

"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.



**Tuesday June 11, 2019**

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



**"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society**  
1 Wildlife Drive  
Sanibel, FL 33957



**“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 2019 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: 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. Morgan has been active on campus as a mentor with Women in STEM and president of the student chapter of Florida Water & Environment Association. She has been involved with research projects including design of an engineering solution to cigarette litter, literature review on biosand filters, testing nutrient content on treated leachate and testing leachate treated in a constructed wetland. Morgan's long-term plans include obtaining a master's degree overseas for an international perspective and pursuing a career in international environmental engineering for conservation and restoration work following natural disasters.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*  
—Margaret Mead

# 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 thirteenth 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 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. Each of you shares 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. Of the many applicants, 16 were selected 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: Adrian Dougherty** *University of Florida*

Adrian graduated from Ft. Myers High School and has just completed her junior year at University of Florida majoring in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation with a minor in Spanish. She is active on campus serving as VP of the Wildlife Society, volunteering with Kids in the Woods and completed an internship with the Alachua Audubon Society; building, placing and monitoring kestrel boxes. This summer Adrian will be interning at Merritt Island NWR to learn more about working as a wildlife biologist in the refuge system. Her long-term goal is to obtain more field experience and then a master's degree in wildlife biology to become a Wildlife Biologist managing wildlife and natural resources with a focus on wetlands.

### **Recipient: Alexandra Mackey** *University of Geneva*

A graduate of Cape Coral High School's International Baccalaureate program and University of Florida, Alexandra is undertaking a master's program in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. So far Alexandra has worked on reports about international transboundary water bodies protections & use and over-extraction of sand being used in the concrete industry that adversely affects river & marine ecosystems. This fall she will be studying in China to learn about their steps to change from a top world polluter to becoming a more sustainable society. Alexandra sees her future career in policy at an international level to advocate for biodiversity conservation and sustainability.

### **Recipient: Kyle Walker** *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*

Kyle is a graduate of Florida Southwestern Collegiate HS and will be attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University this fall majoring in mechanical engineering. During high school he participated in their Drone Academy which engaged in community events. Kyle is working towards obtaining Eagle Scout status. His interest in mechanical engineering is in part related to working in his father's plumbing business and learning how to apply mechanical knowledge to real life situations. Kyle plans to have a career in water management and distribution or building environmentally safe plumbing systems.

### **Recipient: Amy Oxtan** *University of Florida*

Amy attended Ft. Myers HS. She is completing her degree in Natural Resource Conservation at the University of Florida this spring and working towards a master's degree in Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences. For her thesis, Amy will be focusing on effects of Lake Okeechobee discharges, in particular Microcystis blooms on the recruitment of blue crab megalopae. Last summer she was an intern with the Molluscan Program at FWC Research Institute in Steinhatchee, Florida snorkeling to perform scallop surveys and interviewing scallopers for a creel survey. Amy plans to obtain a PhD, continue with marine research and teach at the college level.

### **Zoe Ortiz** *Tulane University*

Zoe graduated from Port Charlotte HS this spring and will attend Tulane University this fall majoring in Environmental Studies and Legal Studies in Business. During high school, she was very active in international Model United Nations winning the Best Gavel Award from the Harvard competition. Additional activities in high school included tutoring, volunteering for community events and serving as an officer of her class. Zoe goal is to obtain a law degree and practice with a non-governmental organization dedicated to environmental advocacy and policy.

## Tarpon Bay Explorers Scholarship

Tarpon Bay Explorers has been supporting this scholarship program since its inception thirteen 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: Griffin Alexander**  
*University of Miami*

Griffin is a graduate of Naples High School and has completed his first year at the University of Miami majoring in Marine Affairs, Ecosystems Science & Policy. He has participated in a variety of campus activities including a community outreach program, *Ocean Kids*, the Marine Science Honors Club, UM Florida Water Environment Association and Surfriders Foundation. Griffin took the initiative to assist in a harmful algae bloom study and is learning about coral research including projects in coral restoration. Griffin is focused on obtaining his degree in Marine Affairs and Ecosystem Policy along with a Master’s in Professional Science within 4 years.

**Recipient: Elizabeth Swiersz**  
*University of Florida*

Elizabeth graduated this spring from Florida Southwestern Collegiate HS and will be entering the University of Florida this fall majoring in Civil & Coastal Engineering. She presented a research project at the Intel International Science Fair on the relationship between exotic plants and invasive arthropod species which had a negative impact on the local environment. Last summer, Elizabeth attended a Women’s Technology Program at MIT to learn more about interdisciplinary engineering. Her long-term goal is to work on sustainable development and make coastal cities more resilient to natural disasters.

## Mike & Terry Baldwin Scholarship

Mike and Terry Baldwin have made Sanibel Island and Fort Myers their year-round home for the last 21 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: Robert Marlin Smith**  
*Florida Gulf Coast University*

Marlin graduated from North Ft. Myers High School and will be starting his sophomore year at FGCU this fall majoring in Marine & Environmental Science. Highlights from his freshman year include involvement with Student Government on sustainability projects, Wings of Hope teaching local elementary students about endangered species and a service-learning project with the Food Foresters Club that developed a self-sustaining outdoor classroom which he helped maintain & promote. Marlin’s experiences with classes and campus organizations has influenced his decision to focus on environmental education and field research.

