Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative

The Paths We Tread

Profiles of the Careers of Minority Environmental Professionals

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OVERVIEW OF MELDI

The Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI) began in January 2003 at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. Since its inception, MELDI has developed a website that has a plethora of resources and information on careers in the environmental field, diversity issues, and minority affairs. The site is used by thousands of people each year.

MELDI's staff has also undertaken a series of studies to examine the status of minority students in academic environmental programs, study the work experiences of workers in the environmental labor force, and collect data on the demographic characteristics of environmental organizations. This year, MELDI is also organizing a conference – the National Summit on Diversity in the Environmental Field.

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We also want to take this opportunity to thank all the people profiled in this book and on MELDI's website (http://www.umich.edu/~meldi) for the generosity they showed in taking the time to share their stories and experiences with us.

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INTRODUCTION

In the late 1980s, minority scholars and policy makers began drawing attention to the lack of diversity in the environmental movement. In 1990 several environmental justice activists and organizations sent a letter to the heads of eight of the country's largest environmental non-profits claiming that the organizations hired few minorities and that said organizations were alienated from minority communities. Leaders of the targeted organizations responded by saying that though the organizations had a poor track record of hiring minorities, racism was not a factor in the hiring process. At the time, only 14 (1.9%) of the 745 workers of the Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Sierra Club were minorities. Leaders of the environmental organizations offered several explanations for the lack of minorities on their staff. They argued that minorities were not applying for jobs in environmental non-profits, the environmental groups did not recruit minorities aggressively, there was a scarcity of trained minority environmental specialists, and that minorities did not want to work for the low salaries being offered by environmental organizations. Leaders – who separated environmental concerns from poverty and social inequality – also expressed the view that minorities were too focused on causes like discrimination and poverty rather than environmental issues.

Even in 1990 there was ample evidence that minorities were interested and active in environmental affairs. Secondly, as environmental justice advocates have rightly pointed out, poverty (or its corollary - wealth), inequality, environment and social justice are inextricably linked and cannot be viewed or understood in isolation from each other. So, while there were relatively few minority professionals in environmental organizations in the early 1990s, some were already building stellar careers in the environmental field.

As *The Paths We Tread* shows, minorities have developed exemplary careers in a wide range of environmental professions. The booklet also paints a vivid picture of minorities who have had a life-long interest and love for the environment. As the name suggests, the people profiled within the booklet, had their environmental awakenings in many different ways and at different times in their lives. They have also arrived at their current positions by a variety of means. This booklet makes it clear that questions about minority competence and interest in the environmental field are fueled by myths and stereotypes that have little basis in reality. MELDI hopes that this booklet will highlight the careers of minority environmental professionals. We also hope that the stories it contains serve to provide inspiration and guidance to young people considering careers in the environmental field.

Photo credit: Ian Robinson

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Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

THE PROFILES

MELDI's staff began identifying and interviewing the minority professionals included in this volume in 2004. The list of professionals included in *The Paths We Tread* is by no means exhaustive. The profiles are intended to provide a sampling of the variety of professional careers that minorities have embarked on.

Though this booklet is being published to coincide with MELDI's National Summit on Diversity in the Environmental Field, the staff will continue to interview minority environmental professionals and develop profiles of them. Like the profiles contained in this booklet, newly-completed profiles will be posted on the MELDI website at: http://www.umich.edu/~meldi.

The Paths We Tread contains 80 profiles of minority environmental professionals; 41 are females and 39 are males. Among them are profiles of academics, board members and chairs of the boards of environmental organizations, administrators, professional fundraisers, lawyers, policy analysts, researchers, foundation program officers, and several minorities who have founded their own environmental organizations. The profiles span a range of professionals – from rising young stars to seasoned veterans. There are also a few profiles of recently-retired professionals. They range in age from 27 to 70 years.

The profiles show professionals with great versatility – in their career choices, pathways taken, and in the multiple "hats" they wear vis-à-vis the roles they play and the positions they hold. The profiles also show that while some of the professionals began preparing themselves for environmental careers early in life, others made mid-career transitions. Many professionals identified one or more mentors who helped to guide their careers. Not surprisingly, the people profiled in this booklet are very committed to mentoring. Recognizing the invaluable role mentoring played in their success, they have an abiding commitment to helping others succeed.

