

## Desiree Bishop takes helm at Environmental Studies Center

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By **Press-Register Correspondent**



[View full size](#) Desiree Bishop holds Ed, an injured screech

owl being cared for at the Environmental Studies Center. (Courtesy of Desiree Bishop)

MOBILE, Alabama — The Mobile County Public School System's Environmental Studies Center on Girby Road has a new director.

Desiree Bishop, a teacher with 30 years of experience in the science field, was appointed July 1 to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Lloyd Scott.

Bishop, a Mobillian who graduated from McGill-Toolen High School and who holds bachelor and master's degrees from the University of South Alabama, previously taught at Dunbar Middle School and at B.C. Rain and Baker high schools.

She's taught middle school science at all levels; regular, honors and AP biology; marine biology and human anatomy and physiology.

She also has been an instructor and counselor at Dauphin Island Sea Lab and an adjunct instructor in biology at Faulkner State Community College.

She's won a Presidential Excellence in Science Teaching Award, has been Alabama's Biology Teacher of the Year, received the Radio Shack National Teacher Award and is in the Alabama Teacher Hall of Fame.

Bishop's new duties include developing educational programs and field trips; coordinating and setting up the Mobile County Public School System Science Fair and supervising the management of the Center, the wildlife exhibits and the natural resources (more than 500 acres).

Bishop has always loved science, and in the summers, when she wasn't teaching in the classroom, she participated in science research, wetland studies and marine biology instruction.

She's participated in and presented dozens of science workshops and has taken students on countless field trips. One of her favorites was when she took a group to Key Largo, Fla., to snorkel the coral reefs and mangroves. "I whole-heartedly believe that you can 'Teach at the Beach,'" she said.

Lloyd Scott, Bishop said, "left a legacy I am proud to uphold. ... I hope to carry forward his vision of making sure the children and citizens of Mobile County appreciate and protect our native wildlife and habitats."

Bishop said that the ESC is open to both casual visitors and for teacher-led programs. There are also Open House events the first Saturday in November and again in May. These, she said, give the public a chance to visit the grounds and that any donations received go to help with the wildlife rehabilitation program at ESC.

In August, the center will resume regular school hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Schools and other groups must make reservations to visit by calling 251-222-5000; the cost is posted on the website, [www.mcps.com/esc](http://www.mcps.com/esc).

In addition to her love of science in general, Bishop has an abiding passion for animals, which she said goes back to her forebears.

"My father and grandfather were merchant seamen and my grandparents always had animals. My grandfather, Henry Bishop, was a captain for Alcoa and Waterman Steamship, and he would bring home parrots and monkeys (back before it was illegal), and my grandmother, Louise Pitt Bishop, raised poodles and dachshunds, so there were always plenty of animals and plenty of animal stories," she said.

And, she said, "I have a not-so-very-secret obsession with turtles, so people who know me have given me turtle figures (until) my office is full of them."

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*This story was written by Jo Anne McKnight, Press-Register Correspondent.*

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