

## Eagle Scout receives honor from former president

By NICOLE DIXON - The Peninsula Beacon – February 5, 2004

A young Point Loma resident has earned the highest award in Boy Scouts and was recognized recently by a man who was once the president of the United States.

Dillon Miller met George Bush, Sr. during the former president's visit to San Diego on Jan. 20 for a private fundraiser downtown. Miller was selected to lead the "Pledge of Allegiance" for the event and had the opportunity to be recognized by former President Bush.

"I was pretty excited, I wasn't really nervous," Miller said. "I shook his hand and I was the first one to take his picture and he actually knew my name."

The former president presented 16-year-old Miller with the Eagle Scout medal, which he earned for spearheading a community-improvement project in Point Loma.

Although much of what happened during his encounter with Bush, Sr. is now "a big blur," Miller does remember that the former president said to him,

"As far as scouting is concerned, you've done it all."

They were words the Eagle Scout says he will never forget.

Miller was just a toddler when former President Bush was in office from 1989 until 1993. Meeting the president was an honor, said the sophomore at St. Augustine High School, 3266 Nutmeg St., but not something that would inspire him to go into politics.

"I don't know what I want to do [after graduation] he said.

Currently Miller plays football and volleyball, in addition to recently being awarded the position of junior assistant scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 500. He knows that his work with Boy Scouts and becoming an Eagle Scout will help him in the future.

"I also think it's a cool thing to have in your background that you can tell somebody," Miller said.

In order to receive the honor, Miller had to earn 21 merit badges and pass through the first five ranks of Boy Scouts. He also had to organize a service project for his community.

In the fall of 2002, Miller decided to work with members of the Point Loma Beautification Committee to fix up the landscaping in a prominent area in his neighborhood, the northeast corner of Nimitz and West Point Loma Boulevards. He gathered a group of 50 volunteers and coordinated their efforts for a total of four months until the project was complete.

"I think he's done an outstanding job," said Hugh Story former chairman of the Point Loma Beautification Committee, who worked with Miller on the project. "It warrants the accolades he was given in becoming an Eagle Scout.

The land, which is owned by the city, had to be cleared of weeds and debris. Then the volunteers planted more than two dozen donated trees and installed an irrigation system. At one point Miller had to raise money to buy fertilizer.

"Dillon had to go around with cap in hand, and get various organizations or people to put in money to buy the supplies," Story said.

The three other corners at that intersection were landscaped by the Point Loma Association, but there were not enough funds to work on the northeast corner, according to Story. Now, nearby residents and the public can enjoy the hard work of Miller and his volunteers.

"I think it's awesome 'cause it's something you can go by in 10 years and look at its progress," Miller said. "So I think it'd be pretty cool to drive by when [the trees are] all big and full grown."

Miller plans to continue working with his troop and he is looking forward to future camping and hiking trips. But he said becoming an Eagle Scout will always stand out in his mind as one of the high points in his life.

