

"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.



# 2021 "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society Environmental Scholarship Awards



**"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society**

1 Wildlife Drive  
Sanibel, FL 33957

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge



“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 local students engaged in the study of conservation, biology, and the environment.

The 2021 recipients are graduating high school seniors, college and post-graduate students from the five surrounding counties. These students have 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:



## 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: Alexandra Polk**  
***University of South Florida***

Alexandra Polk graduated from Ft. Myers High School this spring and will be majoring in Environmental Studies and Marine Biology at the University of South Florida in their honors program. She has had a passion for marine life and started volunteering at age 10 with the Sanibel Sea School where she has been involved with teaching, field research, immersion experiences and life skills for teens. Alexandra is President of Save What's Left Club at her high school that runs the recycling program, organizes cleanups, and reviews environmental policies. She is President of the Science National Honors Society at FMHS. Alexandra's long-term goal is to be involved with education, conservation, and research to promote our marine biomes and ecosystems.

**Recipient: Mark Leone**  
**Stanford University**

Mark Leone attended Canterbury and Estero High Schools and is graduating this spring. He will be attending Stanford University this fall studying Civil Engineering with a focus on Environmental Fluid Mechanics and Hydrology. Mark grew up in south Florida fishing and exploring nature but was disappointed when red tide took away his ability to be on the water. That piqued his interest in learning more about HABs, so the summer before high school he was given the opportunity to work with Dr. Parsons at FGCU on a 2-year project studying phytoplankton populations in Estero Bay. Subsequently, Mark began to focus on red tide, initiating a red tide culture collection at FGCU, then red tide mitigation work with Mote Marine Lab, and teaching the public on local marine environment & college/grad students on science diving. His long-term goal is to pursue a PhD in Ocean Engineering to lead sustainable engineering projects to improve the Florida's ecosystem health and resiliency.

## 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 non-profit organization that supports the refuge with education as one of many areas of our focus. This is the fourteenth 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, supporting more students with financial awards to help pay for their environmental education.

We did receive fewer applications this year with the pandemic but those that applied were very impressive. Each of you shares a passion to pursue a career related to environmental science, conservation, or wildlife preservation. It is exciting to see such enthusiasm for studying and caring for the environment. Fourteen were selected this year to receive scholarships.

We again will not hold an in-person award ceremony due to the pandemic, although we are seeing progress with the advent of the vaccine. The best way for us to celebrate your achievements is our congratulation video and awards brochure with information about the donors and recipients. We look forward to viewing your videos which will be shared with the donors, staff, and board members. We wish you success in completing your education and achieving your career goals. 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 of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society

## **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.

### **Blade Kalikow *Northeastern University***

Blade Kalikow graduated from Community High School of Naples and will be attending Northeastern University this fall studying Environmental Engineering. Blade has always enjoyed being outdoors in Nature and found science has given him the tools to understand the world that surrounds us. During high school, he has taken many AP science classes including with Duke TIP, Johns Hopkins CTY, and Brown University summer programs as well as receiving 2 science awards. Blade has been involved with the Community School Environmental Club as co-president leading meetings, organizing cleanups and club projects, constructing a butterfly garden, and improving students' recycling habits. His long-term goal is to innovate renewable energy systems to combat climate change.

### **Izabella Ferjani *Eckard College***

Izabella Ferjani is graduating from Lemon Bay High School this spring and will be studying Marine Science and Animal Studies at Eckard College. She is currently the President of the Marine Conservation Club which has performed projects, including beach cleanups, seagrass restoration, and reusable water bottle filling stations. Izabella worked in the school's Aqualab and set up seagrass growing tanks, applied for a state permit, and obtained funding from several sources for the project in seagrass restoration. She has been involved with a variety of other school organizations and volunteer activities within the community. After obtaining her undergraduate degree, Izabella plans to attend graduate school in Marine Science and work at a marine mammal research center.

## **Win & Marilyn Kloosterman Scholarship**

Marilyn and Winton Kloosterman were lifelong educators – Marilyn a high school teacher and Win a university professor. In 1986, they sold their home in Michigan and moved to Sanibel to enjoy a lifestyle where they could be outside all year around. With passion for the natural world, they both began volunteering at "Ding", a pursuit that continued for more than 20 years for Win and more than 30 for Marilyn. Both were active in the Ding Darling Wildlife Society, with Marilyn serving as president of the Board of Directors from 1995 to 1997 and later as an emeritus member of the Board. Marilyn was also heavily involved with the Scholarship Committee.

