

GREAT MINDS IN SCIENCE

David Suzuki



David Takayoshi Suzuki (born March 24, 1936) is a Canadian **scientist**, environmental **activist**, and **broadcaster**. Suzuki received his BA from **Amherst College** in Massachusetts in 1958 and his Ph.D in zoology from the **University of Chicago** in 1961. Since the mid 1970s, Suzuki has become known for his TV and radio series and books about nature and the environment. For his work popularizing science and environmental issues, he has been presented with 19 honorary degrees (all doctorates) from schools in Canada, The United States, and Australia.

Early in his research career he studied genetics, using the popular model organism *Drosophila melanogaster* (fruit flies). To be able to use his initials in naming any new genes he found, he studied Drosophila temperature-sensitive phenotypes (DTS). He gained several international awards for his research into these mutations. He was a professor in the zoology department at the **University of British Columbia** for over thirty years (from 1963 until his retirement in 2001) and has since been professor emeritus at a university research institute.

Since 1979, Suzuki has hosted *The Nature of Things*, a CBC television show that has aired in nearly fifty countries worldwide. In this show, Suzuki aimed to stimulate interest in the natural world, to point out what some of the threats to human well-being and wildlife habitat were, and to point out some promising alternatives in terms of sustainability. Suzuki has been a very prominent proponent of renewable energy sources and the soft energy path. *A Planet for the Taking*, a 1985 hit series, averaged about 2 million viewers per episode and earned him a **United Nations Environment Medal** in 1985. His perspective in this series is summed up in his statement: "We have both a sense of the importance of the wilderness and space in our culture and an attitude that it is limitless and therefore we needn't worry." He concludes with a call for a major "perceptual shift" in our relationship with nature and the wild. In 2007, Suzuki made a cross-country tour in a diesel bus, lecturing Canadians about climate change and urging compliance with the **Kyoto Accord**. Gold Standard carbon offsets were purchased by the David Suzuki Foundation for all bus travel and tour activities.

Suzuki is the author of thirty-two books, including *Genethics*, *Wisdom of the Elders*, *Inventing the Future*, and the best-selling *Looking At* series of children's science books. Suzuki is the recipient of Canada's most prestigious award, the **Order of Canada Officer** (1976) upgraded to **Companion status** in (2006), the **Order of British Columbia** (1995), UNESCO's **Kalinga Prize for science** (1986) and a long list of Canadian and international honours. In 2004, David Suzuki was nominated as one of the top 10 "**Greatest Canadians**" by viewers of the CBC. In the final vote he finished fifth and therefore ranked as the greatest living Canadian.

"David Takayoshi Suzuki". <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Suzuki>>. Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, April 2007.