

## Dr. Kelsea Albert, EMT, BS, MS, DC

Dr. Kelsea has a strong lifelong passion for science and medicine. She has an impressive educational and field background in Health, Medicine, Translational Research, Patient Care and Clinical Practice. She first graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Molecular Biology, focusing her research in Genetics in Cancer proteins. She then graduated Suma Cum Laude from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Master of Science in Molecular Biology, completed, and successfully defended her thesis work in Stem Cell Engineering. She then worked in Cancer Stem Cell Research at UCI in California, working on translational research with highly malignant brain tumors and novel chemotherapy agents. She is published in her graduate and undergraduate laboratory work in several peer-reviewed journals. She is a Doctor of Chiropractic medicine and graduated after completing a Clinical Residency in sports medicine. Her main clinical focuses are migraine treatments, diagnostics, sports medicine, clinical research, and evidence-based treatments.



Kelsea has never received any financial assistance for her education often working three jobs while in school. Her positions have included years of working as an EMT in a high volume and dangerous county in Southern California, commercial diver and contractor. She is an entrepreneur and currently owns her own health care firm, an import/export business in Europe and a diving services company.

Kelsea is an avid hunter and Spearfisher. She has earned multiple IUSA and ESRA World Records for Women's Speargun and Polespear. Kelsea frequently uses kayaks and personal watercraft as her spearfishing platforms, and she owns several of her own boats. She scouts and identifies GPS numbers, explores areas in the arctic region unexplored by freedivers or spearfishermen. Her favorite fish to hunt is the California White Seabass. She has held the women's record since 2011, consistently upgrading her own record several times. Although dangerous, she is capable and hunts seabass alone. She rigs all her own guns meticulously, makes her own bands, customizes her rigging on all her gear, boats and kayaks. She locates her fish species using a knowledge base of ocean topography and personal devices. She is a proficient navigator and boat captain.

Some of her top accomplishments:

- 2018 USA Women's National Champion
- 2018 Team USA World Champion Team
- 2020 IUSA World Record Plaice and Pollack
- 2021 Pending World Record White Seabass
- 2021 ESRA World Record Cusk, novel species (pending IUSA)

## Rosibel Molina

Rosibel is an example of the American dream. She was born and raised in communist Cuba. As a young woman, she applied for an exodus grant, with the Special Cuban Migration program. The Cuban application process grants an opportunity for citizenship in the United States. She won it out of thousands of applicants; she felt as though she had won the lottery. After years of red tape, she came to the United States at the age of 23. Cuban family members pooled finite resources to purchase an airline ticket and provide some money to help her with rent and necessities upon arrival. She accepted jobs in the service industry with limited skills and slowly created a successful life in our great country. Fast forward 20 years... she is now a homeowner and a mother of two, living happily in Tampa, Florida. She does not live frivolously, but thankful for the life and freedoms afforded in the United States. She returns to Cuba whenever possible and provides support for her family, still in Cuba, as she has never forgotten their gratitude.



In 2000, Rosibel was recruited by a freediving coach after a random discovery that she could hold her breath... for six minutes to be exact. Her response to the invitation was immediate and quite funny. She was thrilled with the opportunity if only he would teach her to swim. Subsequently, she learned and began pool apnea training.

After coming to the US, she began ocean diving. In 2010, she competed in the Deja Blue freediving competition where she reached 66 meters CWT (216 feet / Constant Weight) and in 2016, she competed in the Blue Element freediving competition in Dominica. She is a Cuban National freediving record holder in multiple disciplines. Subsequently, she was featured in Deeper Blue, one of the world's largest online communities dedicated to Freediving, Scuba Diving and Ocean Advocacy. Within the article, she was also credited with obtaining the Cuban record for static apnea with a successful breath hold exceeding six minutes. They credited her as having "a tremendous adaptation to competitive freediving."

In 2009, Rosibel began spearfishing. She quickly learned she could feed families and friends easily who could otherwise not afford fresh seafood. While she shoots smaller fish in Tampa Bay, she has also shot a 101-pound yellowfin tuna in Costa Rica (picture attached). Close friends describe her as humble, always celebrating the accomplishments of others before her own and always placing the needs of others before herself. Rosibel competes occasionally and has earned the following achievements.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Mixed Team 2011 US Nationals
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Mixed Team 2015 US Nationals
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Women's Team 2018 US Nationals
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Women's USA Team at 2018 Worlds
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Overall Female USA 2018 Worlds
- 1<sup>st</sup> place Florida State Woman's champion 2016, 2019 and 2021.

In summary, Rosibel is a world-class freediver and spearfisher. She has demonstrated that through hard work and motivation, anything is possible. That includes living the American dream and representing our country proudly whenever possible.

