



Late Bloomers Garden Club
4051 Timuquana Road
Jacksonville, Florida 32210
904-382-3110
latebloomersjax.org

Press Release

FOR RELEASE: **January 13, 2022**

CONTACT: **Susan Smathers, President**
Late Bloomers Garden Club of Jacksonville
904-382-3110
Fjrmiss71@gmail.com

CARLTON WARD, Jr. AWARDED HONORARY MEMBERSHIP IN THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., January 13, 2022 – [Carlton Ward, Jr.](#), National Geographic Explorer, award-winning photographer, and founder of the Path of the Panther initiative and the Florida Wilder Corridor Coalition, is one of seven distinguished persons who have been awarded an honorary membership by the [Garden Club of America](#) for 2022. Ward is the 6th Floridian to be extended this rare honor in the 105 years since the Garden Club of America began awarding honorary memberships.

State, national, and international conservation and environmental advocates rallied to Ward's nomination, including the National Geographic Society, The Nature Conservancy of Florida, the International League of Conservation Photographers, and White Oak Conservation.

Alex Moen, chief explorer engagement officer at the National Geographic Society, credited Ward's advocacy in last spring's remarkable, unanimous passing of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act. "The law secures conservation for the iconic Florida panther and for wildlife writ large, creating the framework for a lasting conservation legacy," he said.

Temperince Morgan, executive director of The Nature Conservancy of Florida, also stated, "Carlton played a pivotal role in helping bring back from the brink a nearly extinct species in the Eastern United States."

The GCA noted, "An eighth-generation Floridian descended from a pioneer ranching family, Mr. Ward's work on PBS and in National Geographic, Smithsonian and Nature Conservancy magazines helped galvanize the state's farmers, ranchers, environmental groups and coastal communities to become part of an environmental solution, connecting nearly 8 million acres to protect biodiversity and wildlife corridors in Florida's heartland."

Susan Smathers, president of [Late Bloomers Garden Club](#) in Jacksonville, which nominated Ward for the honorary membership, said "Carlton Ward, Jr., is Florida's 21st century successor to Marjorie Stoneman Douglas. What Douglas did with her pen, leading to the protection and restoration of Everglades National Park, Ward has done with his camera, on behalf of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. These lands will be critical to Florida's environment and wildlife for centuries to come."



Late Bloomers Garden Club
4051 Timuquana Road
Jacksonville, Florida 32210
904-382-3110
latebloomerjax.org
- More -

About [Garden Club of America](#):

Founded in 1913, the GCA is a nonprofit national organization recognized for its leadership in horticulture, conservation, creative arts, historic preservation, and environmental protection. Its mission is to bring its 200 member clubs together to cultivate a bond among people, plants, and the environment. The GCA member clubs consist of almost 18,000 club members who devote energy and expertise to projects in their communities and across the United States.

###

About Late Bloomers Garden Club:

[Late Bloomers Garden Club](#), founded in 1990, is a member of [The Garden Club of America](#), and [Garden Club of Jacksonville](#) and contributes to the community through its civic projects and grants.