

# SCTE Foundation Awards \$5,000 Doug Semon 'Zelmo' FIRST Robotics Scholarship

*FRC Team 3648, Sparta Robotica,  
Recognized for Excellence in STEM  
Innovation and Student Leadership*

EXTON, PA, UNITED STATES, November 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The SCTE Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of SCTE®, a subsidiary of CableLabs®, is pleased to announce that FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC) Team 3648, Sparta Robotica, from Thomas Jefferson High School in Denver, Colorado, has been selected as the 2025 recipient of the [Doug Semon "Zelmo" FIRST Robotics Scholarship](#).

The Foundation's Executive Committee approved the recommendation to award the team, recognizing its exceptional commitment to hands-on STEM education, inclusive leadership, and innovative engineering.

"Sparta Robotica embodies everything the Doug Semon Fund represents: curiosity, teamwork, technical creativity, and a passion for lifting others up," said Charlotte Field, Chair of the SCTE Foundation Awards Committee. "Their perseverance, especially in overcoming financial challenges, reflects the spirit of grit and mentorship that defined Doug's legacy. We are proud to support their continued growth and impact."

The \$5,000 scholarship supports the team's ongoing participation in the FIRST® Robotics Competition, part of the world's leading youth robotics community. FIRST® delivers globally recognized robotics programs that inspire innovation, build confidence, and prepare young people for technical careers and lifelong success. Through team-based challenges and peer collaboration, FIRST® empowers students to develop engineering expertise, creative problem-solving abilities, and communication skills needed to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world.



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## Celebrating Sparta Robotica's Legacy of Innovation

As an integral part of Thomas Jefferson High School's advanced technology program, Sparta Robotica fosters a learning environment where students of every background feel welcomed, supported, and encouraged to explore STEM careers.

Founded in 2011, FRC Team 3648 has earned recognition for its inventive robot designs and strong competitive presence. The team's achievements include:

- International qualification at the 2017 FIRST Championship in Houston
- 2nd place at the 2024 Arizona Valley Regional and 5th place at the 2024 Colorado Regional
- Early success as a rookie finalist in 2011
- Designing highly unique robots, from recycled material builds to advanced swerve drive systems
- A multi-year record of community-building and technical skill development

Recent robots, including Betty White (2022), AJO (2023), Metronome (2024), and Bot Cousteau (2025), highlight the team's continuous evolution in mechanical engineering, strategic gameplay, and leadership. In the 2025 season, Bot Cousteau delivered strong performances across regional competitions, placing 14th at the Utah Regional and 6th at the Colorado Regional.

"Supporting the Zelmo Scholarship is one of the most meaningful ways we invest in the next generation of engineers and innovators," said Ken Klaer, Chair of the SCTE Foundation Board of Directors. "Doug Semon was a pillar of mentorship in our industry, and helping talented, mission-driven teams like Sparta Robotica honors both his legacy and the broadband community's commitment to education and opportunity."

## Honoring Doug Semon's Legacy

The Zelmo Scholarship was established to honor technology pioneer Doug Semon, beloved husband of 2010 Women in Technology (WIT) honoree Leslie Ellis. Doug was a dedicated mentor in the FIRST Robotics community, supporting Denver's FRC Team 1410, "The Kraken," and inspiring countless young engineers with his care, humility, and passion for innovation.

Created in partnership with past SCTE/WICT Women in Technology Award honorees, the fund supports high school FIRST® Robotics teams nominated by broadband industry professionals. Its mission is to foster passion, excitement, and self-confidence in future STEM leaders while preserving Doug's spirit of mentorship, curiosity, and service.

When organizations and individuals support the Zelmo Scholarship, they help cultivate the next generation of problem-solvers, builders, and technology visionaries, ensuring Doug's impact continues to guide and inspire the industry.

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## About SCTE Foundation

The SCTE Foundation is dedicated to fostering talent and innovation for the global broadband connectivity industry. Through the provisions of grants, scholarships, resources, and programs, we empower aspiring professionals and companies with the skills and tools necessary to succeed in our dynamic field. Learn more or get involved at <https://sctefoundation.org/>.

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