

2026 Floyd E. McDonald Scholarship Winner



Sophia Leclerc is a senior at the University of South Carolina pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences with a minor in Forensic Science. From Charleston, South Carolina, she is especially interested in the use of biology and genetics to answer questions within the criminal justice system. Her interest in forensic science has grown through both her coursework and internship experiences with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), where she has worked in the Trace Evidence and DNA Database departments. These experiences have given her the opportunity to see firsthand the care, precision, and responsibility involved in forensic laboratory work and have strengthened her interest in pursuing the field professionally.

After graduation, Sophia hopes to build a career in forensic DNA analysis, with the long-term goal of contributing to casework through the careful examination and interpretation of biological evidence.

She is particularly drawn to forensic DNA because it applies rigorous science to questions with real consequences, allowing biological evidence to provide clarity in some of the most consequential moments within the justice system. Sophia is grateful to receive the SWAFS Floyd E. McDonald Scholarship and appreciates the support of an organization dedicated to students and professionals in the forensic sciences as she prepares to enter the field.