

James J. McCarthy Awarded the 2018 Tyler Prize

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The 2018 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement - often described as the 'Nobel Prize for the Environment' - has been awarded to Paul Falkowski and James J. McCarthy, for their decades of leadership in understanding - and communicating - the impacts of climate change.

"Climate change poses a great challenge to global communities. We are recognizing these two great scientists for their enormous contributions to fighting climate change through increasing our scientific understanding of how Earth's climate works, as well as bringing together that knowledge for the purpose of policy change," said Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Chair of the Tyler Prize Committee.

"This is a great message for the world today; that U.S. scientists are leading some of the most promising research into Earth's climate, and helping to turn that knowledge into policy change," said Marton-Lefèvre.

Human activity has changed Earth's atmosphere, which in turn is changing the Earth's climate. However, early climate models were often inaccurate, because science lacked a detailed understanding of how our modern climate originally evolved. Since all life originated in the ocean, that's exactly where Dr. Falkowski chose to focus his research - publishing influential papers on the critical role of earth's smallest lifeforms in the evolution of our modern climate. By bringing together diverse fields such as biophysics, evolutionary biology, paleontology, molecular evolution, marine ecology and biogeochemistry, Dr. Falkowski built a picture of Earth's climate across enormous timescales - revolutionizing our understanding of climate change.

Dr. McCarthy's pioneering research on marine nutrient cycles added significantly to our understanding of human activity on Earth's climate. But scientific research cannot be of greatest benefit to humankind, unless it leads to improved policy. It was this that convinced Dr. McCarthy to engage with some of the world's best environmental researchers and international policy leaders, to assess the global impacts of climate change. Under Dr. McCarthy's

leadership, the International Geosphere Biosphere Programme was developed. The science produced by this programme was an important component of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), of which Dr. McCarthy was co-chair in 2001. He also served the United States in his role as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

“His ability to effectively, and eloquently communicate the importance and risks of the climate crisis are unparalleled,” said Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who shared the 2007 Nobel Prize with the IPCC. Dr. McCarthy and Dr. Falkowski will be officially presented with the Tyler Prize in a ceremony in Washington D.C., at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, May 3rd 2018.

About the Prize:

Established in 1973 by the late John and Alice Tyler, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is one of the first international premier environmental awards. This global environmental prize recognizes individuals who have contributed in an outstanding manner to the scientific knowledge and public leadership to preserve and enhance the environment of the world.

Recipients encompass the spectrum of environmental concerns, including environmental policy, health, air and water pollution, ecosystem disruption and loss of biodiversity, and energy resources.