

You are here: [Home](#) -> [Top Stories](#) -> Honors College students win laptop computers

## Honors College students win laptop computers

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**MIAMI** - Recently, three Honors College students at Florida International University were awarded laptop computers based on their outstanding academic achievement in high school, as well as their financial need.

The winners, first-year students Jose Campins, Andy Jean, and Aliashgar Taqi, were recipients of the first annual Tony Menendez Computer Scholarships, named in memory of attorney Tony Menendez and made possible through a generous donation by the law firm Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff and Sitterson, PA.

Menendez was part of the class-action defense team that fought ExxonMobil on behalf of gas station owners who alleged that the oil company operated a fraudulent discount-for-cash program. Menendez, who dabbled in computer programming as a hobby, devised a program to decrypt gigabytes of unintelligible Exxon financial data files given to him by gas station owners as part of his legal investigative work.

He diligently worked through the case while battling cancer. Sadly, he did not live to see his law firm's victory when it was awarded a record \$249 million in attorney fees by a federal court in 2006.

"The Tony Menendez Computer Scholarship honors a dear friend and colleague in a very meaningful way," said law partner Gene Stearns. "He would be proud that we are providing a tangible benefit in his name to young, energetic and bright college students who may not have personal access to necessary computer technology."

Jose Campins graduated from Miami Beach Senior High School in the top 2 percent of his class.

He plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in political science and continue on to law school.

Andy Jean, whose interests lie in engineering and mathematics, comes to FIU from Miami's McArthur High School.

"My ultimate goal is to work for airplane companies, and perhaps NASA, using the tools of math and kinematics to the benefit of aeronautical endeavors," he said.

Aliasghar Taqi is a John A. Ferguson Senior High School graduate and *Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction* recipient who is working as a pharmacy technician while pursuing a nursing degree. He plans to get a master's degree in the field and possibly work in the non-for-profit sector.

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**About FIU:**

*Florida International University was founded in 1965 and is Miami's only public research university. With a student body of more than 38,000, FIU graduates more Hispanics than any other university in the country. Its 17 colleges and schools offer more than 200 bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, international relations and law. FIU has been classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a "High Research Activity University." In 2006 FIU was authorized to establish a medical school, which will welcome its first class in 2009. FIU's College of Law recently received accreditation in the fastest time allowed by the American Bar Association.*