



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn, Alabama 36830
Voice: 334-887-4500
Email: Amelia.Dortch@usda.gov
Web: [http:// www.al.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov)

News Release

Release No.: 0000003.22

Contact:
Amelia Hines Dortch, (334) 887-4500
Amelia.Dortch@usda.gov

Auburn University’s Pierce McClendon Named Alabama Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society Earl Norton Scholarship Recipient

AUBURN, Ala., January 14, 2022 Auburn University’s Pierce McClendon has been named the Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society’s 2021 Earl Norton Scholar. McClendon, of Priceville, Alabama, is the recipient of the \$2,000 academic scholarship that will help him as he continues to pursue a degree in Environmental Science from Auburn University’s Department of Crops, Soils and Environmental Science. The Alabama Chapter of SWCS renamed its annual scholarship to honor Earl Norton a long-time member and conservationist.

McClendon has dedicated countless hours during his studies in learning more about water scarcity and its impacts on the future of agriculture. In fact, he spent last summer participating in a research project with



Pierce McClendon (center) is the 2021 Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Scholarship recipient. Also pictured (l to r): Dr. Amy Wright, Earl Norton, Jesse Joiner and Dr. Brenda Ortiz.

the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES). During the summer project, McClendon worked under the direction of Dr. Brenda Ortiz on an on-farm demonstration. Focused on best irrigation practices, the project allowed McClendon and fellow students to collect and analyze irrigation data. Under the guidance of Ortiz, McClendon worked with farmers on adopting new technologies like Variable Rate Irrigation (VRI).

“This work has been incredibly fulfilling as I know that with each new use of VRI, farmers are both able to save money on irrigation while also reducing their environmental impacts,” McClendon said.

With plans to graduate from Auburn in 2022, McClendon looks forward to expanding his knowledge and impact on future conservation efforts. McClendon

adds, “As a proud environmentalist, I’m very interested in promoting practices that help to preserve the world we live in. Going forward, I hope to be a part of the force that drives the widespread application of this new technology in order to combat the threat of water scarcity.”

-More-

Jessie Joiner, President of the Alabama Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society said, “We were very impressed with Pierce McClendon’s commitment to learning how he can play a role in addressing conservation issues. A hard worker who is dedicated to his field, we knew that he would take full advantage of our annual scholarship to complete his studies.”

The Alabama Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society offers a scholarship to one student enrolled in an Alabama college or university. Since 2010, the society has provided 11 scholarships to college students.

The Alabama Chapter of SWCS fosters the science and the art of soil, water, and related natural resource management to achieve sustainability. We promote and practice an ethic recognizing the interdependence of people and the environment.

For more information about the scholarship, please visit the Alabama Chapter of SWCS website:
<https://alchapterswcs.org/Scholarship>

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).