



CHANTELLE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

The Siuslaw community awarded 35 SHS seniors with 137 local scholarships. These include (clockwise from top left) the Arnn Family, Students for a Better World, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Police Union of Florence and CROW.

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When Soroptimist International of Florence presenter Michelle Fraley introduced Soroptimist's three awards, she said, "We are humbled to be able to provide these awards through your support of our various fundraisers. You in essence have helped us honor these young ladies and men with scholarships to further their dreams and their education."

Gratitude toward Florence's fundraising culture and pride in the Class of 2019's accomplishments were the order for the evening. Every award, from \$250 up to \$20,000, mattered not only to the groups who provided the funds but to the students.

Jacquie Beveridge, who presented the Daughters of the American Revolution Scholarship, said, "It's not easy to review all those applications and choose a recipient. We always wish we could give one to every person who applies. And though our scholarship is small, we hope it will in some way make a difference."

Following her, Bob Sneddon, incoming president of the Florence Kiwanis Club, replied, "There's no such thing as a small scholarship. It's not just money. Even a gift of one or two hundred bucks, that's a book or two, and it also acknowledges that the community is behind that student."

Awards came from local clubs, businesses, service

groups, student support groups, members of the arts community and in honor of individuals who have impacted the Siuslaw region for the better.

New this year was the Don Lee Davidson Memorial Scholarship, administered through the Mapleton Lions Club on behalf of the Davidson family.

"Don Lee dedicated himself to business, industry and the people of the Siuslaw region," said presenter Jim Grano. "Hundreds of local high school and college students found education-sustaining summer employment at Davidson Industries, and countless area residents, as many as 450 at a time, had careers at the mill or in the woods working for Davidson Industries. Don Lee Davidson will always be remembered for his 'fierce loyalty to his employees and the community, an ever-present spirit and generosity, and a man of his word.'"

The first recipient was Josh Smith, who received \$4,000 towards his future in trade school or vocational training.

Another new award this year was presented by Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) President Kristin Anderson, who said, "Our goal is to help young artists make their way into the world. Although we do not have it as a requirement that they have to be going for a specific art degree, but rather have as their goal to continue their art and use it to make the world a better

place."

Similarly, Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) Musical Director Maree Beers said, "At CROW, we believe that the arts really do matter and we strive to enrich the lives of our youth through performing arts opportunities. ... The arts provide valuable lifelong skills in whatever path you choose."

Every year, some of the awards are in honor of past students and Siuslaw staff.

SHS Wrestling coach Neil Wartnik presented three \$2,000 awards for the Jose De La Mora Memorial Scholarship. He said the wrestling and art student, who died the summer before his senior year, was "a spark of life and joy" who made a difference and "brought a spirit of goodwill to the school."

The De La Mora family runs Rosa's Mexican Restaurant and annually hosts a taco feed to fundraise for the memorial scholarship.

"Jose De La Mora means a whole lot to the Siuslaw High School community and especially the rest of the community," Wartnik added.

Another legacy scholarship is the Amy Nicole Memorial Scholarship, which "looks at a student who embodies the spirit, determination and interest of Ms. Nicole," Moser said.

A dozen other awards in memorium honor the Future First Citizen — announced during the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce's Siuslaw Awards each year — community service and even membership in the 112th Rhododendron Festival Court.

"This year we had nine amazing seniors. I love them all very much and am super proud of them," said Rhody Court Coordinator Wendy Krause, who worked with the Senior and Junior Courts from January

through the Rhododendron Festival in May. "Thanks to all of you who supported them throughout the year, their parents and the entire community, we are proud to say we have \$9,000 to give away tonight."

There was even a surprise award when Oregon Pacific Bank CEO Ron Green said a client wished to anonymously honor a Siuslaw student.

"Literally, a check and a note shows up at my door one day and says this: 'Dear Mr. Green, As OPB clients and citizens of Florence, we are inspired to see our local high school produce some extraordinarily rare seniors. In order to empower young men who want to continue their education, we have chosen a student that has already proven they are a deserving individual.'"

The "bonus" \$2,500 scholarship went to Robert Manns, who was previously named the SHS Citizen Leader of the Year.

Another surprise came from the Siuslaw Athletic Booster Club, which gave scholarships to all seven students who applied.

"At the end of the day, we couldn't keep from honoring them all," Moser said.

Moser also presented the Siuslaw Student Body Scholarship to two seniors "who had no idea they applied."

"Some awards you earn by filling out an application. Other awards require an essay, activities chart or resume. For the Siuslaw Student Body Scholarship, there is no application. The only way to apply to this award is to do your best, to reach higher and to do more than you thought you were capable of doing. And for each of the students awarded, this is just part of their personality. Additionally, it takes someone who has an incredible potential to continue on their good deeds beyond their time

at Siuslaw," he said. "The students selected this year have no idea they even applied for it, but for the Siuslaw staff, we want to make sure these students know how much we've appreciated their kindness and compassion over the years and how their hard work, respect and determination have not gone unnoticed. These students demonstrate the traits that we hope to instill in all of our graduates and we are all excited to see where they take their next steps. We know they will do it with a huge smile and an unparalleled level of joy."

He named the SHS Student Body Scholarship recipients as Hailee Edgerly and Nic Wilkinson.

Later in the night, Siuslaw Alumni Association awarded three \$3,500 scholarships, with a portion of the funds coming from donations in memory of board member Mona Meink Slocum, class of 1949, "the spark plug" of the alumni organization who was active through 2018.

"I represent an exclusive club of Siuslaw High School students," said Allyn Wilson, class of 1969, who gave a rundown of his family history and connection to the Siuslaw region. His wife graduated in the class of 1968, his sons in 1998 and 2000, both of his parents in 1948 and his grandmother in the class of 1921. "My grandmother actually said her class made the decision between Florence Union High School and Siuslaw Union High School."

His history goes back further yet, to a great-grandfather who homesteaded the Upper Siuslaw River at Johnston Creek.

"I have a unique responsibility. Siuslaw Alumni folks work very hard to raise this money," Wilson said.

Proceeds for the alumni scholarships come from

the All-School Reunion Banquet raffle, which takes place this year on Sept. 21. More information on the alumni association can be found at www.siuslawalumni.org.

Florence Rotary Club gave out 11 scholarships totaling \$37,500.

"Florence Rotary Club is pleased to be able to invest and follow up with students over the years," said Rotarian Andy Johnson. "It's the real privilege of those in the club to award the recipients with money for college and also follow up with them down the road."

He also invited recipients to attend weekly Rotary meetings at the Florence Events Center.

Western Lane Community Foundation also awarded \$37,500, this time in 21 awards.

In conclusion, Moser said, "I just want to thank the providers in the room once again for all that you do. I know graduation is a great night as well, but this is one of those nights where it's so magical. Every high school that's going to have a graduation is maybe going to have a scholarship night, but nobody does it like this. This is so individual to us and it's because of you out there, our audience and our providers, the community of Florence."

He thanked the students again, as well as the counseling staff, volunteers with ASPIRE and more who helped the students complete applications and make their plans for after graduation.

As Tatum said at the beginning of the night, "The Class of 2019 has a bright future ahead of them — thanks in large part to all of you."

Siuslaw High School's Class of 2019 Graduation will be this Friday, June 7, at 7 p.m. at the Siuslaw High School Gym.

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