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N.C. Coastal Federation's Miller Receives "Academy Award" for the Ocean

WASHINGTON -- Todd Miller, founder and executive director of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, was named Thursday a "Hero of the Seas" as part of the prestigious *Peter Benchley Ocean Awards*.

The awards celebrate outstanding leaders who help preserve our oceans and support the coastal communities that rely on a beautiful and productive coast.

Wendy Benchley co-founded the awards eight years ago to honor the legacy of her late husband, Peter, author of "*Jaws*" and a lifetime marine conservationist. The awards are often referred to as the "Academy Awards" for the ocean and recognize excellence and achievement across a range of categories, including policy, science, media and grassroots activism.

The Eighth Annual Awards Ceremony at National Geographic Grosvenor Auditorium was preceded by a leadership forum and panel discussion: "The Ocean in 2050", featuring Prince Albert II of Monaco, also a 2015 Peter Benchley Ocean Award winner.

A lifelong resident and advocate for the N.C. coast, Miller was honored for the work he and the federation have done since its founding in 1982 to enhance the environment and economy of the state's coastline. Under his guidance the federation carries out

advocacy, education and restoration programs that have reduced pollution and protected hundreds of thousands of acres of N.C. coastal habitat.

In his acceptance remarks, Miller stated, "Clearly, the job of protecting our coast is not done." Expressing concern for the increase industrial development and the renewed efforts to drill for oil and natural gas off the state's beaches, Miller shared how these choices will continue to shape the future of our coastlines.

"They challenge us to do even more to protect and restore our world's amazing coasts- and that's vital since that job grows ever more complex and difficult for each new generation."



Photo credit: Jeffrey Dubinsky for the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards.

PHOTO CAPTION:

Peter Benchley Ocean Awards co-founder, Wendy Benchley, "Hero of the Seas" Award winner, Todd Miller (center), and National Stewardship Award winner, Prince Albert II of Monaco at the 2015 Ocean Awards ceremony in Washington D.C.

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