## Nicole Burko

Nicole Burko learned to spearfish in South Florida 15 years ago when there were significantly greater barriers for women entering the sport. After her father passed away, she immigrated from Caledon, a rural town near Toronto, Canada, to live with her extended family. When Nicole started spearfishing at 18 years old, she didn't know anyone involved with the sport and was working full time to put herself through college. At the time, overcoming the financial hurdle of accessing expensive spearfishing gear and freediving classes was daunting. She also lacked a peer group with which to participate. Freediving was not a common sport, and she had to be resourceful in finding others with like-kind interests and inexpensive access to boats and gear. There were significant barriers to entering the sport of which she eventually conquered. She learned about local dive clubs, meetings, tournaments and was fortunate to dive with and learn from some of the best spearfishermen and women in the world.



Nicole soon began to win or place in the top tier of divers. Her peer group grew and elevated her skills beyond what she had anticipated. Subsequently, Nicole has dedicated much of her life to the sport. She currently holds the IUSA Pacific Cubera Snapper record of 69 lbs and has placed as the top female in several club tournaments also winning first place for the largest fish. She is a proficient hunter at depths reaching 80 ft and is currently training at deeper depths to be more competitive in Sardinia, Italy. Her goal is to be a skilled hunter in greater than 100 feet.

Nicole has traveled the world seeking out new oceans and landscapes and was even briefly a flight attendant in her pursuit to do so. She is a member of the Explorers Club, where she has exhibited and given lectures on her painting series of Underwater Caverns and Conservation. Nicole received a scholarship to the New World School of the Arts in Miami where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2011. In 2019, she earned her Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in visual art from Columbia University where she also received a scholarship to study. This is one of the most competitive MFA programs globally. While in attendance, she worked as an assistant professor for Columbia University and won an additional travel scholarship grant to document underwater caves in Australia for her thesis work.

Today Nicole lives and works in South Florida, she is an artist who makes experiential ocean landscape paintings. Diving gives her unparalleled and honest perspective on her subject. Like the Romantics who inspire her, she goes to great lengths to acquire painting references, strapping on a camera, and diving into murky, turbid, uninviting depths on a single breath of air. She paints a sublime, turbid and merciless ocean where few can venture, becoming aware of nuances few others are privy to. Even though so much care is taken to acquire references, they serve only as a point of departure. Once she begins painting, her process is reactive and spontaneous. She allows the oil paint to behave as a liquid, exploring the excitement of happenstance, rather than having a set goal in mind. With her experiences or the ocean in mind she paints an eerie, unfamiliar place, at once disconcerting, vast, and transcendent. To learn more about her work please visit [NicoleBurko.com](http://NicoleBurko.com).

## Melody S. Engle

Melody has a long history of participating in adventure sports. In the 1980's she was a skydiver who traveled extensively, jumping from airplanes and helicopters, accumulating over 1,500 jumps. She was Jumpmaster who also participated in women's world record jumps. In the 1990's she trained as an adult figure skater and eventually won a gold title at nationals fulfilling a childhood dream.

Melody started scuba diving and spearfishing in 1996. She began competing in 2013 and won her first state spearfishing tournament (women's division) and others going forward. In 2018, she helped organize the first women's freediving division at US Nationals. The impact was one of historical significance. Her team won 1<sup>st</sup> place. Because of this effort, CMAS (World Federation) included a female category at worlds in Portugal later that year. For the first time in history, women were able to compete in their category. The US team ultimately won 1<sup>st</sup> place and captured 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the podium as single divers as well.



Melody is a founding member of the Women's Spearfishing Alliance (WSA) and an active member of other local women's dive clubs. She is a champion of women in the sports of scuba diving, spearfishing and freediving. As a spearfishing tournament organizer, she coordinated donating thousands of pounds of fish to local charities. In addition, she organized a local turkey drive which had contributed nearly 50 thousand pounds or 3 thousand turkeys to feed the homeless. She is passionate about "giving back" to her local community and the homeless. In 2019, she organized a relief effort after hurricane Dorian decimated the Bahamas. Six generators and two hundred and fifty backpacks were donated containing various medical supplies and personal items, most of which were donated through direct solicitation from the dive community.

Within her professional life, she is the owner and founder of a technology company, Advanced Data Solutions, Inc., with offices in three metropolitan cities. She built the company without any capital and has developed a reputation as an industry expert nationwide within her discipline. She has developed "best practice" procedures now prevalently used and implemented with state of Florida government agencies. The company's headcount is currently 40.

Melody has owned and operated her own marine vessels for twenty years. She is proficient in ocean navigation and fully capable of the maintenance and operation of her boats. She takes pride in charting spearfishing trips actively targeting certain species based on oceanic topographies.

Oddly enough, Melody considers her most significant achievement to be freediving and learning to be a capable diver in her late 50's. She says both the physical and mental aspects of the sport are the hardest she has ever experienced. Progress is slow, and even the smallest of achievements are a celebration. She feels fortunate to have world-class free divers like those on the US freediving team as friends and mentors. Her largest fish is a 112-pound yellowfin tuna she shot in Costa Rica. While this seems like a significant achievement, she recalls the moment when she successfully shot a 12-ounce Spanish Mackerel as equally satisfying. Small and large accomplishments, in her mind, are both worth celebrating.