



THE HEINZ AWARDS

for the Arts, Economy and Environment

EMBARGOED UNTIL
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Protecting the Navajo Nation's Precious Natural Resources and Leading a Movement for Climate Justice: Heinz Family Foundation Names Nicole Horseherder and Colette Pichon Battle Recipients of the 28th Heinz Awards for the Environment

PITTSBURGH, September 20, 2023 — The Heinz Family Foundation today named Nicole Horseherder, co-founder, Tó Nizhóní Ání (Sacred Water Speaks), and Colette Pichon Battle, co-founder of Taproot Earth and former executive director of the Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy, recipients of the prestigious 28th Heinz Awards for the Environment. As part of the accolade, Ms. Horseherder and Ms. Pichon Battle will each receive an unrestricted cash award of \$250,000.

Nicole Horseherder is an energy justice leader working to protect the water, air and landscapes of the Navajo Nation and position the region to transition to and produce renewable energy. Ms. Horseherder, Diné, of the Navajo Nation, is the co-founder and executive director of the nonprofit Tó Nizhóní Ání (TNA), which works to protect the aquifers, streams and land of Black Mesa, Arizona, and to bring power to Indigenous communities suffering the environmental effects of decades of coal extraction.

Returning to her community in Black Mesa after college, Ms. Horseherder learned that years of mining by the Peabody Western Coal Company had depressurized and drained the region's aquifer, the only source of drinking water, as well as her family's livestock springs. Research revealed that the Peabody Mine was depleting the Navajo Aquifer of 3 to 4 million gallons of pristine water per day for a slurry line to transport coal, while also exposing nearby residents to heavy metal-laden coal dust. Additional coal mining agreements in place since the 1960s were also exploiting Indigenous land and water to benefit growing populations in Arizona, Nevada and California. And while extracted coal was lighting nearby cities, those residing in Navajo and Hopi lands lacked access to electricity due to the exclusion of Indigenous nations in the Rural Electrification Act of the early 1900s.

Encouraged by a local Indigenous leader to take up the cause, Ms. Horseherder, her husband Marshall Johnson and community member Valencia Edgewater established TNA as a nonprofit in 2001. Four years later, with the coordinated efforts of partners such as the Black Mesa Trust, TNA successfully shut down the Black Mesa mine, ending Peabody's industrial use of the aquifer. In 2019, the Navajo Generating Station, the largest coal-fired power plant in the western U.S. and the largest source of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the country, was shut down, in part due to TNA's ongoing efforts.

With a depleted aquifer, polluted land, less precipitation due to climate change and the region's coal economy fading, TNA is now focused on financing a just transition to clean energy production and transmission. The organization is also working on the decommissioning and complete cleanup of the Navajo Generating Station site and repatriation of artifacts and ancestral remains removed when mining began. Under Ms. Horseherder's leadership, TNA initiated an agreement between the Navajo Nation and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to identify Navajo land for renewable energy development. As of 2022, three large-scale Navajo solar facilities are in place, with another to be

completed this year. She has testified before the U.S. House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources regarding the slow progress and deficiencies in cleaning up closed coal mines and the need to ensure that reclamation efforts are enforced.

To advance her vision, Ms. Horseherder has confronted coal companies, private interests, and even her own neighbors and tribal leaders. She notes that hydrologists have said it will be many years before the groundwater returns to the seeps and springs of the Navajo Nation and that some seeps and springs may never regenerate.

“As Indigenous people and nations, we must stay out in front, developing our communities and guiding transition away from fossil fuel. We cannot repeat the same business structures as before. New partnerships must be mutually beneficial. There must be meaningful community engagement and direct community benefits. Most importantly it must not come at the cost of our water and our people’s way of life. More than ever, Indigenous knowledge is needed to ensure our survival,” says Ms. Horseherder.

Ms. Horseherder and her family reside in an off-grid home, where she lives according to Diné fundamental principles that emphasize stewardship of the land and living in balance with the environment. New projects include a focus on regenerative agriculture and the teaching of Indigenous farming techniques.

