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Presentation to Gilbert M. Grosvenor by Angier Biddle Duke

Ladies and Gentlemen: Our first guest of honor this evening is Gilbert M. Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, which this year is celebrating its one-hundredth anniversary.

The National Geographic Society is a remarkable American institution. It has a loyal membership today of nearly 11 million people. Its official monthly journal, the wonderful National Geographic magazine, which many of us began to read as young people and continue to read with even greater interest today -- has a readership of some 40 million. It also publishes World Magazine for children, National Geographic Research, and Traveler Magazine. And of course we have all seen the award-winning National Geographic television programs, which has thrilled so many of us and brought the beauties of nature and the wonders of geography to tens of millions more.

Earlier this year our honored guest made headlines across the country when he reported on a survey that revealed how terribly deficient is the knowledge of geography among many Americans. But the National Geographic Society did more than discover how little so many of our fellow-citizens know about the subject. Grosvenor and his colleagues decided to do something about it. This great task of education has now begun, and it will be a major challenge as the Society enters its second century. I know all of us here wish him well in this important task.

Our guest of honor, a graduate of Yale University, joined the staff of the National Geographic Society some 33 years ago. He was editor of the National Geographic magazine from 1970 to 1980 and since then has served as president of the Society and, since last year, as chairman of the board of trustees.

Gilbert M. Grosvenor has dedicated his life to the goal first expressed by the great-great-grandfather when he helped to establish the National Geographic Society 100 years ago: to increase and diffuse geographic knowledge. That goal was

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by his great-grandfather, Alexander Graham Bell, and by his grandfather and his father, both of whom also were distinguished editors of the magazine and presidents of the society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to present the first of our awards this evening to Mr. Gilbert M. Grosvenor. Mr. Grosvenor, will you please rise? The citation reads:

"The Appeal of Conscience Foundation honors Gilbert M. Grosvenor, advocate of education and geography, who through the commitment of the National Geographic Society to 'increase and diffuse geographic knowledge' has advanced international understanding of social and cultural values."