

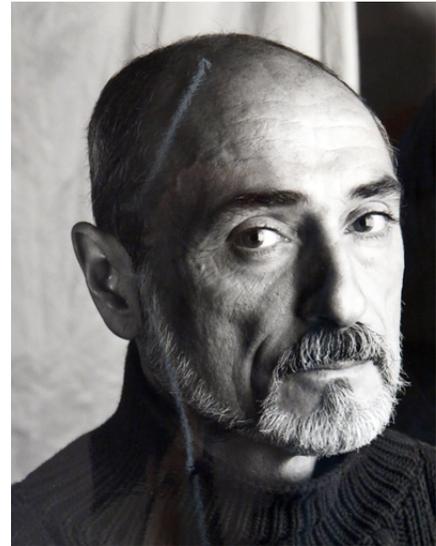
# Tony Maffatone - Eulogy

By Joel Silverstein

On Wednesday, August 2, 2000, our dear friend Anthony Maffatone died while diving on the wreck of the USS San Diego. Tony was an inventor, an explorer, and a man of true integrity. We mourn his loss and appreciate what we have learned from him.

“Courage is Grace under Pressure.”

-- Ernest Hemingway



Silverstein 1993

**Courage** - Who was more courageous than Tony? As a little boy, he was chased down the street with his shoe-shine box in hand by the older boys when he decided to take a swing and stand his ground so he could earn a few nickels doing some honest work. . As a young man alone in a foreign land defending democracy for people he never knew his goal was to survive yet another nightmarish day. As a man he raised his children and grandchildren, made friends, and earned a living protecting people from the evils of the world. These are all tough things, but most importantly Tony had the courage to fulfill his dreams by living every moment knowing it may be his last.

**Grace** – He could blend into the world with no one knowing who or where he was. But when he wanted you to know he was there it was not difficult to do either. He could move through a room of a thousand people and you could pick him out — his distinguished looks, his chiseled face, his eyes that told no lies. Polite and polished was this uncut stone of a man.

**Pressure** - Tony understood the pressures of being courageous and graceful, each had its price tag. The constant pressure of being the consummate professional—always being on. He once told me that he never sleeps once he is on duty, that he trained himself to live with the pressures of being independent, and with the pressures of being a protector. But the greatest pressure of all was to be loved. He made special efforts to allow into his heart only those who could understand his strength to be who he was.

Tony Maffatone always dared the ocean. But those of us who knew him and loved him knew that he was the least reckless person we'd ever met. Careful, precise, controlled. But the sea is a tough adversary.

Regardless of one's experience, one's equipment, or one's metal God did not design us to survive underwater. We go there with artificial means. For a new diver, his first breaths are experimental, and for a man like Tony, who's passion was invention and survival, each dive was experimental.

I met Tony in 1992 aboard the Research Vessel Wahoo little did I know that this trip would be the beginning of the very special relationship between he and I and others aboard.

Tony taught me many things about diving. Things which when you say them now, seem uncomfortably ironic:

"Don't jump in the water unless you are prepared not to come back from it."

"If you survive the sea it was a good day."

Tony had a hunger for information, and how things worked... he used diving as other means to keeping his survival skills sharp. It was the ultimate test for him. Quietly he tinkered away on his projects, learning, researching, and testing. In modesty he would always undervalue his own knowledge and accomplishments; this was part of his way.

We were returning from the Andrea Doria in 1997 in 25-foot seas. We had gotten beaten up by a hurricane and spent 20 hours getting back to port. It was a difficult passage. While the icy water was pouring down on us, Tony cracked: "I survived all kindsa sons-of-bitches shooting bullets at me, I ain't gonna die from no water."

His life was filled with adventure, excitement, romance, and, unfortunately, tragedies. Did we know him? We knew parts of him that he chose to share. However when he did share, he opened his heart fully.

A few years back I photographed Tony for an exhibition, I had my son Charles with me who wanted to meet the great Tony. With a glimmer in his eye and a tear hanging in the shadows, I could see into his soul as I watched Tony tell that young boy about his adventures. Carefully choosing his words to keep some truths from being too gruesome for the youngster to hear. I could see in his eyes and hear in the tone of his voice the real sense of who Tony was. He was a man.

Tony Maffatone loved the sea, and he loved red wine. He especially loved grappa -- for those of you who don't know -- grappa is a very clear, very strong, very intense Italian drink. It will always remind me of him. If I had a glass now, I'd lift it in his honor -- and say, Cent Anne. And while Tony wasn't with us quite that hundred years in the toast, we will remember him always.

We will miss our friend. With Godspeed Tony can now rest.