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Cruising Club of America Presents Blue Water Medal to Sir Robin Knox-Johnston *Only Seventh Person in CCA's History to Receive Medal Without Date*

New York, N.Y., USA (January 14, 2009) – The Cruising Club of America has selected Sir Robin Knox-Johnston to receive its prestigious Blue Water Medal, without date, for a lifetime devoted to the advancement of sailing, sail training and youth development and on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his singlehanded, non-stop circumnavigation of the world. In the 85-year history of the CCA's Blue Water Medal only seven Medals have been awarded without date. The medal will be presented to Sir Robin Knox-Johnston on March 5, 2010 by CCA Commodore Sheila McCurdy (Middletown, R.I.) during the club's annual Awards Dinner at the New York Yacht Club, in New York.

Born March 17, 1939 in Putney, London, Knox-Johnston went to school at Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire. He served as an officer cadet in the British Merchant Navy in 1957 and later gained his Masters Certificate in 1965. Between sea voyages in Bombay he built *Suhaili*, a 32-foot 5-inch LOA (length overall) India teak ketch of the Colin Archer type and sailed her to England.

With *Suhaili* he entered the 1968 race for the *Sunday Times* Golden Globe Trophy for the first person to circumnavigate the world nonstop and singlehanded. *Suhaili* was the only boat to finish the race, completing the 30,123 mile course in 312 days. Robin Knox-Johnston donated his £5,000 prize to the widow of his competitor Donald Crowhurst, who was lost at sea during the race.

In 1988 *Suhaili* started in the OSTAR Race across the Atlantic, but had to retire after 800 miles due to leaking seams. In 1989, after re-caulking, she set off across the Atlantic following Columbus's route using only an Astrolabe for navigation. Arriving in San Salvador after 3,000 miles, they were only off 8 miles in latitude and 22 miles in longitude. On the return voyage in November of the same year, a large storm knocked them down four times and they lost both masts. Under jury rig they sailed 1,400 miles to the Azores.

In 1990 *Suhaili* sailed north of the Arctic Circle to Greenland's east coast so that a small team might attempt to climb a virgin peak. In 1992 Knox-Johnston was invited to become President of the Sail Training Association, a youth development organization which operated two topsail schooners. He also organized annual tall ship races and, before he retired from the post in 2001, £11 million had been raised to replace the two schooners with two larger brigs.

Since winning the Golden Globe Trophy in 1969 Robin Knox-Johnston has participated in seven quadrennial double-handed Round Britain races. He skippered *Condor* to line honors in two legs of the 1977/08 Whitbread Race, co-skippered *Enza New Zealand* with the late Sir Peter Blake in 1994 to take

the Jules Verne Trophy for the fastest circumnavigation of the world, and completed the Velux5Oceans solo around the world race in 4th position in 2006/07 at the age of 68.

In 1995, Knox-Johnston was knighted by Queen Elizabeth and retained the honorary title 'Sir'. Notably, he has been named the 1994 ISAF World Sailor of the Year, the United Kingdom's Yachtsman of the Year three times, and in 2007 he was inducted into the inaugural ISAF Hall of Fame. He has served as a Trustee of the National Maritime Museum and is currently President of the Little Ship Club and Chairman of Clipper Ventures.

About the CCA's Blue Water Medal

The prestigious Blue Water Medal was inaugurated by the Cruising Club of America in 1923 to reward meritorious seamanship and adventure upon the sea displayed by amateur sailors of all nationalities that might otherwise go unrecognized.

Blue Water Medalists have included such luminaries of the sailing world as Rod Stephens, Eric and Susan Hiscock, Sir Francis Chichester, Eric Tabarly, Pete Goss, Rich Wilson, Minoru Saito and Bernard Moitessier. In 1940 it was awarded to the British Yachtsmen at Dunkerque who helped in the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force in June 1940.

The Medal itself was designed by Arthur Sturgis Hildebrand, a member of the Cruising Club of America, who was one of the crew of the yacht *Leiv Eiriksson*, lost in the Arctic with all hands in September of 1924.

Blue Water Medal awardees – without date (all award years are approximate)

Circa 2000 – *Cloud Nine*, Rodger B. Swanson (USA)

160,000 miles of remarkable cruising, two circumnavigations via Antarctica

Circa 1978 – Humphrey D. E. Barton (GBR)

A lifetime of cruising, racing, 20 or more Atlantic crossings, founder of the Ocean Cruising Club

Circa 1961 – *Seacrest*, Dr. Paul Sheldon (USA)

Extended cruises in Newfoundland, Labrador

Circa 1959 – Vito Dumas (ARG)

Global Circumnavigation 1942-1943 and other singlehanded voyages

Circa 1956 – Carleton Mitchell (USA)

Meritorious ocean passages, sterling seamanship and advancement of the sport by counsel and example

Circa 1937 – *Igdasil*, Roger S. Strout (USA)

Circumnavigation 1934-1937

Circa 1932* – *Jolie Brise*, Robert Somerset (GBR)

Award for a remarkable feat of seamanship, the rescue of 10 crew off burning schooner *Adriana* in the 1932 Bermuda race

*(no actual date appears in the CCA Yearbook)

About the Cruising Club of America

The Cruising Club of America is dedicated to offshore cruising, voyaging and the “adventurous use of the sea” through efforts to improve seamanship, the design of seaworthy yachts, safe yachting procedures and environmental awareness. Now in its 89th year, the club has 10 stations throughout the U.S., Canada and Bermuda, with approximately 1200 members who are qualified by their experience in offshore passage making. In even-numbered years, the CCA organizes the Newport to Bermuda Race in conjunction with the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club. It also sponsors several Safety at Sea seminars and hosts a series of “Suddenly Alone” seminars for the cruising couple. For more information on the CCA, go to <http://www.cruisingclub.org>.

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Photo file name: CCABlueWaterMedal_Robin Knox Johnston_courtesy Clipper Ventures

Photo caption: The Cruising Club of America will award its prestigious Blue Water Medal, without date, to Sir Robin Knox-Johnston for a lifetime devoted to the advancement of sailing, sail training and youth development and on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his singlehanded, non-stop circumnavigation of the world.

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