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Plant Health

PPQ William F. Helms Student Scholarship

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William F. Helms

After graduating from Auburn University, Bill Helms joined the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in 1958 and worked for Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) in field offices in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. He was assigned to headquarters in 1980 as the associate deputy administrator for PPQ and was subsequently promoted in 1986 to be deputy administrator, the highest ranking position in his division and the position he retained until his untimely death in 1990. Bill was an active proponent for change and management improvement. He also looked for better ways of doing business. Through many organizational changes, he never lost sight of the people element and the worth of the organization's most valuable asset, its people. An example of his feelings is reflected in a comment made after a major reorganization in the late 1980's: "There's been some skepticism about the reorganization—many people are resistant to change no matter what. But I believe that it doesn't make any difference how many boxes you have on the chart, how many people you have, how many interrelationships—if you have good, dedicated people, you're going to get results. I think that's why APHIS has succeeded over the years." The William F. Helms Student Scholarship Program continues the legacy Bill worked hard to establish and is further evidence of the agency's continuing commitment to support and hire the best and brightest young people with an interest in the mission of PPQ.

PPQ

The USDA APHIS is the agency responsible for safeguarding America's agricultural and natural resources from exotic

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plant and animal pests and diseases. APHIS' PPQ program deals specifically with plant health issues.

PPQ employees assist in keeping destructive exotic pests out of the United States and work to control or eradicate infestations of exotic pests and diseases like Asian longhorned beetle, citrus canker, and Plum Pox virus, along with more established pests like grasshoppers, imported fire ant, and gypsy moths. Employees monitor the distribution of pests in the United States through an extensive surveillance network and conduct integrated pest management programs on designated pests in cooperation with States, other Federal agencies, private farmers, and ranchers.

PPQ is offering scholarships to academically qualified students who are enrolled in college-level programs related to agriculture or the biological sciences.

What This Scholarship Offers You

This scholarship offers you:

- Financial aid while pursuing a degree (Up to \$5,000 in financial assistance each year they are enrolled in a degree program)
- Mentoring
- Paid work experience during school breaks (both summer and holiday periods)
- Possible permanent employment upon graduation

William F. Helms Scholarship recipients will further their education and gain valuable real world experience in the field of agriculture by:

- Trapping for invasive species
- Performing outreach activities to spread the word about invasive species
- Performing inspections on goods for export
- Meeting personnel from around the country with extensive backgrounds in plant protection and quarantine activities
- Performing surveys for invasive plant diseases
- Learning how to use pesticides properly under guidance of licensed USDA PPQ applicators
- Working with other Federal, State and local agriculture employees to determine best practices to use when outbreaks occur

PPQ will offer scholarship recipients employment during school breaks, both summer and holiday periods. PPQ may offer full-time professional employment to Helms scholars who successfully complete the necessary education, training, and work requirements.

The Application Process

To apply, you must:

- Be a United States citizen
- Be enrolled in an accredited college or university within the U.S.

- Be a sophomore or junior in good academic standing (students must maintain at least a 2.5 grade-point average)
- Be enrolled in programs related to agriculture or the biological sciences
- Agree to work for the agency during school breaks (both summer and holiday periods) a minimum of 640 hours prior to completion of studies

Your application must contain the following items:

- An Optional Application for Federal Employment ([OF-612](#)) or Resume
- A personal letter that:
 - Describes your interests, goals, and chosen career plans
 - Explains how you envision your ability will contribute to the PPQ mission
 - Outlines why you should be selected for this program over other candidates
 - Lists a permanent address where you can be contacted all year
- Transcripts of your college work to date
- Three letters of recommendation (from people not related to you)
- If you have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, please submit documentation of service with your scholarship application

Applications must be postmarked by March 1 of each year to be considered. Students selected will begin receiving scholarship benefits at the start of the fall semester.

This scholarship may not be available every year. Please call (202) 690-4759 to check the status.

Submit your completed application packets to the following address.

United States Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW Room 1710
 Washington DC 20250
 Attention HR/Recruitment

You may obtain further information about the William F. Helms Scholarship by calling (202) 690-4759.

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