

Outdoor enthusiast wins acclaim for his photography

By **BRENDA G. ANDERSON**

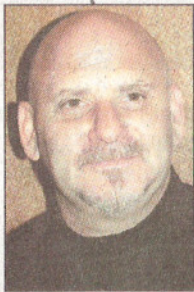
Correspondent

Bob Zimmerman describes himself as a self-taught underwater and nature photographer. His work has been shown in numerous galleries, featured on the front cover of magazines and has won him recognition and awards.

"My first published photograph was on Mobile Bay Monthly magazine," he said. "I've also been featured on Florida Outdoor Magazine, Alert Diver, Outdoor Magazine as well as on calendars and other publications. Some of my work is now at the Battle House and the RSA Tower." His work can also be seen on www.waterworldphotography.com.

"My photography started when I met Jim Wainwright, whose sailboat was in the slip next to mine," Zimmerman remembered. "He was a diving instructor and I had received my diving certification when I was 14 years old, but I never really dove a lot. When Jim and I started diving off Panama City, I bought the cheapest underwater camera I could find. It didn't have a light meter, which forced me to learn how the camera

Get to Know Bob Zimmerman



Birthplace: Neptune, N.J.

Hometown: Mobile

Family: Parents, Steven and Carol Zimmerman; brothers, Stanley and David

Occupation: Real estate investor; underwater and nature photographer

Activities: Sailing, kayaking, scuba diving

worked."

Zimmerman owns an apparatus that mounts both his camera and his light strobes. When totally extended, the piece of equipment is 5 feet wide. "I use a 180-degree-wide area lens, so I must get at least 4 feet from an object to get good lighting and a good shot," he said. "The further down in the water I go, the less light. Some of my hammerhead shark photographs were taken 4 feet away."

Zimmerman grew up spending time on the water. "My father, a retired professor at the University of South Alabama, kept us boys involv-

ed in many activities," he said. "I learned to sail at age 6. He was also our Boy Scouts leader and always found high adventure trips for us. By the time I was 13, I had canoed in the Okeefnokee Swamp and Everglades National Park."

By the time Zimmerman was awarded Eagle Scout, he had

accumulated 10 medals for backpacking on historical trails. "My father, who was very athletic, found all these places to take us Scouts," he said.

After graduating from Murphy High School in 1982, Zimmerman graduated from the University of South Alabama with a degree in finance and is now a real estate investor. "My father was in the business department and our family was oriented to that field," he said. "My mother sold real estate, and we had rental property; I helped with the maintenance while in high school. I

guess I emulated what I was around."

During college, Zimmerman bought his first of many kayaks. "One Thanksgiving, I paddled the Mississippi Sound, which took three days. It was cold with high winds and 4-to-6-foot waves — I loved it," he said.

He has also surfed in his kayak. "After a hurricane is the best time, but you'd better know how to do a good Eskimo roll," he said referring to flipping a capsized kayak back over to the upright position.

After college, Zimmerman headed to Tennessee, where he worked a couple of years for a kayak manufacturing company. "I bought 17 kayaks, all different sizes and applications. I did a lot of white water kayaking while there," he said.

His next water craft was a 25-foot Columbia sailboat, later replaced with a 32-foot Cheoy Lee sailboat. "I like to sail when the water is rough; the boat does better also," he noted. "It's a challenge which tests my skills. Some day I'd like to sail around the world. I need to know my capabilities before taking off on a trip like that."