munger led the U.S. Women's Rafting team from 1989-2001, winning gold at every World Championships. A 25-year instructor for Rescue 3 International, the international raft guide has also taken part in several first descents around the world and is one of the

leading safety and rescue instructors for whitewater rescue in the world, founding Sierra Rescue to advance whitewater rescue curriculum development.

Nikki Kelly helped her New Zealand Women's Rafting Team win World Championships in 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2013. An acclaimed extreme kayaker, she also owns the first female descent of the Stikine River, in British Columbia, Canada. "Everybody who pushes their limits inspires me, especially a beginner kayaker facing their first grade two rapid," she says.

### **Pioneer: Bill Masters**

Bill Masters founded Perception Kayaks in 1975, the brand most responsible for the development of whitewater kayaking. Masters made significant advances to the methodology of rotational molding as applied to kayaks, allowing affordable, high-quality kayaks to be available worldwide. Bill's designs such as the Dancer created categories in boat design still used to this day. He has been referred to as "the trunk of the tree of modern whitewater kayaking."

This year's Class of 2017 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held in Bryson City, North Carolina, USA on October 21<sup>st</sup>, as a component of the annual [ACA National Paddlesports Conference](#). IWHOF fans whose heroes and heroines belong to this year's class are encouraged to attend the event, which includes dinner and a video presentation ceremony honoring the inductees. "We are an International Whitewater Hall of Fame, and we recognize the size and importance of our international membership base," said IWHOF board member Pamela Dillon. "Holding the ceremony in conjunction with the ACA's annual National Paddlesports Conference (NPC) will provide a fantastic opportunity for instructors and individuals seeking training and certification to witness the induction and meet revered whitewater heroes."

### **About the International Whitewater Hall of Fame (IWHOF)**

The [International Whitewater Hall of Fame \(IWHOF\)](#) is a program of the American Canoe Association (ACA) and is designed to recognize and celebrate significant contributions to paddlesports. IWHOF is led by an international Board of Governors who hail from various paddling backgrounds. Nominations are sought and submitted through IWHOF Affiliates around the world and screened by an international panel. Over 100 members of the IWHOF electorate are eligible to cast votes in each category to determine the honorees. Submitted recommendations are good for six years, after which they must be re-submitted. Each year up to two honorees may be chosen in the categories of Pioneer, Explorer, Champion and Advocate. See past inductees and find more information at: [www.iwhof.org](http://www.iwhof.org)