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National Safe Boating Council Announces Retirement of
Executive Director Virgil Chambers
Boating Safety Advocate, Educator, Trainer

Bristow, VA (August 8, 2013) – The National Safe Boating Council, the foremost coalition for the advancement and promotion of safer boating, today announced Executive Director Virgil Chambers will retire on September 30, 2013 after nearly 20 years with the organization.



“Virgil Chambers, the NSBC’s first Executive Director, has served the recreational boating community by elevating boating safety to new levels of professionalism and excellence,” said Joyce Shaw, chair of the National Safe Boating Council. “We wish him the best of luck in his well-earned retirement.”

Chambers is no stranger to boating and water safety, beginning when he served in the U.S. Navy. His first tour of duty was as deck seaman and radarman aboard an APA ship. His second tour took him to the U.S. Naval Amphibious School, Inshore Patrol Boat Division, Coronado, Calif. where he was instructed in the patrol craft handling, maintenance and patrol operations. After completing this instruction, Chambers was assigned to a Coastal and Inshore Division where he served as a leading petty officer aboard a patrol craft in the Republic of Vietnam. During his time in the service to his country, Chambers was awarded: National Defense Service Medal; Republic of Vietnam Service Medal (twice); Vietnamese Commendation Medal; Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry; Combat Action Ribbon; Presidential Unit Citation; and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" (twice) among several others.

After five years teaching at a senior high school where he took his biology students on canoe field trips during the environmental sessions of the class, Chambers joined the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, where he served as chief of the Boating Safety and Education Division from 1978 to 1995. One of Chambers’ most significant accomplishments was the development and implementation of the Public School Boating and Water Safety Manual and Program. Many public schools have used the program with favorable results. He also founded the Pennsylvania Water Rescue Training Program which was then adopted by the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR). He served as director of this national program from 1987 to 1997. Mr. Chambers retired from Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission in 1995.

Chambers is an accomplished regional, state, national and international author and presenter. He wrote the original BoatU.S. Foundation Online Boating Safety Course and has served as technical advisor and writer on a number of U.S. Coast Guard grant boating safety programs which total in funding came to over \$6 million. During his career, he was also certified as a lifeguard, lifeguard instructor (trainer), water safety instructor (trainer), canoeing instructor and boating instructor for the American Red Cross as well as Instructor in canoeing and kayaking with American Canoe Association (ACA).

Chambers has been the executive director for the Council since 1996, where he served as the technical content advisor in direct support of the Council's education and information programs. He was responsible for the planning and development of the year-round national boating safety awareness campaign administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. He also served as a representative of the Council to national and international boating and water safety organizations.

Chambers has been recognized by local, state, national, and international organizations for his work in boating safety and training. In 1988 he was inducted into the Pennsylvania Swimming Hall of Fame for his development of boating and water safety education programs and, in 2010, he was inducted into the National Safe Boating Council Boating Safety Hall of Fame. He has received numerous awards including the National Water Safety Congress' (NWSC) highest national award for accomplishments and contributions to water safety (2008), and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) National Leadership Award (2008), Boating Safety Award (1994) and Lifetime Achievement Award from both NASBLA and NWSC (2008 – 2013 respectively).

“It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the Council's executive director, I have worked alongside some truly dedicated individuals and organizations,” said Chambers. “I have been truly blessed to be associated with so many passionate people who fed my enthusiasm for safer and more enjoyable boating. There certainly isn't a more pleasurable or rewarding career I could have pursued.”

Chambers was raised in Emporium, Pennsylvania and received his B.S. in Education from Clarion University in Pennsylvania. He completed advanced studies at Clarion and Penn State. He and his wife Pamela Dillon plan to return to Pennsylvania to boat and fish. He looks forward to remaining involved with the boating safety community.

About the National Safe Boating Council

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) is the foremost coalition for the advancement and promotion of safer boating through education, outreach, and training. The NSBC accomplishes this mission by promoting outreach and research initiatives that support boating education and safety awareness; improving the professional development of boating safety educators through training; and developing and recognizing outstanding boating safety programs. To learn more about the NSBC and its programs, visit SafeBoatingCouncil.org.

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