

“How rich will we be when we have converted all our forests, our soil, our water resources, and minerals into cash?”

- Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling

Thank you for joining us today!

Continue to check our website

dingdarlingsociety.org

for information about next year’s scholarships.

Follow “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to stay up-to-date with happenings and wildlife sightings at the Refuge.



“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society

1 Wildlife Drive
Sanibel, FL 33957

Welcome to the

2018 “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society Environmental Scholarship Awards



Wednesday June 13, 2018

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge
Visitor & Education Center



“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge is committed to educating our youth as conservation stewards of the future. To that end, the Society works with various businesses and individuals to provide annual scholarships to students engaged in the study of conservation, biology, and the environment.

The 2018 recipients are graduating high school seniors, college and post-graduate students with plans to pursue a career in science with an environmental or natural resources focus, environmental education, wildlife conservation, environmental law or public policy and conservation nonprofit.

The Universities and Colleges that will be gaining these environmental stewards:



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY



Jane Werner Endowed Scholarship

A refuge volunteer for 25 years and a true believer in protecting our wildlife and its habitat, Jane Werner furthered her family's interest in education with this annual scholarship to encourage environmental studies. Before their passing, Jane and her husband Clem funded five scholarships in their hometown of Davenport, Iowa, since the mid-1990s, and at their alma maters -- Smith and Northwestern respectively. She chose to establish the first permanently endowed scholarship through the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, with the hope of making a direct impact on students in Southwest Florida and further their interest in becoming our next environmental stewards. Jane passed away in 2012 and her family continues to support the Refuge and this scholarship fund.

Recipient: Griffin Alexander *University of Miami*

Griffin graduated from Naples High School this spring and will be attending the University of Miami in the fall with a major in Marine Affairs, Ecosystems Science & Policy. Fascination with marine life started at an early age and he began studying the effects of harmful algal blooms and acidification on sea creatures at home. Along with Advanced Placement and Advanced International Certificate classes, Griffin has participated in Envirothon, volunteered with Keep Collier Beautiful & University of Miami Shark Research as well as founding the Green Wave Club which implemented a recycling program at the high school. He developed an experiment to study the effects of fertilizer on the growth of red tide that is being added to the high school curriculum.

Griffin is focused on obtaining his degree in Marine Affairs and Ecosystem Policy followed by a Master's in Professional Science and then law school before embarking on a practice of Marine Environmental Law.

Dear Friends,

The refuge is named after Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, a political cartoonist who was passionate about conservation and environmental education. He was an early vocal conservationist. The "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society is the foundation that supports the refuge with education as one area of our focus. This is the twelfth year for the environmental scholarships, which we award to college and graduate students thanks to the generosity of our donors. Beginning with funds from Tarpon Bay Explorers the scholarship funds have expanded to include individual donors, so more students have been able to receive financial awards to help pay for their environmental education.

This year we had a number of highly qualified students applying for our scholarships. You all share a passion to pursue a career related to environmental science, conservation and wildlife preservation. It is exciting to see such enthusiasm for studying and caring for the environment in our next generation. We selected 15 of you to receive these scholarships.

We wish you success in completing your education and achieving your career goal. We are confident you will become our future conservation stewards and look forward to hearing of your achievements. Thanks to our donors who make all this possible and thank you to the recipients for pursuing your dreams of preserving our environment and wildlife.

Sincerely,
Dr. Wendy Kindig
Education Chair
DDWS

Richard L. Bailey Environmental Scholarship

Before retiring and moving part time to Fort Myers, Richard Bailey's career was with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a federal agency focused on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere. Once he retired, he found his place as a volunteer at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge where he always loved to visit, finding true peace and tranquility surrounded by the beauty of wildlife and nature.