Marilyn and Win loved to travel and toured much of the world on their own and with the Lee County Friendship Force. Every time they returned to Sanibel, they were eager to see their friends—both human and avian—at Ding. Knowing that education is key to assuring that the love of nature that they instilled in their children and grandchildren, Marilyn and Win were pleased to establish this scholarship to support students interested in preserving the environment.

### **Taylor Sorrell *Purdue University***

Taylor Sorrell is a graduate of Palmetto Ridge HS and currently completing her senior year at Purdue University with a major in Agricultural & Biological Engineering. She will begin work on her masters this year in the same area of study. Since attending Purdue, besides her academic load for which she has been accepted into Purdue's College of Ag Honor Society, she has become involved volunteering with several organizations, including Women in Science Programs. Taylor has participated in several research internships from 2018 to the present. She is currently working as a teaching and research assistant for Dr. Chase. Taylor's long-term goal is to focus on research to understand how nutrients affect human disease evolution & progression through agriculture.

## **Tarpon Bay Explorers Scholarship**

Tarpon Bay Explorers has been supporting this scholarship program since its inception fourteen 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.”

### **Tate Williams**

#### ***Florida Gulf Coast University***

Tate Williams graduated from North Ft. Myers High School this spring and will be studying Environmental Engineering at Florida Gulf Coast University this fall. Growing up in south Florida with unique animal habitats and productive estuaries, Tate has seen firsthand the toll that tourism, rapid residential expansion, and agricultural practices have had on our ecosystems and waterways. He has a passion for protecting and preserving south Florida’s fragile ecosystems. Tate has accumulated over 1 year of college credits so he will be able to focus his course work in his area of interest in conservation and sustainability. He plans a career in developing inexpensive alternative energy sources that are as efficient as natural gas and gasoline.

## **Mike & Terry Baldwin Scholarship**

Mike and Terry Baldwin have made Sanibel Island and Fort Myers their year-round home for the last 23 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.

### **Mallory Poff**

#### ***Elon University***

Mallory graduated in the class of 2019 from Barron Collier High School in Naples and is completing her sophomore year at Elon University pursuing a degree in Engineering. Mallory is one of 45 freshman Honors Fellows on Elon’s campus and one of only two female honors engineers in her class. Mallory is conducting a 2-year honors research thesis project focused on developing an efficient solar-panel design to power a mobile cooling unit that meets agricultural standards for small farms. After completion of her undergraduate engineering degree, Mallory plans to pursue a master’s degree focused on Renewable Energy Engineering.

## **Dr. Andrew & 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.

### **Dara Craig** *University of Oregon*

Dara Craig graduated from Cypress Lake High School and Vanderbilt University. She is now pursuing her PhD in Environmental Science, Studies and Policy at the University of Oregon. Dara has extensive experiences in the US and overseas (Vanderbilt, Mote Marine Lab, Honduras, New Zealand, British Virgin Islands, Indonesia) in research and teaching which have influenced her educational path. Her thesis work is researching fisheries co-governance, joint marine spatial planning, and partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Dara's long-term goal is to develop science-based, marine conservation programs that respect both nature and culture, working with Indigenous and non-Native coastal communities around the world.

## **Barry & Francine Litofsky Scholarship**

The Barry & Francine Litofsky Scholarship was established in memory of a wonderful nature loving couple. 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. Francine loved being an active volunteer at the Refuge and sharing her love of nature with others.

Barry grew up in Brooklyn and has degrees in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from New York University, MIT, and the University of Pennsylvania where got his PhD. He lived in New Jersey where he raised his family and worked at AT&T Bell Laboratories for 35 years. Barry and Francine loved Sanibel. They had vacationed on the island in a timeshare for decades and eventually decided to retire on the island. They adored the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, where Barry volunteered as well as worked for Tarpon Bay Explorers.

