



Sue

HENDRICKSON

(1949 -)

Susan Hendrickson is an American paleontologist best known for her discovery of the remains of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* in South Dakota on August 12, 1990. Her discovery was the largest specimen of a *T. rex* found and one of the most complete skeletons.

Sue's Childhood and Education

Sue was born in Chicago, Illinois, to Lee and Mary Hendrickson, but her family moved to Indiana where she grew up. The oldest of three children, Sue has a younger sister and brother.

In 1955, she enrolled at a local public elementary school where her teachers praised her for being such a clever and obedient student. Despite that, she found herself bored at that school and at the age of sixteen she convinced her parents to let her stay in Florida with her aunt, where she was at school there for only a year.

The Diving Years

Sue was a restless and adventurous teenager. She moved from state to state with her boyfriend for some time until she found a way to use her talent for swimming to get a job in an aquarium fish business in Florida when she was twenty years old, diving in the Florida Keys and selling tropical fish to the aquariums and pet stores.

She also found herself fishing for lobster and would occasionally take the summer off and volunteer on paleontological digs.

In 1963, she was invited to participate in a salvage diving expedition off the Florida Keys when a cargo shipment full of valuable materials used for buildings was run aground in the coral reef and Sue was asked to help retrieve them, a

job she very happily accepted. She found herself exploring old shipwrecks and later visited the Dominican Republic, working in the company of archeologists.

From Diving to Digging

By the mid-1980s, Sue had also tried her hand at amber mining in the Dominican mountains and became one of the largest amber providers for scientists. It was at this time that she uncovered three perfect 23-million year old butterflies, half of the whole world's total collection, and became an expert at identifying fossilized insects.

A Swiss paleontologist called Kirby Siber allowed her to join his team of paleontologists. The group began excavating whale fossils at an ancient seabed in Peru, and Sue joined the team for several summers, discovering fossilized dolphins, seals, and sharks.

By this time, paleontology had become her main passion.

The Tyrannosaurus Rex

On August 12, 1990, while examining a cliff-side in South Dakota she discovered an important Tyrannosaurus rex specimen — the largest, most complete, and best preserved T-rex ever found. It was such a fantastic discovery that the find would later be named in her honour.

In 1992, she joined a team of marine archaeologists headed by Franck Goddio. With them, she took part in many diving expeditions, the most notable of which were the Royal Quarters of Cleopatra, and Napoleon Bonaparte's lost fleet from the Battle of the Nile.



"Sue" specimen, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

She became such an accomplished woman that everyone was taking notice. In 2005, Glamour magazine honoured her in their "Glamour Woman of the Year Awards." In 2010, she published an autobiography entitled Hunt for the Past: My Life as an Explorer and in 2008, she was featured on the

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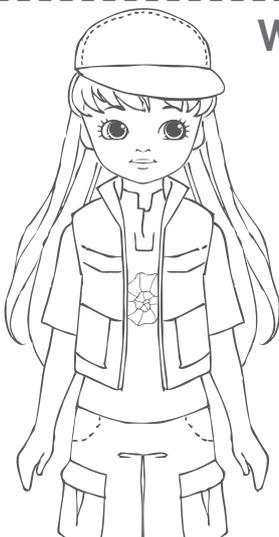
“Dare to Explore” chapter of National Geographic Kids.

Sue now lives on the island of Guanaja, off the coast of Honduras. She is a member of the Paleontological Society, Explorers Club, Society for Historical Archaeology, and was awarded an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2000.



Susan Hendrickson in 'Dinosaur 13'

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