Richard passed away several years ago, and his son, Robert Bailey, established this scholarship in loving memory of his father. Many of the long-time volunteers at the Refuge remember Richard as a loyal and committed volunteer to the Refuge and one who would do anything to help. His son knew how much the Refuge and his time as a volunteer meant to him and wanted to do something to honor his memory and commitment to conservation. His son hopes that the recipient of the Richard L. Bailey Environmental Scholarship will be as committed to conservation and devoted to making a difference in our world.

Recipient: Taylor Hancock ***Florida Gulf Coast University***

Taylor is a past graduate of Estero High School who received his undergraduate degree from FGCU in Biology. He was involved with the FGCU Wildlife Club, FGCU Herpatology Research Lab as well as the Campus Naturalist and Colloquium programs. He is currently employed as a Senior Naturalist on campus in teaching, mentoring, coordinating projects, community outreach and service events. Taylor has just completed his first year of a master's program at FGCU majoring in Environmental Science with a focus on studying the molecular ecology of the critically endangered smalltooth sawfish in collaboration with FWC. He is using DNA based technology to better understand their habitat and diet. His long-term career goal is working in environmental research for conservation and eventually obtaining a PhD.

Recipient: Robert Marlin Smith ***Florida Gulf Coast University***

Robert graduated from North Ft. Myers High School this spring. He will be entering FGCU this fall majoring in Environmental Science. He has taken the Advanced International Certification Exams in Marine Science and Chemistry. Marlin worked on a high school project to convert a chlorinated pool to a biological filter with sand, rocks and filter feeders. He is also studying biodegradability in marine and soil-based environments. His hobby of marine photography was rewarded by winning an award in a DDWS photo contest. Marlin's long-term goal is environmental restoration which was influenced by his outdoor experiences while growing up in southwest Florida.

Recipient: Jake Joers ***Florida Atlantic University***

Jake graduated from Barron Collier High School and is currently finishing his third year at Florida Atlantic University studying Ocean Engineering. Jake is an active member of the Human Powered Submarine Club that designed, constructed and operated an underwater craft. Their group captured first place honors in the speed division in the Annual International Race. He is active in the Marine Technology Society. Jake has also volunteered with the Naples Pier Underwater and beach cleanup over the last 6 years. This summer, he has an opportunity for an internship with a Marine and Environmental consulting firm in Naples, designing projects which have the least possible impact on the environment. Jake's long-term goal is to work on the development of automated undersea vehicles for exploration of the seafloor resources & use of submarine-cabled observatories for monitoring the seafloor environment.

Recipient: Danielle Winchel ***University of Florida***

Danielle graduated from Oasis High School this spring and will be attending the University of Florida this fall majoring in Environmental Science focusing on wildlife and ecological conservation. She is currently dually enrolled in FSW where a class in Southwest Florida Ecology stirred her interest in habitat restoration and conservation. Danielle is active in her school's Environmental Club with projects including clean up, expanded recycling program and beautification with plants around the school and in the community. Her future career plans are not solidified but Danielle has expressed interest working for a national park, habitat restoration or environmental education.

Recipient: Haleigh Niles ***Washington University***

Haleigh is graduating from Lemon Bay High School and will be attending Washington University this fall majoring in Environmental Earth Sciences. At Lemon Bay High School, she has been enrolled in AP Environmental Science classes, dual enrollment in FSW and a member of Science National Honor Society. Haleigh has participated in Envirothon as well as regional environmental science competition. She has been active in a variety of school organizations that include volunteer activities within the community. Haleigh plans to obtain her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and is considering Environmental Law.

Tarpon Bay Explorers Scholarship

Tarpon Bay Explorers has been supporting this scholarship program since its inception eleven years ago. Tarpon Bay Explorers, the official recreational concession for the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, offers kayak rentals and tours, Wildlife Drive tram tours, nature boating cruises, educational Deck Talks, and other opportunities to learn more about local wildlife and its habitat. "Our Tarpon Bay Explorer naturalists are a team of environmental educators. Many of these talented individuals would not have had the opportunity to complete environmental studies or other related programs if it weren't for grants and scholarships from members of the business community," said co-owner Wendy Schnapp. "Therefore, we understand the value of educating these young people and are glad to contribute. We are fortunate to be able to offer these scholarships."

