

## **Governors Recognition Essay Contest**

“What do you believe to be the legacy of a former governor of the State of Florida?”

By: Joshua Hinton. Shoal River Middle School, Okaloosa County.

Other than going to college and playing football for any major university, I have three goals I would like to accomplish. First, I would enjoy swimming with the manatees. I have never done this and I look forward to the day. I would do as much as I could to save these creatures from harm. Just as much as that I would like to visit the Everglades and ride on an airboat. My third goal is to attend the new school built to replace my old middle school and it just opened. All three of my goals are possible today through the efforts of our former Governor Bob Martinez. He was the 40<sup>th</sup> governor of Florida and his legacy is one to remember.

Before Governor Bob Martinez fought to save the manatee population and protect their waters, they were being harmed by the ruthless propellers of motor-boats. They are slow and gentle mammals that have no protection from man. Like many creatures today they needed the help of people who care to protect them and their territory. Governor Bob Martinez fought for laws to help protect the manatee’s home. I hope to swim with them in the future because of this effort.

The Everglades of Florida flow with life and they never cease to amaze. Governor Bob Martinez’s love for the Everglades encouraged him to help create the “Surface Water Management Act.” This act helped protect many of the lakes and rivers that flow into the Everglades from farm pesticides and chemicals that would harm life in them. Some of these bodies of water are the Okeechobee, Lake Jackson, and the Kissimmee River. Today, through this act, the waters affecting the Everglades are healthier and my goal of riding that airboat is possible.

This year, I am attending a brand new school in my county that just opened. This school has many exciting new things my old school did not have. I wanted to participate in sports with the new facilities and now I can. My new school was constructed through the Florida Lottery endowment to schools. Governor Bob Martinez was the existing governor when the lottery began. This program has helped to build schools all over the State of Florida and my new school is one of them. If Governor Bob Martinez had not allowed the lottery to take effect then I might still be at my old school, which was very run down.

Governor Bob Martinez’s legacy has created a positive future for our environment in the State of Florida and the lottery has built my new school. His efforts have helped to preserve the manatee’s territory and the Everglades and I think that is cool. His vision for the future remains active today and my goals are attainable because of his legacy.