

Alachua Conservation Trust

March 19, 2002

Recognizing the 2002 Conservation Stewards for their outstanding contributions to saving Alachua County's Great Places

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The mission of the Alachua Conservation Trust is to protect the natural, historic, scenic and recreational resources in and around Alachua County, Florida. Land protection is promoted through purchases, donations, conservation easements and public advocacy.

A retired physician, a community activist, and a software company CEO are three local citizens being honored at the third annual Conservation Stewards Awards. Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) each year recognizes Conservation Stewards who protect Alachua County's natural and cultural resources. "None of our success would be possible without the visionary leadership in the community," said ACT President Michael Castine. "For that reason, ACT recognizes conservation stewards who help protect our great places." This year's keynote speaker, Alachua County Commission Chair Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson, will provide a visually inspiring retrospective on land acquisition efforts in our area over the ages, and will share some thoughts on the work left to be done. Tonight's honorees include:



2002 Conservation Award recipients, from left, Mickey Singer, Kathy Cantwell, and NKwanda Jah

Dr. Kathy Cantwell, M.D. (To Be Introduced by Doris Bardon)

A retired physician, Dr. Kathy Cantwell has fully dedicated herself to protecting the air, water and land of our area. Kathy is currently in her second term as Chair of the Suwannee-St. Johns Group of the Sierra Club, and is a Member of the Board of Women for Wise Growth. She served as a member of the County's Air Quality Commission. Kathy also was Chair of the Clean Air and Water Political Action Committee, which successfully advocated for passage of ballot measures to protect against pollution. She is now an active member of the Alachua County Land Conservation Board, the citizen's panel charged with recommending lands for public purchase under the Alachua County Forever program. In 2000 Dr. Cantwell was awarded the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club's "Panther Award" for her conservation work.

Ms. NKwanda Jah (To Be Introduced by Dr. Anthony Greene)

NKwanda Jah has committed herself to providing African American children and teenagers with the opportunity to learn about pollution and cherish the natural environment. As Founder and Director of the Cultural Arts Coalition, Ms. Jah has conceived and implemented successful programs such as the Environmental Ambassadors, Girl Power, and the Fifth Avenue Arts Festival. NKwanda has given of her time as a member of citizen advisory groups including the Northeast Park Task Force, the Public Recreation Board, and numerous other community efforts. She has been lauded for her outstanding contributions by the Library of Congress, the Gainesville Sun, and numerous other organizations. Ms. Jah's years of environmental work with teens was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Through Pollution Prevention Program in 2000. The EPA's support provided environmental education and work opportunities for over 20 African American teenagers.

Mr. Mickey Singer (Mac McCarty to Accept the Award)

Mickey Singer is perhaps best known to Alachua County residents as the Founder and CEO of Medical Manager and the donor of the Harn Museum's *Champ d'avione* (Oat Fields), a painting by 19th-century French impressionist master Claude Monet. However, Mr. Singer also has built an

2002 Conservation Stewards *(continued from page 1)*

impressive record as a great supporter of numerous conservation causes. In 2000 Mickey personally pledged a substantial match to enable pursuit of Blues Creek Ravine through the Florida Communities Trust, which was crucial in its pending acquisition by Alachua Conservation Trust. As founder and director of The Temple of the Universe, Mr. Singer helps others to find their own deep connection to the world around them. Through the efforts of the newly formed Santa Fe Land Trust, the Temple's 100 acres of land may form part of a wildlife corridor between San Felasco State Preserve and the Santa Fe River.

Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson - Keynote Speaker (To be Introduced by Bruce Delaney)

This year's keynote speaker, Alachua County Commission Chair Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson, is among a handful of individuals most responsible for saving tens of thousands of acres around Paynes Prairie, the Hogtown Creek Greenway, Newnan's Lake, San Felasco Hammock, Watermelon Pond, and many other corners of our County. Hutch served as the founding Executive Director of ACT and was the prime motivator for Alachua County Forever. He was named a Conservation Steward in 2001.

Conservation Stewards of 2001 & 2000



2001 Conservation Stewards, from left, Davis Morris, Arthur and Phyllis Saarinen, Robert Hutchinson, and Gladys Cofrin.
JOHN MORAN/The Gainesville Sun.

Gladys Cofrin

Ms. Cofrin has been a major volunteer and contributor toward saving land in Alachua County, statewide, and nationally. Gladys is active in many environmental organizations and was a leading advocate for Alachua County Forever, opening her home and heart to saving our heritage for future generations.

Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson

Robert Hutchinson has made numerous community-building contributions in addition to his land conservation successes (see above). He is a past Executive Director of Gainesville's Community Redevelopment Agency, and chairs the committee to restore the Depot Avenue brownfield to a stormwater park.

David "Mo" Morris

David Morris, known to all who cherish him as "Mo," is the dedicated protector of Watermelon Pond. Mo has been the keeper of the lake and a tireless advocate for acquisition efforts surrounding Watermelon Pond. Mo embodies the passion that can exist between a place and its people.

