

News

The Christina Conservancy
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To Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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Congratulations Liam Patrick O’Conner, winner of the 2016 Edward W. Cooch, Jr. Environmental Scholarship.

NEWARK – On June 7, 2016, the Christina Conservancy Board, members of the Christina River Cleanup Committee, members of the Cooch family, and others celebrated the awarding of the 2016 Edward W. (Ned) Cooch, Jr. Environmental Scholarship to Liam Patrick O’Connor of Camden,

Delaware.



Left to right: Dr. Michael Valenti, Liam O’Connor, The Hon. Richard Cooch, Joanne Rufft.

Joanne Rufft, board vice president and chairman of the Scholarship Committee said "Liam was selected as this year’s winner because of his commitment to the environment, his excellent community service, his plan to major in geosciences at Princeton University with a major emphasis on climate change. While at Caesar Rodney High School, Liam earned a 4.0 grade point average.”

Liam’s Boy Scout advisor, Dr. Michael Valenti, told the gathering about Liam’s outstanding performance as winner of the coveted William T. Hornaday

Silver Medal, Scouting’s highest award. According to Dr. Valenti, “Liam essentially conceptualized, planned, and carried out no fewer than four Eagle Scout-quality conservation projects and provided the opportunity for scouts to earn literally over 1,100 service hours.

O’Connor said, “I believe that we as humans have an obligation to protect and preserve nature. Moreover, when our activities become destructive for the environment, it is our duty to mitigate their effects. For this reason, I will focus my studies on the most pressing environmental issues of the present

day: climate change.” Following college, O’Connor hopes to earn a doctorate and be a research scientist continuing his work in the broad areas of global climate change such as glaciology.

The celebration was graciously hosted by the Cooch Family at the historical Cooch residence at Cooch’s Bridge, on Old Baltimore Pike in Newark, Delaware. Cooch Family members attending were the Hon. Richard Cooch, Superior Court Judge and his wife Barbara.

In his welcoming remarks, Richard Cooch told the gathering about the rich history of his home and Cooch’s Bridge dating back to 1746, including the popularly held belief that the Betsy Ross American flag was first flown in battle at the Revolutionary War battle of Cooch’s Bridge in 1777. He spoke of his father Ned’s great passion for the environment and land preservation. His father preserved 200 acres around the family home including Cooch’s Bridge and the grist mill (Dayett Mill). Judge Cooch said, “Considering my father’s undying concern for the environment, this Edward W. Cooch, Jr. Environmental scholarship is a wonderful way to honor him and his accomplishments, not the least of which was his unwavering support of the Christina Conservancy through the years, which is dedicated to preserving and protecting the Christina River.”

Scholarship eligibility and selection criteria follow:

Eligibility

1. Must be applying to a properly accredited junior college, college, or university for the fall semester 2012;
2. Must be a Delaware resident;
3. Must be a senior in a Delaware high school or returning veteran of the U.S. armed services;
4. Must have a grade point average of 3.0 or greater;
5. Must major in an environmental field of study;
6. Must demonstrate an interest in the environment (example: participate in cleanups, engage in school Eco-club projects, elect to take environmental classes).

Selection Criteria

- The recipient will have a strong interest in the natural environment and water resources and will have demonstrated this interest through engagement in the community in these areas.
- The recipient will clearly communicate academic and career goals as it relates to the natural environment and water resources.
- The scholarship will be awarded to a student with a grade point average of 3.0 or greater.

Interviews with Liam O’Connor may be requested by contacting:

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The Christina Conservancy was established in 1982 to improve the water quality and to protect the river’s natural and historic resources. The Christina Conservancy is an all volunteer membership organization (501(c) 3 operated by a board of directors of local citizens.