

Ken & Sonia Smith Memorial Marine Conservation Scholarship 2025-2026

Florida Skin Divers Association

Amount: \$2,000.00

Award Decision: February 6, 2026

Deadline: January 5, 2026

Award Given: February 21, 2026



Background:

As FSDA members for almost thirty years, Ken and Sonia Smith facilitated the Ocean Pals Poster Contest for Children, which was an environmental education program for K-12 students to communicate marine conservation messages through art. Ken served as long-time treasurer for the FSDA, and both Ken and Sonia consistently showed their dedication to the diving community by assisting at numerous FSDA tournaments and events. To honor the legacy of Ken and his wife Sonia for their years of service, the FSDA created the Ken & Sonia Smith Marine Conservation Scholarship Fund. This fund was created to help support deserving students and their studies in the field of marine research, education, and environmental protection.

The FSDA is fortunate to be located in the fishing capital of the world and home to a world-class center for marine science. Our organization's members are deeply committed to the responsible care, conservation, and effective management of marine resources, and we are pleased to offer a scholarship to support one graduate student conducting marine research within the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Priority consideration will be given to applicants who are currently pursuing their studies in or are associated with the greater Tampa Bay area, reflecting our regional focus and commitment to local research initiatives. The scholarship recipient will be carefully selected based on a comprehensive evaluation of their academic achievements, demonstration of a commitment to continuing contributions to the field, as well as qualities that embody the shared values of Ken and Sonia – a passion for diving, a dedication to marine conservation efforts, and a commitment to engaging and inspiring the next generation through youth education. The prestigious award will be formally presented during the highly anticipated FSDA Annual Banquet, scheduled for February 21, 2026. We strongly encourage the scholarship recipient to attend this event, as it offers a unique opportunity for networking, recognition, and celebrating their work. In addition to the monetary award, the scholarship recipient will also receive two free entries to the banquet, allowing them to share this special occasion, and a complimentary one-night hotel stay near the venue to ensure a comfortable and convenient experience.

Application Instructions:

Applicants must submit all required application materials to Florida Skindiver's Association (fsdatampa@gmail.com) with the subject line "2025 Smith Scholarship Application" by **January 5th at 5 pm EDT**. Please include:

- Cover letter explaining research/professional goals, and commitment to both marine conservation and education/outreach (**max 1 page**)
- College transcripts (unofficial is acceptable)
- Curriculum Vitae (**max 1 page**)

www.floridaskindivers.com/ken-and-sonia-smith-scholarship