The profiles also paint a picture of perseverance and dogged determination. Many of the professionals faced difficulties in their personal lives and careers. They speak of discrimination and lack of access to resources. Some achieved great things despite having a limited support base. However, what sets them apart is their ability to understand what they wanted to achieve, develop long-term plans and strategies, learn what was needed to succeed at the highest level in their jobs, be willing to listen and learn from others, and do what was necessary to advance their careers and the careers of others. They also understood that career development and advancement did not always happen by luck, happenstance or serendipity – especially when you are a minority. It was a conscious process that they had to work at. It also involved networking – i.e., cultivating relationships with a variety of people who could help but whom they were also willing to take the time to help themselves.

What also stands out from these profiles is the strong desire of minority professionals to give back to their communities.

Many minority youths have a difficult time envisioning themselves in long-term environmental careers. They often lack role models and mentors. We hope that these profiles will help young people thinking about careers in the environmental field to see the possibilities and to learn how others blazed trails of their own.

Dorceta E. Taylor

(1957-Present)
Associate Professor of Environmental Sociology
University of Michigan
School of Natural Resources and Environment
Center for Afroamerican and African Studies
Program Director, MELDI

Photo credit: Ian Robinson

I became interested in the environment when I was a little girl growing up in rural Jamaica. One of my tasks was to tend the family rose garden and I became fascinated by the flowers and butterflies as well as the countless fruit trees in the yard. I loved going to the garden in the early morning because I could gaze at the nearby waterfall – I particularly liked it when it was obscured by the mist that sometimes blanketed the hillsides. When I was eight, my grammar school teacher opened a magical world to me. One afternoon the teacher led our class through the fields and to the banks of the river on which our small school perched. She handed each of us a new notebook; and as she carefully spelled out the words, “Environmental Studies,” each child copied the letters precisely, being careful not to make a mistake. It was 1965. Our teacher told us that this was a new subject that that we would be studying. I was mesmerized!

The second awakening came four years later in 1969 during my first year in high school. I was then a twelve-year-old girl sitting in the front row of a crowded, sparsely-furnished classroom in Kingston waiting anxiously to see how long the substitute teacher would last before he or she would retreat to the staff room in despair. Being the honors students of the first-year high school class, my classmates had already mastered the art of being disruptive without breaking school rules or being punished too severely. Our collective rule-bending was always well organized and choreographed. Our favorite tactic was to begin a world knowledge contest before the teacher arrived in the room. Once begun, it was nigh impossible for a neophyte teacher to turn our attention to other subjects. Boys sat on one side of the room and girls on the other. We lobbed questions regarding obscure facts at each other. A scorekeeper kept order and recorded the score on the chalkboard. The object of the game was to settle a question that had plagued us all year, were boys smarter than girls? As talk of "women's liberation" filtered into our consciousness, the game got more intense. We spent hours in the library after school each day, trying to unearth facts that could be used to stymie the opposition. On this particular day, we were so caught up in the competition that we failed to notice a tall, elegant black man standing at the door. "What is the intraventricular septum?" he asked. There was stunned silence. It took three or four attempts to get some rough approximation of the answer. Sensing a challenge, the focus of the game shifted; it was now the class against the teacher. He fired questions at us and we fired questions at him for an hour. We couldn't stump him. Up to that point in my life, I had never met anyone who was so smart and who had such presence. Most of our teachers wanted no part of the game; they squelched it as soon as they walked in the room. We were intrigued. We stayed through the entire lunch hour to listen to him. He told us he was a professor, and "a learned man." That evening I went home and wrote a note to myself in the only private place in the house. I pulled my bed away from the wall and added one more goal to my list. On the wall I

wrote, "Get a Ph.D.; become a professor and a learned woman." "The professor" as our American visitor became known, was in our school for a few more days and then simply vanished. None of us really knew his real name or could figure out why he had visited our school. For me, he stayed long enough to demonstrate that learning was an enjoyable life-long undertaking, and that a career involving the pursuit of knowledge was possible.

At the time I decided to become a professor, the career opportunities for and the aspirations of girls were limited. Despite the fact that I had no idea how I was going to attain my goal, I began pursuing it with intense determination from that age on. I knew that if I studied hard and got good grades, then the likelihood that the rest would fall in place was greatly enhanced.

