

On Thursday, May 13, 2021, on the momentous 50th anniversary of the PA Environmental Rights Amendment (ERA), the Unitarian Universalist Justice Environmental Team will recognize former Senator Franklin Kury for his tireless work in protecting Pennsylvania's environment.

On May 18, 1971, Pennsylvania voters ratified (4:1) Article I, Section 27 of our state constitution—the Environmental Rights Amendment: “The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment.”

Over 50 years ago, Franklin witnessed the coal industry's terrible destruction on our state streams. He wrote an amendment to the constitution that would permanently provide environmental protection in Pennsylvania.

While filming a segment of "Pennsylvania: A Fractured State" with Franklin, I noticed copies of Picasso paintings of Don Quixote. Franklin shared that they serve to remind him that one can overcome seemingly impossible obstacles. He won his legislative seat against overwhelming odds, and went on to create and pass this landmark amendment through the legislative process. Pennsylvania is one of only three states which include such a constitutional amendment.

Franklin is a true Don Quixote, striving to "right the unrightable wrong." His actions may inspire readers who encounter "an unbeatable foe" to remember the courage and persistence of Franklin Kury.

Franklin's newest book, "The Constitutional Question to Save The Planet. The People's Right to a Healthy Environment", reviews the environmental history of Pennsylvania, the nation, and the story of how the ERA was created.

The Environmental Justice Award will be presented virtually on May 13 at 7 pm, at which time Franklin will introduce his new book. This will be followed by the short film "Pennsylvania: A Fractured State," produced and directed by Mark Lichty. You can register for the event at [uujusticepa.org](http://uujusticepa.org).