

Carnegie Corporation of New York Honors 35 Distinguished Immigrants for Their Vital and Inspiring Contributions to Our Democracy

Philanthropic foundation established by Scottish immigrant Andrew Carnegie and led now by Irish immigrant Dame Louise Richardson celebrates the crucial role of naturalized citizens in making America a land of opportunity for all

By Carnegie Corporation of New York June 28, 2023



New York, NY, June 28, 2023 — Carnegie Corporation of New York today announced its annual list of Great Immigrants, honoring 35 naturalized citizens who have enriched and strengthened our society and our democracy. Each Fourth of July since 2006, the philanthropic foundation has invited Americans to celebrate these exemplary individuals by participating in its online public awareness campaign, [Great Immigrants](#), [Great Americans](#). #GreatImmigrants

The 2023 Class of Great Immigrants is comprised of naturalized citizens from 33 countries and a wide range of backgrounds and fields. For generations, immigrants have come to the United States seeking opportunities for themselves and their families. Among this year's honorees are individuals who have fostered opportunities for others through their work as educators, mentors, philanthropists, job creators, public servants, storytellers, and advocates.

Additional 2023 honorees are recognized leaders in their fields, including two Nobel laureates, an Olympian, and a member of Congress. Among the honorees are *Elle* magazine editor in chief and TV personality **Nina Garcia**, best-selling novelist **Min Jin Lee**, seven-time Grammy Award winner **Alanis Morissette**, Hollywood star **Pedro Pascal**, and Academy Award winner **Ke Huy Quan**.

"The Great Immigrants initiative is a tribute to the legacy of Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant who, like these honorees, found success in America, contributed enormously to his adopted country, and inspired others to do the same," said Dame Louise Richardson, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, and a naturalized citizen who first came to the United States from Ireland as a graduate student. "The 35 naturalized citizens honored today embody that tradition, reminding us that the contributions of immigrants make our country more vibrant and our democracy more resilient."

Honorees who are being recognized as builders of opportunity include:

- **Wesaam Al-Badry** (Iraq) An award-winning photojournalist and interdisciplinary artist whose refugee experience shapes his work, Al-Badry strives to foster healing by sharing portraits of human struggle that reflect dignity and love.
- **Ajay Banga** (India) As the newly elected president of the World Bank, Banga aims to lead the organization in tackling climate change and confronting the toughest challenges facing developing countries.
- **Jean-Claude Brizard** (Haiti) As a longtime educational leader and now president and CEO of Digital Promise, Brizard has spent his career working to transform educational systems so that all students thrive.
- **Ghida Dagher** (Sierra Leone) As president and CEO of New American Leaders, Dagher is building a more engaged and inclusive democracy by supporting first- and second-generation

immigrants to run for public office.

- **Daniel Diermeier** (Germany) A first-generation college student who rose to become chancellor of Vanderbilt University, Diermeier has fostered a culture of academic freedom, excellence, and inclusion.
- **Miguel “Mike” B. Fernandez** (Cuba) A major investor, philanthropist, and immigration reform advocate, Fernandez has launched more than 20 health-care businesses, created job opportunities, and supported higher education and health causes around the country.
- **Karen González** (Guatemala) A speaker, writer, and public theologian, González advocates for more welcoming immigration laws and encourages churches to go beyond hospitality in supporting refugees.
- **Azira G. Hill** (Cuba) A civil rights leader and former nurse, Hill founded the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program to prepare Black and Hispanic youth to pursue advanced study and careers in music.
- **Angélique Kidjo** (Benin) A Grammy Award–winning singer, Kidjo is also a global advocate for women’s and human rights who has served as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador for more than 20 years.
- **Karen Lozano** (Mexico) A professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and mentor to underrepresented students who are pursuing STEM careers, Lozano is an inventor and founder of a nanofiber firm that spurred economic development in the region.
- **Daniel Lubetzky** (Mexico) Best known as the founder of KIND Snacks, Lubetzky is a social entrepreneur working to build bridges between people and increase appreciation for our shared humanity through philanthropy and civic movements like Starts With Us.
- **Helen Quinn** (Australia) A particle physicist at Stanford University, Quinn championed K–12 science education and fostered development of the Next Generation Science Standards as chair of the Board on Science Education at the National Academy of Sciences.

