

2009 Dr. Joe Kuban Award

The first annual Dr. Joseph Kuban Award was presented to Nicholas Sisk, the top Ecology student and senior at Central Catholic High School.

The award is named in honor of Dr. Joseph Kuban who taught Ecology at Nolan Catholic High School, a Marianist school in Fort Worth. His class was the first Ecology class taught at the high school level in the United States. Dr. Kuban won many awards for his innovative teaching techniques throughout his career, including the Jane Goodall Ecology Award in 1995. In 2006, he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

When James Bendele, Central Catholic Science Chair, developed his summer Ecology course in 2005, he modeled it after Dr. Kuban's award-winning class. The course offers a fundamental and practical approach to all forms of ecology, wildlife biology and environmental studies, he says.

This year, Central Catholic's summer Ecology class students hiked through 12 area parks, including: Friedrich Park, Eisenhower Park, Guadalupe River State Park, Government Canyon Park, Lost Maples, O.P. Schnabel Park, San Antonio Missions Trail, Choke Canyon State Park, Palmetto State Park, Bastrop State Park, Brackenridge Park and Mitchell Lake National Wildlife Audubon Sanctuary.

As the students walked, they analyzed the flora, fauna and geology of the different areas.

Early during this summer, the class discovered that Dr. Kuban, affectionately known as "Dr. Nolan," had died on June 4 after teaching Ecology for more than 30 years and leaving behind quite a legacy.