

Robert Kennedy Jr. to Give Keynote Talk at UC San Diego Graduation Celebration

May 20, 2008

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Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the environmental activist and author who was named one of *Time* magazine's "Heroes of the Planet," will be keynote speaker at the "All Campus Graduation Celebration" to be held June 19 at the University of California, San Diego.

The 6:30 p.m. event on RIMAC Field will honor graduating students and alumni, and is planned as the first in such graduation celebrations annually. Kennedy's talk will address "the important role that our natural surroundings play in our work, our health and our identity as Americans, and how a green investment by youth can stop climate change."

Other program participants include Chancellor Marye Anne Fox; Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Penny Rue; Emma Sandoe, president of the Student Foundation, and Marco Murillo, outgoing Associated Students president, and Doug Jorgesen, Graduate Student Association president. The Senior Class gift will be announced, and Outstanding Senior and Graduate Student awards will be presented. A fireworks display and reception will follow the program.

The All Campus Graduation Celebration is part of a June 13-20 Senior Week scheduled after finals end June 13 and college commencements begin on the UC San Diego campus June 21.

Sandoe, co-chair of the All Campus Graduation Celebration, noted that Kennedy was the ideal choice for speaker because of his impressive commitment to public service and the environment. "We were looking for a speaker that could unite the campus under issues that the campus community, and especially seniors, care about," she said.

Kennedy serves as senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, chief prosecuting attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper, and president of Waterkeeper Alliance. He also is a clinical professor and supervising attorney at Pace University's School of Law's Environmental Litigation Clinic. Earlier in his career he served as assistant district attorney in New York City.

"The environment is the most important, the most fundamental, civil rights issue," Kennedy stated in a recent interview. "In the word ecology, the root 'eco' is the Greek word for home. It's really about how we manage our home. The environmental movement is a struggle over the control of the commons—the publicly owned resources, the things that cannot be reduced to private property—the air, the water, the wandering animals, the public land, the wildlife, the fisheries. The things that from the beginning of time have always been part of the public trust."

Kennedy has written two books on the environment, *Crimes Against Nature* and *The Riverkeepers*. His articles have appeared in many publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Rolling Stone*, *Atlantic Monthly* and *Esquire*. He is a licensed master falconer, and as often as possible pursues a life-long enthusiasm for white-water paddling. Despite suffering from spasmodic dysphonia, a disorder that makes speech difficult and

causes the voice to sound quavery, he hosts the program *Ring of Fire* on Air America Radio and is in demand as a speaker nationally.

An April 2008 article in *Behind the Mic* notes that "Beyond his conviction that there is a moral obligation to maintain the environment for future generations, Kennedy believes that by 'going green' the country can relieve the national debt and that business growth will explode. He is out to make a real difference in the way Americans think about our environment and the way we do business. Fueled by his ever-growing reputation and undying passion, Kennedy's fight for our environment will continue to make the world a better place for ourselves and future generations."

More information can be obtained at <http://seniors.ucsd.edu>

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