



# INVESTING IN FLORIDA'S FUTURE

Today the Aylesworth Foundation and Aylesworth's Fish & Bait are operated by Ralph and Kitty's son, Bobby, and his wife Dawn (pictured at right).

"Florida Sea Grant helps us find the brightest and most deserving students by advertising within the network of Sea Grant colleges, pre-screening candidates and then presenting our board with the cream of the crop," according to Bobby.

"If you own a business in Florida, and are interested in establishing a program to support students, it's easy to set up. You end up supporting the best students training in coastal and ocean topics."



**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 1940s, they operated the business currently known as Aylesworth's Fish & Bait, Inc. in St. Petersburg.

The Aylesworths formed the foundation as a way to give back to the industry and state that had been so good to them and their family. They believed that scientific knowledge in marine-related areas, coupled with decisions based on environmental and conservation factors, would prove to be the only way to develop, use and manage our renewable marine resources on a long-term basis.

The scholarship program remains the cornerstone of the foundation's activities, but the foundation's goals have been expanded to include the funding of research and other educational activities that benefit Florida's marine environment.

## FOLLOW FLORIDA SEA GRANT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



[Facebook.com/flseagrant](https://www.facebook.com/flseagrant)

for the latest information on marine-related jobs, scholarships, fellowships, internships, and volunteer experience.



[@FloridaSeaGrant](https://twitter.com/FloridaSeaGrant)

for interesting stories on marine issues in Florida.



[@FloridaSeaGrant](https://www.instagram.com/FloridaSeaGrant)

to see Florida through a whole new lens.



[Florida Sea Grant](https://www.linkedin.com/company/florida-sea-grant)

to connect with professional networking opportunities.

This publication is supported by the National Sea Grant College Program of the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under NOAA Grant NA18-OAR-4170085. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of any of these organizations.

Florida Sea Grant is committed to responsible and sustainable printing practices. This document is printed on recycled paper using vegetable-based ink.

TP-237

May 2018

# AYLESWORTH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



**AYLESWORTH SCHOLARSHIPS WORTH OVER \$653,000 HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO 121 STUDENTS IN 14 FLORIDA UNIVERSITIES OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS.**

*Aylesworth's*  
**FISH & BAIT, INC.**



This foundation would not be possible without the donations and the participation of Aylesworth's Fish & Bait. Since 1944 Aylesworth's Fish & Bait has provided the highest quality fishing baits and related products to fishermen throughout the world.

[fishandbait.com](http://fishandbait.com)

To apply for an Aylesworth Scholarship and to check the latest scholarship deadlines, visit [flseagrant.org/scholarships](http://flseagrant.org/scholarships)



Bryan Keller is earning a Ph.D. in biological oceanography at Florida State University studying the migrations of coastal sharks. (Photo courtesy Bryan Keller)

## LURING THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST

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 \$653,824 have been awarded to 121 students in 14 Florida universities over the past 30 years.

The scholarship has averaged \$5,403 for each student, and is distributed over the course of the degree program. Scholars 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. New recipients are recognized at the annual awards luncheon of the Southeastern Fisheries Association.



Aylesworth Foundation for the Advancement of Marine Science

Florida Sea Grant College Program ~ University of Florida  
P.O. Box 110400, Gainesville, FL 32611-0400

352.392.5870  
[www.flseagrant.org](http://www.flseagrant.org)



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.

## JAMES CONRAD



James Conrad is a Ph.D. student studying biology at the University of South Florida. He is studying why *Vibrio vulnificus*, a naturally occurring bacteria found in warm, coastal waters worldwide, is capable of causing human illness in some environments at certain times of the year, but not others.

To do this, he is investigating whether modifications to *Vibrio*'s genetic material contribute to its harmfulness.

Conrad's adviser said his research is timely and necessary to ensure safe seafood in the future.

## BRYAN KELLER



Bryan Keller is pursuing a Ph.D. in biological oceanography at Florida State University. He is studying the seasonal migrations of coastal sharks.

"My work is focused on determining if these sharks use magnetic-based navigation, like using a compass, which is common in other marine animals like sea turtles."

