

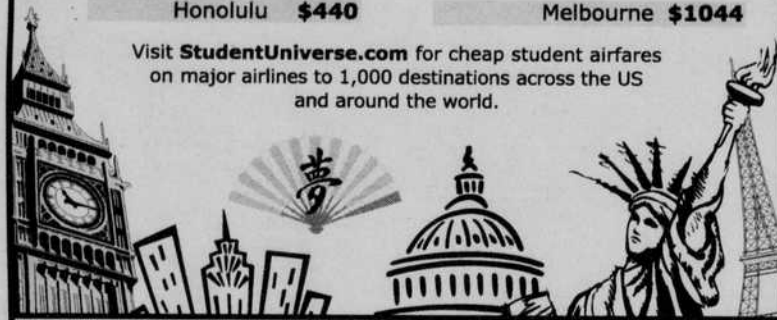
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Conference: Students find more than lectures

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Dune Lankard was a commercial fisherman in Alaska until the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 devastated his industry.

"The oil spill happened, and for me that was the day the ocean died," Lankard said. "But it was also the day my spirit came to life." Since then, Lankard said he has worked to protect the environment and the rights of native people in Alaska.

"It's really important that we remember we're all the same tribe," Lankard said. "We're all indigenous of planet Earth."

At the conference, activists who had made significant contributions were also recognized.

Fernando Dougnac, founder of Chile's premier public interest environmental organization Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente, received the Kerry Rydberg Award for Environmental Activism, given annually at the conference.

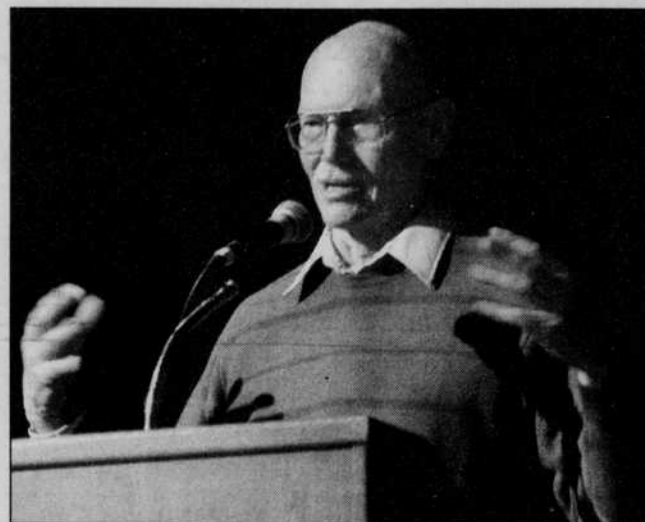
"I have to say that there is nothing more important than defending the environment," Dougnac said in Spanish through an interpreter. "Another struggle is not only to recognize the environmental right as human rights, but to recognize there are other beings more important than human beings, or at least as important. To this struggle I have given my life."

The conference is a student-run event. Conference Co-director Rachel Kastenberg said she and three other student co-directors started compiling a list of possible speakers last summer.

Kastenberg, a second year law student, said she chose to attend the University because of the environmental law program and conference.

"It puts the law school right on the map," Kastenberg said.

"It's neat," conference Co-director Kat Moore said. "It reaches out



Bill Devall, co-author of "Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered," was one of several keynote speakers at the environmental law conference this weekend.

KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

to other law schools and they bring their students here." Moore said in past years, she met students from other schools such as Harvard at the conference.

This year's conference did draw both local students and students from other campuses.

University junior Ben Nussbaum said he attended the conference for a Clark Honors College class he is taking, Human Rights and the Environment. He said he enjoyed the panel about forestry in Ecuador and Bolivia.

"It was really helpful for me because I'm doing a paper on Ecuador," Nussbaum said.

Chris Coelho, an environmental science graduate student at California State University, Chico, said he also attended the conference for a class. His favorite part was a panel discussion Epstein led about cosmetics and cancer.

To earn class credit, Coelho and his classmates had to attend at least four panel discussions and write papers about the event. They will also speak

about their experiences at their university's Earth Day celebration.

"We're going to present the information we got here to campus," Coelho said.

Dan Clarkson first attended the conference in 1988, when he was a Harvard University law student, at the insistence of his professor Zygmunt Plater. Plater, now a professor of law at the Boston College Law School, spoke at this year's conference and received a lifetime achievement award.

"He dragged me out here on a plane," Clarkson said. "He said, 'You have to come out here. It'll change your life.' It changed my life."

Clarkson, now director of legal and governmental affairs for an alternative energy company in Seattle, said he has attended the conference every year since then. He also makes periodic visits to Harvard to encourage more students to come to the conference.

"It's more than a conference," he said. "It's a life-changing event."

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