

NET Television Programs Reflect on the Evolution of Earth Day

LINCOLN, Neb. (April 7, 2010) -- Nearly 40 years after the original Earth Day, our complex relationship with the planet continues to evolve as both a social and political issue. In the 1950s, scientists began to document the impact of technology on the Earth's ecosystem. Within a decade, it seemed many Americans believed the dream of a better world brought about through science, technology and economic growth was turning into a nightmare. On Monday, April 19, two programs airing on NET Television look back at the evolution of our environmental crisis and the progress that followed -- one from the perspective of several Americans and the other through the eyes of one dying woman.

Airing at 8 p.m. CT on NET1 and in high definition on NET-HD, the PBS series "American Experience" presents "Earth Days." The program traces the origins of the modern "green" movement, as well as the people who propelled it from humble beginnings to the moment of triumph in 1970 with the original Earth Day celebration. Representing a diverse cross-section of American life and politics, "Earth Days" offers perspective from nine guests, including former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, renewable energy pioneer Hunter Lovins, biologist Paul Ehrlich, former Republican congressman Pete McCloskey, Earth Day organizer Denis Hayes and Apollo Nine astronaut Rusty Schweickart.

Using archival footage, "Earth Days" takes viewers back to 1970, when breathing the air in Los Angeles was equivalent to smoking two packs of cigarettes a day, dangerous pesticides had brought the American bald eagle to the brink of extinction and 20 million Americans celebrated Earth Day. The program documents how the event aroused a political force which has ebbed and flowed during the past 40 years.

Immediately following "Earth Days," at 10 p.m. CT on NET1 and NET-HD, "A Sense of Wonder" presents an intimate reflection of pioneering environmentalist Rachel Carson's final year. When Carson published the book "Silent Spring" in 1962, the backlash from her critics thrust her into the center of a political maelstrom. Despite her love of privacy, Carson's convictions and her foresight regarding the risks posed by chemical pesticides forced her into a very public and controversial role.

Using many of Carson's own words in "A Sense of Wonder," actress Kaiulani Lee embodies this extraordinary woman in a documentary-style program which was shot at Carson's cottage on the coast of Maine. Struggling with cancer, Carson recounts with both humor and anger the attacks on her from the chemical industry, the government and the press as she focuses her limited energy to get her message to Congress and the American people. "A Sense of Wonder" was first developed as a play, written and performed by Lee.

NET1 and NET-HD are part of NET Television, a service of NET. For complete program schedules, visit NET's Web site at netNebraska.org/television.

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NET Television:

NET1 is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming. NET1 programming is also obtainable on Dish and DirectTV satellite networks in available areas; **NET2** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral, and other news and public affairs programming; **NET3** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.