

SFSC Receives Additional \$30,000 Donation From Duke Energy Foundation

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) recently received another \$30,000 donation from Duke Energy Foundation! In September 2021, SFSC received a grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to enhance the College's Electrical Lineworker Program through an initiative called "Increasing Training Opportunities for Electrical Lineworker Students by Expanding Training Capacity and Improving Safety."

"Supporting South Florida State College's Electrical Lineworkers is vital to developing a diverse workforce to help support the needs of the energy industry," said Nancy Dodd, Duke Energy Florida community relations manager. "Our continued collaboration with SFSC helps strengthen the vitality of the communities we serve, today and in the future."

The most recent \$30,000 donation from the Duke En-

ergy Foundation will help further enhance the College's Electrical Lineworker Program. "Because the program is growing, we'd like to purchase more climbing equipment and hardware, such as poles, transformers, and conductors, and to upgrade our current vehicles," said Christopher Yeomans, electrical distribution professor. "Upper body strength is important for students in the Lineworker program, so we'd like to purchase gym equipment for our Lineworker lab that will assist students in building that upper body strength."

SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program prepares students to work as electric line technicians in the construction, maintenance, and repair of electric utility overhead and underground systems. Through 1,500 contact hours of training at the College's Hardee Campus, students gain an understanding of electrical systems, operations, and safety while mastering competencies in

electrical distribution, basic electrical theory, and underground electrical construction operations. They learn how to maintain electric power systems and use electrical distribution equipment. The program provides practice in climbing, framing, building single and three-phase overhead lines, pole top and bucket rescue techniques, operating bucket trucks, and maintaining and repairing underground systems. Students who successfully complete the program earn a Career Certificate.

For information about SFSC's Electrical Lineworker Program, contact Christopher Yeomans, electrical distribution professor, by emailing yeomansC@southflorida.edu or calling 863-784-7045.

Deborah Bell Latter is the coordinator of internal communications at South Florida State College and can be reached at 863-784-7251 or Deborah.Latter@southflorida.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Gatlin Brothers, will perform one night only at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts in Avon Park tonight (Thursday), Dec. 2, at 7 p.m.

Gatlin Brothers Christmas Concert Tonight At SFSC

By **MELISSA KUEHNLE**
Special To The Herald-Advocate

The Grammy-Award winning trio, Larry, Steve, and Rudy: The Gatlin Brothers, will perform one night only at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts in Avon Park tonight (Thursday), Dec. 2, at 7 p.m.

Dazzling audiences for more than 60 years, the Gatlin Brothers have seven No. 1 singles, 32 Top 40 records, 22 studio albums, and five BMI "Million-Air" awards. Throughout their career, they have amassed numerous awards including a Grammy for Best Country Song ("Broken Lady"), three ACM awards for Single of the Year ("All the Gold in California"), and Album of the Year ("Straight Ahead").

In 1976, the Gatlin Brothers were on the fast track, thanks to the chart-topping success of the Grammy Award-winning single "Broken Lady." The hits continued throughout the decade with their signature song "All the Gold in California" followed

by "Houston (Means I'm One Step Closer To You)." The next decade brought more No. 1 hits with "I Don't Wanna Cry," "I Just Wish You Were Someone to Love," "Statues without Hearts," "Love Is Just a Game," and "Night Time Magic."

"The Gatlin Brothers have entertained audiences in some of the world's largest venues and now they are coming to Avon Park, with some Christmas cheer," said Cindy Garren, director of cultural programs at South Florida State College. "I'm sure many people remember their variety show on ABC - Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers."

The performance is sponsored by Sharion Hudson at All Around Septic and Sewer, and Suzanne and Joe Wright at V & W Farms. Tickets for the show start at \$40. Tickets can be purchased online at sfscARTS.org, by phone at 863-784-7178, or by visiting the SFSC Box Office located at 600 West College Drive in Avon Park on the Highlands Campus of South Florida State College.

Melissa Kuehnle is the director of institutional communications at South Florida State College and can be reached at 863-784-7151 or Melissa.Kuehnle@southflorida.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel (left), SFSC president; Nancy Dodd, Duke Energy Florida community relations manager; and Jamie Bateman, SFSC executive director of institutional advancement.