Recipient: Stella Souza *University of South Florida*

This spring Stella graduated from Seacrest Country Day School and will be attending the University of South Florida majoring in Environmental Science. Stella's interest in the environment developed in part by watching destruction of Brazilian tropical rain forest for cattle ranching and then later realizing how much she enjoyed her summer experiences with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida which spurred her interest in the natural world. As a junior, she spent a semester in Maine learning about how to be a good steward of the environment. Volunteering at the Naples Botanical Garden solidified her interest pursuing a degree in Environmental Science to pursue a career in wildlife and ecosystem management in the National Wildlife Refuge system.

Recipient: Adrian Dougherty *University of Florida*

Adrian graduated from Ft. Myers High School and has just completed her sophomore year at University of Florida majoring in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation with a minor in Spanish. She is active on campus with the Wildlife Society and volunteers with the Gainesville Greenway Challenge removing invasive plants on public lands. Adrian has been volunteering on 2 wildlife research projects. Last summer she studied marine ecology & wildlife techniques program in Belize. This summer Adrian has an opportunity to work at Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area as a wildlife management intern. Her long-term goal is to become a Wildlife Biologist or Land Manager working for a National Wildlife Refuge.

Mike & Terry Baldwin Scholarship

Mike and Terry Baldwin have made Sanibel Island their year-round home for the last 20 years and are avid supporters of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and its friends group, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society (DDWS). At a time when so many young people seem to be spending less and less time in the great outdoors, they are delighted to sponsor a DDWS Scholarship for students who are interested in studies that can help protect and foster our ecology and environment.

Terry holds an EdD from the University of Cincinnati and, since moving to Sanibel, has become an avid wildlife photographer. She served on the board of the DDWS for 9 years, 7 years as its secretary, and now acts as a member of its emeritus board. She also chairs the annual DDWS photography contest and teaches a wildlife photography program at the Refuge during "season". Mike holds a Ph.D. in organic chemistry, retired as Vice-President of Technology for Millennium Chemical in 1999, acted as a safety and environmental consultant to senior management in the energy and chemical sectors until late 2013, and is the current DDWS President.

Recipient: Katie Thorp *University of Florida*

Katie graduated from Ft. Myers High School in 2015 and currently is completing her third year at University of Florida studying Environmental Engineering. She has completed summer programs as a water resource intern in Immokalee for U. of FL. Institute of Food and Agriculture and environmental biotechnology intern in the Netherlands studying phototrophic non-sulfur purple bacteria for wastewater treatment. This summer Katie will have the opportunity to work in Belize as a fellow for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture on assessing the water quality in the Vaca Forest Reserve to provide guidance on restoring the ecosystem. On campus, she is currently the president of the Gators for Environmental Community Outreach which received UF Best New Student Organization. Katie plans to pursue a career as an environmental extension specialist to focus on formulating best management practices and make recommendations to improve the environment.

Dr. Andrew and Laura Dahlem Scholarship

The Dr. Andrew and Laura Dahlem Scholarship was founded in honor of their unwavering passion and service to family, wildlife, community, and science. J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge has been a place for Andrew and Laura to enjoy the wildlife of Sanibel Island for many years. The commitment to ecological preservation that embodies the Refuge, and the island as a whole, played an integral role in their decision to call the island home in 2011 and "Ding" Darling is now only a short bike-ride away. The Dahlem's continue to support wildlife preservation efforts so that future generations may similarly benefit from the beauty that they now enjoy so much.

Originally from Dayton, Ohio, both Andrew and Laura graduated from The Ohio State University and pursued careers in scientific fields. Andrew earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in Toxicology studying the effects of cyanobacteria on the environment. Laura earned a Master's degree in Speech Therapy from The Ohio State University and continues to be passionate about scientific research in her field. Andrew and Laura are now long-time residents of Indianapolis, Indiana. Andrew is an avid animal lover, particularly turtles, and has transformed his suburban yard into a mini wildlife refuge of his own. Laura continues to be a prolific volunteer in all aspects of her community. Andrew and Laura provide love and support for their three children as they pursue dreams of their own.