“We honor Nicole for her courage in fighting to reclaim and protect the precious land and water resources that sustain the lives of the Indigenous people of Black Mesa and to ensure a just and equitable transition to clean energy in the region,” says Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “Our country’s dark history of exploiting our land, our finite natural resources and our people must end, and through her work with Tó Nizhóní Ání, Nicole is leading at a time of reckoning and renewal. With wisdom, grit and grace, she is bringing into the light that which has been taken, confronting those accountable and holding them responsible for correcting past wrongs. She is a force to be reckoned with and a wonderful embodiment of the spirit of the Heinz Awards.”

Climate justice organizer and human rights lawyer **Colette Pichon Battle** receives the Heinz Award for the Environment for her work as the co-founder and partner for vision & initiatives at the nonprofit Taproot Earth, building on the 15 years of foundational work of the Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy (GCCLP), where she continues to advance ecological equity in communities of color living on the frontlines of extreme weather brought on by climate change.

These communities, and in particular the Gulf South, Appalachia and African diaspora regions, lack the resources to combat environmental degradation, receive inadequate support in preparing for and recovering from natural disasters, and are at high risk due to increasing ocean temperatures, intensity of hurricanes and sea level rise.

Through leadership trainings, group facilitation and multiracial coalition building, Ms. Pichon Battle has turned community responses to disasters into informed, proactive regional, national and international movements toward climate action led by frontline communities.

At Taproot Earth, Ms. Pichon Battle works with thousands of leaders and organizations to ensure an understanding about the economic and environmental roots of injustice with an aim of aligning their priorities and catalyze their leadership. She is igniting a climate justice movement, solidifying an

increasingly broader community of organizations and advocates, bringing the needs of the region into national and international conversations, and providing a model for harnessing will toward climate equity and a cleaner economy.

Taproot Earth creates the space and channels resources to support frontline groups to come together, develop a shared analysis of problems and engage in consensus decision-making. Core work also includes seeding and supporting the Gulf to Appalachia Climate Action Strategy and supporting the Gulf South for a Green New Deal, a regional network with more than 400 organizations working on climate and justice in the five Gulf states and the territory of Puerto Rico. It provides the training and tools to advance climate justice and ensures that issues important to them are part of national conversations and policies.

Ms. Pichon Battle's 2019 talk, "Climate Change Will Displace Millions. Here's How We Prepare," at TEDWomen, has garnered 2.5 million views.

When Hurricane Katrina destroyed the homes of family members in 2005, Ms. Pichon Battle, a Louisiana native, stepped in to provide pro bono legal services. For three months, she lived in a tent on the lawn of her family home, and for two years, she lived and worked out of a FEMA trailer. Recognizing the interconnectedness of fossil fuels and climate impacts and experiencing firsthand a disaster recovery system that failed in serving communities of color, she founded the GCCLP.

In its first phase, GCCLP deployed legal and movement building work to advance an equitable recovery in the aftermath of Katrina, during which residents in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana confirmed that federal disaster recovery efforts occurred along racial and economic lines. Long-term displacement of low-income residents impacted services and support, and exclusionary rebuilding and planning processes during this time affirmed the entrenchment of historic discrimination. Recognizing that for the fight for equity in climate disaster recovery to achieve justice, legal power would need to be strategically linked to people power, GCCLP provided relief and legal assistance to survivors across the region, and human rights violations that occurred post-Katrina became actionable items for movement building.

After Katrina, frontline communities from the Gulf South to the Global South continued to experience devastating storms, droughts, wildfires, heat and land loss. In 2020, spurred by a winter storm that left millions without power and water in the South, GCCLP spearheaded and served as lead facilitator for the months-long development of the Southern Communities for a Green New Deal Report and policy platform. With four lead organizations and over 100 leaders and advocates, they built a platform that is now endorsed by 160 organizations. GCCLP also served as the anchor organization and primary contributor for the State of the South Report 2020.

GCCLP launched the national Climate Action Strategy #WeChooseNow in 2021 to engage and organize equitable jobs, infrastructure and a sustainable ecosystem. In 2022, GCCLP closed its doors and offered its base of networks, strategies and resources to a new and international organization, Taproot Earth, creating connections and power across issues, expanding strategies and work to Appalachia, strategic countries in the African diaspora and geographies across the globe.

