

Tomball Boy Scout earns rare scouting honor

Tuesday, 04 September 2012 15:45 Written by [Caleb Harris](#)



Orion District Representative Joseph Okopinski takes a minute to pose with Tomball High School senior William Milby after presenting Milby with his final Boy Scout merit badge. Milby has earned all 133 merit badges that the Boy Scouts offer.

Submitted Photo

For 11 years Tomball High School (THS) senior William Milby has been earning his merit badges as a member of Boy Scout Troop 471. He rose through the ranks and completed a complicated project to become an Eagle Scout. A lifetime of dedication has enabled Milby to complete a rare feat in the scouting world -- being awarded all 133 merit badges offered by the scouts.

"It's feels great to accomplish this," Milby said.

Merit badges were something added by the Boy Scouts of America in 1910, to encourage scouts to learn areas of interest and teach them valuable skills. The scouts started with 14 badges and over time have added more and subtracted some, leading to the current maximum of 129. There were four centennial badges that were offered for a short period during the Boy Scouts 100 year celebration. Milby earned those, giving him his grand total of 133.

Milby got into scouting early in life, encouraged by his mother Denise.

"He wanted to get involved because some of his friends were," Denise said. "He's always seemed to enjoy the learning."

"My grandfather was big into scouting as was my uncle and my dad," Will added. "I've always been drawn towards the outdoors."

Will earned his Eagle Scout rank in junior high, by building a raised amphitheater to view the duck pond at Jones State Forest. He and his volunteer helpers put in more than 350 man hours on the project.

He credits scouting for helping him grow, as he is also involved in the THS Navy JROTC program, FFA, the JROTC color guard and air rifle teams and his church youth group at St. Anne's Catholic Church.

"It's helped me become more diverse," he said. "I've been able to go and see the world and many different cultures."

Milby also said his scouting work has given him a chance to grow closer to his family. Both his parents have volunteered for his local Boy Scout troop and his sister is part of the Adventure Crew, a co-ed program for 13-21 year olds to continue Boy Scout principles and leadership.

"We've had some really good adventures," his mother added.

Milby said he wants to remain involved with the Boy Scouts after he turns 18, as it has given him so much. After high school he will be headed to Texas A&M to study geological engineering and hopes to join the Corps of Cadets.

"It's made me a more well-rounded person and a chance to do and see so many things," he said. "I just want to give back to others what I have had given to me."

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