

2021 Conservation Stewards Awards Dr. Willa Drummond

Dr. Willa H. Drummond came to Gainesville for a job interview in 1978 and immediately fell in love with the trees and open spaces. She joined the UF Department of Pediatrics and devoted herself to studying Primary Pulmonary Hypertension in newborns. Her seminal research led to the treatment and cure of this once lethal disease. She retired in 2011 as an internationally acclaimed Professor of Pediatrics and Neonatology with an honorary appointment at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine in recognition of her work in Equine Neonatology. Dr. Drummond's other love, the environment, also frequently landed her in the spotlight. One weekend in 1980, Willa went for her morning run to find that a neighbor was cutting down ancient oaks without a permit. She ran home for chains and padlocks and chained herself to an injured oak threatened by a huge bulldozer. This was the first time she was front page news, but not the last! From there, she continued to work to protect the environment as a leader of the Serenola/Idylwild Special Area Study Group. A dedicated conservationist, Dr. Drummond is donating 20 acres of her land to the Serenola Forest Preserve.