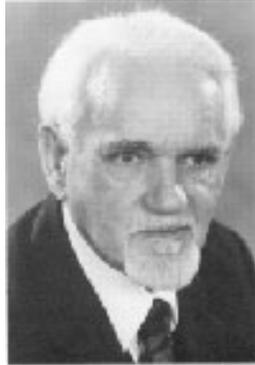


Tyler Prize

For Environmental Achievement

1986 Tyler Laureate Richard Vollenweider



Richard A. Vollenweider is being recognized for his fundamental contribution to identifying and understanding the role of phosphorus in the eutrophication of fresh water. As chief coordinator of a worldwide scientific search from 1966-1968 for solutions to the eutrophication problem, the single greatest threat to the quality of the world's lakes, Dr. Vollenweider provided the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with a milestone report which introduced the first quantitative biological model predictive of the degree of eutrophication resulting from a given amount of phosphorus. The Vollenweider Model has subsequently been adopted as the basis for eutrophication control programs of most countries of the western world.

The "death" of Lake Erie became a symbol of the gravity of the global environmental crisis in the 1960's. In response to the DECD report, the U.S.-Canadian International Joint Commission for the Great Lakes began correcting the problem in 1972 by reducing phosphorus content in detergents (eventually by almost 60%) and by convincing the two governments to spend about \$ 100 million annually to construct strategically located antiphosphorus water treatment plants. Pollution in the world's largest supply of fresh water was controlled and reversed by the program which was indebted to the research of Richard Vollenweider.

After publishing the DECD report, Dr. Vollenweider organized and directed an 18-nation DECD Eutrophication Study Program to collect data linking nutrient loads with eutrophication in about 200 lakes and reservoirs in North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australia. His findings have led, for example, to the establishment of nutrient load limits in lakes and reservoirs by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Canadian agencies.

Dr. Vollenweider is concerned that the success of the Vollenweider Model in the Great Lakes and elsewhere not create a false sense of security because eutrophication has not been eliminated. It is still a major water quality problem affecting fisheries, drinking water supplies, recreation and tourism. The parts of the world with the greatest population pressures, the developing nations, lack sufficient money for lake cleanup programs. Dr. Vollenweider warns that those nations are in very real danger of spoiling their sources of fresh water, both for themselves and for future generations.

Tyler Laureates

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Dr. Vollenweider is helping the international community cultivate ecologically oriented values, and he has declared that this is a vital part of the world's agenda for at least a couple of generations. To avoid irreversible environmental disaster to the world's water resources, a new conscience about the environment must begin developing now. Dr. Vollenweider is urging humanity to face the fact that "progress" that degrades the world's ecosystem is not progress at all.

Born in Switzerland, Dr. Vollenweider earned his Ph.D. in biology from the University of Zurich. He is Senior Scientist at the National Water Research Institute, Environment Canada. Currently Dr. Vollenweider serves as copresident of the "International Center for Advanced Environmental Studies, Alessandro Volta," in Como, Italy and vice president of the International Lake Environment Committee. Among his other honors, Dr. Vollenweider received the Premio Internazionale Cervia Award for his consultative work on resource management and eutrophication of the Adriatic Sea.