"Growing up in the bayous of South Louisiana taught me that a good life depends on a good environment and a good environment has good stewards. We are not separate from our place, but rather a part of it — and it's part of us. We can continue to unknowingly take part in our planet's destruction, or we can

intentionally choose to be a part of a global restoration to heal our relationships with each other and with our earth. This is a liberation horizon. Choosing restoration means a future free from extractive practices in all areas of our society. It also guarantees a tomorrow rooted in liberation for everyone. I'm committed to work toward that broader liberation and honor those working for justice from the Gulf South to the Global South with this award," says Ms. Pichon Battle.

In July 2023, the Environmental Justice Clinic at Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS), in collaboration with Taproot Earth and other partners, launched Environmental Justice State by State. The resource allows community advocates, attorneys, academics, reporters and policymakers to keep up to date on laws, policies, mapping tools and state-recognized definitions amidst a rapidly changing environmental justice landscape and facilitates communities' efforts to understand their protections.

"As our planet continues to heat and severe weather events become more frequent and more catastrophic, those equipped with the fewest resources to adapt, prepare and respond are being hit the hardest," says Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. "My husband, John Heinz, lived by the guiding principle that if the status quo is deemed unacceptable, we must collectively work to improve it. We honor Colette for stepping forward to amplify the voices of those for whom systems of protection and support have repeatedly failed and to ensure that the perspectives of people and communities impacted by industry and climate change are heard and integrated into policy decisions. We honor her for her courage and tenacity in leading the call for just and equitable changes to our laws and policies and for showing how we can achieve them."

Created to honor the memory of the late U.S. Senator John Heinz, the Heinz Awards recognize excellence and achievement in areas of great importance to Senator Heinz. The 28th annual awards bring the total number of recipients to 171 and reflect more than \$31 million in monetary awards since the program was launched in 1993.

Additional recipients by category are:

Arts: Kevin Beasley, Visual Artist, New York, New York, works across sculpture, sound and performance to create artworks inspired by his personal experiences of grappling with history. He uses culturally inspired ephemera, materials, music and sound to create installations that engage multiple senses to address complex American histories that are steeped in our shared generational memories.

Arts: Roberto Lugo, Visual Artist, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is a ceramicist, activist, poet, educator and self-described "ghetto potter" whose wheel-thrown pottery of traditional European and Asian vessel forms are canvases for depicting narratives about social resistance movements, hip-hop culture, and his own Puerto Rican and African heritage. Mr. Lugo shares his love of ceramics as an assistant professor of ceramics at Temple University and by taking his potter's wheel out onto city sidewalks to encourage strangers to give it a try.

Economy: Kathryn Finney, Author and Managing General Partner, Genius Guild, Chicago, Illinois, is breaking down barriers for Black and Brown women in the tech startup ecosystem. Ms. Finney founded digitalundivided (DID), a social enterprise that identifies, develops and supports Black and Latinx women-led startups. Currently, she's the managing general partner of Genius Guild, a multimillion-dollar venture firm that invests in high-growth startups that use the social determinants of health framework to build market-driven solutions in the health care industry.

Economy: Leah Penniman, Co-Founder, Soul Fire Farm (SFF), Petersburg, New York, teaches regenerative farming practices and land stewardship, steeped in traditional and spiritual methods, to Black, Indigenous and people of color to reconnect them to the land, promote equity in the food system and train the next generation of farmers. Just last year, she and her team trained more than 38,000 participants. Ms. Penniman’s 80-acre family farm has evolved into SFF, a nonprofit providing youth education programs, urban plantings, mobilization training and a community-supported agriculture program.

Recipients of the 28th Heinz Awards will be honored at an event in Pittsburgh in October. For more information on the awardees, visit www.heinzawards.org.

EDITORS/REPORTERS: To obtain photos of the recipients, please contact Maya Brod at mbrod@burness.com or 301-467-4917 and/or 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 celebrates 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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