

(Introductory remarks by Meryl Streep at the 2005 Global Environmental Citizen Award ceremony honoring Former Vice President Al Gore.)

When Al Gore was in the White House three huge heretofore neglected constituencies were represented in government. You could say that these three constituencies comprised the voiceless majority of America. They are the earth, the air, and the waters, and all the creatures that dwell therein.

Not since Teddy Roosevelt had the environment had so brave, unabashed and uncompromised an advocate at the highest level of government. And armed with computer models that could predict the global climate changes whose effects we are experiencing now, Al Gore went well beyond his predecessor in his work to try to conserve our natural, national and international resources. When he left office those constituencies lost their champion in the White House, but not their voice in the world, because he has not given up.

Protection of the environment has been Al Gore's passionate signature issue throughout his career. And his perseverance in communicating the environmental crisis we face, its threat to our health and the health of our children, and the need for public and political action today, remain at the center of his endeavors.

He wrote the book on global warming and in his bestseller *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* he outlined the critical need to protect the earth's ozone layer and to clean up toxic-waste dumps.

Currently, Al Gore is Chairman of Generation Investment Management, which is a new London-based fund management firm that plans to create environment-friendly portfolios.

Al Gore once said that the environment is the issue that connects his heart to his brain and we are lucky that both are capacious.

Nowhere is that connection more evident than in the passionate speeches he's been making on climate change delivered to political leaders, policy-makers, and public audiences around the world. We are so lucky that you are out there on the front line doing this.

Arguably you, Al Gore, understand more than any political or public figure I can think of, you understand and communicate clearly, the urgency, the complex scientific findings with regard to climate, and you weave these issues into historical and social contexts that are drawn from your dazzling knowledge of practically everything, as far as I can tell.

It is this effort to increase public awareness that we at the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School wish to recognize, support and continue to help build. On behalf of and with the gratitude of the voiceless earth, and the underrepresented air, and the heretofore defenseless waters, and all of us who depend on

them, we at the Center for Health and the Global Environment present you and are proud to present you, with the 2005 Global Environmental Citizen Award.