



THE HEINZ AWARDS

for the Arts, Economy and Environment

EMBARGOED UNTIL
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Heinz Family Foundation Names Environmental Justice Advocate Jacqueline Patterson and Regenerative Agriculture Pioneer Gabe Brown Recipients of the 26th Heinz Awards for the Environment

PITTSBURGH, November 18, 2021 — The Heinz Family Foundation today named Jacqueline Patterson, M.S.W., M.P.H., environmental justice advocate and founder of the Chisholm Legacy Project, and Gabe Brown, a pioneer in regenerative agriculture and soil health, the recipients of the prestigious 26th Heinz Awards for the Environment.

As part of the accolade, Ms. Patterson and Mr. Brown will each receive an unrestricted cash award of \$250,000.

Jacqueline (Jacqui) Patterson has spent a lifetime building the capacity of marginalized Black communities to be strong, vocal advocates for environmental and social justice. She served as the founding director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program (ECJP) from 2009-21, organizing frontline communities and NAACP chapters around issues such as clean water, carbon impacts, land equity, the local impacts of climate change and more. She also shaped the program to address the ways communities of color and low-income communities are disproportionately affected by the placement of toxic facilities such as coal-fired power plants and landfills, which emit mercury, arsenic, lead and other contaminants into water, food and air.

During her tenure as director, in conjunction with Little Village Environmental Justice Organization and the Indigenous Environmental Network, the NAACP released a report analyzing sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions of 378 coal-fired power plants in the United States in conjunction with the demographic factors of populations living within three miles of those plants, including race, median income and population density. The report, titled “[Coal Blooded: Putting Profits Before People](#),” focused on the role that these power plants have in the inequitable health outcomes of communities of color and was accompanied by the Coal Blooded Action Toolkit to spur grassroots action, produced by ECJP, with Ms. Patterson as a contributing author.

“We are proud to honor Jacqui for her leadership as a spokesperson, scholar, organizer and advocate working on the frontlines of environmental justice,” says Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “At a time when the effects of climate change and pollution’s toll on human health are increasingly evident, she is coalescing groups across the country around a well-defined policy agenda and equipping communities of color with the tools they need to take action on environmental issues that are directly affecting their health, their families and their neighborhoods.”

Ms. Patterson recently founded and serves as executive director of [the Chisholm Legacy Project](#), a resource hub for Black frontline climate justice leadership. Rooted in the Just Transition Framework, which advocates for a movement led by workers and communities impacted “first and worst” to advance

systems change, the Project is named after Shirley Chisholm, a champion of gender and racial justice and the first Black woman to serve in the U.S. Congress.

“For years, I watched Black communities who were inundated by pollution, disaster and political disenfranchisement while being deprived of basic goods and services such as food, water and energy. Then I witnessed the growing threats of racism, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis, and climate change exacerbating already dire conditions,” says Jacqueline Patterson. “This moment called me to reimagine possibilities. This is why I founded the Chisholm Legacy Project. I felt compelled to support Black, frontline, climate justice leadership in a world that cares for the sacred relationships with Mother Earth and with each other, as well as one that centers cooperation, regeneration and deep democracy. Now, Black communities can harness their own innovation, creativity, resilience and brilliance and join other BIPOC communities to confront the environmental issues that have plagued their neighborhoods and lead a movement that prioritizes the welfare of people and planet over profits.”

Gabe Brown is a leader in regenerative agriculture and soil health who is catalyzing the movement to change farming practices. The results he achieves at his highly productive 5,000-acre farm, [Brown's Ranch](#), together with his first-hand farming experience and passion for sharing his journey are inspiring farmers to shift from conventional to regenerative methods, transforming farmland from an environmental problem to a solution.

Mr. Brown began experimenting with new farming practices after a series of weather-related crop disasters at his North Dakota farm put his family in desperate financial straits. In 1993, he adopted no-till practices for moisture conservation, and went on to implement other soil-building practices, including diverse cover cropping, complex crop rotation and the incorporation of perennials. In 2001, he ceased the application of synthetic pesticides and fungicides and stopped using synthetic fertilizers in 2007. He is a leader in rotational grazing approaches that maintain plant diversity and soil health, while lowering disease risk for livestock.