In the meantime, my fascination with the environment continued – it only grew stronger after I was introduced to biology in high school. I specialized in zoology and botany passing both the University of Cambridge ordinary and advanced levels exams. I also entered a teacher-training college and studied to become a teacher at the same time I pursued my Cambridge advanced level studies. I became a certified high school science teacher in 1977. While teaching, I shared my enthusiasm for the environment with my students. Just before I left Jamaica in 1978, my second-year science class in the girls boarding school in which I taught, won the National Junior Science Exhibition award for the project I did with them studying light and shade tolerance of Pinto bean plants. That same year, one of the students I trained also became the regional Spelling Bee champion.

I completed my undergraduate education in the U.S., specializing in biology and environmental studies. At times I worked full time and also took a full-time course load. I graduated from Northeastern Illinois University with high honors in 1983. However, for graduate school I wanted to work more on the relationship between people and the environment. I was always concerned with poverty and social inequality (especially as it affected people in developing countries), and wanted to incorporate it more fully into my academic pursuits. At the time, I found the discipline of biology did not pay much attention to social issues so I decided to focus less on biology and more on environmental studies and sociology as a means of cultivating my interests.

When I was admitted to the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 1983, I was the second black woman admitted to the masters program in the history of the school. I completed a Master of Forest Science degree in 1985 and was admitted into the Ph.D. program that same year. From 1985-1991, I completed a master of arts and a master of philosophy degree as well as dual doctorates. I developed an individualized program of study in which I pursued one Ph.D. in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and another in the Department of Sociology concurrently. I am the first black woman to get a Ph.D. from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. (Founded in 1901, the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies is the oldest school of its kind in the country.)

In choosing which graduate school to attend, I faced a dilemma – go to one of the schools that offered full fellowships or take out a large student loan to go to school where I felt I would get the best education. I chose the latter – and if faced with the same choice again today, would make the same decision. After completing my first master's degree, I got several national and university-wide fellowships to pursue doctoral and post-doctoral studies. While a doctoral student, I was the recipient of a Patricia Roberts Harris Fellowship, Yale Dissertation Fellowship, Bouchet Dissertation Fellowship, and a National Research Council Ford Dissertation Fellowship. I also received two Mellon fellowships to conduct dissertation field research in the Virgin Islands and to study organization theory.

In 1991 I received a National Science Foundation post-doctoral fellowship to conduct research in England. I also lived in Canada for a year. In 1992, I applied for post-doctoral and faculty positions at the

same time. I received a Rockefeller-Ford post-doctoral fellowship in Michigan's Poverty and the Underclass program. I was also offered a tenure-track position with a joint appointment in the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) and the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS) at the same time. I accepted both positions at Michigan: I spent the first year as a post-doctoral fellow and assumed full-time faculty responsibilities in 1993.

I am currently an Associate Professor of Environmental Sociology at the University of Michigan where I teach courses in environmental history, environmental politics, environmental justice, environment and development, gender and environment, and sociological theory. My research focuses on history of mainstream and environmental justice ideology and activism, social movements and framing, and diversity in the environmental field. I completed two books recently that are currently in review. The first, which focuses on the rise of the urban environmental movement is entitled: *Environment, Work and Recreation in American Cities: 1600s-1900s. Disorder, Inequality and Social Change*. The second manuscript which analyzes the rise of the conservation movement is entitled: *Outward Bound: Manliness, Wealth, Race and the Rise of the Environmental Movement. 1830s-1930s*. I am currently working on a third manuscript on minorities and the environment which I hope to complete in the next year that will be entitled: *People of Color and the Environment: 1600s-1900s*.

I am currently the Program Director for the Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI - http://www.umich.edu/~meldi). MELDI's initial funding came from the Joyce Foundation. I am currently conducting a national study of minority and white students in university environmental programs to find out about their preparation for the environmental workforce, willingness to work in environmental organizations upon graduation, salary expectations, and whether they consider issues related to equity and diversity in the workplace relevant to their job satisfaction. I am also conducting a parallel study of employees in environmental organizations to find out about their work experiences. A third study is being conducted among environmental organizations to find out about institutional factors relating to recruitment and retention of employees, the institution of mentoring programs, diversity efforts, employee review procedures, and the demographic characteristics of these organizations.

I am also conducting a fourth study that is closely related to those already mentioned. I am working on a National Science Foundation-sponsored project that seeks to examine the status of minority faculty in university environmental departments (see http://www.umich.edu/limfef). I am conducting a survey of minority and white faculty in an attempt to find out about recruitment, retention, promotion and tenure, career development, opportunities to collaborate with colleagues or take on leadership roles, networking, and mentoring. I am also currently organizing a National Summit on Diversity in the Environmental Field. The goal of the summit is to bring together leaders of environmental organizations, government environmental agencies, environmental grantmaking foundations, academics, students, and corporate representatives to discuss the state of diversity in the environmental field and formulate next steps.