Cindy Rose Eaton wildlife photogoraph now at SFSC

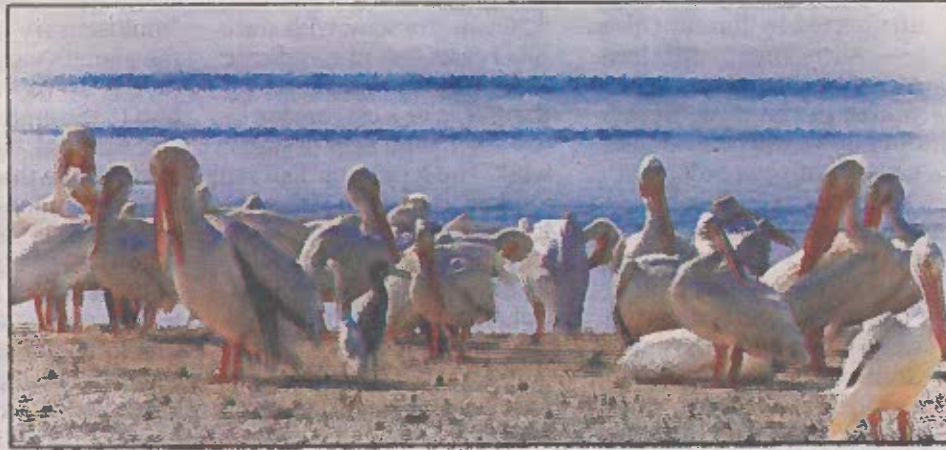
Special to Highlands Sun
PROVIDED BY MUSEUM OF
FLORIDA ART & CULTURE,
SFSC

AVON PARK — The Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) at South Florida State College (SFSC) has mounted a Florida wildlife exhibit featuring the work of photographer Cindy Rose Eaton. The exhibit is on display in the Lobby Gallery of the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC, now through Monday, Jan. 31.

Eaton is an award-winning, Florida-based artist who, over the past 16 years, has become a highly respected professional Everglades wildlife and nature photographer.

“My love for nature, especially living in Florida with the abundance of birds and water habitats, has had a tremendous impact on how I shoot and capture unique images,” Eaton said. “Highlands Hammock State Park in Highlands County has become a favorite hangout to shoot photos, along with Florida beaches on the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, as well as wherever my travels take me – to Montana, New England, Switzerland, and beyond.”

Eaton’s art reflects her keen interest and appreciation for this unique ecosystem. She shoots with her heart to capture, expose, and help preserve this fragile ecosystem.



COURTESY PHOTO/CINDY ROSE EATON

‘Pellie Party’

Her uniquely styled imagery brings intricate details up close to the viewer and reflects her personal commitment and her desire to represent each photograph as lifelike as

possible.

Eaton is a native of Montana, but she has lived in Florida for more than 17 years. During this time, she has devel-

oped a love and passion for southern Florida’s spacious and magnificent River of Grass and the flora and fauna that are found throughout. Her photographic vision has been exhibited in many

galleries and art expositions throughout Florida.

The Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC is located at 600 W. College Drive in Avon Park. The Lobby Gallery is open to the public during MOFAC’s hours Wednesday through Friday, 12:30–4 p.m. Patrons of the Wildstein Center may visit the museum one hour prior to matinee and evening performances. MOFAC will be closed Saturday, Dec. 18 and reopen on Friday, Jan. 7, 2022.

For more information about MOFAC and its programs, contact Dale McDaniel, MOFAC manager, at 863-784-7240 or by email at Ivan.McDaniel@southflorida.edu.

SFSC Nursing graduates honored in pinning ceremony

Special to Highlands
News-Sun
COURTESY SFSC

AVON PARK — On Monday, Dec. 6, 22 graduates of South Florida State College's (SFSC) Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program were honored in a traditional pinning ceremony in the Alan J. Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC's Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

The graduates are Crystal Abesamis, Debbie Arias, Karl Asumen, Sonia Becerra, Tessa Brewer, Cole Bronson, John Morgan Clyatt, Raylee Coleman, Jessie Cox, Caitlin Cwalinski, Sarah Elders, Diana Eugenio Hernandez, Kayti Ezard, Jodie Ferreira, Adriana Galindo, Samantha Hazard, Kimberlee Layton, Jenny Lopez, Eduardo Magana, Morgan Mimbs, Gloria Onyishi, and Adrianna Springsteen.

Each year, ADN graduates award the Golden Duck to someone who has served as a mentor to the students in the program. The D.U.C.K. acronym represents the foundational elements of the mentoring arrangement: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge. During the ceremony, ADN graduate Crystal Abesamis presented the 2021 Golden Duck Award to Dr. Veronica Walker, an SFSC Nursing Education adjunct instructor and nurse practitioner in Lake Placid.

