



The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund

Background

The establishment of the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund was inspired by the work of one of Micronesia's lead conservation pioneers, William Charles Raynor, known to many as Bill Raynor. Bill Raynor (Feb. 22nd, 1957-Sept. 1st 2015), former Director of The Nature Conservancy's Micronesia Program, first came to the region as a Jesuit volunteer on the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). As a long-time resident of Pohnpei, Bill became extremely involved with Pohnpeian culture and customs; and as a result he earned a Pohnpeian honorific title, Soumadau en Pei ni Eng Eihr—Lord of the Altar of the East Wind—and grew giant yams, which is an important tradition in Pohnpeian society. He was considered a true Pohnpeian; he spoke the language fluently and was revered as a bona fide Pohnpeian agroforestry expert. He married a Pohnpeian lady from Madolenihmw Municipality and together they raised several children and grandchildren.

Not only did he adapt to and become quite involved with the culture, but he also dedicated his life to supporting and improving Micronesians' quality of life through his work. Bill was a dedicated hero for nature. For over 30 years, he engaged in significant and meaningful conservation work across Micronesia. Among his many pioneering efforts, he helped launch the Conservancy's program in the region. He also helped to establish/strengthen several non-governmental organizations in Micronesia, (the Micronesia Conservation Trust, Chuuk Conservation Society, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization, Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, Yap Community Action Program, Marshall Islands Conservation Society, etc.) that are now leading conservation and sustainable development work in their jurisdictions. As a sponsor and founding member of the Micronesians in Island Conservation (MIC) Network, Bill was committed to identifying and nurturing emerging conservation champions from across the region. He was also instrumental in establishing the Micronesia Challenge (www.micronesiachallenge.org) and the endowment fund associated with the initiative. Over the course of approximately three decades, Bill supported and mentored emerging environmental leaders who have the passion and the potential to continue the conservation initiatives and maintain the Micronesia Challenge commitment that he and the other conservation pioneers helped establish in the region.

Bill lived life, including his end of life, on his own terms—fully, with love and with a commitment to others and to the world. In his honor, the Micronesia Conservation Trust and its many partners are pleased to announce the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund.

Micronesia Challenge

The Micronesia Challenge is a groundbreaking commitment by the leaders of Micronesia (Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, the US Territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) to place at least 30% of Micronesia’s near-shore marine resources and 20% of its terrestrial resources under effective conservation by the year 2020.

The Micronesia Challenge partnership continues to identify, support and coach new successors to take on conservation and resource management leadership roles and responsibilities, as leadership capacity and development continues to be a critical need. To address this need, the Micronesia Conservation Trust and its partners have established the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund to provide financial and leadership development support for citizens and long-time residents of the five jurisdictions of Micronesia (ROP, FSM, RMI, Guam, and CNMI).

Applying for the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund

The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund aims to contribute to the development of effective conservation of Micronesia’s biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods across the region. This scholarship provides an opportunity for individuals from Micronesia to undertake either a Master’s or Doctorate degrees in any resource management/conservation field at various institutions within the Pacific Region to include universities in Guam, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan.

Call for applications will be issued once a year. The Call for Applications will be announced in April each year and circulated via MCT’s website and network list-serves, the MC website & newsletter, and social media. Announcements will provide details on application forms & requirements, submission deadline, and other relevant information.

For an application to be eligible for review, it must be accompanied by all required documents stated on the application form and other documents that will support the application. Applications with incomplete supporting documents will not be considered for review and late applications will not be accepted. Application packages **MUST be sent via email to:**

Lisa R. Andon
Deputy Executive Director,
Micronesia Conservation Trust
deputy@ourmicronesia.org .

Applicants are to focus on leadership and technical skills and/or majors that enhance their ability to carry out work in conservation, climate adaptation and sustainable development in Micronesia.

