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**Smithsonian Marine Biologist Receives Prestigious Heinz Award
Dr. Nancy Knowlton Recognized for Broadening Understanding of Ocean
Biodiversity and the Impacts of Humans on Marine Life**

PITTSBURGH, September 13, 2011 – Teresa Heinz and the Heinz Family Foundation today announced Nancy Knowlton, Ph.D., a marine biologist whose research is credited with the discovery that the diversity of the ocean is far greater and more important than previously recognized, as a recipient of a \$100,000 Heinz Award. Dr. Knowlton currently serves as Sant Chair in Marine Science at the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Knowlton's lifelong focus on the ecology, evolution and conservation of coral reefs has led her to pioneer the use of genetic techniques to explore the diversity of corals and the organisms that live with them. Her work revealed previously unrecognized species now threatened with extinction and led to the recognition that diversity plays a critical role in allowing reefs to adapt to warmer temperatures.

"Thanks to Dr. Knowlton we now know much more about the genetic diversity of coral reefs and oceans and the countless species living in them. Her pioneering role in and passion for interdisciplinary education has paved the way for the protection of ocean life," Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation, said today.

For eight years, Dr. Knowlton chaired the synthesis panel of the World Bank's Coral Reef Targeted Research Program, which for the first time in history, brought together many of the world's leading coral reef scientists. She also co-led the Census of Coral Reefs, a component of the 10-year Census of Marine Life, an effort that documented the vast biodiversity that is sheltered by coral reefs. This work was featured in her 2010 popular book, *Citizens of the Sea: Wondrous Creatures from the Census of Marine Life*, published by National Geographic Press.

"I'm pleased that the Heinz Family Foundation recognizes how critical coral reefs are to the planet. I have witnessed the loss of 80% of the living coral from Caribbean reefs during my lifetime. Without slashing greenhouse gas emissions and creating more marine protected areas, the tipping point for the loss of coral reefs as cradles of ocean diversity will come by the end of the century if not well before. I have great hope that we will rise to the challenge," said Dr. Knowlton.

Now in its 17th year, the Heinz Awards honors visionaries who have made extraordinary contributions to the environment, a life-long area of commitment for the late U.S. Senator John Heinz. Dr. Knowlton and nine others are recognized for their significant efforts benefitting the environment. This year's awards total \$900,000.

After beginning her career as a professor at Yale University, she moved to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. While working on an island off the coast, she and her then 4-year-old daughter were taken hostage by soldiers loyal to General Manuel Noriega and were rescued by U.S. forces.

Later, Dr. Knowlton joined the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego and created the Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation — an interdisciplinary center for graduate education in marine sciences, economics, law and policy and communications that has served as a model around the world and trained a generation of ocean champions.

Dr. Knowlton regularly communicates science to the public to alert the world that the sea is in trouble, testifying before the U.S. Congress and other government bodies. Concerned about all of the bad news regarding the state of our ocean, Dr. Knowlton recently started a program called “Beyond the Obituaries: Success Stories in Ocean Conservation” in order to celebrate marine conservation efforts that are making a difference.

In addition to Dr. Knowlton, the 17th Heinz Awards are honoring the following individuals:

- **John Luther Adams**, Independent Composer (Fairbanks, Alaska) *For his musical compositions that invite us to hear the whole world as music*
- **Richard Alley, Ph.D.**, The Pennsylvania State University (University Park, Pa.) *For his polar ice discoveries that showed abrupt climate change is possible and for engaging his students, policymakers and the public*
- **Janine Benyus**, Biomimicry Institute (Missoula, Mont.) *For inspiring us to look to nature’s engineering for solutions to our biggest challenges*
- **Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis**, Wicked Delicate Films, Truck Farm and FoodCorps (Brooklyn, N.Y.) *For using humor and innovative programming to engage people about sustainable food*
- **Louis J. Guillette, Jr., Ph. D.**, Medical University of South Carolina (Charleston, S.C.) *For being a leader in the field of hormone disruption and the impact chemicals have on wildlife*
- **Joan Kleypas, Ph.D.**, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Institute for the Study of Society and Environment (Boulder, Colo.) *For conducting breakthrough research on the impacts of environmental change on coral reefs and engaging both scientists and policymakers*
- **Nancy Rabalais, Ph.D.**, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (Chauvin, La.) *For her pioneering research of severe oxygen depletion in the Gulf of Mexico and commitment to reduce water pollution through education and public policy*
- **Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D.**, Ithaca College, (Ithaca, N.Y.) *For highlighting the link between toxic chemicals and diseases through her written work, as well engaging the public as a cancer survivor*

About the Heinz Awards

The Heinz Awards annually recognize individuals creating and implementing workable solutions to the problems the world faces through invention, research and education while inspiring the next generation of modern thinkers. While this year the awards focus singularly on the environment, winners were chosen who address the intersection of the environment with one of the other award categories recognized in many previous years, including arts and humanities, human condition, public policy, technology and the economy.

The Heinz Family Foundation began as a charitable trust established by the late U.S. Senator John Heinz. His widow, Teresa Heinz, established the Heinz Awards in 1993 to honor and sustain the legacy of her late husband.

Nominations for the Heinz Awards are submitted by invited experts who serve anonymously. Award recipients are selected by the board of directors for the Heinz Awards upon recommendation by a blue-ribbon panel of jurors.

In addition to the \$100,000 award for their unrestricted use, recipients are presented with a medallion inscribed with the image of Senator Heinz on one side and a rendering of a globe passing between two hands on the other. The Heinz Awards will be presented at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on November 15. For more information about the Heinz Awards or the recipients, including photographs, visit www.heinzawards.net.

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