THE HEINZ AWARDS

HEINZ AWARDS 30th ANNIVERSARY

for the Arts, Economy and Environment

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Removing Barriers to Employment, Housing and Economic Opportunity: Heinz Family Foundation Names Byron Auguste and Sara Bronin Recipients of the 30th Heinz Awards for the Economy

PITTSBURGH, September 16, 2025 — The Heinz Family Foundation today named Byron G. Auguste, Ph.D., co-founder and CEO, Opportunity@Work, and Sara C. Bronin, J.D., founder, National Zoning Atlas, recipients of the prestigious 30th Heinz Award for the Economy. As part of the accolade, Dr. Auguste and Ms. Bronin will each receive an unrestricted cash award of $250,000.

Byron Auguste, Ph.D., is leading a national movement to rewire the U.S. labor market to recognize the skills, value and potential of STARs — workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes rather than a bachelor's degree — and to remove the barriers blocking 50% of U.S. workers from accessing opportunities for upward career mobility while benefitting employers looking for skill-based employees.

Dr. Auguste, whose career spans 20 years with McKinsey advising Fortune 500 companies and serving as an economic policy advisor in the White House and the National Economic Council in the Obama administration, founded Opportunity@Work to change entrenched hiring practices that rely on automated screens, algorithms and stereotypes. Using research, data visualization tools and other resources, Opportunity@Work equips companies to modify their talent acquisition practices to tap the pool of 70 million STARs who lack college degrees but have gained valuable, market-ready skills through military service, community college, training programs, partial college completion and on-the-job experience.

"Employers screening out by degrees have blocked STARs from over 7 million good jobs, such as administrative assistant, medical technician, sales rep and IT support," said Dr. Auguste. "Like a paper ceiling stifling careers and wage growth, this practice has a disparate impact on Black and Brown workers, military veterans and rural Americans. We can do better."

In 2022, Opportunity@Work launched the Tear the Paper Ceiling campaign in partnership with the Ad Council, sparking national awareness and motivating action by companies, policymakers, talent platforms and decision-makers. Over 90 partners, including major corporate employers, have removed degree requirements and are now adopting skills-first hiring. To date, 30 states have committed to removing degree barriers.

"Our research proves that low wage does not equal low skill: 30 million STARs already have the skills for roles with at least 50% higher salaries than their current jobs," shared Dr. Auguste. "If we truly want a merit-based economy, the starting point is to value all skills. If you're building more inclusive talent pipelines, if you're working to expand economic mobility, if your goal is scalable, positive solutions to the big forces reshaping our labor market — AI, inflation, uncertainty — then you need STARs."

Opportunity@Work is working with corporate, public sector and philanthropic partners to make hiring STARs for higher-wage roles the norm. In the next decade, alongside its partners, Opportunity@Work

aims to enable upward mobility for 1 million STARs by opening up 10 million good-paying jobs, boosting their earnings by 100 billion dollars.

“My husband, John Heinz, believed firmly in the power of individuals to change the world for good, and he was ahead of his time in advocating for an economy that provided everyone with the means and access to well-paying jobs and to equitable pay for quality work,” said Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “We honor Byron for driving change to practices that have prevented millions of workers from access to jobs for which they are qualified and for providing the data and tools that are moving employers to recognize the tremendous potential of those who have gained knowledge and skills through life experiences.”

Sara Bronin, J.D., is a Mexican American architect, attorney, professor of law at George Washington University and policymaker whose work spotlights the power of law and policy to foster more equitable, sustainable, well-designed and connected places. The author of “Key to the City: How Zoning Shapes Our World,” she is honored for founding and implementing the “National Zoning Atlas” (NZA), which aims to digitize, demystify and democratize information about zoning so that data is understandable and accessible to professionals as well as the broader public. As a result of her team’s work, analysis has been completed for 12 states and counting, and zoning conditions have been documented for land where more than half of the country lives.

Often shrouded in complex language, zoning laws influence housing affordability and availability, access to education, economic development, job growth and transportation patterns, dictating how and where nearly everything in the U.S. is built.

