



NPS Women Cartes de Visite Collection



Diane Richardson, 1990. (NPS History Collection Photo).

Diane Richardson
Channel Islands National Park
Ship Captain, 1988-?

- Born in 1962 in California but the family moved to New York when she was a child.
- Returned to CA to attend the University of California at Santa Barbara.
- Received her scuba diver certification and took a part-time job on a local dive boat while completing her degree.
- Was relegated to working in the galley, as “girls don’t work on deck” according to her bosses.
- Earned her divemaster certification.
- Worked in the Cayman Islands, and then returned to California to sit for her captain’s license.
- Left the private boat sector due to constant discrimination and roadblocks on account of her gender.
- Joined the NPS as a second captain and a relief operator at Channel Islands National Park in 1988.
- In 1990, at age 28, became the first woman ship captain in the NPS, as full-time boat operator of the 56-foot vessel *Ranger*.
- Duties included transportation of park personnel and supplies as well as 5-day research missions, where she led orientations, maintained the safety of all on board, and supervised divers in the water.
- Captained the boat for the NPS Submerged Cultural Resources Unit investigation of the *H.L. Hunley* in 1996.
- No other information has been found about her to date.

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