

Valerie Taylor Biography

Valerie Taylor

Pioneering Diver, Shark Advocate
& Conservationist



Valerie Taylor has an ease and grace in the water that conceals her 82 years of age. Valerie has been diving for over 60 years. She can tell stories about a sea bursting with life, the great schools of fish, sharks as far as the eye can see. These, she says, are now gone. But Valerie remains hopeful. She believes that the ocean will recover, 'if' we leave it alone.

Famous for her chainmail shark suit and for gracing the covers of National Geographic, Valerie and her late husband, shark protection pioneer Ron Taylor, carved out an extraordinary career with their stunning marine documentaries. Ron and Valerie introduced Australia and the world to the wonders of marine life, specifically sharks.

Starting their ocean careers as competitive spear-fishers, as their fascination with the oceans increased, they gave up their spears for cameras.

The list of credits and awards for Valerie Taylor is extensive. She and Ron were the first people to film great white sharks without the protection of a cage. They made countless shark films, including Blue Water, White Death, which caught the attention of American film Director Steven Spielberg and led to them working on Jaws. The list of film and television credits is exhaustive, but it's the conservation work Valerie has done both in Australia and around the world that is truly impressive.

Through her campaigning efforts, she prevented oil exploration in Ningaloo Marine Park, overturned mining rights on Coral Sea Islands, won protection for many places on the Great Barrier Reef before it was given World Heritage status and lobbied for the maintenance of sanctuary zones in South Australia. In 1986, Valerie was appointed Rider of the Order of the Golden Ark for marine conservation by His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. In 2003, Valerie was awarded the Order of Australia for her conservation efforts. Pioneering diver, shark advocate, conservationist, artist, ask Valerie and she says, "I'm a diver who loves Australia's oceans."

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