I have received several awards. Most recently, I received the Edward P. Bass Distinguished Visiting Environmental Scholars Program fellowship to be in residence at Yale in Fall 2005. I am currently a member of the Yale School of Forestry's Leadership Council, and Vice-Chair of the Board of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. In addition, I review proposals for the National Science Foundation and National Research Council. I also review journal articles for a number of leading journals. I recently served on the selection committee for the Morris K. Udall Foundation fellowship program. Because of the nature of my work and the interest in environmental justice, I get numerous requests

for speaking engagements. As a mother of young twins, I try to balance life and career by limiting the number of speaking engagements I commit to in a given year. My professional life is an important part of my identity, but family is also very important. It is important to my husband and me to take the time to raise our girls so that they become strong women who can make intelligent choices and balance the various aspects of their lives when they get older.

Nothing in life is easy, and embarking on an environmental career is by no means a walk in the park. In many ways, the easy option for me would have been to continue on the pre-med path and become a doctor or a biomedical researcher. Subjects like biology, botany, zoology came effortlessly to me, but I would have been extremely unhappy with those choices. I took the road less traveled by switching from a purely natural science degree to a blend of social and natural science. This was risky – especially since the switch did not occur till I was in graduate school, and at the time I made the switch, I had little social science background. However, once I decided on the career I wanted and finally figured out all the steps I needed to take to attain it, I was willing to go against conventional wisdom, be ostracized by my peers, take the risk of being the "only one" or the "first one" to achieve my objectives. At first I just "toughed it out," but later I began to realize that many great leaders or thinkers were very unconventional. Simply following the crowd often leaves little for innovation. Over time, I began to view my unconventional path and choices as preparation for something unusual – I don't know yet what that might be.

I absolutely enjoy being a professor and would do nothing else despite the fact that I could earn a lot more money in other jobs. However, money has never driven my career choices – freedom to control my time, thought processes, and area of research, as well as the chance to work with young people have always been far more important to me than money. Furthermore, I cannot imagine myself working in any other field. I discovered early on that I hated the 9-5 routine, being stuck in an office, and having someone watch over me all the time. I work best when I control my time and creativity. Academia is the ultimate place in allowing for that. I work long hours every day of the week. If I were expected to put in that amount time in an office, I would be much less inclined to do so.

I like meeting and working with students, teaching them and watching the "light bulb turn on" in their heads. I mentor many students at the University of Michigan and elsewhere. I like the growth and progress one sees in students as they mature and develop their own careers. This is the most exciting part of my career.

"Mentoring is only as good as the protégé's ability to recognize good advice and act on it." Dorceta E. Taylor, 2005.

There are ebbs and flows to everyone's career. The periods of normalcy are sometimes interrupted by intense high and lows. One such low point occurred in 1987. I was then a second-year doctoral student attending a professional conference in Washington, D.C. on a hot, humid day in August. Somewhat apprehensively, I walked into a social gathering of people in my field. I met a few professors and students from other universities and was just starting to feel comfortable when an older gentleman walked over to me – I was the only minority person in the room – and said in a loud voice, "What are you doing here? Deliveries are in the rear!" Nothing prepares one for moments like this and all the things you tell yourself you should have said or should have done completely escape you (they usually comeback after the moment has passed). The room went silent. All fifty or so people in the room stared at me. I looked at the man and said, "The same thing everybody else is doing here." I don't

quite remember what else I said. I knew I took a sip of my wine and turned back to the person I was conversing with before being interrupted. For the next little while, two competing thoughts raced through my mind – leave the room and conference immediately or stay. Instinct took over, I stayed. It also occurred to me that no one said anything; after an awkward pause lasting a few seconds, everyone went back to their wine, cheese and conversation.

I later learned that the man who confronted me was a "big name" professor in the discipline. Indeed he is quite renowned in the field and has a reputation as a liberal thinker. About an hour after initially confronting me, the man approached me again and quietly said, "I am sorry I said that to you. You were wearing white and I thought you were the server. I just came out of a long meeting, I am tired and I just snapped." No one else in the gathering ever said anything about the event till last year. The young man I was talking to when the incident occurred sent me an email out of the blue raising the issue again. As it turned out, he was a first-year doctoral student studying under the professor and felt powerless to intervene.

