

Trailblazers: *Floating to the Top*

When it comes to aquatics and water safety, expert Tom Griffiths rises above.



Name:	Thomas Griffiths, Ed.D.
Title:	Founder, Aquatic Safety Research Group and Director of Aquatics, Safety Officer for Athletics and Affiliate Associate Professor, The Pennsylvania State University
Member Since:	1992

During the past 30 years, Tom Griffiths has bubbled up the ranks of the aquatics world through innovative thinking and the kind of motivation that keeps him diving into new projects. He is known in the aquatics community as the frontrunner of recreational water safety, having published more than 300 articles on the subject and developing The Five Minute Scanning Strategy, a surveillance technique implemented by 100,000 lifeguards worldwide. His reach of influence doesn't end there. He founded the Aquatic Safety Research Group that offers evaluations, classes, litigation and other services.

In 2005 and 2006, *Aquatics International* magazine named Griffiths as one of the "Power 25," an annual honor that defines the "most powerful people" in the aquatics field. He was also presented the Distinguished Aquatic Professional award by NRPA in 2003. Griffiths wrote *Better Beaches*, an NRPA publication, and has been published in *The New York Times*, among many other periodicals. An inventor, an educator and an advisor, he is now the director of Aquatics and safety officer for Athletics at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Penn.

Most proud moment: "Personally,

when you produce a healthy baby; that is a proud moment. Professionally, when you produce a book, it is like having a baby. I'll never forget the feeling you get when you hold that book and admire it for the very first time. In addition to my books, when I see The Five Minute Scanning Strategy being used by so many lifeguard stations, including my own; that is the epitome of a professional rush. But it's not about making money, but rather saving lives."

Influences for success: "My father constantly encouraged me with 'You can do it Tommy!' My graduate professors at the University of Maryland taught me to be more analytical and encouraged me to publish. Penn State University Athletics encouraged me to do things well and allowed me to do the extracurricular projects that I do."

Words of wisdom: "Read, read, read. Question, question, question. Work, work, work."

Future of parks and recreation: "The future of parks and recreation is bright, particularly in aquatics, provided we continue to emphasize the benefits and do not attempt to eliminate all risks, which, of course, is impossible."