Awardees of this prestigious scholarship will receive financial support to earn graduate degrees while receiving close guidance and mentorship from key individuals within the Micronesia Challenge partnership, including members of the peer learning networks, MIC and the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC). The mentors/advisors are technical experts who have extensive experience in the field of conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development in Micronesia/Pacific.

Each year, two students from the region will be selected through a competitive process, and will be eligible to receive up to \$30,000 per year for up to two years for the successful completion of a Master's program, and up to three years for the successful completion of a PhD program. This scholarship is limited to just two students per scholarship-round in order to provide the mentorship and guidance support that will be required to ensure the students' long-term success.

The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund committee, will also make a good faith effort to place scholarship recipients in permanent positions when they graduate. To help ensure recipients are able to participate in Micronesia Challenge activities either remotely or during breaks, awardees are required to study at universities within the Pacific region/rim and they must secure an agency that will commit to hosting them during their studies and one willing to hire the intern after they complete their studies.

The alumni of this scholarship program will form a cadre of new leaders that will meet annually in association with the MIC peer-leaders network. This will allow the alumni to continue to be mentored by conservation champions around the region and grow as leaders, who will in turn serve as mentors themselves for new scholarship recipients.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund, applicants must:

- i. Be a citizen OR permanent resident of any of the five Micronesia Challenge jurisdictions (*ROP, FSM, RMI, Guam, and CNMI*)
- ii. Possess a Bachelor's degree
- iii. Have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of not less than 3.0; **or** a cumulative undergraduate GPA of not less than 2.0 with at least 3-5 years of work experience in conservation, climate change or sustainable development
- iv. Be working for a natural resource management agency/NGO, or have a high potential to be hired by one
- v. NOT already have a full scholarship from any funding source (students with partial scholarships will not receive funds above and beyond the cost of their tuition and associated fees).
- vi. Be accepted or enrolled in a graduate degree program in a resource management/conservation field at universities within the Pacific region (Guam, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, or Japan) at the time of application.
- vii. Commit to returning to Micronesia to work in the environment sector.

Awardees' Obligations

Awardees are expected to:

- i. Enroll as a full time student
- ii. Maintain a good academic standing
 - a. Masters' and PhD students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or equivalent
 - b. Research students must show progress in research
- iii. Update MCT and partners with each academic term's performance
 - a. Masters' and PhD students must send MCT an official copy of each term's transcript
 - b. Research students must submit to MCT a quarterly progress report certified by a principal supervisor
- iv. Send MCT each invoice and receipt provided by the university so MCT can apply the scholarship funding directly to the awardees' school fees
- v. Actively participate in Micronesia Challenge activities as directed by designated mentors and advisors

Selection Criteria

Applicants will be selected based on the following:

- i. Strength of their application and that the program they are attending is in line with conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development goals of their home country's or host organization;
- ii. The strength and commitment of their host institution, including the ability to hire/retain them after the completion their studies;
- iii. The commitment and experience of their mentor(s) in resource management and sustainable development efforts in the Pacific.

Accepting scholarship conditions

Upon receipt of the scholarship, awardees must sign a promissory note which serves as their acknowledgement for their understanding and acceptance of the scholarship terms and conditions.

In order to support these students, MCT and its partners have a target goal to raise an endowment fund of approximately \$1.2 million dollars, generating an estimated 5% in earnings per year, to support two full time students at up to \$30,000 each per year. This fund will be housed at the Micronesia Conservation Trust and will be invested as a sub-account within the Micronesia Challenge Endowment Fund. Every \$2 raised will secure an additional \$1 in match. You can give directly to the fund, by visiting MCT's website at <http://www.ourmicronesia.org/> and clicking on the '**Donate**' button.

For more information on the BRMC Scholarship Endowment, please contact:

Mr. Willy Kostka
MCT Executive Director
P.O. Box 2177, Pohnpei FM 96941
Ph. (691) 320-5670
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For more information on the BRMC Scholarship Program, please contact:

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