

THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

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For Release

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Premier Oceanographer Sylvia Earle at The Progressive Forum April 5, 2011

Called “Her Deepness” by *The New Yorker*, Dr. Sylvia Earle will appear at The Progressive Forum Tuesday, April 5, 2011, at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, at 7:30 PM. She will greet fans and sign books at the end of the evening.

“Her visit is timely,” said Randall Morton Progressive Forum president. “Earle will discuss the health of the Gulf of Mexico after much of the evidence will be in from the BP oil spill disaster. Earle’s lecture will include an enthralling big-screen audio-visual presentation. Her program is entitled ‘Sustainable Seas: The Vision and the Reality.’ ”

Tickets range from \$14 to \$54. A limited number of \$74 tickets are available which includes a pre-event reception with Earle at 6:15 PM and center-front seating. Tickets are available at www.progressiveforumhouston.org or by calling 832-251-0706. There is no physical box office except at the theater on event night.

Sponsors of the event include the Magnolia Charitable Trust, Lucy Wray Todd, and the Texas Environmental Grantmakers Group.

Dr. Sylvia Earle is widely acclaimed as the most important advocate for research and protection of the world’s seas. She’s a marine biologist, author, lecturer, scientific consultant, the co-founder and director of Deep Ocean Engineering, Inc., and the president of Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, Inc.

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Earle's impressive list of accomplishments is enhanced by her genuine love for the ocean, exploration, and science in general. Formerly the chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Earle is an explorer-in-residence at National Geographic. She also serves as the first female honorary president of The Explorer's Club.

Earle's presence and impact at National Geographic has been remarkable. In less than 12 months, she created and gathered funding for the Sustainable Seas Expedition. The SSE explores and researches 12 National Marine Sanctuaries that surround the North American continent, working to increase US and international recognition and caring for the oceans by the public, policy-makers, and institutions. The project also seeks to increase the nation's ability to conserve the natural and cultural resources of the oceans and establish the utility of new submersibles, which will allow for advanced exploration and research. In keeping with the commitment to further involve the public in caring for our oceans, schoolchildren and teachers will be able to follow these missions on the Internet and interact, while those who are near the sanctuaries during the expeditions will find hands-on ways to participate.

Earle made her first dive in 1952 at the age of 16, in the Weekiwatchee River in Florida. She wore a borrowed copper diving helmet and breathed air pumped through a hose by a compressor. Twelve years later, when Earle was preparing for her doctorate in marine botany at Duke University, she was invited to join a six-week expedition aboard Harry Truman's old presidential yacht. She was the only woman among 70 men and quickly learned the necessity and power of self-sufficiency and a good sense of humor. Six years later, she found herself part of a group of five women unexpectedly allowed to participate in the NASA aquanaut program called Tektite II. The two weeks Earle spent in the 50-foot deep underwater habitat changed her view of the ocean forever, and further inspired her to "go deeper." In 1985, she made a daring solo descent to 3,000 feet in the Pacific Ocean just off the coast of San Diego. Earle still holds the record for the deepest untethered solo dive, and has led more than 50 expeditions worldwide involving an excess of 6000 hours underwater.

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Recognized by the Library of Congress as a "Living Legend" and inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, she is the author of more than 100 publications concerning marine science and technology, including the books, *Sea Change* (1995) and *Wild Ocean* (1999). She has participated in numerous television productions and given scientific, technical, and general interest lectures in more than 60 countries. Her books for children include *Hello Fish*; *Sea Critters*; and *Dive!*, a winner of five awards for excellence.

Time magazine named her its first "Hero for the Planet" in 1998. Earle was featured in a *Time* magazine special report October 4, 2010, called "Code Blue. One Woman's Quest to Save our Oceans the Simple Way: Protect Them."

Most recently, Earle became the face of Google Oceans, Google's downloadable, interactive guide to the deepest depths of the sea. With vivid imagery and the ability to go back in time to see the evolution of 75% of the Earth's surface, Google Oceans is visually astonishing and an incredible guide to the history of our planet.

She is also the winner of the prestigious 2009 TED Award (Technology, Entertainment, Design), which is an "annual conference bringing together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers who are challenged to give the talk of their lives" in the mission of spreading innovative ideas to the global community.

Her company, Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, continues to design advanced systems for submersibles, ultimately making the diving machines more accessible to the public. "With knowing comes caring," says Earle, "and with caring there is the hope that we will find a place for ourselves within the natural systems that sustain us."

The Progressive Forum is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) civic speaker organization presenting its events at The Wortham Center. It's the only civic speaker organization in America dedicated expressly to progressive values. Its purpose is to enrich our democracy and culture by striving to present the greatest minds from all the fields of human endeavor, the sciences and the humanities as well as politics and public affairs,

great minds it believes are advancing the success of individuals, our species, and life on the earth.

The last year of 2010 marked the fifth anniversary of The Progressive Forum.

The Progressive Forum premiered on June 13, 2005, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Houston Mayor Bill White in a program called “Our Environmental Challenges.” Al Gore launched *An Inconvenient Truth* at The Progressive Forum June 7, 2006, his first U.S. book event for that title. On September 17, 2008, Gloria Steinem celebrated the 30th anniversary of the historic National Women’s Conference held in Houston. On March 27, 2008, Robert Redford introduced a film he produced and narrated, *Fighting Goliath: Texas Coal Wars*, a documentary about 32 Texas cities banding together opposing coal plant permits. In June 12, 2009, Nancy Pelosi became the first sitting U.S. House Speaker to make a public appearance in Houston in modern times. On December 7, 2009, The Progressive Forum produced the national launch event for the first book by premier climatologist James Hansen of NASA, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our last Chance to Save Humanity*. And in 2010, The Progressive Forum presented John Paul Stevens, the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice to appear in a public event in Houston.

Other speakers have included Karen Armstrong, Lester Brown, Ken Burns, Richard Dawkins, Jared Diamond, Elizabeth Edwards, Tim Flannery, Brian Greene, Arianna Huffington, Seymour Hersh, Molly Ivins, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., George Soros, Edward O. Wilson, Frank Rich, Garrison Keillor, Joe Klein, Anna Deavere Smith, George Lakoff, Richard Leakey, Bill McKibben, Eric Schlosser, T. Boone Pickens, Larry Wilmore, and Edward O. Wilson.

The Progressive Forum originated a new model in civic speaker organizations in Houston to deliver a larger audience and a higher quality experience in a theater rather than a hotel luncheon as with traditional speaker organizations. The Progressive Forum model is similar to a performing arts company by using the finest theaters, paying speaker fees to present the top intellectual stars, and marketing throughout the region. It offers convenient box office services through its website allowing ticket buyers to print tickets at their computer in addition to traditional phone sales.

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc. for 34 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included leading oil equipment in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. Morton created, produced, and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum from 1994 to 2003, another speaker platform which is still the largest in the oil industry. While earning a degree in government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee.