



# Protect. Educate. Inspire.

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

[ChelleKWalton@gmail.com](mailto:ChelleKWalton@gmail.com)

Caption: Sue Tray's love of plants and nature inspired the refuge's second permanently endowed intern fund.

### **Sue Tray memorial internship fund established at 'Ding' Darling**

Former, longtime Sanibel Island resident Hal Tray has established a permanently endowed intern fund in memory of his wife with the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The Sue Tray Memorial Internship for Visitor Services, the second permanently endowed internship fund for DDWS, will guarantee ongoing funding for one intern annually to assist the Visitor Services staff at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

"I was impressed and interested after reading about the Harkey Development & Communications Intern Fund, which Bill and Laurie Harkey established recently as the first such permanently endowed internship support," said Hal Tray. "I was looking for something meaningful to memorialize my wife. She loved the outdoors, and we both enjoyed taking family and friends to 'Ding' Darling when we lived on Sanibel. An internship is something she would have appreciated, and it just clicked."

Sue Tray was a talented gardener, floral designer, landscape design consultant, and teacher of Sogetsu Ikebana floral design, all of which led her to embrace the beauty of nature and plants. She was a Master Flower Show judge for the National Council of State Garden Clubs and served

for several years as state president of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland.

“The visitor services team is the face of the refuge, and the annual intern works with that team to ensure positive experiences that can create or reinforce a commitment to conservation,” said DDWS executive director Birgie Miller.

“Permanently endowed support is the most effective gift for internships - a guarantee a smiling face and informed intern will always be there to greet the nearly million visitors each – 375,000 of which stop in annually at the Refuge Visitor & Education Center. It requires a contribution of \$200,000 or more to invest in internships that continually support refuge conservation and education into perpetuity. For us, as the refuge’s fundraising arm, that means security in knowing our mission will live on.”

DDWS supports more than a dozen interns each year to assist refuge and DDWS staff with education programs, visitor services, biology research, and philanthropy. Donors are able to establish a DDWS endowment fund for any purpose with \$10,000 or more.

For more information about supporting the refuge internship programs or establishing an endowment fund, contact DDWS associate executive director Sierra Hoisington at 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

#### 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 profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

###