### **William Sobczak** *University of Florida*

William Sobczak graduated from Barron Collier High School and is completing his freshman year in the Honors & University Research Scholar Program at the University of Florida studying Environmental Engineering. He was elected to the Student Advisory Board that facilitates connections between undergraduate students and research opportunities across campus and became a member of the honor society, Phi Kappa Phi. Willy is currently working with Dr. Bowden mapping PFAS ("forever chemicals"), used in industrial processes which have toxicity implications to humans and natural world. He is obtaining water & environmental samples in Southwest Florida and analyzing data from these samples. His long-term vision is to tackle our environmental challenges with a combination sound science, innovative engineering, and enlightened leadership.

## **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.

**Alexandria Henson**  
**University of Florida**

Alex Henson graduated from North Ft. Myers High School this spring and will be attending the University of Florida pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies. Her passion for the environment was energized with a STEM summer high school outreach program working with a local university’s Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences. Alex participated in six Youth Ocean Conservation Summits at Mote Marine Laboratory and founded a public outreach program, “Project L.E.A.D.” (Local Environmental Activist Development) to motivate local youth to learn about environmental issues and find their voice for change. The project included networking, campaigns, mangrove plantings and cleanups. Alex’s long-term goal is to perform research and educate at the college level as a professor of Ecological Studies.

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

This permanent annual scholarship was 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.

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

Marlin Smith graduated from North Ft. Myers High School and is completing his third year at FGCU studying Marine Science and Environmental Studies. He is active on campus focusing on sustainability. In his current position as Director of Sustainability on FGCU campus, Marlin has worked on several projects including *gLitter is litter* converting use of confetti to *EcoFetti* for graduation photos, *Campus Race to Zero* focusing on waste reduction, *Eagle’s Earth Week* to educate students on sustainability and future campaigns to eliminate single use plastic in the dining facilities. He will be a divemaster for the scientific diving program. Marlin plans to pursue a graduate degree, engage in underwater research, and coral restoration.

## 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.

### **Shannon Dougherty** *Mercer University*

Shannon Dougherty graduated from Cape Coral High School this spring and will be studying Sustainability Science, Business with a minor in Law at Mercer University. She found the pandemic only deepened her appreciation for the natural world and focused her attention to how she could conserve and improve our environment. During high school, Shannon was involved with Model UN learning of international environmental issues, Keep Lee County Beautiful Youth Advisory Council, Keep America Beautiful Youth Advisory Council, and Executive Board of Student Government. She was responsible for organizing projects to remove exotic plants, cleanup beaches, trim trails, and improving the recycling efforts on the high school campus. Shannon also received a grant to engage youth in the creation of a community COVID unity garden to recognize first responders during the pandemic. Shannon plans to pursue a career in Environmental Law and work inside the government to regulate business environmental practices.

### **Micah Evans** *United States Naval Academy*

Micah Evans is graduating from Gulf Coast High School and will be attending the U.S. Naval Academy majoring in Ocean Engineering. Micah has always been captivated with the natural world, especially wildlife and feels a draw towards field research. His awareness of environmental problems came through reading and experiences which focused his attention on sustainability and conservation. Micah has a strong interest in developing his leadership skills which has already begun with positions in Key Club, Mu Alpha Theta, National Honors Society, Band and Type 1 Diabetes Club. He has used his leadership roles to advance sustainable practices. Micah plans to pursue the goals of fuel efficiency and environmental sustainability within the military.

## "Ding" Darling Conservation Scholarship

The "Ding" Darling Conservation Scholarship was funded by an anonymous donor that has a passion for environmental education.

### **Skyler Lowden** *University of Miami*

Skyler Lowden is a graduate of Ft. Myers High School and completed her fourth out of a five-year program at the University of Miami studying Architecture. Skyler grew up on Sanibel where she was exposed to the beauty and complexities of nature which contributed to her passion for protecting the environment. Her second passion is art, and she was a past winner of the Junior Duck Stamp competition at "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Combining her two passions, architecture will allow her to design buildings with conscious awareness, to create beautiful, spiritual places while benefiting sustainability and conservation practices. Skyler plans to become LEED-certified, pursue a master's degree in design with an environmental focus and become an innovative architect.



*"Land, water and vegetation are just that dependent on one another. Without these three primary elements in natural balance, we can have neither fish nor game, wild flowers nor trees, labor nor capital, nor sustaining habitat for humans."*

*— Jay Norwood Darling*