

1996 Tudor Richards Award

Presented at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, October 5, 1996.

The Tudor Richards Award is presented annually to the person who best exemplifies Tudor's love and knowledge of the outdoors and who has worked tirelessly and effectively on behalf of conservation in New Hampshire. Howard S. Crosby is the thirteenth recipient of the award.

Howard Crosby still remembers Miss Kirkland, his junior high school teacher in Long Beach, California, who introduced him to the wonder and science of the natural world. "Every couple of weeks," he said, "she would take us to a different habitat—the beach or the orange groves, for example—and talk about the flowers, trees and animals."

Her teaching stayed with him, through a US Navy career that took him to the east coast, the west coast, Washington, Hawaii, Bahrain, and England. When he retired in 1979, he and his wife Phyllis returned to New Castle, NH, where he had met Phyllis in 1951. Howard trained as a University of New Hampshire Marine Docent, and he began teaching about the rocky shore at Odiorne Point State Park. He became active in the Seacoast Chapter of NH Audubon and started managing the Chapter's successful bird seed sale.

In 1985 Howard became a director of the Friends of Odiorne Point and started to work on a new management plan, recognizing that the old Sugden House visitor's center was leaky beyond repair and could no longer accommodate even its summer-only operations. The plan recommended increasing the size of the visitor's center and soon Howard was heading the building committee.

As the plans grew, the vision grew as well – to a year-round center interpreting the seven different habitats of the park, with potential as a major regional visitor destination.

With Howard's leadership, the tireless support of his wife and his sister Irene, and the hundreds of individuals Howard was able to inspire, the new Seacoast Science Center was built in 1992, encircling the Sugden House.

When the center opened, Dr. Peter Home, director of UNH Cooperative Extension, declared "The good ship SSC has been successfully launched!" According to executive director Wendy Lull, "Captain Crosby has been at the helm, on watch, and on deck since then. There is no part of the ship that has not benefited from his insight, experience, and enthusiasm. He teaches, writes, researches, hosts great parties, swabs the decks, and generally gets the job done. Every crew member has learned from his example. If we had a uniform," Lull concludes, "He would be a credit to it."

In 1995, visitation at the Seacoast Science Center topped 120,000. Howard reacts to being honored with the Tudor Richards Award with typical modesty: "Oh, there are so many people who deserve it more." But there are few who have given so many New Hampshire people the opportunity to experience the wonder and science of the natural world.

