

Scripps Nierenberg Prize Awarded To Nature Filmmaker Sir David Attenborough

Annual award recognizes science in the public interest

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The fifth annual award honoring the memory of William A. Nierenberg, who led Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD, as director for more than two decades, will be awarded to celebrated BBC nature filmmaker Sir David Attenborough.

Attenborough will receive the Nierenberg Prize for Science in the Public Interest during a ceremony on Sunday, June 5, at 1 p.m., in front of the Birch Aquarium at Scripps. He will be presented with a bronze medal and \$25,000. The award ceremony will be followed by "Discovery and the Camera," a free public presentation from Attenborough. The Nierenberg Prize presentation is free; aquarium admission is not included. Seating and parking for the presentation are limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

"It is a pleasure to award the Nierenberg Prize for Science in the Public Interest to Sir David Attenborough, whose distinguished career spans a half century," said Scripps Director Charles F. Kennel. "The three key words that best describe Attenborough's life's work are: science, public and above all, interest. He has found ways to interest all of us in how Earth's creatures live and by so doing has enriched the lives of all humans."

Attenborough has traveled the world making innovative nature programs for more than 50 years. Shortly after joining BBC in 1952, he began hosting the 10-year-long series, *Zoo Quest*, which helped establish his career as well as the reputation of BBC's Natural History Unit.

A landmark in television came with 1979's *Life on Earth*, a series about how life evolved on the planet, which required 1.25 million feet of film and visits to 30 countries. The series was seen by 500 million people worldwide. Many other programs followed, including *Life in the Undergrowth*, *Eastwards with Attenborough*, *The Living Planet*, *The Trials of Life*, *Life in the Freezer*, *The Private Life of Plants*, *Attenborough in Paradise*, *The Life of Birds* and *The Life of Mammals*. He has authored companion books for many of these programs.

In the 1960s-'70s, Attenborough moved into senior management positions at BBC, presiding over the introduction of color television in the UK, giving the go-ahead to air *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and helping bring many historical, cultural and scientific documentaries to television.

Among numerous honors over the years, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society-the UK's national academy of science-in 1983 and received a knighthood in 1985. He is a founding member of the World Wildlife Fund and a patron of the World Land Trust, which purchases rain forest and other lands to preserve them and their animal inhabitants.

Born May 8, 1926, in London, Attenborough received a degree in natural sciences from Cambridge University in 1947, then served for two years in the Royal Navy. In 2002, he published an autobiography, *Life on Air*:

Memoirs of a Broadcaster. His career in broadcasting was celebrated with the accompanying BBC program, *Life on Air: David Attenborough's 50 Years in Television*.

The Nierenberg Prize for Science in the Public Interest is named for William Nierenberg (1919-2000), a renowned national science leader who served Scripps Institution as director from 1965 to 1986. The recipient of numerous awards and honors for professional research and public service, Nierenberg was a leading expert in several fields of underwater research and warfare, and was known for his work in low-energy nuclear physics.

Past winners of the Nierenberg Prize are naturalist E. O. Wilson (2001), newsman Walter Cronkite (2002), marine ecologist Jane Lubchenco (2003) and primatologist Dame Jane Goodall (2004).

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