



Emily Earley, 94, a longtime conservationist, was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in a ceremony Wednesday in Madison. At left is her daughter, Susie Earley. Gov. Jim Doyle presented the award.

MICHELLE STOCKER
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Emily Earley inducted into Conservation Hall of Fame

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Emily Earley, longtime Wisconsin conservationist and a founding board member of the Wisconsin chapter of The Nature Conservancy, can be forgiven for not being able to make it to Stevens Point recently for her induction into the state's Conservation

Hall of Fame.

After all, Earley is 94 and entitled to her off days.

But her friends and admirers came up with a plan. They brought the ceremony to Earley, right here in Madison.

That's why a reception hall in the Capitol Lakes Retirement

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Community on West Main Street was filled Wednesday morning with luminaries, practically a Who's Who of Wisconsin environmental activism, including George Archibald, founder of the International Crane Foundation, Mike Dombeck, former chief of the U.S. Forest Service and now a professor of global conservation at UW-Stevens Point. And, oh yes, Gov. Jim Doyle and Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz were there to say a few words, too.

They were all there to honor a woman who has helped found or lead many of the environmental organizations working in the state today and has been one of the most successful volunteers and fundraisers on behalf of conservation issues in Wisconsin.

"There is no better fundraiser than Emily Earley," said Cieslewicz, who worked with Earley in The Nature Conservancy. "People cross the street when they see her coming. And that's what you want."

More than her fundraising skills, however, Earley's ability to lead and inspire generations of environmentalists in Wisconsin was most often mentioned by many who spoke of her legacy



Emily Earley, who was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Wednesday, is well known not only for her conservation work but her rugged travels around the world as a birder, including this trip years ago to Central America.

Earley family photo

proud of," Doyle said, "and among those things is that we have a citizen like Emily Earley among us."

Cieslewicz also praised Earley's much-admired ability to remain young no matter her age. He described how Earley, a skilled and inveterate sailor, sailed in a competition on her 90th birthday, fell in, had to be "hauled out

by the heels" by the skipper, and was just a little late for her birthday celebration.

Earley, who has difficulty speaking, appeared touched as her wheelchair was turned around and she saw that the crowd stood applauding her.

She waved, smiled, and said a simple "Thank you."

Wednesday. Among the organizations she served and in many instances helped found are the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Sierra Club, the Natural Heritage Land Trust and Wisconsin Women Forward for Environmental Education.

"Wisconsin has a lot to be