## **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.

### **Recipient: Conor Dougherty** *University of Scranton*

Conor graduated from Cape Coral HS this spring and will be attending University of Scranton with a major in Biology and Environmental Science. His high school accomplishments include academic awards, an award-winning science project on "The Effects of Increased Ocean Acidification on the Dissolution of Coral & Oyster Shells", research on ways to reduce single use water bottles and volunteer projects with Keep Lee County Beautiful. Conor's hands-on approach to environmental problems led to getting refillable water bottle filtration stations installed at his high school followed by finding a way through becoming a member of the KAB Youth Advisory Board, to obtain grants to support placing these stations in other Lee County high schools. His long-term goal is to "help create environmental policies that will substantially protect the environment."

## **Barry & Francine Litofsky Scholarship :**

The Barry and Francine 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.

### **Recipient: Abigail Clinger** *Florida Atlantic University*

Abigail graduated from Bishop Verot HS this spring and will begin her studies in Environmental and Marine Science at Florida Atlantic University in the fall. Her original connection to the marine environment was through her sailing experiences with the 2017 America's Cup winning team and founding her high school sailing team. These experiences have led to her interest in exploring southwest Florida's water quality issues. Abigail founded Blue Tides, a group that raises awareness and funds for Captain for Clean Waters that advocate for legislation that will improve the water quality in south Florida. Her long-term goal is to contribute to research on red tide and find ways to improve natural filters in our local estuaries & ecosystem.

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

Taylor is a graduate of Palmetto Ridge HS and is currently attending Purdue University with a major in Agricultural & Biological Engineering. Since attending Purdue, besides her academic load for which she has been accepted to Purdue's College of Ag Honor Society, has become involved volunteering with several organizations, including Women in Science Programs. Taylor has participated in internships in Florida and Virginia in water resource labs focusing on optimizing agricultural water use and reducing impact on water quality. This summer she will be working with Bayer Crop Science studying water management in the crop fields, how to minimize any negative impact on water quality and disease transmission. Taylor's long-term goal is to focus on research to understand how nutrients affect the disease evolution & progression through agriculture.

## **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.

**Recipient: Mallory Poff**  
*Elon University*

Mallory graduated in the class of 2019 at Barron Collier HS and will be studying Environmental Engineering at Elon University this fall. She followed an engineering curriculum in high school allowing her to obtain NAFTrack Completion Certification and was the only female out of the original 60 that completed the program. Her passion is focused on how to better harness our renewable energy sources, wind, solar and water through research on innovative engineering techniques. Mallory plans to obtain her undergraduate degree in environmental & civil engineering followed by a master's degree in renewable energy engineering.

## 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: Gabriella Placido** *University of Rhode Island*

Gabriella is a graduate of Ft. Myers HS and University of Florida with a degree in wildlife ecology & conservation. Since completing her undergraduate program, she has obtained field experience in a variety of locations from Cape Cod National Seashore to Arizona and Florida working on projects related to endangered plant & animal species. Gabriella's personal connection to SW Florida with the devastating consequences of persistent red tide and blue-green algae blooms of last year has motivated her to pursue a postgraduate degree. She will be attending the University of Rhode Island in their Master of Environmental Science & Management and plans a career that will allow her to influence environmental policy.

### **Recipient: Madison Hopkins** *Rollins College*

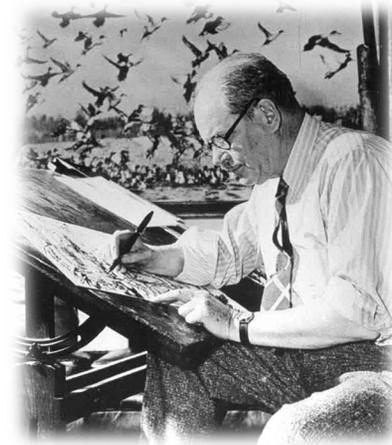
Madison is a 2019 graduate of Lely High School and will be attending Rollins College pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies. During high school she founded an environmental club, served as VP of a political activism club and participated in a Mock Trial Team. These experiences informed her interest in the connections between the environment, policy and law. Madison plans to complete her undergraduate work, attend law school and then practice environmental law with a focus on environmental problems that disproportionately affect populations of lower socioeconomic status.

## "Ding" Darling Conservation Scholarship

A new scholarship for this year, the "Ding" Darling Conservation Scholarship was funded by an anonymous donor that has a passion for environmental education.

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

Jake graduated from Barron Collier High School and is currently finishing his fourth year in a 5-year Ocean Engineering program at Florida Atlantic University. Jake is an active member of the Human Powered Submarine Club that designed, constructed and operated an underwater craft. He is active in the Marine Technology Society. Jake has also volunteered with the Naples Pier Underwater Cleanup and with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. He is interning with a Marine and Environmental consulting firm in Naples, that designs coastal projects to have the least environmental impact. Jake's long-term goal is to design & solve engineering problems that will benefit the ocean; to design underwater structures which have a positive effect on the marine environment.



*"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*