

Kathy Sinnett Honored with 2025 BoatUS/NWSA Leadership in Women's Sailing Award

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., June 9, 2024 – Since 1999, the BoatUS/NWSA Leadership in Women's Sailing Award has recognized extraordinary women who have inspired, educated and enriched the lives of women through sailing. This year's honoree, Kathy Sinnett of Daytona Beach, Florida, continues the tradition in epitomizing the exceptional skill, leadership, and dedication to promoting opportunities for women to embrace the joy and challenge of the sport of sailing. Sinnett accepted the award Saturday at the 2025 National Women's Sailing Association Conference presented by American Sailing in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Sinnett grew up on the water, first racing Snipes with her father, then teaching and racing at the University of Wisconsin. Her career decision to move to Alaska did not tamp down her desire to sail. "Who cares if the water is frozen? I'm from Wisconsin," she offers as she shares her sailing adventures aboard her DN iceboat up the Kuskokwim River.

After accepting a position as a public health nurse in Ketchikan, Alaska, Sinnet found a spot on an all-women's keelboat on which she shared her knowledge while honing her leadership in Alaska's wet, cold and challenging environment.

Throughout the years moving coast to coast as a U.S. Coast Guard spouse, Sinnet has shown leadership by creating opportunities for connection with other women through sailing and racing on dinghies, keelboats and offshore boats. She spearheaded the long-running Ideal Women Sailing Program at the Stonington Harbor Yacht Club (SHYC) in Stonington, Connecticut, and the new group, Windward Women at Halifax Sailing Association in Daytona Beach, Florida. Through a networking event she organized, Sinnet recruited Windward Women and the St. Augustine Sailing Sisters to join and strengthen the Florida Women's Sailing Association.

In 2019, Sinnett received the Tucker and Sandy Bragdon Trophy for her substantial contributions to SHYC's sailing programs, and in 2020, she was presented with the George Shuck Award for her leadership at the club. She currently holds a position on the leadership team of the Halifax Sailing Association.

"We grow women's competence and confidence on the water in all the groups while strengthening connections between us," Sinnet said proudly. "Our focus is not only on sailing but also on environmental issues and giving back to our community."

NWSA President Debby Grimm remarked, "Kathy has a positive and encouraging nature to lead with enthusiasm while teaching. Her 'can-do' attitude makes others ask how to be involved."

"We congratulate Kathy for this well-deserved honor," said BoatUS Vice President Heather Lougheed. "BoatUS is proud to partner with NWSA to get the word out to aspiring women sailors that this healthy lifetime sport can be rewarding and life-enriching."

Visit WomenSailing.org to celebrate the accomplishments of past awardees.