

2005 Waring Prize winner speaks at WRA

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On April 28, 2006, the 2005 Waring Prize recipient returned to campus to challenge the Reserve community with a presentation entitled *The Environment and the Power of the Individual*.

Bancroft Poor '74, vice president and CFO of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, was introduced to students and faculty assembled in the Chapel by Director of Academy Advancement Helen Gregory. "Friends and co-workers describe Banks as a man of incredible integrity and extraordinary standards," Gregory noted, "a leader for social justice, a person who purposely aligns his professional life with his personal beliefs, and a sane and steady voice."

A Harvard graduate with a master's degree in public and private management from Yale, Poor has been an activist since the age of 17, when he spent a summer working for the United Farm Workers in California. More recently, he was instrumental in helping the Massachusetts Audubon Society establish the Program for Belize, which protects a 262,000-acre tract of tropical forest threatened by citrus and forestry interests.

Poor used a PowerPoint presentation to tell his Chapel audience how individuals "can have, and do have, a positive influence" on the protection of the environment. "Unlike issues such as nuclear proliferation or Darfur," he added, "we *can* have an impact on the environment."

Why care about the environment? Poor outlined his own reasons: First, because the health of the environment has a direct impact on human health and survival. Second, because human beings have a moral obligation to coexist with other species. And third, he added, "is my pure enjoyment of being outdoors."

While offering a litany of challenging environmental issues facing the globe today, Poor gave brief profiles of three of his own "environmental heroes," individuals who had made a significant difference. He also attempted to explode several environmental myths: First, that environmentalists are "anti-growth, anti-progress;" second, that they don't care about people; third, that people who care about the environment are all "leftwing Democrats;" and finally, that environmentalists are "all doom and gloom."

Citing two Northeast Ohio successes that at one time seemed hopeless – the clean-up of the Cuyahoga River and the comeback of Lake Erie – Poor encouraged Reserve students to get personally involved. "Protecting the environment is not a spectator sport," he cautioned. Noting that Americans consume twice as much energy as Europeans, he challenged students to think about the many choices they make that can have a positive environmental impact: "The products you buy, what you drive, recycling, voting choices, and working with the Reserve campus to make environmental choices.

"I'm not asking you to lead a cheerless life of deprivation," Poor countered, adding that individuals must learn to think about the environment in their daily lives, both at home and at work. "Humankind has the ability to solve a huge number of problems. I think it's doable."



The Waring Prize was established in 1972 and honors an alumna or alumnus who “by his or her way of life and achievements represents the human and individual values the Academy strives to foster.”