ICTE graduate student and Christensen Fund Fellow, Corneille Ewango received the 2005 Goldman Environmental Prize at a ceremony held at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco on April 18, 2005.

This prestigious prize, often referred to as the Nobel Prize for the Environment, is the world's largest award for grassroots environmentalists and includes a cash award of $125,000. The prize is given each year to environmental heroes from each of six regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Island Nations, North America and South/Central America.

For further information visit: http://www.goldmanprize.org/2005media/home.htm

Corneille Ewango joined the graduate program in the Department of Biology as a Christensen Fund Fellow in August 2003. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1995 and was employed as botanist and herbarium curator by the Centre de Formation et de Recherche en Conservation Forestière (CEFRECOF) adjacent to the Ituri Forest Reserve. The Wildlife Conservation Society and other conservation groups established the reserve in 1992.

In 1996 civil war broke out in the region and in spite of great personal danger, Corneille remained in the area, working in the reserve collecting plant specimens. Further civil unrest occurred in 2002 and Corneille was the only senior staff member left in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve. Demonstrating incredible bravery and resourcefulness, Corneille was able to save precious plant specimens and data books as the station infrastructure was vandalized. He worked with local people to feed fourteen okapi at the Ipulu Zoo and during this time one okapi was born.

For four months, isolated from any outside support, he reported on the status of the reserve and poaching activities. As the situation worsened he was forced to leave the reserve and spent several days walking through the forest to safety and being reunited with his family.

Audio File

africa.mp3 (5 MB)

Movie

Comeille_Ewango_ref.mov