

# Honoring a Man Who Loved the Everglades

Rafael Crespo dedicated his life to protecting the environment and wildlife of South Florida. He was a respected leader and mentor, and a warm and charismatic friend. His family, friends, and coworkers created an endowment at the University of Florida to support conservation research.



**You can continue Rafael's legacy by donating to the Rafael Crespo Conservation Fund.**

We created a **permanent endowment** to support aspiring wildlife biologists and ecologists. The **fund is endowed forever** and we are committed to **grow it!**

## *About Rafael*

As the lead biologist for University of Florida's American Crocodile Monitoring Program, Rafael spent thousands of hours scouring shorelines and mangrove wetlands for crocodiles and their nests. He helped colleagues research other animals and plants in Florida, Belize, Ecuador, Cuba, and Zimbabwe. In his free time, Rafael enjoyed fishing and tramping around in the swamp. He planted native plants in his mom's backyard to bring a bit of the Everglades home to her. He was a champion kickboxer, although you would not guess this by his humble nature. Rafael drew in many friends with his kindness, humor, and sincerity.

## *About the Fund*

Florida's Everglades have been altered by decades of destructive water management. Today, the ecosystem is undergoing a multibillion-dollar restoration project. The American crocodile is a threatened species and an indicator of a healthy Everglades. Rafael was passionate about conserving crocodiles and their natural habitat. The Rafael Crespo Conservation Fund will provide a \$1,000 scholarship each year into perpetuity to support aspiring biologists and ecologists carrying out Rafael's legacy. The first scholarship was awarded in 2015 to Avishka Godahewa, a researcher from Sri Lanka who came to South Florida to learn about American crocodiles and field research techniques. In 2017, Dr. Natalia Rossi was awarded for her work on the endangered Cuban crocodile (one of Raf's dreams was to work on Cuban crocs).

## **How to Donate**

Visit: [www.uff.ufl.edu/appeals/crespoaward](http://www.uff.ufl.edu/appeals/crespoaward)

Or you may mail a check to: University of Florida Foundation (IFAS), P.O. Box 110170, Gainesville, FL 32611-0170  
(Indicate that your gift is for the Rafael Crespo Conservation Fund.)



[Rafael Crespo Conservation Fund](#)