

The AYLESWORTH SCHOLARSHIP

Investing in Florida's Future

Since 1986, the Aylesworth Scholarship has supported undergraduate, master's and doctoral students in a variety of academic disciplines that have a direct application in marine science. From journalism and education to biology and engineering to economics and food science, Aylesworth Scholarship recipients study many subjects that impact the fishing, seafood and marine industries.

The scholarship is a joint effort of the Aylesworth Foundation for the Advancement of Marine Science, the Southeastern Fisheries Association and the Florida Sea Grant College Program. Aylesworth Scholarships worth over \$570,000 have been awarded to 100 students in 14 Florida universities over the past 29 years.

The scholarship has averaged \$5,450 for each student, and is distributed over the course of the recipient's degree program. Recipients receive the award each year as long as satisfactory progress is made toward degree completion. Undergraduate awards are typically for two years, beginning in the junior year. Master's level awards are for up to two years, and doctoral awards are for up to three years.

To apply for an Aylesworth Scholarship and to check the latest scholarship deadlines, visit the "Students" tab at the Florida Sea Grant website, flseagrant.org, and click "Scholarships/Fellowships."



AYLESWORTH
FOUNDATION



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RECENT AWARDEES



Megan Conkling

Megan Conkling is pursuing a master's degree in biology at Florida Atlantic University.

She is using high-content imaging technology, or HCI, to understand how and why marine sponges produce chemicals with pharmaceutical relevance.

Her adviser says she is “hard-working, has excellent lab skills, is dependable and is committed to successful completion of her courses and thesis research.”

Once finished with school, Conkling hopes to continue her sponge research and possibly pursue a doctoral degree, or gain a position as a research scientist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



Matthew Gorstein

Matthew Gorstein is pursuing an M.S. in food and resource economics at the University of Florida. His research tracks demographics of seafood customers with the hope of gaining more insight into consumer demand for seafood. Gorstein said his dream career is one that integrates water and economics.

His adviser says, “Matt is an energetic and promising student who is also appreciative of all the support he can get. He is a hard worker in his studies, research, outside employment and extracurricular activities.”

Gorstein said he is thankful for the award, which will help supplement the income from his part-time job at a patio store in Gainesville.



Stephanie Garvis

Stephanie Garvis is pursuing her Ph.D. in conservation biology at the University of Central Florida. Her dissertation research is attempting to predict how marine habitats, such as seagrasses and oyster reefs, will shift from future changes in the environment due to sea-level rise.

“If we can successfully predict these shifts, then we can change coastal development planning in a way that maximizes future habitat for these creatures,” she said.

Her adviser says she possesses “a scientific keenness, a strong degree of perseverance, a desire to assist others with graduate education and research, and a passion to conserve marine resources.”

Garvis also earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Central Florida, and hopes to find a job at a government agency, such as NOAA, the United States Geological Survey, or at one of Florida's water management districts.



Stephanie Lawler

Stephanie Lawler is pursuing an M.S. in marine science at the University of South Florida. Her research is focusing on microbial communities in deep sea corals. Her adviser says, “Two things that define and distinguish Stephanie are her motivation and energy.”

Lawler has served as president of the Student Environmental Awareness Society at her university, was a diver at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and an intern at the Pinellas County Water Management District and the U.S. Geological survey. She plans to stay in academia and pursue her Ph.D.

PAST SCHOLARS

The impact of the Aylesworth Scholarship program is far reaching across many disciplines in academia and the public sector. Today, Aylesworth scholars contribute to the collective body of knowledge on marine and coastal issues not only in Florida, but throughout the United States.



Peter Barile

With support from the Aylesworth Foundation, Peter Barile earned his master's in marine biology in 1993 and his Ph.D in environmental sciences in 2001 at Florida Institute of Technology. Today he is active

on federal, state and community projects to reduce the impacts of human pollution and harmful algal blooms on the Indian River Lagoon and coral reefs in south Florida.

Peter has been a technical consultant and advisor on several efforts to convert waste streams and living biomass to biofuels. He also served on the Florida Consumer Fertilizer Task Force. He is presently a senior scientist with Marine Research and Consulting, Inc. in Melbourne.



Christy Foust

Because of her dedication to research and admirable work ethic, Christy Foust was named by the scholarship committee as a two-time recipient of the award.

Foust is pursuing a Ph.D. in ecology and evolution at the University of South Florida. Her doctorate research, which expands on her master's thesis, examines how stressors related to climate change such as increased salt marsh salinity affect genetic structure of plants.

Her lab mentor says, "The work she is doing on salt marshes will have far-reaching broader impacts... with implications for society from predicting response to climate change to improving agriculture." Christy plans to pursue a career in academia where she can provide future undergraduate and graduate students with an appreciation for coastal systems while contributing to the body of research on coastal communities.



Mark Butler

Mark Butler, internationally known marine biologist, professor and eminent scholar in biological sciences at Old Dominion University, received an inaugural Aylesworth Scholarship in 1986.

He has published more than 100 scientific articles and book chapters, and has been awarded more than 50 grants totaling more than \$8 million. He is active on sponge restoration projects in the Florida Keys to determine the feasibility of a large scale program to restore these critical communities.



Michael Tringali

Michael Tringali received the scholarship in 1989 while attending the University of South Florida. He currently leads a team of geneticists in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Genetic Research and Monitoring Laboratory, assists biologists and resource

managers in species management, and provides guidance to policy makers on conservation issues.

Along with his team, he has had the privilege of discovering two new species of marine fish and one new freshwater fish.

LOOKING BACK: A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



Ralph and Kitty Aylesworth, long-time members of the Florida fishing industry, established the Aylesworth Foundation for the Advancement of Marine Science in 1984. Since the mid 1940's, they operated the business currently known as Aylesworth's Fish & Bait, Inc. in St. Petersburg. The Aylesworths formed the foundation as a means to

return something to the industry and state that had been so good to them and their family. This scholarship was created because the Aylesworths believed that scientific knowledge in marine-related areas is the way to develop, use and manage our renewable marine resources on a long-term basis.

Today the foundation and Aylesworth's Fish & Bait are operated by Ralph and Kitty's son, Bob, and his wife Dawn, pictured below with scholarship winners. While the scholarship program remains the cornerstone of the foundation's activities, the foundation's goals have been expanded to include the funding of research and other educational activities that benefit Florida's marine environment.



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Aylesworth Foundation for the
Advancement of Marine Science

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