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Shana Smith : Green and Golden

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Alumni



SHANA SMITH
MS, MARINE SCIENCE '92

What happens when you get a Master's degree in Oceanography and have a passion for helping and motivating kids? The multitalented Shana Smith bundled her diverse creative elements and morphed into the nationally known children's "edu-tainer" Shana Banana. Music has always been a part of her life. Shana discovered her gift for singing and songwriting in her mother's preschool in Gainesville. Since then, she has performed at major festivals, schools, libraries, and performing arts centers across the United States. Along the way, Shana Banana has earned many prestigious awards including: two first-round Grammy nominations, Parents' Choice, NAPPA, and Kids' First Coalition for Quality Children's Media. In 2004, she won "Best Children's Song In the Country" by the Just Plain Folks organization. Her music has taken her to the White House, Seattle's Whirligig, the Florida Folk Festival, Merlefest, Seminole Tribe Indian Reservations, the Bluebird in Nashville, and various jazz, Americana and blues events across the country. With a profound natural love of the Earth and its creatures, Shana relentlessly advances her core mission to effect global change and foster human good stewardship.

She continues to develop a variety of live shows, study guides, and workshops for teachers, parents and children. Employing her contemplative side, Shana presents her "Chanting to the Open Heart" kirtan circles for adults and children at yoga studios, spiritual centers and festivals. She and her husband Dan own the Gainesville Retreat Center, a forested 108-acre wildlife refuge and meditation/yoga retreat. They live there with their "two kids, Grace Ohna (age 10) and Benny Albert (age 6)."

Shana's first book, *Meditation Practice for Moms and Dads*, is due for publication and release later this year.

While at USFSP, Shana was the first recipient of the Charles Haslam Endowed Memorial

Scholarship. She was also awarded the Pinellas County Alumni Chapter's Regional Chancellor's Award in 2007.

“My late father, marine biologist Dr. Albert C. Smith, was the one who introduced me to Drs. Peter Betzer, Jose Torres, and Norm Blake, and brought me to the research vessels R/V Bellows and R/V Suncoaster. What followed were many very happy years working with incredible scientists and seafolks—kindred spirits who led me to discover in awe the miracles of planet Earth. Interestingly, those years at sea at USF St. Pete and Florida Institute of Oceanography, as well as the many hours spent wading through the estuaries and researching in the labs, planted the seeds for the work I do today: artistic expression, education, writing, and spiritual practice. The deep bonds and experiences shared with others, the magic of nature, the endless quest for discovery, and the sense of universal connection were all cultivated at USF St. Pete, and they have sustained my life's work. I dedicate this honor to my beloved late father, Dr. Smith. He would be proud.”

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