



For Immediate Release

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The Founders Scholarship Fund celebrates 30 years of granting College Scholarships to Collier County Students

(September 9, 2021 – Naples, FL) What began with a small group of golf members at Club Pelican Bay in 1991 has now grown into a vital scholarship resource for Collier County students seeking a college education.

The Founders Fund, Inc. was named in honor of the founding golf members of Club Pelican Bay in 1991 and Club member Robert H. “Rocky” Caldwell was appointed to become the first Chairman of The Founders Fund. Seed money for the non-profit organization was made possible by reserve dollars left over from the building of the golf course. Instead of refunds, members voted to donate their dollars to establish the college scholarship program.

Appointed to the first Board of Directors were Edward J. Brennan, Jean Harford and Robert Lee. Lee, a founding member of the Club Board, represented the Club and acted as its liaison. On April 22, 1992, The Founders Fund, Inc. was organized as an official Not-for-Profit Florida Corporation and contributions had reached \$100,000 from the Club’s 476 members.

Originally, scholarships were to be awarded to employees and their children only but shortly after establishing the Fund, the board realized that there were many other deserving students in Collier County that could use financial assistance.

To date, the charitable organization has awarded scholarships exceeding a total of \$4.5 million to more than 725 students. The current Founders Fund Board of Trustees increased the scholarship award to \$3000 per year beginning with the Class of 2021. The increase from \$10,000 to \$12,000 for a four-year scholarship now bring the annual commitment to \$384,000 for this year. Each year, students are selected to receive scholarships based on need and academic merit; 32 students were awarded for this year.

“In the 30-year history of the Founders Fund, the need for scholarship assistance has never been so great as it has been these past two graduating classes,” said Adam Crescenzi, Board Chair for the Founders Scholarship Fund. “We are grateful to our donors who make it possible for us to award the scholarships and meet our obligations to over 100 students currently receiving the four-year renewable scholarships.”

Club Pelican Bay members have a culture of philanthropy. Not only do they donate but more than 100 of their members have served as board trustees for the Founders Scholarship Fund over the past 30 years.

“We are proud to have been able to serve the community for these past 30 years and look forward to many more,” added Crescenzi.

The Fund is supported by donations from Club Pelican Bay members and local corporate sponsors. For more information about scholarships or sponsorships, contact Stacy Lee-Williams, Founders Scholarship Fund Director at 239-593-0124 or visit www.TheFoundersScholarshipFund.org.

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PHOTO ID:

Rocky Caldwell 2011 - 6323.jpg – Rocky Caldwell, first Board Chair for the Founders Fund, speaking at the 2011 Student Luncheon at Club Pelican Bay

JPG 3619: Adam Crescenzi, Founders Scholarship Fund Board Chair with Cesar Hernandez, Founders Scholarship Fund 2016 Alumni and Pat Chadwick, Vice Chair of the FSF at the 2018 Student Holiday Luncheon