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College Foundation Hosts First Annual FKCC Shark Expo Featuring Live Sharks, Wyland Art Auction, and Shark Repellant Presentation



FKCC Dean of Marine Science Dr. Patrick Rice instructs marine science students in placing bonnet head sharks into tonic immobility, a state of unconsciousness that facilitates data collection and scientific research.

KEY WEST, FL, August 19, 2010—The FKCC Foundation, the fund-raising arm of Florida Keys Community College, invites the community to attend the first annual FKCC Shark Expo on Saturday, August 28 from 5:30p.m. to 9:00p.m. in the college's Tennessee Williams Theatre. A celebration of both marine art and science, the fundraiser will promote shark conservation, while benefiting the college's marine science program.

The evening will begin with live shark repellent demonstrations, which FKCC Dean of Marine Science Dr. Patrick Rice will perform with the college's collection of bonnet head sharks. Guests will enjoy food, cash bar, and live pianist, while they learn about shark ecology and conservation from experts representing three respected organizations: Repel Sharks, company that distributes products developed by Shark Defense Technologies, LLC. to deter sharks; the University of Miami's South Florida Student Shark Program; and Oceanic Defense, an international non-profit that aims to protect the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Guests are invited to bid on a variety of silent auction items donated by local artists and businesses, as well as preview nine limited edition lithographs created by world famous marine artist and conservationist Wyland. The artwork, valued at approximately \$15,000 combined, includes an underwater seascape, entitled "Ocean Paradise," crafted with fellow marine artist Guy Harvey. In addition, Wyland will create a sumi-e, or

Japanese brush art, painting live on stage before auctioning the ten pieces to the highest bidder.

Patrick Rice and Eric Stroud of Shark Defense Technologies will present the main event, "Of Sharks and Humans: the History and Latest in Shark Repellent Technology." The two will discuss the discoveries, development, and application of shark repellants, as well as the impact they can have in protecting humans from sharks, and more importantly, in protecting depleting shark populations from humans.

"Love them or fear them, I think most people find sharks incredibly intriguing," says Rice. "The goal of the event is to educate the community about the critical role sharks have in the marine ecosystem and why it's important to protect them—but the event is also going to be a lot of fun, and most importantly, it's going to help the college educate the next generation of marine environmental stewards."

Admission is \$15 and \$10 for students. Net proceeds will benefit the FKCC Foundation's Marine Science Fund to provide scholarships and program support at FKCC. For more information about the event or about the FKCC Foundation, contact Patti Carey, Director of the FKCC Foundation, at 809-3299.

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