

# Ted Turner

2020 Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medalist in Global Innovation

Media pioneer and philanthropist Ted Turner is the 2020 recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Global Innovation.

Turner is known for creating the world's first 24-hour cable news channel, Cable News Network (CNN), and founding its parent company Turner Broadcasting (now WarnerMedia), home to channels including Turner Classic Movies and Cartoon Network. Throughout his career, Turner has received recognition for his entrepreneurial acumen, sharp business skills, leadership qualities and philanthropy. Whether in billboard advertisement, cable television, sports team ownership, competitive sailing, environmental initiatives or philanthropy, Turner's vision, determination, generosity and forthrightness have consistently given the world reason to take notice.

The medals, typically presented in person at UVA and Monticello, will be given in absentia this year due to ongoing efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus and limitations on events and travel.

Turner founded and chairs the United Nations Foundation, which promotes a more peaceful, prosperous and just world; co-founded and co-chairs the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a charitable organization working to reduce the global threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; and serves as founder and chair of the Turner Foundation, whose board includes Turner's five children and adult grandchildren, and is committed to protecting and restoring the Earth's natural systems – land, air and water – on which all life depends.

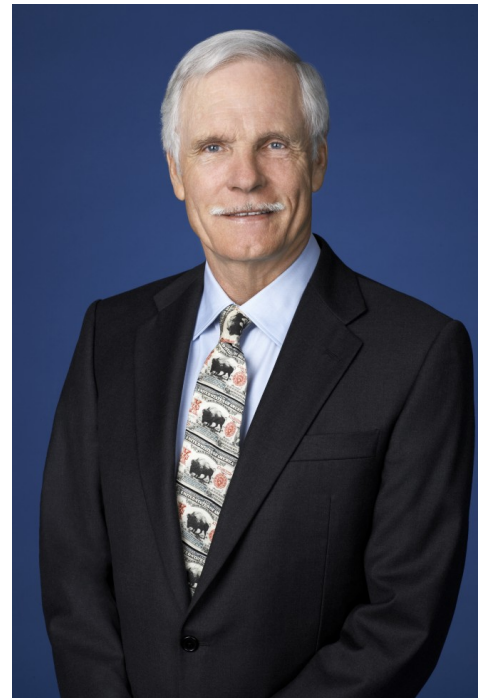
Turner and executive producer Barbara Pyle launched the animated series "Captain Planet and the Planetheers" in 1990. One year later, the Captain Planet Foundation was created to fund and support hands-on environmental projects for children and youth. The foundation's objective is to encourage innovative programs that empower children and youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities.

Turner also is co-founder of Ted's Montana Grill restaurant collection, which operates 43 locations nationwide.

Out of concern for the well-being of his land, totaling approximately 2 million acres in the U.S. and Argentina, Turner established the Turner Endangered Species Fund in 1997 to conserve biodiversity by emphasizing restoration efforts of endangered or imperiled species on Turner properties.

For many years, Turner has devoted his time and energy toward promoting the use of clean energy sources. Through his Turner Renewable Energy company, Turner makes the case that investing in renewable energy is not only a prudent financial decision, but also a crucial step toward ensuring our planet's future health. Turner Renewable Energy has taken several significant steps in moving from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, including investing in MERIT SI LLC, a national sustainable infrastructure company with offices in Austin, Texas, Houston and New Jersey. MERIT SI develops and delivers innovative solar and energy storage solutions to industrial operators of critical infrastructure across North America.

In addition to its investment in MERIT SI, Turner Renewable Energy is responsible for the development of the 25-canopy Luckie Street Solar Project and the utilization of clean energy sources whenever possible at Ted's Montana Grill restaurants and on Turner Ranches, which utilize some form of solar power on the majority of its properties.



Turner's global philanthropy efforts include the United Nations Foundation, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, Turner Foundation, Captain Planet Foundation, Turner Endangered Species Fund, Ted Turner Reserves and Turner Renewable Energy. (Photo courtesy Ted Turner)

Turner also chairs Turner Enterprises Inc., a private company with offices in Atlanta and Bozeman, Montana, which oversees his business interests, landholdings and investments as well as Turner's herd of more than 50,000 bison across 15 of his 16 western ranches. Turner is attributed with helping to bring the iconic American bison species back from the brink of extinction, now owning approximately 10% of the nation's bison population.

During his sailing career, Turner was an intense ocean racer and champion in the 5.5-Meter and Flying Dutchman classes. He helped bring international attention to the America's Cup with his victory in 1977 with the first aluminum 12-meter vessel, *Courageous*. In 1979, Turner skippered the 61-foot *Tenacious* to victory in the Fastnet race, which was marred by disaster when a fierce storm ravaged the fleet. In that same year, he won the Miami-Montego Bay race. Turner was awarded the Yachtsman of the Year award on four different occasions and was honored with the New York Yacht Club Commodore Medal in 2017.

Turner is the recipient of numerous honorary degrees, industry awards and civic honors, including being named TIME Magazine's 1991 Man of the Year, Broadcasting and Cable's Man of the Century in 1999 and one of TIME 100 World's Most Influential People in 2009. Turner also received the 2011 Palazzo Strozzi Foundation's Renaissance Man of the Year award; the Overseas Press Club Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012; was honored by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 35th Annual Sports Emmy Awards in 2014; was recognized with an official portrait unveiling at the National Portrait Gallery, also in 2014; received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 35th Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards in 2015; was honored with the Forbes 400 Lifetime Achievement award for Philanthropy in 2016; and in 2017, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, among many others.

Turner also delivered the keynote address at Valedictory Exercises on UVA's 1986 Final Exercises weekend.

On the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, April 13 (known locally as Founder's Day), the University of Virginia and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello join together to present the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medals to recognize achievements of those who embrace endeavors in which Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and third U.S. president, excelled and held in high regard. These medals are the highest external honors bestowed by the University of Virginia, which grants no honorary degrees.

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