Recipient: Sarah Swiersz ***University of Central Florida***

Sarah attended high school in Ft. Myers at Southwest Florida Christian Academy and currently is enrolled in the Burnett Honors College at the University of Central Florida, where she has an interdisciplinary curriculum combining Computational & Physical Science along with Biology & Environmental Science. Sarah has received a research grant for an independent project involving plant systematics and the collection, taxonomic identification and preservation of plants with a focus on those that induce allergies. Additional research assistance experience is in processing core soil samples to understand historic storm events in Florida. She has participated in several environmental volunteer activities in the Ft. Myers area. Her long-term goal is to pursue a career in ocean & earth science research with an emphasis on protecting coastal communities.

Francine Litofsky Scholarship :

Francine was originally from Brooklyn, NY, and her education at Barnard College was in chemistry. But her artistic and environmental drive were always as strong as her scientific nature. She was well known on Sanibel as a nature and landscape black-and-white photographer. Her photographs are in numerous homes on Sanibel as well as in the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge administration building along with a book of her nature photographs that she published. Her love of nature started with shell collecting on Sanibel, but she donated her entire scientifically indexed shell collection to the National Bailey-Mathews Shell Museum to concentrate on birding and photography.

Since she retired and moved to Sanibel with her husband Barry, Francine loved being an active volunteer at the Refuge and sharing her love of nature with others. She found that going out on Wildlife Drive and sharing her knowledge with others was very rewarding and relaxing and would reduce her everyday stress. This scholarship is in her memory.

Recipient: Kevin Macias ***Cornell University***

Kevin is a graduate of Barron Collier High School. He is completing his first year at Cornell University majoring in Biology with a focus on Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. His interest was sparked in high school while participating in the Marine Science Club and attending a Marine Lab educational program in Key Largo. At Cornell, Kevin has joined the Wildlife Society and has been accepted to the Biology Scholars Program. Through this he was selected to travel to the Galapagos Islands this year to study environmental and evolutionary concepts. Long term, Kevin plans to pursue a career in research that will contribute to the areas of habitat restoration and conservation of diverse species.

The Mary Elaine Jacobson Memorial Scholarship

The Mary Elaine Jacobson Memorial Scholarship was established in her fond memory by the Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society. Elaine, a board member and the program chairperson for San-Cap Audubon from 2003 through 2015 and planned and coordinated their very successful yearly lecture series on birds and the environment. As a J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge volunteer for over a decade and a self-taught expert on local Florida flora, she conducted a weekly visitor plant walk and with her husband also led a weekly Refuge visitor bicycle tour. In addition, Elaine volunteered at the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) where she organized and led their native plant education program, Weeds & Seeds.

Elaine passed away in July of 2015 and is sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. She was always enthusiastic about everything that interested her, and her enthusiasm was contagious. A vibrant and lively person who enjoyed life to the fullest while being amazingly giving and loving, Elaine's curiosity and excitement about plants, nature, history, and her passion to explore the world were admired by many.

Recipient: Maegan Mikkelson *University of Florida*

Maegan graduated from North Ft. Myers High School this spring and will be attending University of Florida this fall with a major in Environmental Science. She became involved with mangrove restoration through a 4H troop but took the project to a new level, beginning with applying and receiving a Disney Youth Summer of Service grant to grow and plant mangroves, then to developing a web site for "Adopt a Mangrove Foundation" so mangrove caregivers can view the trees planted in their names. This initiative garnered interest from university professors, county commissioners and local environmental agencies that became involved. For her work, Maegan received the Conservation Stewardship Award from the Environmental Protection Agency of Ft. Myers. She plans to utilize her degree to further environmental stewardship within her community.

