

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
Contact: Chelle Koster Walton
239-699-4754
ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption:

‘Ding’ welcomes permanently endowed fund

Friends of the late Elaine Jacobson, Kevin Bowden and Candice Ethridge, have honored her memory with an endowment fund to permanently support education efforts at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge through the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Jacobson served as a “Ding” Darling volunteer for about 15 years at the front desk in the Visitor & Education Center, as a bird rover on Wildlife Drive -- often by bike -- and as a plant guide at Bailey Tract, for which she had an acute passion.

About 18 years ago, Bowden and Ethridge met her and husband Bill “Jake” Jacobson and became fast friends, both on the island and off, meeting in Canada several times and once even on the Lewis and Clark Trail. On the island, Jacobson and Ethridge went botanizing almost daily and led SCCF plant walks for 10 years.

“For most plants at ‘Ding,’ Elaine knew both their botanical name and common name,” said Ethridge. “As a grandmother of three, she particularly enjoyed helping children, so with Elaine’s death, Kevin and I wanted to remember her with a fund for children’s nature education at ‘Ding.’”

“To know that in her legacy she will be helping those studying nature and the environment would have immeasurably pleased Elaine,” said her husband.

Endowment funds establish a permanent donation from which DDWS draws only the earnings on the account to support various earmarked aspects of the refuge including education, interns, and student conservation scholarships.

“We are deeply grateful for this generous gift to remember one of our well-loved volunteers,” said Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director. “Permanent endowment funds have become the lifeblood of the society, providing a measure of financial stability long into the future. It’s a wonderful, lasting way to honor family and friends.”

DDWS’ first endowment came from Kip Koss, the late grandson of the refuge’s namesake, Jay Norwood Darling. It supports overall conservation education projects, including annual teacher conservation grants. Former refuge volunteer Jane Werner later endowed a conservation scholarship in her name. Several more endowments have come along through the years, with two more under discussion at this time, said Miller.

Donors can establish a permanent endowment fund with a contribution of \$10,000 or more. To learn more about establishing an endowment to support the refuge or learn about the 45/82 legacy society, contact Miller or DDWS associate director at 239-472-1100 ext. 4.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

###