

The Two Minds that Modelled Climate Change

Science is forward-thinking, exploratory and impactful, not just in the work itself, but how it will impact society. The world as we know it. But, some of the key breakthroughs happen when we look back, not ahead.

Science-great, Warren Washington, built some of the first computer modelling of the Earth's climate. There was a need for a tool to understand climate and its changing state. Michael Mann, a climatologist, geophysicist and Atmospheric Science Professor then did something nobody had ever done before.

Using Washington's models, Mann combined his information to reconstruct the patterns of climate back thousands of years, prior to *any* modern historical record. Amid the climate change naysayers, guns blazing, Mann did what all great scientists do – provide *proof*... showing that climate 'change' really *was* happening.

The unprecedented curve, outside the envelope of natural variability, that shows the abrupt warming from the past century.

Washington and Mann will receive their 2019 Tyler Prize for environmental achievement. An award that recognises the pair's work in helping the world understand climate change in very complementary ways.

And most importantly, the message they leave us with: that “there is no planet B.”

Washington's pioneering spirit carried him through the tough 60's, where computers were primitive, at best, and scientists of colour were not taken seriously. A time when there was no way to anticipate the future status of the atmosphere and how that would play into a changing climate.

The process was “painfully slow” but Washington remained confident in his stance, that we *needed* climate computer modelling.

Washington's global climate models shed light to how the earth's systems work – models upon which Mann expanded to provide us with climate reconstructions dating back centuries, even millennia.

Mann turned the conversational paradigm from “we think” to “we know”, through the 'Hockey Stick Curve.'

Narrowing in on years, not decades, of temperatures in different regions – Mann showed a recent, rapid rise in global temperature, providing evidence for anthropogenic climate change.

All this work was produced under relentless attention from climate sceptics, in what Mann likes to call, 'The War on Science.' Mann, along with this data, stood up to public interrogation unwaveringly and, as a result, we're now on the right path for solving the problem of climate change.

His message has been heard and championed by those with a platform. With national celebrities, including Hillary and Bill Clinton and Leonardo DiCaprio, Mann continued to press forward, knowing “the stakes are too great.”

Today’s schools of scientists rely on state-of-the-art climate models, which only exist due to Washington and Mann’s efforts. Two highly deserving parties of the Tyler Prize, we can all agree.

When told about his Tyler Prize award, Mann stated it was “the achievement of a lifetime” and he was delighted to share it with his true hero, Warren Washington.

“He’s been at the leading edge of advancing our understanding of the climate system and the construction of elaborate computer models, to model Earth’s climate system.”

Washington mirrored his words, adding he was proud their work is getting the recognition it deserves. Having both humbly dedicated their lives to better understand earth’s climate, their contributions have, literally, changed the world.

But <insert woman’s name from video> laughs, “you have no idea what I had to go through to get Warren’s updated CV. He’s not the type of person that seeks out accolades.”

Of course, he’s busy making the world safe for all living things.

With Washington’s models and Mann’s application, there’s now scientific evidence to support global warming. The courageous nature of their work goes beyond science, and into public policy, social change and the human psyche.

The answers we’re seeking are found in the data we now have, dating back 1,000 years. First, looking backwards to connect the dots and, only then, creating the real changes, to protect the generations to come.