Dr. H. Randall Deming Endowed Scholarship for Conservation & Environmental Studies

This annual scholarship has been established in memory of Dr. H. Randall Deming by his family. Randy graduated from Dartmouth College and the University Of Vermont School Of Medicine. He practiced Radiology at the Maine Medical Center for 30 years, which included serving as the Chair of the Department. After retiring in 1995, Randy and his wife Ann divided their time between Maine and Ft. Myers. A lifelong outdoors enthusiast and avid birder, Randy loved spending time at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and would initiate frequent outings to the Refuge with his children and grandchildren.

Affectionately known as "Big Daddy," Randy was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and friend. He is remembered for his crushing hugs, gentle demeanor, big heart and great love for his family. Because he truly appreciated and valued the importance of education and the protection of our natural habitat, this scholarship has been established to provide an opportunity for students interested in the conservation and preservation of our natural environment to pursue their studies.

Recipient: Morgan Humphrey *Florida Gulf Coast University*

Morgan is a graduate of Barron Collier High School and is currently attending FGCU with a major in Environmental & Civil Engineering. She has been involved with a research project testing samples from a wastewater reactor for a variety of chemical compounds to determine the potential for leachate additives. Morgan has become active on campus with Women in STEM and FGCU Engineering Ambassador program as well as participating in several professional engineering chapters. Her vision is to complete a master's program, to pursue a career in international environmental engineering for conservation and restoration work needed following natural disasters. Once that work is completed then she would like to return to Florida and work on Everglades Recovery Projects.

Leslie & Hans Fleischner Scholarship:

Sanibel Island, Florida has recently become a place for Hans and Leslie Fleischner to relax, appreciate wildlife from their porch, surround themselves with the natural beauty of the outdoors and make regular trips to the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Part-time residents, their home is in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where they are very involved in the community and believe strongly in supporting education. They support students through the Pittsburgh Chapter of the ARCS Foundation which provides scholarships to the best emerging scientists at Carnegie Mellon University, The University of Pittsburgh and Penn State; at the middle-school Neighborhood Academy and at local Opera company programs developing stars of the future.

Leslie graduated from Carnegie Institute of Technology. She raised two boys, owned and operated a very successful needlework shop, then took up photography, including some amazing shots of Sanibel birds, shells and landscapes. Hans graduated from Harvard (BA) and Columbia (MBA) and spent most of his working life with the United States Steel Corporation. Since retiring, Hans and Leslie have traveled to all seven continents including the North Pole, and continue their many activities with local non-profits. As investing in the younger generation is one of their main interests, they are excited to bring this support to Southwest Florida by establishing this scholarship with the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society.

Recipient: Anthony Bonacolta *University of Miami*

Anthony is a graduate of Bishop Verot High School and is completing his third year at the University of Miami with a double major in Marine Science and Microbiology & Immunology. He has achieved the high award of Eagle Scout which he credits teaching him appreciation of the natural world. Anthony has become involved working in the Cnidarian Immunology Lab and now beginning his own project studying the role of specific bacterial strains on the functionality of the starlet sea anemones. Anthony remains immersed in his area of interest during his summers and last year worked in the marine microbial ecology lab at FGCU. His vision is to pursue post graduate studies until attaining a PhD and then focusing his research to the microbiota of coral and the effect on coral reef health.

Recipient: Dara Craig *Vanderbilt University*

Dara graduated from high school at Cypress Lake Center for the Arts and is finishing her junior year at Vanderbilt University with a double major in Ecology, Evolution & Organismal Biology and Anthropology. Over the last year Dara has traveled to Honduras to study coral reefs, interned with environmental consulting group in Nashville and started researching the use of field cameras for conservation purposes for her senior thesis. She is currently in New Zealand in an Earth Systems study abroad program that integrates Maori perspectives of environmental stewardship with intense study of the different earth systems of New Zealand as a basis for tackling current environmental issues. Long term, she plans to obtain a PhD in biodiversity and environmental conservation and then follow a career that will enhance environmental stewardship.