



Item: AS: A-3

## COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

June 5, 2014

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF HONORARY DOCTORATE NOMINATIONS**

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### PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

Recommend full Board of Trustees approval to confer Honorary Doctorates on Chief Jim Henson and Mr. Aaron Higer.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

University Policy 2.3 (Honorary Doctorates) specifies that those nominated for Honorary Doctorates be recommended to the FAU Board of Trustees by the University Faculty Senate Honors and Awards Committee, the Provost and the President. Two candidates are being recommended at this time.

Chief Jim Henson, former Tribal Chief of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, has been nominated by Dr. John Lowe, Wymer Distinguished Professor in the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, for his many contributions of the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and to many areas of society as well. Chief Henson has been involved with the College of Nursing for more than seven years. He has engaged faculty and students in talking circles and created access for research, expanding knowledge that can benefit Native American youth. In addition, about 150 students a year spend a week within the tribal jurisdictional area in an intensive clinical practicum rotation. He has advocated for Native Americans in local, state and national forums. A highly respected cultural leader and contributor to research, he has letters of support from around the world.

Aaron Higer has been nominated by Dr. Leonard Berry, Director of the Florida Center of Environmental Studies, Nicholas Aumen, Regional Science Advisor of the U.S. Geological Survey, and several representatives of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. After graduating from the University of Miami, Mr. Higer began work for the U.S. Geological Survey ("USGS"). His research led to the first-ever applications of aerial photography and remote sensing techniques to hydrobiological research conducted by Mr. Higer and other

researchers in Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Tampa Bay, Appalachia and the West Indies. In the 1970s, he was a member of NASA's Working Group on Hydrology and the Goddard Space Flight Center. By the 1980s he was consulting for the National Geographic Society and serving a national committees as a recognized expert on hydrology. In the 1990s, Mr. Higer transferred to West Palm Beach to serve as the USGS liaison with the South Florida Water Management District and other agencies. He has dedicated five decades to protecting and restoring the Everglades, with a multi-discipline and multi-agency approach and increasing the role of science in the service of public policy.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATES**

If approved, each Honorary Doctorate will be conferred at a future commencement ceremony.

#### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A.

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**Supporting Documentation:**

**Nomination letters and additional materials**

**Presented by:**

**Dr. Gary Perry, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs  
Phone: 561-297-3061**



Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing  
Davie Campus  
3200 College Avenue  
Davie, FL 33314  
Tel: 954-236-1275  
Fax: 954-236-1325  
[jlowe@fau.edu](mailto:jlowe@fau.edu)  
[www.fau.edu](http://www.fau.edu)

November 5, 2013

President Crudele  
Florida Atlantic University  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, Florida 33431

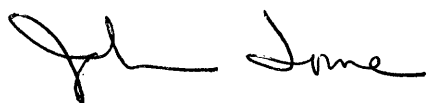
Dear President Crudele:

It is an honor to nominate the Honorable Chief Jim Henson for an Honorary Doctorate from the Florida Atlantic University (FAU). Chief Henson is a former Tribal Chief of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians which is one of the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes in the United States. Chief Henson is a very humble, giving and gracious person. He prefers to be called "Uncle Jim". He is considered to be a member of the FAU Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing family. Chief Henson has been a supporter of FAU for many years. He has served in many formal and informal capacities for the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing. His role as interventionist and cultural advisor/consultant for our research projects conducted with Indigenous youth has served to be a pillar for receiving federal funding to support our projects. He has visited the FAU campus several times and has met with previous FAU Presidents, Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Students. His presence is invigorating and he provides inspiration and energy to all who meet him. For example, he conducted a traditional Native American talking circle that was open to the entire FAU community during one of his visits. The event was well attended and significantly impacted those who attended with positive insight and inspiration.

Chief Henson's contribution to society is extremely invaluable in so many arenas. Among his many contributions, he helped to produce the National Park Service documentary "Keetoowah's Come Home". He also served as a co-founding member for the Arkansas Native American Center "Turtle Island Hall of Honors" along with Arkansas Gov. Beebe and President Clinton. As you will note from the letters supporting his nomination for an Honorary Doctorate, he is highly respected and held in high esteem by many throughout the world.