The Great Immigrants initiative is intended to increase public awareness of the economic and societal benefits of immigration. According to the [American Immigration Council](#), a Corporation grantee, immigrants create new businesses at a higher rate than the overall population, with 3.2 million immigrant entrepreneurs generating \$88.5 billion in annual income and employing millions of Americans. Immigrants or their children have founded 43.8 percent of [Fortune 500 Companies](#), generating \$7 trillion in revenue and employing more than 14.8 million people worldwide. Immigrants also contribute to [key workforce needs](#) in America, comprising 15.2 percent of nurses, 25.9 percent of health-care aides, and 23.1 percent of STEM workers. Additionally, American culture is enriched in diverse ways by the [more than 400,000](#) immigrants who work in creative or artistic occupations.

The Corporation's Strengthening U.S. Democracy program supports immigrant integration through a portfolio of grantees that focuses on immigration policy reform. Citizenship is the goal of integration, and among the Corporation's long-term priorities is encouraging eligible immigrants to naturalize. For more than a decade, the Corporation, in collaboration with other philanthropic partners, has supported the [New Americans Campaign](#), which is led by the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#). To date, the campaign and its national network of nonprofit partners have helped more than 593,000 lawful permanent residents, known as green card holders, apply for citizenship. Services include low-cost application assistance in multiple languages and an online tool that can help with the process. More information is available [here](#).

Since 2006, the Corporation has named more than 700 Great Immigrants, forming one of the largest [online databases](#) of its type. The 2023 honorees, the 18th class in the program, will be recognized with a full-page public service announcement in the *New York Times* on the Fourth of July, as well as through tributes on social media. Please join the celebration by sharing via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) using the hashtag #GreatImmigrants.

Here is the complete list of the 2023 Class of Great Immigrants:

Wesaam Al-Badry (Iraq) Photographer, Investigative Journalist, and Interdisciplinary Artist

Ana Lucia Araujo (Brazil) Professor of History, Howard University

Kyriacos A. Athanasiou (Cyprus) Professor of Biomedical Engineering, University of California, Irvine

Ajay Banga (India) President, World Bank, and Former CEO, Mastercard

Jean-Claude Brizard (Haiti) President and CEO, Digital Promise

Betty Kwan Chinn (China) Founder, Betty Kwan Chinn Homeless Foundation

Ghida Dagher (Sierra Leone) CEO and President, New American Leaders

Daniel Diermeier (Germany) Chancellor, Vanderbilt University

Miguel “Mike” B. Fernandez (Cuba) Chairman and CEO, MBF Healthcare Partners

Maria Freire (Peru) Global Health Leader and Biophysicist

Nina Garcia (Colombia) Editor in Chief, *Elle*

Timnit Gebru (Ethiopia) Founder and Executive Director, Distributed AI Research Institute

Karen González (Guatemala) Faith Leader, Writer, Speaker, and Immigrant Advocate

Azira G. Hill (Cuba) Cofounder, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program

Roald Hoffmann (Poland) Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, Cornell University, and Nobel Laureate

Guido Imbens (Netherlands) Professor of Economics, Stanford University, and Nobel Laureate

Angélique Kidjo (Benin) Grammy Award–Winning Singer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador

Bernard Lagat (Kenya) Champion Runner and Five-Time Olympian

Min Jin Lee (South Korea) Author and National Book Award Finalist

Ted Lieu (Taiwan) U.S. Congressman, California, District 36

Karen Lozano (Mexico) Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Daniel Lubetzky (Mexico) Founder, KIND Snacks and Starts With Us

J. Patrice Marandel (France) Former Chief Curator of European Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Stephen Michael (Guyana) Brigadier General, U.S. Army (ret.), and Senior Executive, UBS

Alanis Morissette (Canada) Grammy Award–Winning Singer-Songwriter, Thought Leader, and Wholeness Advocate

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria) Director-General, World Trade Organization

Pedro Pascal (Chile) Actor and Time 100 Honoree

Susan Polgar (Hungary) Chess Grandmaster and Triple-Crown World Champion

Ke Huy Quan (Vietnam) Academy Award–Winning Actor

Helen Quinn (Australia) Professor Emerita of Physics, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford University

Julissa Reynoso (Dominican Republic) U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra

Oscar A. Solis (Philippines) 10th Bishop, Diocese of Salt Lake City

Ali Soufan (Lebanon) Chairman and CEO, The Soufan Group, and Former FBI Special Agent

Inge G. Thulin (Sweden) Former Chairman, President, and CEO, 3M Company

Ponsi Trivisvavet (Thailand) CEO and Director, Inari