



PRESS RELEASE

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ChelEd

theTurtleRoom Presents First Annual ChelEd Award

theTurtleRoom is proud to announce the first annual *ChelEd* Award for Lifetime Achievement in Chelonian Education. One of theTurtleRoom's core beliefs is that all conservation begins with education. This award was created to recognize individuals who share that belief and have lived their lives by that belief.

The inaugural recipient of the award is Dr. Peter C. H. Pritchard in recognition of his decades of research and, most importantly, sharing of that research with the world through writing countless articles, papers, and books – many of which are celebrated works. Dr. Pritchard was privately presented with the award during a visit to his Chelonian Research Institute by theTurtleRoom Assistant Director, Anthony Pierlioni.

About Dr. Pritchard

Dr. Pritchard is known as the “Utmost Authority” on the biology and conservation of turtles and tortoises and has shaped the field for all to come after. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in biochemistry and chemistry from Oxford University and received his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Florida.

A student of the inspirational Dr. Archie Carr, Dr. Pritchard has himself gone onto influence generations of other turtle and tortoise lovers, including all of theTurtleRoom's staff. Throughout his career, Dr. Pritchard has done considerable field work with turtles on all continents they exist as well as many remote islands. Among the highlights of his work is the establishment of a permanent field station in Northwestern Guyana. Three species of chelonians have been named

for him, including a snake-necked turtle, a pond turtle, and a giant side-neck turtle known from fossils.

Among his writing credits are seven books: *Living Turtles of the World* (1967), *Marine Turtles of Micronesia* (1977), the iconic *Encyclopedia of Turtles* (1979), *Turtles of Venezuela* (1984), *The Alligator Snapping Turtle* (1990, 2006), *Galapagos Tortoises: Nomenclatural and Survival Status* (1996), *Cleopatra the Turtle Girl* (2006), his memoir *Tales of the Thébaïde* (2007), and finally *Rafetus: The Curve of Extinction* (2012). Also in 2007, he translated *Turtles of the World* (Bonin, Devaux, and Dupré) from French to English.

In 1998, Dr. Pritchard established the Chelonian Research Institute, which features a research facility, library, offices, museum, residence for visiting scientists, and a sanctuary. The institute holds more than 13,000 catalogued specimens – the world’s third largest turtle and tortoise museum collection – including 270 of the world’s 300 recognized species of turtles with every living genus represented in the collection.

Dr. Pritchard has received many other honors greater than this meager award, including being recognized as a “Champion of the Wild” by the Discovery Channel, a “Hero of the Planet” by TIME Magazine, and 2001’s “Floridian of the Year” by the Orlando Sentinel newspaper.

Why this award now?

theTurtleRoom’s staff had discussed an award program to recognize the educational contributions of individuals. With no better first choice than Dr. Pritchard, the time was perfect to present the first *ChelEd* award to not only a preeminent “turtle man,” but a wonderful human being.

About theTurtleRoom

theTurtleRoom was founded by Steve Enders in 2011 with the intent to become a collaborative of breeders to create educational resources (videos, articles, etc) and be educational resources available to be contacted. In 2013, theTurtleRoom shifted to a conservational mission and its staff began participating in the Association of Zoos and Aquarium’s (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP) programs. theTurtleRoom has continued to grow in that direction, focusing on conservation and education. In 2015, theTurtleRoom’s Director, Steve Enders, chaired a session at the Turtle Survival Alliance’s (TSA) 13th Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles and theTurtleRoom continues to seek new ways to collaborate with the AZA and the TSA.

The mission of theTurtleRoom is to aid in the education, conservation and survival of the world’s turtle and tortoise species through developing educational resources; collaborating with other organizations and privately to develop quality, detailed captive breeding programs of carefully selected turtle and tortoise specimens; and supporting other organizations that conserve and/or educate about turtles, tortoises and their care.