



NEWS RELEASE

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Carnegie Corporation of New York Honors 34 Great Immigrants for Their Contributions to Our Democracy

Annual tribute from the philanthropic foundation established by Andrew Carnegie focuses on naturalized citizens who live their lives in service to society

New York, New York, June 30, 2021 — Carnegie Corporation of New York released its annual list of Great Immigrants today, honoring 34 individuals who have enriched and strengthened our society and our democracy through their contributions and actions. The philanthropic foundation invites Americans to celebrate these distinguished individuals by participating in its online public awareness campaign **Great Immigrants, Great Americans**, #GreatImmigrants.

The Class of 2021 represents more than 30 countries of origin and emphasizes service to society, including honorees who are recognized for helping others as medical providers and researchers; as advocates for the disadvantaged, disabled, and disenfranchised; and as changemakers in politics, voting rights, climate change, and teaching. Overall the honorees have a wide variety of backgrounds and careers, including the chairman and CEO of Pfizer; the head of Google's interactive design; the creator of language-learning software Duolingo; winners of the Pulitzer, Nobel, Vilcek and Beard prizes; and celebrities such as actress Helen Mirren and comedian John Oliver.

Among honorees working in service to society:

Jun Cho (South Korea): Delaware National Guardsman who missed his naturalization ceremony when deployed to Washington, D.C., after the January 6 riots, he was granted a private ceremony after a Congressman heard about his predicament.

Gisele Barreto Fetterman (Brazil): Anti-poverty and social justice advocate, she founded multiple nonprofits to address food and economic insecurity and to support women entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania.



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Wayne A. I. Frederick (Trinidad and Tobago): President and professor of surgery at Howard University, he developed methods for narrowing racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in cancer outcomes.

Karine Jean-Pierre (Martinique): Principal deputy press secretary for the Biden White House and former chief of staff for Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris, she has been a campaign organizer, activist, author, and lecturer.

Katalin Karikó (Hungary): Scientist and senior vice president of BioNTech, she conducted breakthrough mRNA research that was foundational to the development of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.

Young Kim (South Korea): U.S. Congresswoman from California, she has focused on supporting small businesses as part of the COVID-19 recovery and is the third Korean American woman elected to Congress.

Herro Mustafa (Iraq): U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria who joined the Foreign Service in 1999, she has held numerous high-level diplomatic posts, including senior advisor on the Middle East to Joe Biden (2009–2011).

Vincenzo Piscopo (Venezuela): President and CEO of United Spinal Association, he has been a longtime advocate for disability rights and accessible transportation, helping people with motor disabilities worldwide.

Jorge Pulleiro (Argentina): Idaho's 2021 Teacher of the Year who teaches Spanish in a dual immersion program, he is a U.S. Army veteran and standout graduate of the military's Troops to Teachers program.

Pedro A. Sanchez (Cuba): Professor at the University of Florida, he has dedicated his career to eliminating world hunger and absolute rural poverty, working to protect and enhance degraded soils in South America and Africa.

Nsé Ufot (Nigeria): Longtime civil, human, and worker rights advocate, she is the executive director of the New Georgia Project, which provides voter education aimed at strengthening democracy.

Ali Zaidi (Pakistan): Deputy White House national climate advisor, he designs and implements federal policies and public-private partnerships to increase energy security, reduce pollution, and create green jobs.

[View a complete list](#) of the 2021 Great Immigrants.

This year's tribute is dedicated to the immigrant who founded the Great Immigrants initiative in 2006 and whose life epitomized service, Vartan Gregorian, the Corporation's president from 1997 until his unexpected death in April 2021. Like the Corporation's founder, Scottish immigrant Andrew Carnegie, Gregorian was an immigrant of modest



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means, born and raised as an Armenian in Iran. He arrived in America in 1956 to study at Stanford University, going on to rise to the highest levels of higher education and philanthropy — public service that earned him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Gregorian's experiences in a new country helped shape his support for the civic integration of immigrants. At his naturalization ceremony in 1979, Gregorian said, "For us, America is not just a past; it is also a future. It is not just an actuality — it is always a potentiality. America's greatness lies in the fact that all its citizens, both new and old, have an opportunity to work for that potentiality, for its unfinished agenda."

"It is deeply satisfying to acknowledge the work of those who have dedicated themselves to a life of service. Embodying Vartan Gregorian's spirit, our Great Immigrants stand for a stronger democratic society, one that furthers Andrew Carnegie's ideals of immigrant integration, citizenship, and patriotism," said Thomas H. Kean, chairman of the board of Carnegie Corporation of New York and former governor of New Jersey. "Vartan took tremendous pride in the Great Immigrants initiative and was actively involved in reviewing the meaningful contributions and inspiring life stories of each nominee, all of which makes it a pleasure to dedicate this year's tribute to Vartan and his life's work in service to society — and especially to our nation's immigrants."

According to a study by Pew Research Center, the nation's immigrants are essential to driving growth in the U.S. workforce at a time when the population of working-age adults is declining. Immigrants make up 14 percent of the population, yet the country has been unable to develop comprehensive immigration reform that would create a pipeline to citizenship. The Migration Policy Institute, a research center funded through the Corporation's Democracy Program, says nine million legal permanent residents (green card holders) are eligible to naturalize, but on average, the process takes eight years and the current backlog is at least four million applicants. In response, the Corporation joined a collaboration of philanthropic funders to establish the New Americans Campaign 10 years ago. The nonprofit provides free legal assistance to legal permanent residents seeking U.S. citizenship.

The Great Immigrants initiative is intended to increase public awareness of immigration's role in our country, reflecting the priorities of Andrew Carnegie, a self-made industrialist. In 1911, he established Carnegie Corporation of New York, a grantmaking foundation dedicated to the causes of democracy, education, and international peace. To date, the Corporation has honored more than 600 outstanding immigrants, whose stories can be viewed through the Corporation's online database, which is among the leading resources of its type.

The 2021 honorees, who mark the 16th class of Great Immigrants, will be recognized with a full-page public service announcement in the *New York Times* on the Fourth of July and through a social media campaign. Please share via Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter @CarnegieCorp using the hashtag #GreatImmigrants.