



CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM®

David Yates to Step Down as Clearwater Marine Aquarium CEO

Frank Dame, long-term COO, to fill the role of CEO

CLEARWATER, Fla. (January 2, 2020) – David Yates, CEO at Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) for 14 years, has announced his resignation as CEO from CMA, effective March 15, 2020. Hired in February 2006 at a time when CMA was in financial and operational uncertainty, Yates was able to bring international attention to CMA through the overcoming story of Winter the dolphin. Winter’s story has been featured in thousands of media stories, multiple books, documentaries, and the *Dolphin Tale* movies, which Yates co-produced.

“Leading CMA has been the joy of my life,” said Yates. “We’ve come a long way since 2006. Working with the amazing CMA team, we’ve been able to save thousands of marine life while inspiring millions of children and wounded soldiers.” Yates continued, “Those close to me have known that I have a final chapter to my career I need to get to that will include writing a number of books, public speaking, nonprofit consulting and producing TV and movies. CMA’s best years are ahead, as our new facility will open up in 2020 and the world will discover CMA all over again. I’m one hundred percent confident in Frank’s ability to manage this growth now and into the future.”

Frank Dame has been voted unanimously by the CMA Board of Directors to replace Yates. Involved with Clearwater Marine Aquarium since 2006, Dame was Chairman of the Board in 2007-2008 and was then hired as Chief Operating Officer in 2008 by Yates. Dame has extensive executive experience, including previous positions with GE Capital, President of GTE Leasing Corporation, Vice President and General Manager of Verizon Credit, and Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Progress Telecom. Committed to the betterment of the City of Clearwater, Dame has also held various leadership positions within the community; most notably as Chairman of the Clearwater Jolley Trolley, Chairman of the Board of the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce, Past President of the Island Estates Civic Association, and Chairman of the City of Clearwater Community Development Board.

“I am both honored and humbled to have been selected by our Board of Directors to succeed David Yates as CMA’s next CEO,” said Dame. “David and I have worked together for 13 years implementing his vision and business model. I have shared and supported the vision to make CMA a credible and world-renowned marine life rescue center with a focus on educating the public in sustainability and environmental conservation.” Dame added, “I anticipate a seamless transition in leadership and with a strong team in place, CMA is on a trajectory for a very solid future.”

“We are sad to see David leave, and he has left a legacy of success for our mission. The Board of Directors have full confidence in Frank’s capabilities to carry on this success,” said John Draheim, CMA Board Chairman.

“Frank’s long-term leadership skills are exactly what CMA needs during this transition,” said Paul Auslander, CMA’s Vice-Chairman.

Dame will usher in a new era for Clearwater Marine Aquarium in 2020 with the completion of an expanded facility that includes five new dolphin habitats, an elevated deck, and a new building for guest and educational space.

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About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release. CMA is home to rescued dolphins, sea turtles, river otters, stingrays, nurse sharks and more. Winter the dolphin’s story of survival, after an injury that caused her to lose her tail, has impacted millions of people around the world. Major motion picture *Dolphin Tale* (2011) features Winter’s story and its sequel *Dolphin Tale 2* (2014) features the incredible story of Hope, a young resident dolphin of CMA. Clearwater Marine Aquarium also conducts important global research focused on protecting manatees, right whales and sea turtles. The mission and potential to change people’s lives differentiates Clearwater Marine Aquarium from any other aquarium in the world.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our marine life and environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in the education, research, rescue, rehabilitation, and release.

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