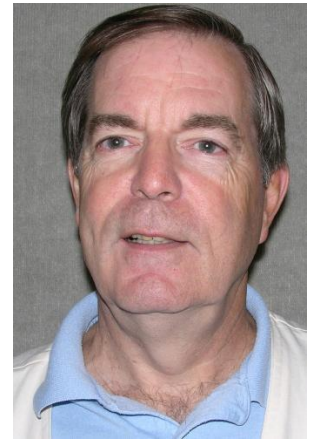


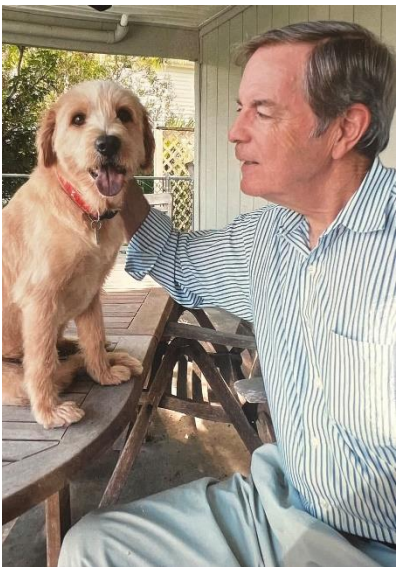
Tom Edgar Volunteer Fund

Tom's first love was his family and, secondly, the family he chose for himself in the form of his volunteer family at "Ding" Darling.



While attending Rollins College, he visited Sanibel Island and the Refuge and knew this would be a place he would one day live. He and his wife, Connie, eventually made that dream a reality, and from the moment they moved to the island, Tom showed his love and appreciation for this special place by volunteering for several organizations. However, it was his unique connection to "Ding" Darling, its staff, and volunteers that was closest to his heart.

In 2003, Tom began volunteering at the Refuge Front Desk, bringing his love of the Refuge to the community and individuals visiting as well as sharing the important story of protecting lands for the wildlife. Seeing the impact of what the friends group "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society has on helping to fill in the gaps to assist the Refuge in its conservation work, Tom joined and served on its Board of Directors for three years, beginning in 2005. He was not one to shy away from asking the hard questions and giving ideas for improving upon the work both at DDWS and the Refuge. As his dementia progressed, being at "Ding" with all its love and support meant so much to him and to his family. Before his death in 2021, Tom earned his 2,500-hour volunteer award in 2020.



Tom understood the value of volunteerism to the Refuge and the good work that was being done by the volunteers, but he also saw the true value of what volunteerism means to the individual volunteers. Although it differs for each person, volunteers gain a sense of purpose, a sense of family, a connection with the community and a chance to meet others with similar interests.

Connie and his three girls (Tyler, Alexandra, and Ashley) knew how important the Refuge was to Tom and how he valued his time there. They chose to establish this permanent fund to help with the expenses for running the volunteer program, knowing that Tom would have been supportive of anything to do with volunteers and the Refuge.

Individuals, families, businesses, or foundations interested in making a gift to support the Tom Edgar Volunteer Fund can visit dingdarlingsociety.org, click the donate button, and make a note in the comment section for this fund.

To learn more about establishing your own permanent endowed fund, call 239-292-0566. Donors can establish an endowment with a gift of \$10,000 or more. Proceeds earned by the investment go towards supporting the Refuge mission.