



# THE HEINZ AWARDS

for the Arts, Economy and Environment

EMBARGOED UNTIL  
Thursday, November 18, 2021

## From Championing Environmental Justice and Regenerative Agriculture to Removing Economic Barriers to Economic Prosperity and Entrepreneurship, Recipients of 26<sup>th</sup> Heinz Awards Are Leaders of Transformative Change

*Heinz Family Foundation Announces \$1.5 Million in Awards*

**PITTSBURGH, November 18, 2021** — The Heinz Family Foundation today announced the recipients of the 26<sup>th</sup> Heinz Awards, which will present unrestricted cash awards totaling \$1.5 million to seven Americans for outstanding contributions in the categories of the Arts, the Economy and the Environment. Two awards will be given per category. As part of the accolade, an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000 will be given to the recipient of each award.

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 26<sup>th</sup> annual awards bring the total number of recipients to 158 and reflect more than \$30 million given since the program was launched in 1993.

This year's recipients by category are:

➤ **Arts:**

**Tanya A. Aguiñiga, Los Angeles, California**, is a visual artist whose works blend contemporary craft, sculpture and performance to address issues of migration, gender and identity. Born in San Diego and raised in Tijuana, Mexico, she draws on her life experience crossing the U.S./Mexico border daily as a child to attend school. That reality, together with foundational skills from her M.F.A. in furniture design, has inspired nearly two decades of socially engaged art. Often incorporating textiles, Ms. Aguiñiga blends traditional Indigenous practices and materials and contemporary design into elaborate and colorful works that hang on walls, form immersive performance installations, incorporate film and more. Noted works include *AMBOS: Border Quipu/Quipu Fronterizo*, which captures reflections gathered from interviews with thousands of individuals crossing the border between the nations. Travelers were also asked to tie a knot between pieces of fabric as a documentation of their crossing, together creating a large, colorful cascading installation.

**Sanford L. Biggers, Sag Harbor, New York**, is a conceptual artist whose powerful, multifaceted work grapples with ways in which culture and history interplay with our modern society. His expansive body of work encompasses painting, sculpture, film, textiles, installation and performance, employing a wide variety of media such as antique quilts, bronze, marble, sequins, vinyl and sound. Mr. Biggers' *Codex* series is his signature textile work project that includes mixed-media paintings and sculptures done directly on or made from pre-1900 quilts. Mr. Biggers also started working in marble after a residency in Rome and created a series entitled *Chimeras*, which are hybridized forms that transpose, combine and juxtapose classical and historical subjects to create alternative meanings and produce what he calls "future ethnographies." In 2021, Mr. Biggers debuted his largest *Chimera* to date, *Oracle*, a 25-foot bronze sculpture installed at Rockefeller Center, which is a classical

depiction of Zeus with what Biggers describes as an “Africoid mask bust figure.” Other noted works include his *BAM* series, which seeks to memorialize and honor victims of police violence in the U.S., elevating the stories of specific individuals to combat historical amnesia.

➤ **Economy:**

**Dina J. Bakst, J.D.,** and **Sherry J. Leiwant, J.D.,** **New York, New York,** are co-founders of A Better Balance, a nonprofit legal organization that advances policies that promote fairness in the workplace and help employees meet the conflicting demands of work and family, including issues such as paid family and medical leave, paid sick time, fairness for pregnant workers, fair and flexible scheduling, child care and elder care, and equal pay and attendance policies. The organization’s legal team provides resources and services to combat discrimination, including discrimination against pregnant workers and caregivers. Ms. Bakst and Ms. Leiwant have been credited with advancing legislation in cities and states across the country and driving federal momentum on bills such as the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and proposals for a national paid family and medical program.

**William J. (Bill) Bynum, Jackson, Mississippi,** is the founder and CEO of HOPE, a Jackson, Mississippi-based community development financial institution comprised of Hope Credit Union, Hope Enterprise Corporation and the Hope Policy Institute. HOPE provides financial services, aggregates resources and engages in advocacy to mitigate the extent to which race, gender, geography and wealth limit one’s ability to prosper. Since its founding in 1994, HOPE has generated or leveraged more than \$3.1 billion in financing that has benefited nearly 2 million entrepreneurs, homeowners and individuals in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

➤ **Environment:**

**Gabe Brown, Bismarck, North Dakota,** is a pioneer in regenerative agriculture and soil health who is catalyzing the movement to change land use practices. His firsthand farming experience and passion for sharing his journey are inspiring farmers to shift from conventional to regenerative practices, transforming farmland from an environmental problem to a solution and changing the mindsets of farmers, scientists and the corporate food industry. With the initial goal of saving his 5,000-acre farm from financial and ecological demise, Mr. Brown began implementing soil-building practices, including no- or low-till, diverse cover cropping, complex crop rotation and rotational grazing. The resulting increases in soil fertility, drought resistance and crop nutrition transformed his land into a highly profitable farm ecosystem that sequesters carbon, supports wildlife and grows enormous quantities of high-quality food. He reaches thousands of farmers annually by speaking, consulting and conducting soil health training sessions, and his book, *Dirt to Soil: One Family’s Journey into Regenerative Agriculture*, has become a key resource for both novice and seasoned farmers.

**Jacqueline C. Patterson, M.S.W., M.P.H., Baltimore, Maryland,** is the founder and executive director of the Chisholm Legacy Project, a resource hub for Black frontline climate justice leadership. Ms. Patterson has spent a lifetime building the capacity of marginalized Black communities to be strong, vocal, effective advocates for environmental and social justice. A dedicated scholar and prolific speaker and writer, Ms. Patterson is recognized for coalescing communities across the country around a well-defined, shared, climate justice policy agenda and for building programs that equip communities of color with the tools they need to take action on environmental issues, including speaking out against the practice of placing coal-fired power plants and landfills in Black and low-

income communities. Ms. Patterson served as the founding director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program (ECJP) for more than a decade, and her work has been used by environmental groups across the United States in their preparation of briefings and testimony.

“We live in an age when we are rediscovering the old truth that the world needs all of us—all of our talents, all of our abilities, all of our varied perspectives. John Heinz understood that. He believed not just in the power we each hold to shape the future, but in the responsibility we collectively hold to exercise that power and to inspire one another to do the same,” said Teresa Heinz, Chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation.

She added, “This year’s recipients of the Heinz Awards are not only calling attention to challenges impacting our communities, our country and our environment, they are doing the hard work of re-creating a country of possibility for everyone, where everyone can make a difference. Through their art, their advocacy, and their leadership, they cause us to reflect and to learn, and in the true spirit of the Heinz Awards, they direct us to better care for and understand our neighbors and the planet that we share.”

Recipients of the 26<sup>th</sup> Heinz Awards will be honored in a virtual ceremony 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](mailto: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](http://www.heinzawards.net).

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