

## Renowned marine biologist and oceanographer Eugenie Clark dies

Eugenie Clark, whose childhood rapture with fish in a New York City aquarium led to a life of scholarly adventure in the littorals and depths of the Seven Seas and to a global reputation as a marine biologist and expert on sharks, died on Wednesday at her home in Sarasota, Fla. She was 92.

The cause was lung cancer, her son Nikolas Konstantinou said.

Long before “Jaws” scared the wits out of swimmers, Clark rode a 40-foot whale shark off Baja California, ran into killer great white sharks while scuba diving in Hawaii, studied “sleeping” sharks in undersea caves off the Yucatán, witnessed a shark’s birth and found a rare sixgill shark in a submersible dive off Bermuda.

Clark was an ichthyologist and oceanographer whose academic credentials, teaching and research posts, scientific activities and honors filled a 20-page curriculum vitae, topped by longtime roles as a professor at the University of Maryland and director of the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota.

For all her scientific achievements, Clark was also a figure of popular culture who used her books, lectures and expertise to promote the preservation of ecologically fragile shorelines, to oppose commercial exploitation of endangered species and to counteract misconceptions, especially about sharks.

She insisted that “Jaws,” the 1975 Steven Spielberg film based on a Peter Benchley novel, and its sequels inspired unreasonable fears of sharks as ferocious killers. “When you see a shark underwater,” she said, “you should say, ‘How lucky I am to see this beautiful animal in his environment.’ ”

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