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Story from Ponchatoula Times

Former Ponchatoula biologist authors must-read book detailing Louisiana's creation and future

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In a refreshing departure from the normally heavy and mostly incomprehensible tomes of gifted scientists trying to communicate what they know to the rest of us, former Ponchatoula resident Dr. Paul A Keddy has authored a truly readable and enjoyable book that is destined to become a required text in Louisiana colleges and high schools.

For the rest of us, "Water, Earth, Fire: Louisiana's Natural Heritage" is a great read that will change forever how we look at our own state.

Officially completed and published in 2008, the book is available both in hard and soft covers through Xlibris Corporation (toll-free 1-888-795-4274, on the Internet at www.xlibris.com or by email at orders@xlibris.com).

Well-illustrated with 25 maps, and 60 graphs and drawings, Dr. Keddy's newest book reflects the profound impact on the scientist while he lived in Ponchatoula and held a prestigious academic chair at Southeastern Louisiana University. While living here Dr. Keddy and his wife Cathy were active members of the Krewe of Erin and the Ponchatoula Poetry Society.

They at first made their home in the River Ranch subdivision, but abandoned that well-kept suburban setting to live in the swamps of Lee's Landing to get ever-closer to the subjects of the biologist's passionate interests. What Keddy learned with his trained scholarly eye and his learned insight, he painlessly conveys to the reader in text that manages to explain everything without giving up the integrity of the knowledge being conveyed.

The Canadian native takes us from the era when Louisiana was not yet formed, to the Louisiana of today which faces a fight for its very survival in a world changed by man and by climate.

Along the way, Ponchatoula history is explored as never before, from the creation of entire environments, to powerful instruments of their change such as the local cypress harvest.

We learn, as the book's title suggests, how water, earth and fire have played crucial parts in the formation of this land that we love.

We canoe with Iberville and help found this state with him, ride the first steamboats on the Mississippi, visit armadillos at nighttime in the Tickfaw State Park near Ponchatoula, and learn how the animals and the plants and trees fit into the big picture.

Dr. Keddy's brilliant new book illustrates how Louisiana history and nature weave together today's State of Louisiana in a way the reader has never before seen it.

This new book belongs in every Louisiana classroom and college lecture hall, and in the personal library of every Louisiana citizen.