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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption w/sensewonder: Virtual participants can view a free film that day.

Caption w/LMP at microscope: Dr. Louise Perry retired to Sanibel, where she provided free eye exams for children.

‘Ding’ Darling to celebrate International Women’s Day March 8

A film about Rachel Carson and the announcement of a new endowed conservation fund for girls will virtually celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8 for the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. The global observance, which began in 1911, applauds the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women all over the world. The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) orchestrates the day’s virtual events.

As part of its ninth annual “Ding” Darling Film Series, DDWS will air *A Sense of Wonder*, a 54-minute documentary chronicling environmental pioneer, biologist Rachel Carson, in the final year of her life. It portrays Carson as she looks back over her dealings with the government, media, and chemical industry following the release of her then-controversial watershed book, *Silent Spring*, in 1962.

The film, sponsored by Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts (SCBR), is available for viewing for free anytime that day, with a Zoom virtual discussion scheduled for 5 p.m. Pre-registration for the film and discussion are required; visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series for links. Those who register for the film will receive an email a day before the showing begins containing the streaming link and password

along with a link to the Zoom discussion. For more information, visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

Also, in conjunction with International Women's Day, DDWS announces the establishment of a permanent endowed fund honoring the life of Dr. Louise Merrimon Perry, the first woman to donate land to the refuge, protecting the coastal Perry Tract on Sanibel Island. The Dr. Louise Merrimon Perry Conservation Fund for Girls, known familiarly as the LMP Fund for Girls, honors the highly respected ophthalmologist and malacologist who retired to Sanibel Island.

Dr. Perry valued and appreciated the island's wildlife and understood the importance of protecting its habitat from future development. Upon her passing in 1962, she donated her 4-plus acre beachfront property to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to maintain as a safe haven for wildlife.

The Perry Tract lies adjacent to Gulfside City Park, where DDWS and the refuge installed a kiosk for beach visitors to learn more about Dr. Perry, the shells and wildlife they may find, and the importance of helping to protect and preserve the land.

Dr. Perry's family is establishing the endowed conservation fund to support women in the field of conservation and those -- who as a teacher, program leader, or in other such roles -- are impacting the lives of girls by inspiring future conservation stewards.

"What an appropriate day to celebrate two outstanding women and their work saving wildlife," said DDWS executive director Birgie Miller. "Throughout history, women have made and continue to make a significant impact in conservation, but their contributions often go unrecognized. The LMP Fund for Girls will allow the refuge and DDWS to recognize and support women making those small and large differences in conservation. It is an honor to recognize Dr. Perry in this way."

Anyone interested in supporting the LMP Fund for Girls in honor of International Women's Day can visit dingdarlingsociety.org to make a gift online or call Miller at 239-292-0566.

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.



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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.

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