

Harbor Branch ‘Love Your Lagoon’ another sold-out success

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YourNews contributor

VERO BEACH -- Once again, the work of local graduate students conducting research on the Indian River Lagoon will continue, thanks to proceeds from the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation’s “Love Your Lagoon” event.

The annual sold-out fundraiser recently took place at the Quail Valley River Club and helped raise critical funding to benefit research and outreach on the Indian River Lagoon by the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at FAU.

Proceeds from the event will fund the 2019 Indian River Lagoon Graduate Research Fellows program, supporting the work of graduate students involved in direct Indian River Lagoon research at HBOI. Each student will be mentored by an HBOI faculty member at the HBOI campus.

The competitive process will result in support for salary, tuition, travel to present research, and/or necessary materials. Fellows will ultimately present their research at the 2020 Indian River Lagoon Symposium as well as the FAU Charles E. Schmidt College of Science Graduate Research Day.

In addition, proceeds from this year’s event helped support the recent two-day Indian River Lagoon Symposium: Quo Vadis. The Indian River Lagoon Symposium is a multi-institutional, multi-agency effort to provide a forum for discussing Indian River Lagoon science and its application to management of the lagoon.

Traditionally, HBOIF has named an honoree at each of its previous events. The 2019 Leadership and Achievement Award Honoree was former Florida Senate President Joe Negron. Sen. Negron’s greatest local accomplishment was SB 10, which secured funding and set deadlines to build a reservoir to reduce Lake Okeechobee discharges to coastal estuaries.

It was approved in 2017, the year after toxic algae closed the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon and — for the first



Indian River Lagoon graduate research fellows. More photos on Page 6. J. PATRICK RICE



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time — Atlantic beaches. In addition, Negron fought for the Florida Forever environmental land-buying program and beach re-nourishment, which is expected to receive additional funding this year as part of the state budget.

Mark your calendars now for the ninth annual “Love Your Lagoon” gala, which is tentatively set for Friday, Feb. 7, 2020. For more information on next year’s event, call 772-466-9876 ext. 200 or visit



Steve and Elizabeth Barbella J. PATRICK RICE