

KAREN TWEED HAYS

Karen Tweed reported to the Academy from Bethesda, Maryland, with the goal of learning how to keep people and the environment safe. She majored in Marine Science, competed on the Sailing Team, and in 1980 at the Women's North American Intercollegiate Sailing Championships. Karen was a cheerleader, was active in Cadet Musical Activities, and sang and danced as one of the first five "Ice Breakers," CGA's first all-women's vocal group. Sailing on EAGLE all four years enabled her to be just one of two in her class to qualify as both OOD and EOW, a passion she passed onto her daughter who has earned her Master's license and now sails tall ships professionally worldwide.

Her first assignments were as a Student Engineer aboard USCGC DECISIVE, based in New Castle, NH, followed by a tour at Marine Safety Office Port Arthur, Texas. She then earned an MS in Naval Architecture/Marine Engineering and an MS in Materials Engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), followed by a Professional Engineer's License, and a degree in Strategic Planning and National Security from the Naval War College.

Assigned as a Naval Architect at the Marine Safety Center in 1989, LT Hays established and led the MSC's first Ship Engineering Response Team (SERT) to supervise EXXON VALDEZ's refloating and safe transit to San Diego for repair. As part of the National Transportation Safety Board's team evaluating the vessel's damage, she assisted the USCG's Commandant and Chief of Marine Safety with briefings on Capitol Hill during the development OPA 90's new double hull rules. LCDR Hays served at USCG Headquarters as Chief of G-MTH's Safety and Oversight Section. There she was responsible for developing the USCG's first Alternate Compliance Program, detailing how American Bureau of Shipping could assist the USCG with vessel inspection, a major program still in place today. The program's first draft was completed right on time, just four days before her youngest was born! Karen subsequently served as Chief, Vessel Inspections at MSO Portland, OR until her retirement from the USCG with 16 years of service under the Temporary Early Retirement Program (TERA).

After retiring Karen served as Supervisor of Washington State's Marine Safety Field Office in Seattle from 1996 until 1999. She then joined and currently works as the Environmental Manager for a startup, Alaska Tanker Company (ATC), created in 1999 to consolidate BP's eleven chartered Alaskan crude oil tankers into one company, closing gaps in safety and environmental assurance. ATC was the first tank vessel operator to earn the USCG's Benkert Osprey Award and has had best environmental and safety record among tankship operators worldwide since 2008.

Karen is married to Don, an Army and civilian helicopter pilot. They reside in the Pacific Northwest and are proud parents of two daughters, Katherine and Sara.