In the few seconds I pondered staying or leaving the room, I didn't think of the larger ramifications of the decision. Leaving the room would have meant leaving the discipline (and if I was going to do that I wanted to do it on my own terms). As it turns out, to this day, just about every article or book submitted for publication, research grant submitted for funding, even my review for tenure go through some of the people who were in that room. Though I did not know it at the time, a decision to stay in the room really meant I had to figure out how to have some kind of long-term professional relationship with the people in that room.

I haven't allowed events like this to cloud my view of field or the people in it. Over the years, I have met and worked with many people who have been incredibly gracious and generous with their time. My advisors at Yale, William Burch, Paul DiMaggio, Wendell Bell and Kai Erikson helped me how to think more analytically at the same time they pushed me to produce work of very high standards. They were willing to give advice when I sought it. Throughout my profession, I have always sought advice from people who are more senior and who understand how systems, institutions and networks function. I maintain contact with people who understand the unwritten and informal rules of the game since these are often crucial to one's career. At the University of Michigan, senior colleagues like Paul Mohai and Bobbi Low helped me to understand the intricate ways in which academic departments functioned. On a larger scale, I have maintained contact with a large number of people who I can always count on to give me a perspective that comes from outside the institution in which I work. Mentoring is only as good as the protégé's ability to recognize good advice and act on it. To young people considering a career in the environmental field, if you don't have a mentor, get one! Once you do have a mentor, be aware that the protégé plays an active role in the mentoring process. That is, the protégé sets goals, seeks out good mentors, solicits advice, acts on the advice given, and makes the adjustments necessary to mature, meet their goals and flourish. .

Carl Anthony

(1939-Present)
Program Director
Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Initiative
Ford Foundation

Photo credit: A Lot in Common website

Carl Anthony was born in 1939 to Louis Edward and Mildred Anthony in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia has a rich history and tradition of urban planning. However, as Anthony noted, this tradition often neglects to address the needs of people of color and low-income areas. Thus, Anthony's observations and interests led him to combine the tenets of the Civil Rights Movement with architecture and urban and community planning.

The community design movement that began to emerge in the 1960's blended ideas of design and environment. Anthony was attracted to this line of thinking and in 1965 Anthony began working with the Architecture Renewal Community in Harlem (ARCH). The organization sought to address social and economic justice issues in Harlem. Among other things, Anthony and his colleagues worked on the Neighborhood Commons Project. This project focused on converting vacant lands into neighborhood commons by encouraging local residents to participate in the creation of these commons. To better understand, develop and implement such projects, Anthony obtained a professional degree in architecture from Columbia University in 1969. However, by the late 1960's Anthony found himself questioning the direction of the movement and his work. Consequently, he traveled to Africa to better understand the traditional architecture of indigenous Africans and the ways it could be incorporated into his future work.

At the time Anthony went to Africa, he was also growing critical of traditional architectural approaches because he felt that they often served the needs of the upper classes while ignoring those of the lower classes. Thus, by studying the history of architecture, African culture and the environment, Anthony hoped to better understand and address the needs of communities of color.

Upon his return from Africa, Anthony accepted a teaching position at the University of California – Berkeley. At Berkeley, he focused on green design. However, Anthony felt that because he still maintained a strong interest in working on issues in the environments of poor communities, he got little support from his colleagues who showed little interest in this kind of work. Ergo, after teaching at Berkeley for ten years, he left academia to work in architecture and planning in Oakland, California. However, he found that as he became more engrossed in the architecture and planning work, his contacts with communities declined. At this juncture, he founded the Urban Habitat Program – a program that seeks to promote environmental leadership in people of color communities for the development of sustainable and just communities in the San Francisco Bay area. Anthony, in collaboration with Luke Cole of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, created the journal, *Race, Poverty and Environment*. The journal addresses questions of environmental sustainability through the lens of race and poverty. The creation and publication of this journal is one of the many highlights of Anthony's career. Anthony is currently working as the Director of the Ford Foundation's Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Initiative. Prior to taking this position, he was also the President of the Earth Island Institute.

"We are responsible for what we know and for teaching it to others." - Carl Anthony, 2005.

