SCF volleyball star honored as Florida's top scholar-athlete

By CHRISTINE HAWES

MANATEE -- Sarah Geraldson, 21, plays volleyball at least two hours a day, five days a week.

And when she's not playing volleyball, she's studying to maintain her 4.0 grade-point average as a student at State College of Florida.

And when she's not playing volleyball or studying, she's working at her family farm market -- Geraldson Community Farm.

Geraldson's hard-working qualities earned her the honor of being Florida's top college scholar-athlete. She was named the sole recipient this year of the Roberta Stokes Scholar-Athlete Award, given each year to a college student who stands out academically, athletically and in community service.

"Sarah is very disciplined, she's an achiever, and she always excels in the classroom or on the court," says her volleyball coach Carmine Garofalo, who along with SCF Athletic Director Matt Ennis, nominated Geraldson for the award. "Whatever she sets her mind to, she is going to do with the best of her abilities."

Geraldson, a graduate of Bradenton Christian School, credits her ability to stay organized and her time management skills to her strong record of sports and academic performance and her ability to hold herself accountable.

"I know what's expected of me, I know what I'm capable of, and if I do any less than that, I really get down on myself," Geraldson says. "Both in volleyball and in school, I know what I can do and if I don't meet that requirement, I feel like I've failed myself."

Geraldson aspires to be either an elementary school teacher or physical education teacher. Her community service includes volunteering for the South Florida Museum, the American Heart Association, the Arthritis Association and the Boys and Girls Club.

She also started a small volleyball club along with her father, who has long been the volleyball coach at Geraldson's alma mater, Bradenton Christian. And she can be relied upon to always take a leadership role, says Garofalo, who noted how Geraldson found time to sell tickets to a school fundraiser in spite of her already packed schedule.
"She's also very coachable," he says. "She'll take the information you give her with a positive attitude, and she's going to improve herself all of the time."

Geraldson, traditionally a setter, has filled almost every role on the SCF volleyball team, setting an example for other players who were either injured, distracted or unable to live up to their full potential. She ensures that she makes time to study for her tests, including long-term study and quick reviews just before tests. She says several of her teachers at Bradenton Christian helped her learn how to take good notes, a skill that has served her well. "I like having a reference point for later on," she says.

Geraldson also believes participating in volleyball for her entire life has helped her "become a better person."

"You have to work as a team in volleyball," she says. "There's no way you can do everything yourself and succeed. Your attitude has to be good in volleyball. I know that I've developed a good work ethic because of it."