

# A Gift in Your Will: Frequently Asked Questions.

READ ON TO LEARN THE FACTS.

- Q. I'm committed to doing everything I can to protect and preserve the ocean, but I want to make sure my children and grandchildren are taken care of, too. Is there a way to do both?**
- A.** Yes! We wholeheartedly agree that family comes first. Depending on your situation, naming Ocean Conservancy for a percentage of a retirement account can be a tax-wise step, leaving heirs less heavily taxed assets. Alternatively, naming Ocean Conservancy a contingent beneficiary — which means we are next-in-line after other beneficiaries — can be a good approach.
- Q. Is there a minimum amount for a gift in a will to Ocean Conservancy?**
- A.** There is no minimum donation. Every gift makes a difference! Whatever size bequest you can leave is greatly appreciated and will create a legacy for the future of our ocean.
- Q. What if I need to change my plan?**
- A.** We understand that circumstances change. One of the best things about gifts left in a will or trust or by beneficiary designation is that you remain in control during your lifetime and can change your beneficiaries at any time.
- Q. What should I do next?**
- A.** Use the reply form on page eight or contact Thomas Perkins at 1-800-519-1541 or [oceanlegacy@oceanconservancy.org](mailto:oceanlegacy@oceanconservancy.org) to request assistance in determining the type of gift that makes the most sense for you. While you are under no obligation to do so, if you have already left a gift for Ocean Conservancy, please let us know. Providing us with notice of your intention is the best way to ensure that we receive the gift you have planned for us and that your wishes are honored.



Looking Ahead:  
Planning for and Thriving  
in Your Later Years



## NEW PLANNING GUIDE AVAILABLE

Our complimentary planning guide will help you plan your legacy as you look beyond your early retirement years.

[www.oceanconservancy.org/splash-plan](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/splash-plan)

“OUR BEQUEST TO OCEAN CONSERVANCY IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

— FLORENCE OLIVERIO

## Mary Kay Neumann

### A Voice for the Ocean and the Future

Mary Kay Neumann is an artist whose vibrant watercolors capture the extravagant beauty of the natural world, a psychotherapist who understands the healing power of art, and an activist who uses her work to advocate for the environment.

“Painting the ‘underwater gardens’ of tidepools and garden plants is deeply joyful,” Mary Kay says. “During tidepool explorations on the West Coast, I encountered the beautiful sunflower sea stars, a sea star with 24 arms that moves rapidly with 15,000 small tubular feet. The beauty of this creature and its similarity to blooming sunflowers on land was astonishing and has been a source of inspiration for decades.”

The sunflower sea star became a guiding force for her work, and she feels the connection deeply: “One morning as I stood knee deep in the Pacific Ocean at low tide, a pair of purple legs emerged from the sea grass. The creature was a sunflower sea star, and her two dozen legs and thousands of tiny gyrating tube feet propelled her towards me. She had a large purple body with contrasting hot pink and orange on the inside of her legs. This little beauty touched my shoe, my pant leg, and as I stood, mesmerized, she felt around my entire foot before finally moving away into the shallows, under the kelp, disappearing into the ocean. I had fallen in love. This moment was one of the most sacred in my life.”

For 20 years, Mary Kay returned to visit the tide pools and observe the sea stars. She began to use her art to educate people about the impacts of climate change on the environment — and on the sea stars. In 2013, she discovered that Sea Star Wasting Disease was killing sea stars. The deadly virus, causes sea stars to disintegrate and wiped out most of the sunflower sea star population. Researchers believe large increases in ocean temperatures caused by strong El Niño years in the past decade, ocean acidification and climate change are stressing the stars,



▲ Mary Kay Neumann

making them more susceptible to pathogens and causing an apocalyptic die off. In turn, because sea stars are an apex predator, their demise has caused serious impacts to the broader ocean ecosystem. Mary Kay says, “There were thousands of them when I visited the tidal pools — then there were none. I felt like a family member had died. My ‘Melting Sea Star Series’ was my challenge to depict these creatures during a time of crisis.”

While mourning her beloved sea stars, Mary Kay realized that one way to move people past the paralysis caused by feeling helpless in the face of the climate crisis is to encourage people to find one thing, one creature, plant or life form that they cherish.

“What do you love, that is hurting? Find out what that is, and fight for it. For me, it’s the sunflower sea star. But if everyone works to help one thing that they love, together our efforts will make an impact!” Mary Kay’s current collaborative undertaking, “The Flowers Are Burning: An Art and Climate Justice Project,” is a traveling art and climate change exhibition. Using intensely colorful watercolor paintings, the educational project reinforces this message: “What do you love that needs protecting? What are you moved to do about it?”

In addition to her art and activism, Mary Kay has included Ocean Conservancy in her will. “I love their work and together we can be a voice for the ocean and the future.”

## WE’RE HERE TO HELP

Please call 1-800-519-1541 or email [oceanlegacy@oceanconservancy.org](mailto:oceanlegacy@oceanconservancy.org).

You can also return the reply form on the next page to provide us with the best way to reach you. Together, we can make so much possible for our ocean.



▲ Jessica Schoenig, Rachel Foster, Thomas Perkins, Charlotte Meyer, and Annie Wilcosky.