As a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from FAU, I am extremely confident that Chief Henson will represent FAU with dignity and honor. I look forward to hearing of his selection to be awarded the Honorary Doctorate. Please contact me if further information is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lowe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Lowe" clearly distinguishable.

John Lowe, RN, PhD, FAAN  
Wymer Distinguished Professor

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the key personnel and other significant contributors in the order listed on Form Page 2.  
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FOUR PAGES.**

NAME <b>Jim L. Henson</b>	POSITION TITLE Tribal Leader and Elder
eRA COMMONS USER NAME	Substance Abuse Counselor

EDUCATION/TRAINING <i>(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, and include postdoctoral training.)</i>			
INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE <i>(if applicable)</i>	YEAR(s)	FIELD OF STUDY
Oklahoma University, Norman, OK	BA	1992	Counseling
Professional Counselors, Moore, OK	International Certification	1993	Drug/Alcohol and Behavioral Health Counselor

### A. Positions and Honors

#### Positions and Employment

- 1980-1985 Community Empowerment Specialist Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, OK
- 1985-1989 Manager, Half-way House, Cherokee Nation Alcoholism Program, Tahlequah, OK
- 1993-1997 Substance Abuse Counselor, Out-patient Services, Cherokee Nation Behavioral Health Department, Tahlequah, OK
- 1993-1998 Substance Abuse Counselor, Cherokee Nation, Behavioral Health Department, Tahlequah, OK
- 1998-2001 Chief, Appointed by the Tribal Council, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, Tahlequah, OK
- 1999 Producer, Video Documentary on Keetoowah Cherokees, National Park Service, Fort Smith, AK
- 1999-present Historian, Arkansas Educational Television Network, University of Arkansas, AK
- 2000 Co-Founder, Native American Center "Turtle Island Hall of Honors", Little Rock, AK
- 2000-2002 Interventionist, Teen Intervention Project – Cherokee (TIP-C), Florida International University/Cherokee Nation
- 2001-present Cherokee Language and Culture Educator, Gans Public Schools, Sallisaw, OK
- 2002 Certificate of Honor, HIV/AIDS Bureau, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
- 2003-present Lead Counselor, Harbor House Treatment Center, Fort Smith, AK
- 2007-2011 Interventionist and Community Liaison, Community Partnership to Affect Cherokee Adolescent Substance Abuse Project funded by NIH/NIDA
- 2013 AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors Award

#### Certifications

- 1993-present Internationally Certified Drug/Alcohol and Behavioral Health Counselor, Oklahoma Drug/Alcohol Professional Counselors Association, Moore, OK
- 2000-present Vice President, Clinical Council on Practice of Native American and Ethnic Issues Oklahoma Drug/Alcohol Professional Counselors Association, Moore, OK
- 2009-present Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor
- 2011-present Certified Motivational Interviewer Counselor

## B. Selected peer-reviewed publications

- Lowe, J., Liang, H., Riggs, C., & Henson, J. (2012). Community Partnership to Affect Substance Abuse among Native American Adolescents. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 38(5): 450–455.
- Lowe, J., Riggs, C., & Henson, J. (2011). Principles for establishing trust when developing a substance abuse intervention with a Native American community. *Creative Nursing*, 17(2), 68-73. PubMed Central PMCID: PMC3103821. NIH: 1R01DA021714-01A2.
- Lowe, J., Riggs, C., Henson, J., & Liehr, P. (2009). Cherokee self-reliance and word-use in stories of stress. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 16(1), 5-9.
- Henson, J. (1996). Keetoowah's Come Home. Documentary Film. *University of Arkansas and the Southern Educational Telecommunications Network*.

