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“Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure.”

- John McConnell, Founder of Earth Day

Over 40 years ago, John McConnell envisioned having a day to celebrate the natural wonders of our planet. This idea was first suggested to a few members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and other community leaders, especially interested in caring for and improving our natural environment. From the beginning, the proposal called for observance of Earth Day on March 21, which is the Vernal Equinox. This is the moment when night and day are equal throughout the Earth – reminding us of Earth’s beautiful systems of balance which humanity has partially upset and must restore. This is also the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere.

The Board of Supervisors proceeded with approval and Mayor George Christopher issued a proclamation on March 21, 1970, which inaugurated the first Earth Day. A few other cities in Northern California did the same.

In 1970, the *Environmental Teach-In*, who were planning a one-time event for April 22, also decided to call their event Earth Day. This nation-wide event attracted great attention and complemented the earlier West Coast observance.

In January 1971, Senator Gaylord Nelson announced an Earth Week for the third week of April.

On March 20, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed a proclamation declaring Friday, March 21, 1975, as Earth Day. He called upon all concerned citizens and government officials to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. He asked that special attention be given to personal voluntary activities and educational efforts directed toward protecting and enhancing our life-giving environment.

As stated in the Proclamation, the original Earth Day was to be observed on March 21, although most states celebrate it on April 22.

Forty years later, Earth Day, which started off as a local annual event, is now observed globally. It is a significant day of the year, because people from all nations, backgrounds, races, colors, religions, and all other human-made barriers actually celebrate their similarities – living on Earth as neighbors.