Mary von Merveldt,

director of nursing education, indicated that it was St. Nicholas Day and compared St. Nicholas' life with those of the graduates. "He was said to be humble, compassionate, and generous. He shares this with you — the way you care for your patients and each other is inspiring. You also have another commonality with St. Nicholas — you, too, help with a global health crisis. Nicholas was believed to have lost both his parents to an epidemic at a young age. Academically, you've faced difficult days as a result of the pandemic and the challenges that come along with nursing school. Some of you have faced tough personal circumstances, but have persevered no matter what life has thrown at you. My wish for you is that you continue to give in spite of your circumstances. That you bless others through your generosity, compassion, and that you are blessed in return."

During the ceremony, the graduates' loved ones presented them with their individual nursing pins. The graduates then passed the flame of a lamp, one to another, before reciting the Nightingale Pledge.

Von Merveldt explained the origins of the Nursing pinning and the importance of the lamp lighting ceremony to the graduates: "The pinning we know today originated in the 1850s at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital in London.

Having been awarded the Red Cross of St. George for her selfless service to the injured and dying during the Crimean War, Florence Nightingale chose to extend this offer to her most outstanding graduating nurses by presenting each of them with a medal of excellence. The presentation of the lamp is a symbol of the caring devotion nurses administer to the sick and injured in the practice of nursing. After nurses were pinned, Nightingale would light a lamp and pass the flame to each nurse as they recited the pledge. The passing of the flame represents a formal welcoming of new nurses to the profession. Florence Nightingale personifies competence, compassion, courage, selflessness, determination, and initiative. These nurses' values are yours to pass along to those you work with, teach, or mentor. But most importantly, they are a blessing to those under your care. The memories of this special ceremony will remain with you throughout your career as you carry on the sacred legacy of caring and excellence that is nursing. I am honored to be the first to welcome you into the discipline of professional nursing."

Graduates of the ADN program become registered nurses by passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses. SFSC nursing graduates are usually fully employed in nursing within a few months of graduation.



COURTESY PHOTO

SFSC Nursing graduates recite the Nightingale Pledge.

SFSC's ADN program is the only nationally accredited nursing program in its service district of Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties. It is accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

SFSC offers ADN program options for students interested in becoming registered nurses: a two-year Generic-RN program, a two-year Evening/Weekend RN program, and a one-year Transition-LPN to RN program. The College also offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and an 11-month Practical Nursing (PN) program. For program entry requirements, consult the SFSC College Catalog online at southflorida.



COURTESY PHOTO

Jenny Lopez of Hardee County was pinned by her mother, Maria Guerrero.

edu or contact Danielle Ochoa, Health Sciences Division advisor at 863-784-7027 or by email at

healthsciences@southflorida.edu or Danielle.Ochoa@southflorida.edu.

College graduates celebrate milestone

Special to Highlands News-Sun

COURTESY SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

AVON PARK — For the South Florida State College (SFSC) graduates who gathered in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, Dec. 16, the 2021 Commencement ceremony was a time to celebrate.

Student Commencement speaker Madeline J. Charles, who received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), spoke to her fellow classmates. She recounted her mother's personal challenge: In spite of having lupus, she went on to earn a degree in criminal justice. Charles overcame her own life challenge: She became a teenage parent. With self-determination and support from the community, she completed high school and followed her dream to become a nurse.

Charles urged the graduates to celebrate their accomplishments of today, "so that tomorrow you can walk through a new door. The friends and resources you have gained during this chapter of your life will hold you up through life's difficulties. Even when the corridor to your next door seems dark, have faith that God has what is best in store for you. A wise man once told me, 'When a door is opened in your life, that means God is working in your life.' Walk confidently through

that door. I hope I have left you with courage for the next chapter in your lives."

Early in the program, Tami Cullens, chair of the SFSC Board of Trustees addressed the graduates: "From all the terms used to describe graduates, the one that should receive top billing is 'winner.' Each of you is a winner. You have demonstrated through hard work, dependability, and conscientiousness that you have what it takes to continue in your life, no matter what that may be. As you leave this theater ... hold your head high and smile with joy in your heart, because you are a winner."

The graduates received congratulations and further words of wisdom from Dr. Thomas Leitzel, SFSC president. "You have a name that we will remember as you leave us and move on to your next opportunity. I ask you to also remember our name, since we may serve as a reference for you, but also remember South Florida State College, a name that many recognize for excellence and a name that along with yours will propel you to success in your future endeavors. And for that, I simply wish you the very best."

During the ceremony, Leitzel gave special recognition to Erik Christensen, dean of applied sciences and technologies, who retires from SFSC on Dec. 17 after having served the college for over 17 years. He also honored Helen



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Mark Bukowski (left), dean of student services, presented Madeline Charles, SFSC student Commencement speaker, with a plaque during the ceremony.

