

# President's Message



Dr. Robert K.  
Musil

## **Welcome to the Rachel Carson Council.**

Rachel Carson's vision, values, and credibility are sorely needed today. They are reflected in our mission and throughout every aspect of our organization and our work. I hope you will join us in carrying out Rachel's legacy through the Rachel Carson Council (RCC), the organization she envisioned that was founded in 1965 by her closest friends and colleagues.

Like Carson herself, the RCC believes that our concern for the environment must be grounded in credible science; but that pure science alone is never enough. Without awe, wonder, imagination, and feeling for nature; without empathy, caring, and concern for our fellow humans and all of creation – science can become arrogant, even dangerous.

It is why, in her time, Carson could write lovingly and wondrously of the creatures of the sea and of the shore – sea turtles, manatees, magnificent eagles – while warning of the dangers of nuclear fallout and radiation for far-off Inuit mothers and children, of the horrors of animals confined and crammed into automated feedlots and, of course, the disastrous effects on people and on wildlife from the relentless use of DDT and other toxic chemicals to control nature for our own

short-term benefit.

Today, the RCC celebrates the wonders of the environment and the beauty of the natural world – from the flute-like songs of the Veery and Hermit Thrush that Carson thrilled to in her Maine cottage above the ocean; to scampering Sanderlings and gliding Black Skimmers along the Outer Banks; to the giant redwoods in Muir Woods that she visited in her final, dying days with David Brower, the legendary leader of the Sierra Club and founder of Friends of the Earth.



Black skimmer

But the RCC also gives special care and concern for our fellow humans – especially the most vulnerable – children, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities – whose health, communities, and livelihood are often most affected by pollution and the perils of our changing climate.

**We share Rachel Carson's environmental ethic—a reverence for all of life on our fragile planet and a determination to protect it.**

The RCC also shares Carson's belief that the public can be moved and engaged to love the environment and act to preserve and protect it through the power of the arts and humanities – through poetry and prose, photographs and films – through feeling as well as facts. It is why *Silent Spring* begins with

a fable – the searing story of a deserted, ghostly town.

Once engaged and inspired, as well as presented with the scientific realities of what is occurring in the world that surrounds and supports us, the RCC also believes that our fellow citizens will want to join us. I hope you will want to join with me and the RCC in the growing environmental and social justice movements that take on, as Carson did, corporate polluters and their political allies who would allow the destruction of our children's future.

It is why the RCC is organizing to save the fragile beauty of our butterflies and bees in Maryland and around the nation, while organizing to protect poor communities in North Carolina from the stain and stench, the harm to human health, of factory farms that cram as many hogs as there are people in the Tarheel State into horrifying conditions.

It is why we are building a growing, vibrant national campus movement – faculty, staff, administrators, as well as students – to encourage and promote a new generation of Rachel Carsons and David Browsers.

**In her classic commencement address to the women of Scripps College in California, Carson put it plainly, “...your generation must deal with the environment.”**



Rachel Carson speaking on  
pesticides before Senate

Government Operations  
subcommittee. United Press  
International photo, 1963. Prints  
and Photographs Division of the  
Library of Congress.

The RCC links all these efforts, all these people, to savvy and sophisticated advocacy and lobbying in state houses and on Capitol Hill. Rachel Carson worked closely with her friends and allies in the environmental, anti-nuclear, and animal welfare movements; she represented them masterfully in the corridors of power. She testified before the Senate, worked within the Kennedy White House, wrote speeches and worked on legislation until at last breast cancer took her from us.

Today, national and local environmental movements are larger than ever. But, too often, they operate in separate silos, fail to combine their efforts into unified campaigns, or to link their educational, organizing, and media efforts with respected, effective advocacy in the nation's capital. And few bring respected, credentialed science to the table. With your involvement and support, the RCC can and will fill these roles.

I hope you will work with me to eliminate pesticides and other toxic substances in our air, food, water, and everyday products. I hope you will join with me in the fight against global climate change and for clean energy that threatens all that Rachel Carson and the RCC have worked for over the years.

***Join with me and involve your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow environmentalists in the great work of the Rachel Carson Council.***

Together, I believe we can create the world that Rachel imagined and make it cleaner, safer, and healthier for our children, grandchildren, and all those who will follow after us.

Robert K. Musil