



Andrew Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech

Respecting Our Environment

Katja Torneman



Katja Torneman is the winner of the 2013 Andrew Carnegie Medal for her film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*. She delivered her acceptance remarks at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.



Thank you, and good morning everyone. First, I want to thank the 2013 Carnegie Committee members for bestowing this honor on my film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*. Thank you.

What inspired me to make the film *Anna, Emma and the Condors* was because I want to make films about the environment and endangered species that are informative, inspire change, and that express beauty and heart.

Creating films for youth audiences is a big part of why I make films, because

their knowledge and education about the natural world are important to our future.

I grew up in Sweden in a very artistic family. My great grandfather was Axel Torneman, who painted many murals and paintings during the early 1900s in Sweden. One of his murals is located in the Blue Hall in the State House of Sweden, where the Nobel Prize is awarded each year. My great-grandmother was an opera singer from Norway. Through my family, I got to appreciate and learn art and music as a medium to inspire, to create from the heart, and to follow my dreams.

Furthermore, my strong connection to nature and wildlife is because my parents taught me to care for and respect the land, ocean, plants, trees, wildlife, and their habitats. We spent most of our time outside exploring all the beauty around us.

When I was seventeen years old, I left Sweden and became a professional mountain climber and traveled to climb mountains in the Himalayas; big walls in Asia, Africa, the United States, and Europe; and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.

During that time of traveling and climbing, I was not blind to what was happening to our environment around the world and the effect climate change had on wildlife, the oceans, and land.

I felt overwhelmed and heartbroken. I wondered what I could do to inspire awareness and change in our modern society for a better world to live in.

After almost fifteen years as a professional climber, I decided to do something about it. So I decided to make films about our connection to the natural world and went to a film school in

Arizona to learn how. *Anna, Emma and the Condors* is my first film, and it is my student thesis film project.

I want to give my gratitude to Brian Reinhart, Jeremy Hawks, and Rue at Sedona Film School for being my inspiring and very knowledgeable teachers.

I also want to give thanks to my sister Sanna Torneman. She was my biggest supporter (and still is) while I made the film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*.

There would not be a film without the Parish family. They invited me into their lives to film with them and their important work with the condors at Vermillion Cliffs in Arizona. It was an inspiring and educational experience that will be in my memory forever.

How did I get to be here? In Chicago, at the ALA Annual Conference? And being honored with the Andrew Carnegie Medal?

I met film distributor Suzanne Harle at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in California, when my film was screening there. She is the founder of Green Planet Films. She asked if *Anna, Emma and the Condors* could be included in the Green

Planet Films catalog for distribution to the educational community.

Suzanne's hard work and dedication to get the film out to the educational market in the United States has been very successful. She became a part of the film because she believed in it and its message. Thank you Suzanne Harle for giving it an opportunity to be where it is today, and to the various film reviewers who recommended it to other librarians.

My dream has come true, and now thousands of people have seen the film and have been inspired by the family, showing that we *can* make a difference in this world and change is possible.

One week after I was awarded the Andrew Carnegie Medal, I was alerted that *Anna, Emma and the Condors* has been selected for a PBS broadcast series called "Natural Heroes," so starting later in the summer, the film can be seen on PBS stations across the country. This medal, in part, has made that upcoming broadcast possible.

Thank you again for this honorable award. 🙏