## C. Research Support

### Ongoing research support

NIH/NIDA R01DA029779-01A1 Role: Consultant/Cultural Advisor 4/1/2011 – 3/3/2016  
Brief intervention for substance using Native youth.  
This project is conducting a clinical trial evaluating a culturally congruent, school-based motivational interviewing intervention targeting substance use among Native American high school students.  
Role: Consultant

### Completed research support

NIH/NIDA R34DA029724-01A1 Role: Interventionist 4/1/2011 – 3/30/2013  
Testing a substance abuse prevention for Cherokee-Keetoowah early adolescents.  
This project is examining the feasibility of using an innovative culturally appropriate school based substance use prevention for American Indian 6th graders as they transition to middle school.

NIH/NIDA R01 DA021714-01A1 Role: Interventionist/Tribal Community Liaison 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2011  
Community Partnership to Affect Cherokee-Keetoowah Adolescent Substance Abuse  
This project strengthened a partnership between the FAU College of Nursing and a Native American Indian community to affect substance abuse among Cherokee-Keetoowah adolescents by developing and testing a culturally competent school-based intervention.

Native American Nursing Scholars Institute Research Award Role: Cultural Advisor 1/12/05-1/12/07  
Nursing in the Native American Indian and Alaska Native (Indigenous) Cultures. This was a descriptive study that explored exemplar cases of Native American Indian and Alaska Native nurses. The study results contribute to the continued development of a theory of Nursing in the Native American Culture.

ANAC/Bio Tech Role: Interventionist 1/01/02-1/01/03  
This project tested the effectiveness of an HIV/AIDS prevention study that utilized a culturally competent approach using the Cherokee Teen Talking Circle for Cherokee adolescents.

Minority Supplement to R01 AA10246-05S1 Role: Interventionist 6/01/2000-12/30/02  
NIH/NIAAA

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This study tested the efficacy of the Teen Intervention Project – Cherokee (TIP-C) for its effectiveness as a culturally competent school-based substance abuse intervention for Native American Indian (Cherokee) adolescents.

SAMHSA/NIMH      Role: Consultant/Cultural Advisor

8/01/92-8/01/96

This study investigated the concept of Cherokee self-reliance and the relationship to the health and well-being of Cherokees. A Cherokee self-reliance model and an instrument to measure for the presence of Cherokee self-reliance emerged from the findings of the study.

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January 16, 2014

Dr. Gary W. Perry  
Interim Provost and Chief Academic Officer  
Florida Atlantic University  
777 Glades Rd.  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

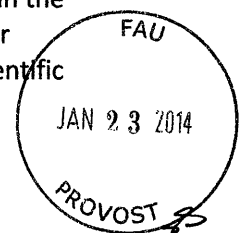
Dear Dr. Perry:

It is with great pleasure that we nominate Mr. Aaron Higer for an honorary doctorate degree from Florida Atlantic University. Mr. Higer is one of those rare, visionary scientific leaders who has contributed tremendously to the science that underlies and supports the protection and restoration of Florida's Everglades.

After graduating from the University of Miami with a Bachelors Degree in Industrial Engineering in 1959, Mr. Higer began work for the US Geological Survey (USGS) in Miami on a student appointment while studying Oceanography at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. He studied pesticide residues in fish, animal, and plant tissues collected in Everglades National Park. This research led to the first-ever applications of aerial photography and remote sensing techniques to hydrobiological research conducted by Mr. Higer and other researchers in Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Tampa Bay, Appalachia, and the West Indies. Mr. Higer and his USGS collaborators pioneered the use of multispectral data collection and processing techniques in delineating hydrologic and hydrobiologic features. In the 1970s, he was a member of NASA's Working Group on Hydrology at the Goddard Space Flight Center, served as a consultant to the United Nation's AID Program on remote sensing for Jamaica, and was the coordinator for program development at both the Earth Science Office at the Kennedy Space Center and the EROS School on Remote Sensing, and was a representative to the First Symposium on Remote Sensing for the Pan American Nations in Panama City, Panama. He was the Federal representative on the State of Florida Carrying Capacity Committee and a Task Force member on the President's Committee for Environmental Quality concerning the planned Cross Florida Barge Canal.