Ms. Bronin’s work calls out these often-overlooked impacts of zoning laws on communities and the barriers that zoning can create — while equipping the public with the information and tools needed to push for change. She also recently launched a related project, the National Preservation Atlas, to illuminate information about historic properties and encourage their protection. For two years, Ms. Bronin chaired the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which, under her direction, adopted policies on climate change and housing, streamlined review processes to facilitate federal rehabilitation projects and advanced federal recognition of Indigenous Knowledge.

“It is critical that we understand how the seemingly mundane rules governing our built environment powerfully influence our health, wealth, happiness and long-term survival on this planet,” said Ms. Bronin. “People who steward our laws and policies — including local zoning rules, state building codes and federal historic preservation standards — too often prioritize the status quo at the expense of a just and equitable future.”

NZA data is being used by organizations, communities and individuals to drive zoning reform in neighborhoods and cities across the U.S., enabling more manufactured housing in Texas, more “missing middle” housing (e.g., duplexes and townhouses) in Montana and more accessory dwellings in Connecticut. The data has also been used in groundbreaking research, including highlighting the relationship between zoning and future housing needs given predicted sea level rise and correlating exclusionary zoning with economic and racial segregation.

"We honor Sara for providing individuals with the tools to understand the laws that determine the shape and makeup of their communities and to take action when entrenched, exclusionary zoning is restricting access to quality housing, schools, transportation, jobs and green spaces," said Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. "Sara's work is ensuring that these elements, which are essential to living a life of dignity, health and economic opportunity, are available to all."

Created to honor the memory of the late U.S. Senator John Heinz, the Heinz Awards celebrate excellence and achievement in areas of great importance to Senator Heinz. The 30th Awards bring the total number of recipients to 186 and reflect more than $32 million in awards since the program was launched in 1993.

Additional recipients by category are:

Arts: Jennifer Packer, New York, New York, is a celebrated figurative artist whose paintings and drawings powerfully reimagine identity and representation through expressive linework, luminous color and passages of dissolution. Her portraits and still lifes reflect emotional depth and autonomy, merging personal and political narratives to offer an intimate, nuanced vision of American life.

Arts: Marie Watt, Portland, Oregon, is an interdisciplinary artist whose work in textiles, sculpture and printmaking explores community, memory and Indigenous knowledge. A citizen of the Seneca Nation, she creates collaborative public works that honor lived stories, cultural traditions and the power of intergenerational connection.

Environment: Dana Gunders, President, ReFED, Truckee, California, is a national leader in the movement to reduce food waste. Her work has catalyzed public awareness, shifted consumer behavior and influenced policy to reduce the 73.9 million tons of food wasted annually in the U.S., mitigating climate impacts and promoting sustainable food systems.

Environment: Sacoby Wilson, Ph.D., Professor, University of Maryland, and Founder, T.H.E. EJ Lab and CEEJH INC, College Park, Maryland, is an environmental health scientist and justice advocate whose research and community partnerships address environmental racism and pollution in frontline communities. His hyperlocal data tools and engagement efforts empower communities to demand cleaner, healthier environments.

Recipients of the 30th Heinz Awards will be honored in October in Pittsburgh. For more information on the awardees, visit www.heinzawards.org.

EDITORS/REPORTERS: To obtain photos of the recipients, please contact Abby Manishor at AManishor@burness.com or 917-539-3308.

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About the Heinz Awards

Established by Teresa Heinz in 1993 to honor the memory of her late husband, U.S. Senator John Heinz, the Heinz Awards celebrate the accomplishments and spirit of the Senator by recognizing the extraordinary achievements of individuals in the areas of greatest importance to him. The Awards, administered by the Heinz Family Foundation, currently recognize individuals for their contributions in

the areas of the Arts, the Environment and the Economy. Nominations are submitted by invited experts, who serve anonymously, and are reviewed by jurors appointed by the Heinz Family Foundation. The jurors make recommendations to the Board of Directors, which subsequently selects the Award recipients. For more information on the Heinz Awards, visit www.heinzawards.org.

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