

2018

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Jacob Sandstrom

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Recommended Citation

Sandstrom, Jacob (2018) "David Suzuki, 2012 Inamori Prize Recipient," *The International Journal of Ethical Leadership*: Vol. 5 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/ijel/vol5/iss1/7>

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David Suzuki, 2012 Inamori Ethics Prize Recipient Jacob Sandstrom

David Suzuki, the prominent Canadian geneticist and environmentalist, received the Inamori Ethics Prize at Case Western Reserve University in 2012. A resident of Vancouver, British Columbia, Suzuki is an advocate for science, the environment, and humankind in Canada and abroad. Throughout his life, David Suzuki has long worked to preserve and protect the planet through education and research. As an internationally recognized public figure in environmental activism, Suzuki encourages thoughtful approaches to dealing with environmental and scientific woes to ensure sustainability for generations to come.

Suzuki's academic work is thoroughly impressive, yet his ability to explain scientific complexities in "a compelling, easily understood way" has been the source of his acclaim worldwide.¹ An enthusiasm for science combined with a knack for speaking in a straightforward, accessible manner has afforded Suzuki the opportunity to educate millions on the importance of the natural world. The host of *The Nature of Things*, a CBC-TV program in its fifty-eighth season, Suzuki fascinates viewers with "adventure, drama and insight" by exposing the "wonder and accomplishments of science."²

The success of *The Nature of Things* has led to Suzuki's appearance in recent years on multiple channels, documentaries, and programs, including PBS, BBC, CBC Radio, and Discovery Channel, among others.³ The program maintains a large viewership, providing a high-profile platform to share and celebrate scientific achievements while also drawing attention to areas in need of further attention, research, and action. Suzuki's continuing efforts as a broadcaster are impressive and make a tangible impact within and beyond the scientific community.

Apart from his weekly appearances on television, Suzuki is a prolific writer, having written more than fifty books, many of which are for children.⁴ In 2015, David Suzuki published *Letters to My Grandchildren*, a collection of letters chronicling his own life and legacy, challenging his grandchildren—and readers worldwide—to "speak out and act on their beliefs" and to "live with courage, conviction, and passion."⁵ Suzuki recognizes that meaningful change comes with time, effort, and resolve; he often implores future generations to continue the meaningful work that has defined his life.

In addition to his books, David Suzuki regularly writes articles and opinion pieces for news sources around globe. Writing in *The Guardian*, Suzuki notes that “climate change isn’t a problem of the future. It’s happening now. We’re seeing the increasing effects of climate change every day.”⁶ He further calls humankind to action, adding that it is key to “move forward with a common understanding that we are embedded in the natural world, and what we do to our surroundings, we do to ourselves.”

David Suzuki has received myriad awards, honorary degrees, and recognitions throughout his life for his tireless efforts to conserve the natural world. Since receiving the Inamori Ethics Prize, he has been recognized by numerous organizations, and was awarded Freedom of the City in 2015, the highest award given by the City of Vancouver on the basis of national or international achievement.⁷ Suzuki’s work has not only influenced his city and country, but also millions of global citizens today and tomorrow.

The David Suzuki Foundation, founded in 1990 and based in Vancouver, serves as a catalyst for sustainability and conservation, furthering the vision of David Suzuki. The continuing work of Suzuki and his Foundation is vast, including areas relating to sustainable transportation, tribal protected areas, eco-assets, safe drinking water, fisheries, coastal waters, and many others.⁸ Ultimately, Suzuki believes that there is certainly hope for the future, but that hope comes with the caveat that we remember that “our dominance on Earth comes with great responsibility.”⁹

Notes

1. “The Nature of Things: Host: David Suzuki,” CBC-TV, April 19, 2018. <http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/host/>.
2. “The Nature of Things: About the Show,” CBC-TV, April 19, 2018. <http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/about/>.
3. “The Nature of Things: Host: David Suzuki.”
4. “About: David Suzuki,” David Suzuki Foundation, April 19, 2018. <https://david Suzuki.org/expert/david-suzuki/>.
5. “Letters to My Grandchildren,” Greystone Books, April 19, 2018. <https://greystonebooks.com/products/letters-to-my-grandchildren>.
6. David Suzuki, “Rivers Vanishing into Thin Air: This Is What the Climate Crisis Looks like,” *The Guardian*. April 21, 2017. Accessed April 19, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/21/rivers-vanishing-thin-air-climate-crisis>.
7. “Freedom of the City,” City of Vancouver, January 26, 2015. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/freedom-of-the-city.aspx>.
8. “Projects,” David Suzuki Foundation. Accessed April 19, 2018, <https://david Suzuki.org/projects/>.
9. David Suzuki, “The ‘Age of the Human’ May Not Become the Age of Destruction,” *The Guardian*. December 17, 2015, April 19, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/17/paris-climate-deal-cop21-age-of-the-human-destruction>.