By the 1980s, Mr. Higer was a recognized expert on south Florida hydrology, consulting with the National Geographic Society for their Atlas on North America, serving on the U.S. Justice Department's Remedy Committee for the Everglades, chairing the USGS National Water-Use Committee, and serving on the Dade County Technical Committee for the location of new well fields. He also was the Chairman of a workshop on Meteorology, Hydrology, and Water Management held as part of a US-India Symposium in Ahmeabad, India, and took part in the Symposium on the Ecology and Conservation of the Usumacinta-Grijaula Delta in Tabasco, Mexico.

In 1992, Mr. Higer transferred to West Palm Beach, Florida, to serve as the USGS liaison with the South Florida Water Management District and other agencies co-located in their offices. He was tapped to serve as a member of the Working Group of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, and as the first Coordinator of the USGS South Florida Ecosystem Program. As Co-chair of the Working Group's Science Sub-Group and as the official spokesman for U.S. Geological Survey programs in south Florida, he contributed significantly to delineating the scientific needs for ecosystem restoration decision-making in south Florida. He developed a comprehensive integrated science program within the USGS that included 70 projects, all major scientific disciplines, and hundreds of partners from other agencies, academia, and private companies. Results from this ongoing program provide crucial scientific





information on which to base ecosystem restoration decisions in south Florida and in other similar areas of the country and the world.

Mr. Higer recognized that scientific results from USGS and other agencies would be of most value to resource managers and others if presented and disseminated in useful formats. To this end, he personally directed this aspect of the south Florida program to provide easy access to all scientific information through the Internet. He was called upon frequently to brief the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Science, State and Federal Legislators, and White House representatives. Mr. Higer also sat on the USGS's National Ecosystem Council and advised the other ecosystem programs on what works successfully and what has been tried and not worked as well. In recognition of his many outstanding contributions to the programs of the USGS, Mr. Higer was presented with the U.S. Department of Interior's Meritorious service Award in 1993, and the Distinguished Service Award in 2000.

One significant contribution by Mr. Higer is the SOFIA website – the prime depository and access point for Everglades-related scientific information (<http://sofia.usgs.gov>). The website provides coherent information access in support of research, decision-making, and resource management for the south Florida restoration effort. It contains a suite of information systems and tools enabling the searching, selection, organization, documentation, dissemination, and storage of data and other information products. It continues to be used frequently by federal, state, and local agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. Mr. Higer established SOFIA in the mid-1990s, well before the importance of data management and easy access to information was commonly recognized.

Perhaps Mr. Higer's most enduring concept is the Everglades Depth Estimation Network (EDEN). The main focus of Everglades restoration is to restore more natural hydrology, and EDEN is a primary tool used by scientists to examine the relationships between hydrology and other natural processes. The EDEN (<http://sofia.usgs.gov/eden>) is an integrated network of real-time water-level monitoring, ground-elevation modeling, and water-surface modeling that provides scientists and managers with current (1991-present), on-line, water-depth information for the entire freshwater portion of the Greater Everglades. Presented on a 400-meter by 400-meter grid spacing, EDEN is available to anyone free of charge, and offers a consistent and documented dataset that can be used by scientists and managers to examine ecosystem-level responses to hydrodynamic changes in the Everglades. Mr. Higer reached out to FAU scientists when EDEN was still in its conceptual phase and he involved them throughout its development. Today, a growing list of FAU graduate students and faculty are using EDEN data in their theses, dissertations, and research projects.

In making this nomination, while we believe that Mr. Higer's documented academic and research achievements are very significant, they do not represent his most important contribution to south Florida science. To us, Mr. Higer's most important contribution can be viewed as analogous to a conductor of a large philharmonic orchestra with instrument sections representing various science and resource management agencies, and with instrumentalists representing scientists and managers of those agencies. The conductor is well-aware of the abilities of the orchestra and strives to get the best performance possible. Mr. Higer was this conductor for science in south Florida, and we and the Everglades benefitted from his visionary leadership and mentoring.

Mr. Higer excelled in this role because of his well-honed skills in inter-personal relationships that, when combined with his accumulated knowledge of Everglades-related sciences, history, and institutions,

allowed his observations and suggestions to be highly regarded and worthy of further consideration and development by other knowledgeable individuals. Similarly, his quietly gregarious nature conveyed his receptiveness to new ideas from many scientists. These ideas were seamlessly incorporated into ensuing discussions with subsequent expansion, modification, and eventual improvement.