Shoemaker, professor of nursing, who retires from SFSC on Jan. 14 after having taught at the college for 27 years.

Approximately 346 students met the SFSC requirements by fall Commencement. Of these, 26 received their Bachelor of Science in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM), four received their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), one received their Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSEE), 108 received their Associate in Arts, 51 received their Associate in Science, 45 received their State of Florida High School diplomas, and 111 received career certificates or college credit certificates. Students participating in the Commencement ceremony totaled 125.

Mace bearer and



COURTESY PHOTO

SFSC graduates who gathered in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, Dec. 16 received congratulations and further words of wisdom from Dr. Thomas Leitzel, SFSC president. Approximately 346 students met the SFSC requirements by fall Commencement. Students participating in the Commencement ceremony totaled 125.



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chief marshal for Commencement was Thomas Bush, and marshals were Joan

Briand, Kathleen Capo, Jennifer Groves, Robert Hampton, Dr. Theresa James, Cindy Kinser,

Garrett Lee, Michelle Macbeth, Ricardo Pantoja, Dr. Mintoo Patel, Andrew Polk and Tina Stetson.

SFSC Matinee Series Opens Jan. 4

By **DEBORAH BELL
LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

The matinee series at the Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College (SFSC) in Avon Park opens Tuesday, Jan. 4 and continues every Tuesday until March 8.

All matinees begin at 1:30 p.m.

"The Matinee Series is very popular," said Cindy Garren, director of cultural programs at South Florida State College. "Residents and visitors can enjoy a delightful lunch either at the Hotel Jacaranda or on campus at Kelly's Bistro by the Bay, tour the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC), see a rousing performance, and be home before dark."

Jim Witter and his band will open the series on Jan. 4.

Witter, a Canadian, and his band faithfully recreate some of The Beatles' greatest hits including "Hard Day's Night," "Nowhere Man," "Help," "Hey Jude," "Let it Be," and countless others. During this multimedia magical, mystery tour, audiences learn some interesting facts about how some of these songs originated, and what inspired John and Paul to write some of the most memorable music of our time.

Jim Witter has been entertaining crowds for more than 30 years. Witter's versatility as an artist has allowed him

the opportunity to reach out and share his music and his infectious personality with audiences of all ages across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Dubai, and the Netherlands.

His unique approach and comfortable rapport make each member of his audience feel as though they are a part of a private concert in the comfort of their own living room.

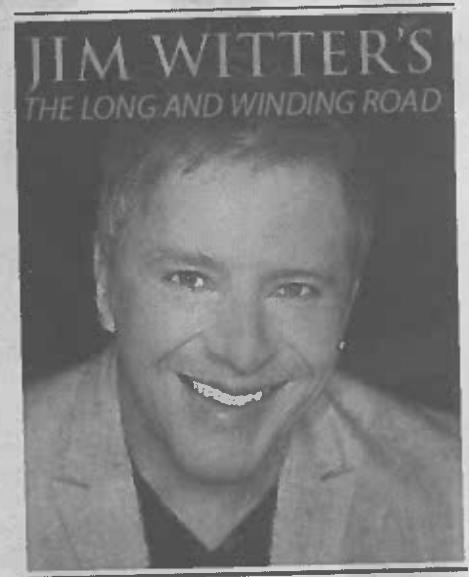
Witter's music and songwriting have been recognized on both sides of the border, earning him multiple awards and nominations from the Canadian Country Music Association, the Juno Awards, and the Dove Awards in Nashville, where Witter's album "Forgiveness" was nominated for Inspirational Album of the year.

All areas of the theater are sanitized and disinfected prior to all performances. Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the building. Face masks are encouraged, but not required.

Upcoming Matinees are: Phil Dirt and The Dozers, Jan. 11; The Rees Family, Jan. 18; The Four Freshmen, Jan. 25; Rocky and the Rollers, Feb. 1; Steve Solomon's "My Mother's Italian, My Father's Jewish and I'm Still in Therapy" on Feb. 8; South of the Border, a tribute to Herb Alpert, Feb. 15; Private Eyes, Hall & Oates tribute, Feb. 22; Country music artist Doug Stone, March 1 and the international dance/music company Tamburitizens, March 8.

The SFSC Box Office is closed for winter break, but tickets can be purchased online at sfscARTS.org.

Deborah Bell Latter is the coordinator of internal communications at South Florida State College and can be reached at 863-784-7251 or Deborah.Latter@southflorida.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO/SFSC

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