Phyllis and Arthur Saarinen

Phyllis and Arthur Saarinen have donated countless hours of professional time to a wide variety of conservation causes in Alachua County and beyond. In 1999 Arthur and Phyllis donated the 80 acre Saarinen Preserve to ACT, thereby ensuring perpetual protection. Arthur is a dedicated board member of ACT.



2000 Conservation Stewards, from left, Alfred A. Ring, Courtland Collier, Doris Bardon, and John Mahon.
JON M. FLETCHER/The Gainesville Sun.

Doris Bardon

Doris Bardon's list of civic accomplishments is long and diverse. Doris has spearheaded many environmental initiatives and is a tireless advocate for the arts. Most recently, Doris directed her efforts into establishing Women for Wise Growth.

Courtland Collier

Former Mayor-Commissioner of Gainesville with 18 years of service in office, Courtland Collier pioneered efforts to acquire 22 parcels of land in and around Gainesville from 1967 to 1994. These parcels include land surrounding Bivens Arm, Hogtown Creek, Paynes Prairie, and many other special places.

John Mahon

John Mahon is one of the foremost historians of the Seminole wars, which raged in Florida in the early 19th century. Mr. Mahon is a long-standing board member of ACT, who has supported numerous land acquisitions. He has also been a member of the local Sierra Club and Audubon Society for over 30 years.

Alfred A. Ring

Alfred A. Ring is known nationally for his real estate textbook, which is the second-oldest textbook in continuous publication.

Locally, Dr. Ring is also known for his many charitable contributions and for his donation of the Alfred A. Ring Park and the Emily Ring Wildflower Garden. He was also a founding board member of the Alachua Conservation Trust.

ACT gets another one: Blues Creek Ravine and Fox Pond

On November 30, 2001, Alachua Conservation Trust became one of the first four non-profit organizations in the state of Florida to ever receive a land acquisition grant from the Florida Communities Trust (FCT). Alachua Conservation Trust was awarded \$2.88 million to purchase Blues Creek Ravine and Fox Pond, adjacent to San Felasco Hammock State Preserve. The property is a critical ecological connection between San Felasco and other natural areas, and contains breathtaking ravines, wetlands, endangered species, and mixed hardwood forests. The remains of the Spanish Mission of San Francisco de Potano, established in 1607, are thought to exist on the site.

The project was undertaken in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, with the permission of the property owners, Mildred Bryant and family. Bruce DeLaney of the University of Florida Foundation worked with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) to secure a transfer of approximately 70 acres to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to connect the 80 acre Fox Pond piece to the 160 acre Blues Creek Ravine.

The Florida Communities Trust is a program funded by Florida Forever (previously Preservation 2000), a statewide bond program to buy environmental and recreational lands. This was the first grant cycle in FCT's 12-year history to allow non-profit agencies to compete for these funds to develop public parks. In February 2002 the Alachua County Commission voted to include the project in the first acquisition list for Alachua County Forever. It is expected that the land will be purchased with the FCT grant, and developed and maintained using County funds.

This is an outstanding example of a partnership between a non-profit agency, local government, and state government. Senator Rod Smith spoke before the FCT board to support the grant. Generous assistance in developing the application was provided by Peter and Carlotta NeSmith, Tony Malone, Michael Drummond, Ramesh Buch, Anne Barkdoll, Dan Pearson, Robert Hutchinson and others. But it was ACT's public support that made the project possible. "We could not have completed this work without the funding provided by our generous donors. If you've ever donated funds to ACT, you made this victory possible," said Pegeen Hanrahan, ACT's Executive Director, who prepared the grant application. As the grant covers only the direct costs of acquisition and not our staff time or overhead for completing the transaction, your help is still critically needed to see this project through!

What Does The Alachua Conservation Trust Do?

Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) is a local, nonprofit land trust. Its goal is to protect natural areas and historical and archaeological sites in Alachua County for the benefit of present and future residents. ACT works with landowners to preserve the natural qualities of their land while reducing their tax liability. Since its incorporation in 1988, ACT has facilitated over 10,000 acres of public land purchases and private conservation easements. A few of our accomplishments are listed below.

- Paynes Prairie CARL Additions (over 2,460 acres)
- Hogtown Creek Greenway FCT Grant (over 900 acres)
- Newnan's Lake - Gumroot Swamp SJRWMD Purchases (over 720 acres)
- Prairie Creek SJRWMD Purchases (over 230 acres)
- Historic Haile Homestead (acquisition, building restoration and site work)
- San Felasco Hammock Expansion (over 880 acres)
- Watermelon Pond CARL Proposal (over 4,800 acres)
- Suwannee River Water Management District Small Parcel Acquisitions (over 1,000 acres)
- The Saarinen Preserve (80 acres)



Blues Creek Ravine at a Surficial Spring Seep
JEFF RIPPLE

ACT would like to extend a special thanks to volunteers Gracy Castine, Doug Hornbeck, Robert Hutchinson, Tony Malone, and Arthur Saarinen. Their assistance was crucial in planning and implementing this event.

Thanks also to musical guests The Weeds of Eden and Confetti of the Sweet Adelines.

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