

# The Dick Fletcher Memorial Scholarship Fund at USF

10 News Chief Meteorologist Dick Fletcher died February 26, 2008. Mr. Fletcher touched many lives. He frequently served on national weather panels and was a member of the local American Meteorological Society Chapter where he provided outreach to school teachers showing them hands-on activities to explain weather concepts. Fletcher also spent time in the community educating school children, business groups, senior citizens and others on the importance of preparing for severe weather. He mentored younger meteorologists, teaching them what he knew.

Mr. Fletcher received numerous awards and recognitions during his lifetime, including a national award for Outstanding Service by a Broadcast Meteorologist from the American Meteorological Society in 1987, the Media Award from the Governor's Hurricane Conference in 1993 and the Distinguished Service award from the National Hurricane Conference in 2003.

After his death, his wife Cindy set up the Dick Fletcher Memorial Scholarship Fund at USF. Contributions poured in from those who wanted to honor him and his wishes. The fund was established to provide a scholarship to three students (graduate or undergraduate) in disciplines which were close to Mr. Fletcher's own heart. The students came from the Department of Geography where Meteorology classes are offered, the Department of Geology and Department of Mass Communication. The stipulation of the award was that the recipients should demonstrate the character of Dick Fletcher. In other words, they should be hard working and have a strong work ethic and hunger for knowledge. Students from these departments were selected based on an essay they wrote about themselves.

Department of Geography Awardee: Alicia Williams



As an aspiring meteorologist who grew up watching Dick Fletcher on Channel 10, Alicia knew exactly who she wanted to job shadow when the opportunity arose in high school. Under Mr. Fletcher's guidance, he was the initial inspiration for Alicia's decision to pursue a Geography degree and take classes in meteorology. Mr. Fletcher often attended meetings of the West Central Florida Chapter meetings of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) where Alicia, now as a

college student at USF, met up with him again. Alicia now holds an officer position in this organization and is an active member. Alicia has embraced every opportunity to conduct undergraduate research and utilize the skills obtained in her Meteorology and GIS classes. Alicia has presented her research conducted with faculty mentor, Jennifer Collins, and meteorologists at the National Weather Service (NWS). She has presented at local and national levels. She presented her collaborative work on “Southwest Florida warm season tornadoes” at the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers conference, and her work on “Geographical, Meteorological and Climatological Conditions Surrounding the 2008 Interstate-4 Disaster” was presented at the local and national meeting of the AMS. Alicia and her collaborators have recently had two peer-reviewed papers accepted for publication.

Based on her research accomplishments, Alicia was chosen as the 2009 recipient of the West Central Florida Chapter of the AMS’ Dewey Stowers Award. Alicia is currently working in conjunction with the NWS on a Preserve America Initiative grant obtained by Charles Paxton (NWS) and Dr. Jennifer Collins (USF) from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Alicia will be completing her Bachelor’s degree this fall and hopes to continue shortly thereafter with a Master’s degree in Geography. Alicia was chosen for the Dick Fletcher Memorial Scholarship due to her commitment to her research projects and service to the field (which included a teaching component as she was also involved in the local AMS chapters’ “Teach the Teacher” initiative).

Department of Mass Communication Awardee: Colleen Krepstekies



Colleen Krepstekies is a second year Graduate Student in Multimedia Journalism. Colleen also volunteers for WMNF Radio in Tampa and is one of only two students accepted into USF's class-based three-minute news program (which airs nightly on WUSF television) as a member of both the news and the production teams. Her job responsibilities on the news side include newscast producer and reporter as well as web producer; on the production side she works as director, technical director, audio operator, studio camera operator and graphics designer.

For eight years, Colleen led soldiers and managed military logistics. Colleen began her military service as an enlisted soldier, and in 1994, she participated in a humanitarian mission in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba during the Haitian crisis. Colleen also conducted humanitarian missions with her soldiers and led convoy operations with the Iraqi Army soldiers. Colleen is now pursuing her lifelong dream of becoming a journalist. After completing her Master’s Degree in May 2010, Colleen hopes to either produce or report for television or the web. Colleen is an exceptionally hard-working person with an iron-willed work ethic and a desire for knowledge and development.

Department of Geology Awardee: James Wilson



James Wilson is a senior in Geology. James recently returned from Panama where he fulfilled a six month internship with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute as a structural geologist. He worked with geologists from University of Minnesota, Texas A&M, University of Florida and Colombian universities on the Panama Geology Project, collecting field data and samples from the Panama Canal Expansion Project excavations and from localities in eastern Panama. Historically, James has participated in several international geological research projects. With ecohydrology professor, Mark Rains, he traveled to La Manzanilla, Mexico twice to study the interaction between mangrove wetlands and a small community by collecting and interpreting biological, geochemical and hydrogeological datasets. He visited Miches, Dominican Republic to perform similar studies on two coastal plain lakes to understand the impacts of human settlements and land use practices on the local agrarian and fishing economies from an environmental perspective. Working with structural geology/tectonics professor, Paul Wetmore, he assisted two Master of Science candidates collect geophysical data near Ensenada, Mexico to understand basin morphology and dynamics of two basins along the Agua Blanca Fault. He also worked with Dr. Wetmore in the Henry Mountains of Southern Utah to collect magnetic data at the Trachyte Mesa to add to the existing geophysical database at the locality, and he did his Honors Thesis on this locality.

James received two Patel Center Global Research Scholar awards to study in La Manzanilla, Mexico and Miches, Dominican Republic. He presented a poster entitled “Conservation of Coupled Human-Mangrove Ecosystems” at the 2008 USF Undergraduate Research Symposium. In October 2009, he will travel to Portland, OR for the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting to present a poster entitled “Transtensional deformation along the Gaillard Cut, Panama Canal.” Next month, James will be the Honors College’s “Featured Student of the Month”. James plans on finishing his undergraduate degree in December 2009 and pursuing a Ph.D. in structural geology and tectonics and being a researcher at a well respected institution such as USF.

<http://www.wtsp.com/video/default.aspx?aid=92603>

If you would like to donate to the fund please contact Melissa Mayse 813-974-4072

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Checks should be made payable to the USF Foundation. Please note In Memory of Dick Fletcher.

Gifts made online should be made to Fund # 420043, Arts and Sciences Memorial and Tribute Fund. You may also note In Memory of Dick Fletcher.