

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Two Marine Scientists Paved the Way for Hammonton Resident to Research Seals in NJ

Linda Dotts Awarded Stacy Moore Hagan Memorial Scholarship to Continue Carol Slocum's Research

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Galloway Township, NJ- Carol Slocum and Stacy Moore Hagan, both of whom lost their lives to cancer in the past three years, are remembered for their leadership in the field of marine science and for paving the way for women interested in pursuing science careers.

Linda Dotts, a senior biology major and marine science minor at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, is one woman who is ready to advance the path that both Slocum and Hagan pioneered. Dotts, who currently resides in Hammonton, has been awarded a scholarship named in memory of Stacy Moore Hagan, which will enable Dotts to continue a research project started by Carol Slocum nearly two decades ago.

In 1994, Carol Slocum, then an associate professor of marine science at Stockton College, started a New Jersey seal study in cooperation with the Marine Mammal Stranding Center (MMSC). Each year, from late fall through late spring, Slocum and her students, along with Steve Evert, field station manager at Stockton's Marine Science and Environmental Field Station, traveled by boat to observe a seal colony on Great Bay.

Slocum's study documented seal abundance, species composition, age/class distribution, basic behavior and timing of return to breeding colonies. The data collected by Slocum, her students and the MMSC resulted in the first local dataset.

Linda Dotts is the first student to receive the spring term Stacy Moore Hagan Memorial Scholarship, which over the past three years, has been awarded to Stockton students to complete summer internships that focus on marine science research projects. Previous projects have looked at fish larvae, eels and crab traps.

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Roland Hagan established the memorial scholarship in memory of his wife, Stacy Moore Hagan, who graduated from Stockton College in 1992. Roland Hagan, who also studied at Stockton College, is currently a laboratory researcher at the Rutgers University Marine Field Station (RUMFS). Hagan works closely with Dr. Ken Able, RUMFS field station director, who is also collaborating on the internship.

Steve Evert and Dr. Mark Sullivan, assistant professor of marine science, will oversee Linda's internship. Dr. Sullivan explained that during the selection process "Linda was highly recommended by multiple marine science faculty members."

Both Stockton College and Rutgers University have marine science field stations that share the same bay and estuary (the Mullica River and the Great Bay Estuary). Dr. Sullivan said, "This scholarship has resulted in a collaborative initiative between the Rutgers University Marine Field Station and Stockton's Marine Science and Environmental Field Station. In addition to getting students involved in fieldwork, Roland's support will help to keep Carol's research alive."

January, February and March will be busy months for Dotts. She will study fish ear bones, referred to as otoliths by scientists, to reveal seals' diets. Otoliths are collected from seal scat and separated with a tool called an elutriator. Since each species of fish has a unique ear bone shape, scientists can identify which fish species seals prey upon.

Linda Dotts said, "I was fortunate enough to have gotten to know Carol as a result of taking Seal Biology and Behavior [a preparation course for the New Jersey Seal Study]. It was during this class that I became interested in her research on harbor seals, which winter off the coast of New Jersey, specifically diet and behavior."

Dotts hopes to gain some insight on how the feeding habits of seals fit into the local food web using scat and otolith analysis. "Carol's energy and enthusiasm particularly regarding conservation of harbor seals (her work at the Marine Mammal Stranding Center) were what inspired me most, and I am honored to have known her."

Dotts will graduate this December, and she will continue her studies at Stockton in the post-baccalaureate teacher certification program beginning in the spring.

Both Carol Slocum and Stacy Moore Hagan are recipients of posthumous Women and Wildlife Awards presented by the Conserve Wildlife Foundation in 2010 and 2007 respectively.

The Stacy Moore Hagan Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Linda Dotts by The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Foundation. For more information on the College's Foundation or to make a contribution, please visit www.stockton.edu and type the word "scholarship" into the search box.

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