Before beginning his Ph.D. program, the certified scuba diver worked as a scientific director at Global Eco Adventures and conducted his master's research at the Bimini Biological Field Station in the Bahamas.

## CECILY BURTON



2016 Aylesworth scholar Cecily Burton is pursuing her master's degree in environmental science at Florida Gulf Coast University.

She also works with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission studying populations of adult and juvenile fish in Charlotte Harbor.

For her master's thesis, she is locating endangered smalltooth sawfish that have been tagged with acoustic transmitters to see which habitats they are using most.

## DEVON PHARO



Devon Pharo is a master's student in the fisheries and aquatic sciences program within the University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation.

He is studying how algal blooms might affect stone crabs in Florida Bay. He is also investigating how stone crabs use chemical cues to navigate, and find food and shelter in the hard-bottom communities they inhabit.

After graduating, Pharo hopes to obtain a government position either in Florida, or another coastal state.

## KELLI O'DONNELL



2016 Aylesworth scholar Kelli O'Donnell earned her master's degree in fisheries and aquatic sciences at the University of Florida.

Her research focused on quantifying the growth of staghorn coral using different growing methods in the nursery to see which restoration practices will be the most successful.

Today, she is a fisheries management biologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration where she develops fishery management plan amendments.

## MATT DIMAGGIO



2010 Aylesworth scholar Matt DiMaggio is an assistant professor of ornamental aquaculture at the School of Forest Resources & Conservation at the University of Florida.

He completed his M.S. and Ph.D. in fisheries and aquatic sciences at the University of Florida where his research focused on development of the marine baitfish industry in the southeastern US.

His advice to current students is to "develop a broad foundation in your chosen field and distinguish yourself through productivity and innovation."

## MICHELLE MASI



Michelle Masi, a 2013 Aylesworth scholar, earned her Ph.D. in marine resource assessment from the University of South Florida.

Her research focused on developing a spatial biogeochemical marine ecosystem model of the Gulf of Mexico using the Atlantis Modeling Framework.

Today, Masi works as a fisheries modeler for the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in New Zealand where she uses mathematical models to assess the distribution and abundance of fishes in New Zealand.

## MELINDA DONNELLY



Melinda Donnelly earned her Ph.D. in conservation biology at the University of Central Florida, studying methods that improve the success of saltmarsh restoration efforts in Florida's Indian River Lagoon.

She was the university's outstanding graduate teaching assistant, and an active volunteer leading school elementary students on field trips.

Today she is a postdoctoral fellow at UCF and using living shorelines techniques to protect ancient shell middens and restore the estuary.

## MICHAEL JEPSON



Michael Jepson earned his Ph.D. from the University of Florida and today is an applied anthropologist for NOAA Fisheries, focused on the social impacts of fishery policy on fishing communities in the Gulf, South Atlantic and Caribbean.

"I've always thought the Aylesworth scholarship was an important recognition from the industry that has assisted me well beyond my graduate career," Mike said.

Mike also served as program director for the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation.

## BROOKE DENKERT BLACK



Brooke Denkert Black, a 2009 Aylesworth scholar, earned her master's degree at Florida Gulf Coast University, majoring in environmental science.

Her research dealt with effects of freshwater runoff on eggs, larvae and juvenile fish in the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

Today she works as the Florida Keys representative to the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust, where she acts as a medium between the scientific and fishing communities to further the advancement of catch-and-release fisheries science.

## ROBIN SHERMAN



Robin Sherman has been recognized nationally for spearheading the environmental restoration project that has removed hundreds of thousands of waste tires from the Osborne Reef in the Atlantic Ocean off Fort Lauderdale.

She earned her bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. from NSU with support from the Aylesworth Foundation.

She is now associate dean at the Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography at Nova Southeastern University.

## PHILIP STEVENS



Philip Stevens is a research scientist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission who leads the fish biology group that focuses on age and growth, reproduction, and movement patterns of marine fishes.

Stevens earned a Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 2002.

He and his staff have published more than 50 articles about freshwater inflow to estuaries, use of tidal tributaries by fish, critical nursery habitat, fish movements, and response of fish communities to restoration and disturbance.