The resulting improvements in soil fertility, drought resistance and crop nutrition have transformed his land into a highly profitable farm ecosystem that sequesters carbon, supports wildlife and grows an abundance of high-quality food. Mr. Brown's farm realizes crop yields that are equal to or higher than neighboring farms while improving stability during intense rain events and droughts. Scientists documenting soil conditions on Brown's Ranch have found that soil organic matter has increased at rates that defy long-held predictions, increasing from just less than 2% to 5-8%. Topsoil depths have been measured at four to five times the average and soil carbon has been measured at 96 tons per acre, 180 tons in some areas, a figure far higher than the 10-30 tons per acre that is typical for the region.

“As rewarding as it is to see the positive impacts of regenerative practices on my own ranch, helping other farmers and ranchers make the transition from the chemical-intensive conventional agriculture model to the low-input regenerative agriculture model has been the most gratifying,” says Gabe Brown. “Through my work with Understanding Ag and the nonprofit Soil Health Academy, I'm seeing how regenerative agriculture is restoring the health of our living soil; increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration; improving water infiltration and quality; improving the nutrient density of our food; and importantly, improving the profitability of family farms. Every day, we see proof that soil health-

improving regenerative agriculture represents an enormous opportunity for farmers, consumers and our planet—and why it holds the promise of ‘common ground for common good.’”

Recognizing that adoption of more ecologically based farming practices requires farmer-to-farmer training, better farmer networking and a culture of ideas exchange, Mr. Brown is dedicated to sharing what he has learned. He reaches thousands of farmers annually through speaking and consulting engagements and soil health training sessions. Additionally, his book, *Dirt to Soil: One Family’s Journey into Regenerative Agriculture*, has become a key resource for both novice and seasoned farmers.

“John Heinz was committed to protecting the environment and had a great gift for building bridges with those who initially may not have shared his point of view,” says Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation. “We honor Gabe for developing a new approach to agriculture that recognizes the interconnection of land, food and climate change, and for his dedication as a thought leader demonstrating that environmentally conscious farming techniques not only heal the soil, they also produce healthier food, greater yields and a better financial return for those who depend on the land for their livelihood.”

Created to honor the memory of the late U.S. Senator John Heinz, the Heinz Awards honors excellence and achievement in areas of great importance to Senator Heinz. The 26th awards bring the total number of recipients to 158 and reflect more than \$30 million given since the program was launched in 1993. Additional recipients by category are:

Arts: Tanya A. Aguiñiga, Los Angeles, California, a visual artist whose works blend contemporary craft, sculpture and performance to address issues of migration, gender and identity.

Arts: Sanford L. Biggers, Sag Harbor, New York, an artist whose work in sculpture, painting, video and performance, positions him as an interlocutor with the past through formal explorations that reveal complicated and intertwined cultural and aesthetic relationships while suggesting new narratives.

Economy: Dina J. Bakst, J.D., and Sherry J. Leiwant, J.D., New York, New York, co-founders of A Better Balance, a nonprofit legal advocacy organization that advances justice for workers, so they can care for themselves and their loved ones without jeopardizing their economic security.

Economy: William J. (Bill) Bynum, Jackson, Mississippi, founder and CEO of HOPE, a community development financial institution comprised of Hope Credit Union, Hope Enterprise Corporation and the Hope Policy Institute, which provides financial services and advocates for individuals who have been excluded from opportunity because of their race, gender, geographic location and wealth.

Recipients of the 26th Heinz Awards will be honored at a virtual event in December. For more information on the awardees, visit <https://heinzawards.net/2021>.

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

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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 great importance to him. The Awards, administered by the Heinz Family Foundation, recognizes individuals for their contributions in the areas of the **Arts**, the **Economy** and the **Environment**. 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, two in each of the three awards categories. For more information on the Heinz Awards, visit www.heinzawards.net.

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