**Dr. James “Buddy” Powell, Executive Director**

Dr. James “Buddy” Powell is one of the world’s leading experts on manatees throughout their range. During a career spanning more than 40 years, his work has led to direct protections for manatees and their habitats in Florida, West Africa, Central America, and Cuba. Buddy embarked upon his career as a high school student when he acted as a guide to Jacques Cousteau for the first documentary on manatees. While still in college, Buddy began his professional career when the US Fish & Wildlife Service hired him as a manatee specialist. Buddy later moved to Africa to study African manatees and forest elephants which earned him a PhD in Zoology from Cambridge University in England. From there he moved to Belize and managed a marine research station on a coral atoll. As a native Floridian, he eventually returned home to administer the state’s research program on marine mammals and sea turtles for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. In 2001, he became a Vice President at Wildlife Trust where he oversaw the Aquatic and National Divisions. In 2008, Buddy co-founded Sea to Shore Alliance, a nonprofit created to improve the health and productivity of coastal environments. In 2018, Sea to Shore Alliance merged with Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) where the organization’s work continues under CMA’s newly created division, Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute. Buddy serves as the Executive Director of the Research Institute, overseeing its global research, conservation, and educational initiatives. Buddy was the recipient of the prestigious Pew Award in Marine Conservation in 2000, has been featured on “Champions of the Wild” and National Geographic’s “Wild Chronicles” documentaries, and has been honored with multiple awards and certificates. Dr. Powell has authored two books, numerous scientific publications and popular articles.

**Dr. Anmari Alvarez Aleman, Caribbean Program Director**

Dr. Anmari Alvarez Aleman has been working with manatees, dolphins and the coastal communities that interact with these species for more than 15 years. Her passion for marine mammals and conservation began as a youth growing up in Cuba leading her to pursue academic studies and a career in this field as an adult. Anmari received a Bachelor’s degree in Biology in 2006 and a Master’s in Integrated Management of Coastal Zones in 2010 from the University of Havana. In 2015, she became the first Cuban national to be accepted into the University of Florida in 50 years and began pursuing a doctorate in Interdisciplinary Ecology with a concentration on Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. The core of her research was population genetics and the conservation of the West Indian manatee with a focus on Cuba. After four years of research and studies, and the birth of a baby boy, she graduated in December 2019. As the Caribbean Program Director at Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, she designs, implements, and oversees research and conservation projects of marine megafauna and their habitats in the Caribbean region. Some of her current research includes understanding the connection between the Cuban and Florida manatee population and generating knowledge about the importance of Marine Protected Areas for manatee conservation in the Caribbean.