

about you as a candidate for *your position*? In what ways would you like to contribute to the Symposium/International Sea Turtle Society?

How do you envision using the Symposium to advance sea turtle biology and promote conservation?

My foremost vision and solemn commitment as Treasurer will be Fiscal Responsibility linked to the cornerstone of accountability to the Society's Board and membership. The financially-sound convening of creative well-conceived science-successful Symposia is the Key to the advancement of sea turtle biology and promotion of conservation by the ISTS. Within our Society communication is the essential vehicle to achieving this vision. The conduction of expanded and better ways of communicating by the Board with membership, and visa versa, will yield greater transparency and openness. During my service on the Board (2012-2017) some excellent steps forward have been made in these directions through teamwork based on professional trust, friendship, and mutual respect for differing views and visions among Board members. As the ISTS Treasurer, hence a voting Member of the Board of Directors, I will strive through the generous use of my time, experience, talent, and genuine interest to be at the leading edge of both Fiscal Responsibility and Enhanced Communication as a team player. In doing so I will also continue to promote the Spirit of Aloha as well as our informal ISTS motto "We are a Happy Society". In my vision, fiscal responsibility, accountability and superior communications go hand-in-hand with promoting conservation of sea turtles and happiness.

- Why is the ISTS as an organization important to you, professionally and personally? What is your vision for the ISTS over the next 5 to 10 years?

Participation in the ISTS Symposia formed a critical cornerstone in the building of my expertise and partnerships that resulted in a decades-long career running a highly productive marine turtle research and conservation program in Hawaii. That program was fueled with an annual budget ranging from USD\$450,000 – 860,000. As program leader I oversaw the judicious and creative expenditure of these funds for numerous purposes- from personnel salaries to equipment, supplies, travel, and contracting. A key to this success was teamwork, respect, and communication. My vision for ISTS for the next 5-10 years is the significant expansion of membership in countries currently under-represented but where sea turtles are well-known to occur and face threats at the population level from human-related but potentially controllable activities. I envision this expansion to be made up of a stable Society membership from year-to-year, and not a 'pulsed-membership'- that is, being a member in only those years when a symposium is attended. I envision a Society linked in communication with its own stable web site, listserv, social media ties, and other miracle futuristic digital means surely forthcoming. I envision a financially secure ISTS with a robust savings portfolio that will have grown far beyond the rate of inflation. Lastly, I envision a major planning effort being initiated in 10 years for the Symposium of 2030, the 50th Anniversary of our Symposia that have given us so much in so many different ways, and even more to the sea turtles that we truly love in our own ways in a vast array of different cultural settings.

Please include a 250-word bio and a photo

George Balazs saw his first sea turtle in 1964 while exploring the lagoon at Bora Bora, French Polynesia with his wife Linda. A few months later he tried to spear a small turtle for sustenance while snorkeling near their rental home in the then-remote Paea District of Tahiti. He missed by only a few inches and the turtle sped away safely. Unknown at the time the swimming skills of this amazingly beautiful creature, a #d George's ineptness as a hunter, were to change his life forever. In 1969 George and Linda watched commercial turtle fishers on Maui land their catch for nearby restaurants catering to Hawaii's expanding tourism. He wondered if there really were enough turtles to sustain the growing demand for turtle steak. After finishing graduate school he went to work in 1971 for the University of Hawaii as a junior research in an aquaculture program that included experimental rearing of sea turtles. In 1973 his research interest turned entirely to the conservation biology of wild sea turtles in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific island region known as Oceania (Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia). For the past 43 years he has pursued a partnership in publishing an array of studies to aid in understanding and restoring populations of sea turtles. In the mid-1980, after attending is first ISTS Symposium, George was given responsibility to build and run a marine turtle research and conservation program within NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center based in Hawaii. That program judiciously and science-successfully expended over the decades USD \$17,000,000 under his watchful fiscal leadership. In October 2016 George took advantage NOAA's new 50% retirement program thereby giving more personal time desired to focus additional attention on service to and 'giving back' to the International Sea Turtle Society, and his role as Co-Chair of the Oceania Region's IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group. In late 2017 he will convert to full 100% retirement, thereby freeing up even more time for service to these outstanding organizations that have significantly aided his career and sea turtle populations globally. The guiding principle of George's professional and personal life is the conviction