Anthony's work has been influenced by several people who shaped his work and thinking. Anthony includes James Baldwin, Louis Mumford, Carl Linn, Christopher Alexander, Kevin Lynch, Sin VanDerRin, Myron Orfield, David Rusk, John Powell, and Thomas Berry as mentors and people who influenced him. In turn, Anthony has served as a mentor to others. He works hard to bring people of color into conservation. He has utilized his role as a faculty member, founder of Urban Habitat, and as an overseer of grants to influence and mentor the leadership of the next generation. Anthony advises those interested in the environmental field to recognize the right to have a relationship with place. However, Anthony also states, "Realize that the right to a relationship with place takes a lot of work, but it is necessary work. We need to lead the larger society to understand issues of environmental, racial and social justice. We are responsible for what we know and for teaching it to others."

Anthony has spent his career searching for ways to mobilize and solve problems of social justice. He was drawn into the environmental field not because of gloom and doom predictions about the future of the earth, but rather by the promise and possibility for creativity and growth that he saw in the field. He has changed career paths as his thinking has led him in new, more productive directions. While he is disappointed that environmental justice has not gained more momentum and that the movement is full of unrealized promise, he has stuck with a career in the field because he has a sense that the work he does is his mission or *raison d'etre*. As a third grade student in an integrated elementary school, Anthony took part in a science club where they learned about stars, dinosaurs and William Penn. It was at that time that Anthony noticed the line of demarcation between his own community and the community of the white students. As an eight year old student, Anthony asked, "Why?" He has dedicated his career to not only understanding why the line exists but what we can do about it. He is driven by the sense of importance, and the challenge, to recreate relationships between people of color and the environment.

Don Aragon

(1945-Present)
Executive Director
Wind River Environmental Quality Commission
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) member

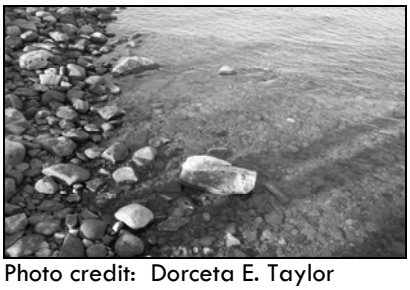


Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Don Aragon – the youngest of nine children – was born in Fort Washington, Wyoming to ranchers Lucinda and Pete Aragon in 1945. His parents stressed the importance of education, honesty, and hard work. These values are reflected in Aragon's ideals and accomplishments.

Aragon's first job as a lab and X-ray technician with the Riverton Hospital in Wyoming exposed him to the health impacts of a poor living environment, including unsafe drinking water and unhealthy sanitation practices. Work as a research technician for the University of Washington's School of Medicine and Dentistry provided additional opportunities for him to explore histology and medical work, including documenting the symptoms associated with fetal alcohol poisoning in native peoples. While he initially intended to work as a hospital administrator after completing his bachelor's degree in business administration from Western Washington University, his interest and commitment to ensuring that all people have safe living conditions drew him away from medicine and directed him towards the environmental field.

Aragon is currently the Executive Director for the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission for the Shoshone and Arapaho tribes. In this position, he examines air and water quality as well as the processes and problems associated with oil production. He strives to safeguard natural resources and human health. He and his staff also collaborate with the EPA to ensure that the corporations doing business comply with environmental laws and regulations, including the Safe Drinking Water Act.

"Doing something for the people is one of the reasons I'm still here. Not just me, I have respect for lots of tribal environmental directors who are doing the same thing…this work is all about what we believe will be beneficial to the people." Don Aragon, 2005.

While serving on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), Aragon was able to see the impact of environmental injustices on all people. Aragon states that it was a great honor to be named to this council and refers to it as one of the highlights of his career. He also cites the two years he spent with the Indigenous People Subcommittee of the EPA as another career highlight. He also served on the Human Health Committee. Through his work with these councils and committees, Aragon was able to assist various agencies' efforts to improve environmental conditions for minorities.

It is this ability to assist people and bring about environmental change that keeps Aragon in the environmental field. When asked what has made him stick with a career in the environmental field, Aragon replied, "The people. Doing something for the people is one of the reasons I'm still here. Not just me, I have respect for lots of tribal environmental directors who are doing the same thing…this work is all about what we believe will be beneficial to the people."