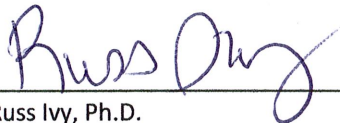
Indeed, Mr. Higer's legacy is his brilliance that he applied for five decades in protecting and restoring the Everglades, his vision that flourishes today of his multi-discipline and multi-agency approach to Everglades science, and the increasing role of science in the service of public policy. For these reasons and for his life-long efforts on behalf of the Everglades ecosystem and south Florida, we submit this nomination for your consideration.

Sincerely,



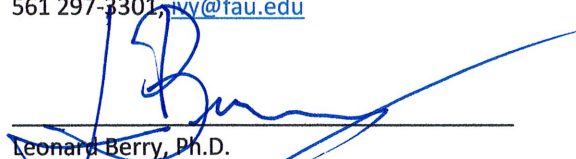
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Nicholas G. Aumen, Ph.D.  
Regional Science Advisor, Southeast Region  
US Geological Survey  
7500 NW 36<sup>th</sup> St.  
Davie, FL 33314  
954 377-5917, [naumen@usgs.gov](mailto:naumen@usgs.gov)



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Russ Ivy, Ph.D.  
Interim Dean, Charles E. Schmidt College of Science  
Florida Atlantic University  
Science and Engineering Building, Room SE 254A  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
561 297-3301, [ivy@fau.edu](mailto:ivy@fau.edu)



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Leonard Berry, Ph.D.  
Director, Florida Center for Environmental Studies  
Co-Director FAU Climate Change Initiative  
Florida Atlantic University  
5353 Parkside Dr, Bldg. SR # 249  
Jupiter FL 33458  
561 799-8554, [berry@fau.edu](mailto:berry@fau.edu)



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Zhixiao Xie, Ph.D.  
Director, Center of Geographic Information  
Analysis and Modeling  
Department of Geosciences  
Florida Atlantic University  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
561 297-2852, [xie@fau.edu](mailto:xie@fau.edu)



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Dale E. Gawlik, Ph.D.  
Director, Environmental Sciences Program  
Charles E. Schmidt College of Science  
Florida Atlantic University  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
561 297-3333, [dgawlik@fau.edu](mailto:dgawlik@fau.edu)



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## Dedication and Thanks to Aaron Higer

The [2000 Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Science Conference](#) is dedicated to Aaron Higer, member of the Working Group and Science Coordination Team of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. It is fitting that the first GEER conference should be dedicated to Aaron who has worked for the benefit of the Everglades ecosystem for over 40 years in capacities ranging from field researcher collecting fish samples for pesticide analysis, to his current position as Working Group and Science Coordination Team member, and U.S. Geological Survey South Florida Ecosystem Coordinator.



Airborne Aaron, 1961

After graduating from the University of Miami with a Bachelors Degree in Industrial Engineering in 1959, Aaron started working for the USGS in Miami, Florida, on a student appointment while studying Oceanography at the prestigious Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences. During the early sixties Aaron worked on a study to determine pesticide residues in fish, animal and plant tissue collected in Everglades National Park. This effort led to his interest in applying aerial photography and remote sensing techniques to hydrobiological research which he, with other researchers, did successfully in Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay, Tampa

Bay, Appalachia and the West Indies. Aaron, working with Milt Kolipinski, pioneered the use of multispectral data collection and processing techniques in delineating hydrologic and hydrobiologic features. In the seventies Aaron was a member of NASA's Working Group on Hydrology at the Goddard Space Flight Center, served as a consultant to the United Nation's AID Program on remote sensing for Jamaica, was the coordinator for both program development for the Earth Science Office at the Kennedy Space Center and the EROS School on Remote Sensing, and was a representative to the First Symposium on Remote Sensing for the Pan American Nations in Panama City, Panama. He was the Federal representative on the State of Florida Carrying Capacity Committee and a Task Force member on the President's Committee for Environmental Quality, Cross Florida Barge Canal.

