



Storyteller and diver Tara Roberts is helping document some of the thousand slave ships that wrecked in the Atlantic Ocean. She is working to tell the story of Diving With a Purpose and the complex history of the global slave trade in an inclusive way that amplifies Black voices.  
WAYNE LAWRENCE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC | Courtesy photo

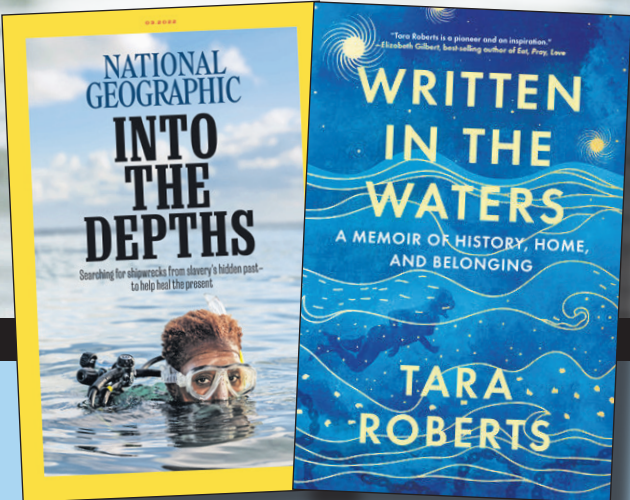
# A writer, a diver and a historian

YWCA Charleston to host groundbreaker Tara Roberts

HD Media

CHARLESTON—Compelling storytelling often requires a deep dive into history. One renowned writer did that literally when she donned scuba gear to dive with and document the stories of Black scuba divers searching for shipwrecks from the transatlantic slave trade. Now, she will share her remarkable adventures as a storyteller, explorer and historian during “An Evening with Tara Roberts,” on Thursday, Aug. 28, in Charleston. Hosted by the YWCA Charleston, Roberts will speak from 6:30 until 8 p.m., with a pre-event reception beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the Katherine “Kitty” Dooley Community Center for Community Enrichment. Roberts is a groundbreaker in every sense of the word — not only through her under-seas feats, but also as a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence. Her journey as a diving historian became the six-part, National Geographic-produced podcast “Into the Depths” and was featured in the March 2022 cover story of National Geographic — making Roberts the first Black, female explorer ever to be featured on the magazine’s cover. In 2022, she was also named the Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year. Roberts’ recently released book — “Written in the Waters: A Memoir of History, Home, and Belonging” — “interweaves her personal search for belonging with the history of the Middle Passage. Inspired by a photograph at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture, Roberts joined the diving group Diving With a Purpose, embarking on a journey that took her from the coasts of Senegal and South Africa to the waters of St. Croix,” a news release states. “Along the way, she unearthed not just historical truths, but also a deeper understanding of her own roots and identity.”

SEE ROBERTS, 2E



## WANT TO GO?

### An Evening with Tara Roberts

**WHEN:** 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 28 (reception begins at 5:30 p.m.)  
**WHERE:** Katherine “Kitty” Dooley Community Center for Community Enrichment, Charleston  
**TICKETS:** Free with registration (sign-up required by emailing [shante@ywcacharleston.org](mailto:shante@ywcacharleston.org))

# Remember Him in good times, too

SOMETIMES I start writing about one subject and then land in another. This is one of those times. I didn’t know where I was headed until I arrived. Back when Don and I still lived in Atlanta, I spent a few years working as the executive assistant to the CEO of a recruiting firm that had locations all over the world. The Atlanta office was on the smaller side, staffed with about 70 people. I knew most of my coworkers well — knew their majors in col-



*Smell the Coffee*  
By Karin Fuller Patton

lege, the names of their kids and their pets, knew who was vegan and who followed Paleo. Knew what sports teams they cheered for. But aside from my boss, they didn’t know me. Conversations only went one direction, with me asking questions of them. They

asked none of me. I chalked it up to their age. They were young. Many fresh out of college. On my last day with the company, my boss spoke at my going-away luncheon and shared with the staff about how I was a writer and had bought an old warehouse and lived with a squirrel and that Don and I made ray guns out of found metal objects. Afterward, coworkers kept coming up to say, “Wow. I wish I had gotten to know you better.” I felt sad that I hadn’t been

deemed worthy of knowing until it was too late. This sort of thing wasn’t new to me, though. When in my early 20s, I worked as a secretary for two executives. At the time, I had no children, only a young German shepherd named Jade. One day at work, my boss was in my office when I received a call telling me Jade had bitten someone. The call left me rattled. “It’s not a big deal,” said my boss. “Little kids bite people all the time.” I realized then I had been

spending 40 hours a week working with a man who knew nothing of me. Life is a bit different in a town as small as where we live now. They check in. Ask thoughtful questions. Leave produce. There’s a warmth in being seen, even if it’s only by a few. But then, this past weekend, an old acquaintance appeared out of the ether long enough to say hi and drop a couple of compliments. And then ask a favor. SEE COFFEE, 2E

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