

For Immediate Release
Contact: Frances Mericle
941-343-0839
francesmericle@comcast.net

News Release
May 21, 2009

Tampa Sailor Named Young Woman Sailor of the Year

The Florida Women's Sailing Association (FWSA) today announced the winner of its inaugural FWSA Young Woman Sailor of the Year Award at its annual meeting at Davis Island Yacht Club in Tampa.

Frances Mericle, chairwoman of the selection committee, presented the trophy and a monetary award to Shannon Heausler of Tampa. A sailor since she was 7 years old, Shannon has raced, taught and coached through high school at H.B. Plant in Tampa, Florida and now as a student at the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. Ms. Heausler is the daughter of Gail and Buzzy Heausler, well-known sailors at Davis Island Yacht Club in Tampa, Florida.

"FWSA is happy to recognize Shannon for her accomplishments in sailing and her desire to further her racing and coaching goals, and to help her continue her studies and sailing in college and beyond," said Mericle.

A business and economics major at the College of Charleston, Heausler is a two-time All-American Sailor and the 2006 US Sailing's Women's Single-Handed National Champion. Her varsity women's sailing team is ranked #1 in the country.

Heausler's newest goal is to crew in a Trans-Pacific Race which sails from San Francisco to Honolulu, Hawaii or other off-shore race, a goal she developed after working summers as a sailing instructor at Great Harbor Yacht Club on Nantucket, Massachusetts. Seeing the performance boats racing, she said, "I believe that (kind of racing) is the true definition of teamwork."

FWSA was founded in 1973 to promote and encourage the growth of women's sailing on the West Coast of Florida. Currently there are FWSA-member clubs from the Clearwater Yacht Club, Davis Island Yacht Club, Dunedin Sailing Center, Sarasota Sailing Squadron, St Petersburg Yacht Club, Tampa Yacht Club, Treasure Island Yacht Club and the Venice Women's Sailing Squadron.