By the eighties Aaron was a recognized expert on south Florida hydrology, consulting with the National Geographic Society for their Atlas on North America, serving on the U.S. Justice Department's

Remedy Committee for the Everglades, chairing the USGS National Water-Use Committee and serving on the Dade County Technical Committee for the location of new well fields. Aaron was also the Chairman of a workshop on Meteorology, Hydrology and Water Management held as part of a US-India Symposium in Ahmeabad, India and took part in the Symposium on the Ecology and Conservation of the Usumacinta-Grijaula Delta in Tabasco, Mexico.



Field work in the Everglades, 1967

In 1992 Aaron transferred to West Palm Beach, Florida, to serve as the USGS liaison with the South Florida Water Management District and other agencies co-located in their District Headquarters. This transfer represented a great personal sacrifice for Aaron and his family who were in the process of rebuilding a home devastated by Hurricane Andrew. Four years later, Aaron was tapped to serve as a member of the Working Group of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and as the Coordinator of the USGS South Florida Ecosystem Program. As



Miami Subdistrict Luncheon, 1997

Co-chair of the Working Group's Science Sub-Group and as the official spokesman for U.S. Geological Survey programs in south Florida, he significantly contributed to delineating the scientific needs for ecosystem restoration decision-making in south Florida. He then developed the most comprehensive integrated-science program within the U.S. Geological Survey that

includes about 70 projects; all major agency scientific disciplines; and hundreds of partners from other agencies, academia, and private companies. Results from this ongoing program provide crucial scientific information on which to base ecosystem restoration decisions in south Florida and in other similar areas of the country and the world. Aaron also recognized that results of science programs of the U.S. Geological Survey and other agencies would be of most value to resource managers and others if presented and disseminated in useful formats. To this end, he has personally directed this aspect of the south Florida program to provide easy access to all scientific information through the Internet. Aaron is frequently called upon to brief the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Science, State and Federal Legislators, and White House representatives.

He also sits on the USGS's National Ecosystem Council and advises the other ecosystem programs on what works successfully and what has been tried and not worked as well. In recognition of his many outstanding contributions to the programs of the USGS, Aaron was presented with the U.S. Department of Interior's Meritorious service Award in 1993, and the Distinguished Service Award in 2000.

The multi-discipline and multi-agency approach to understanding the functioning of the Everglades ecosystem that has characterized much of the work of the South Florida Ecosystem Interagency Task Force can, in no small measure, be attributed to Aaron's view of the role of science in the service of public policy. Although his accomplishments are numerous

and varied, Aaron may be most appreciated by his associates for his legendary vision and by his friends and coworkers for his selflessness and his willingness to mentor and advise. For these reasons and for his life-long efforts on behalf of the Everglades ecosystem and south Florida, this GEER conference is dedicated to Aaron Higer. All of us involved in greater Everglades restoration extend to Aaron and Francine our best wishes during retirement.



Aaron and his number one supporter, Francine.



Award given to Aaron from the South Florida Water Management District "in appreciation of his 40 year commitment of State-Federal science partnerships pivotal to Everglades restoration and South Florida sustainability". [\[larger image\]](#)



Aaron taking photo, Green Swamp, 1975



Aaron at cypress stump, Green Swamp, July 1975.



Aaron surveying in mangroves, ENP, Nov 1971.



Aaron in salt marsh near Crystal River, Fla. Feb 1974.



Aaron holding irrigation hose in citrus ag land, eastern Everglades C-111 basin, near Context road, May 19, 1976.



Aaron is sawgrass marsh, C-111 basin, South Dade Co.,

May 19, 1976.



Camp near Rogers River headwater in ENP; One of "many" Aaron helped design, May 1971.



Aaron in Big Cypress Swamp, December 1969 (?)



Aaron in helicopter, near Gum Slough, Big Cypress Swamp, July 14, 1975.

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Comments and suggestions? Contact: [Heather Henkel - Webmaster](#) or (727) 803-8747 ext. 3028

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