Aragon attributes much of his success to four instrumental mentors: Luana Reyes, Dr. Calvin Watness, Star Weed, and his father. Luana Reyes was the Executive Director of the Seattle Indian Health Board. Aragon states, "She taught me a lot about managing people and how to work with tribal governments." Dr. Calvin Watness is the tribal administrator for the Puyallup tribe. He shared his positive outlook with Aragon. He taught Aragon how to negotiate and work with challenging individuals and groups. Watness helped Aragon learn that there is always room for discussion so that everyone can achieve some of their goals. Shoshone tribal elder, Star Weed, shared his fantastic outlook on life with Aragon. According to Aragon, "Star Weed feels that we're put here for a specific reason. He taught me that it's important to be respectful and honest with people. We are part of the solution, not part of the problem." Finally, his father instilled in him a strong work ethic.

Aragon is a positive role model for minority youth. He is active in speaking with Indian youth about the importance of staying in school. He encourages them to always look to learn new things. From 1998-2002 he

served on the Board of Directors for the Haskell Indian Nations University, helping them to establish an environmental degree program. Furthermore, he speaks with students about the environmental work that he and his colleagues are involved with, "We let them see how we do field work. They get a sense of pride that it's being done by native people." Students often describe a can-do attitude that stems from the example being set by Aragon and his colleagues. He advises students and minorities interested in the environmental field to be dedicated and patient as change takes time.

Kenneth Bailey

(1955-Present)
Geospatial Information Specialist and
Community Development Officer
Office of the Secretary of the Department of the Interior

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Kenneth Bailey was born in 1955 in Northern Ohio. He is the oldest of three children born to Bobbye, a housewife and Lloyd Bailey, a business owner. Bailey and his family lived very close to Lake Erie and from an early age, Bailey witnessed Lake Erie being polluted by surrounding factories. This had a huge impact on him as a child and later influenced his career decision to work in the environmental field.

Bailey began his college education at the University of Tulsa as a pre-medical student. There he studied biological oxygen demand and natural water systems. Bailey was fascinated by this subject and he soon decided that he wanted to expand his studies further into other environmental sciences. Bailey later transferred to the University of Cincinnati where he graduated with a Bachelor's in Environmental Science in 1997. He went on to attend Miami University of Ohio where he obtained a Masters in Environmental Science, with a focus on remote sensing technology in 2004.

"I like to think I'm making a difference…making things better for others." Kenneth Bailey, 2005.

Bailey started his environmental career as an intern with Environmental Careers Organization at the Bureau of Land Management in 2001. He was a project coordinator for their Falcon-Gonder Project. The project was funded by Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPC) in Reno, Nevada. The goal of the project was to improve SPPC's electrical system import and export capabilities which would also allow SPPC to import more power from Utah, and Idaho and export it to Nevada and California. Bailey helped to monitor the environmental impact this would have.

In 2002, Bailey went to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Sacramento, CA in their Pacific regional office as a regional endangered species coordinator. Later that year, he was transferred to the Eastern Region of the BIA. While there, he became the natural resource specialist and he worked in that position for two years. During his tenure as the regional natural resources specialist, he developed and promoted a program entitled "Tribal Master Planning." This program was created to help the tribes to plan for the future and

manage their resources more effectively. He originally developed the idea while working in California. After transferring to the Eastern Region of the BIA, he promoted the idea to the tribes while visiting the reservations and through presentations at the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) gatherings. His idea was accepted and soon the program began.

He currently works in the Office of the Secretary of the Department of the Interior as the Geospatial Information Technology Specialist and community development officer. The Office of the Secretary (OS) has adopted Tribal Master Planning as a national initiative and has dubbed it "community development." He is responsible for overseeing the initiative, developing a budget for the program and working through the OS with other federal agencies to make it a reality for the tribes. Participation from the tribes is strictly voluntary.

Although Bailey has received helpful advice and encouragement from many people throughout the years, he recognizes that there are two people who have inspired him the most. The first person is his grandfather. He taught Bailey about the land ethic and how important it was to appreciate the earth. The second person to influence him was Dr. Gene Willike. Dr. Willike was the Director of the Institute of Environment Sciences at Miami University of Ohio. He taught Bailey that though it is important to understand the problems that plagued the earth, it is also necessary to create solutions to those problems. Dr. Willike believed that man must be responsible in his use of natural resources. Bailey says that the guidance that he has gained from both his grandfather and Dr. Willike is reflected in his work today.

Bailey is not currently a mentor, but he does have advice to give to young minorities who are considering a career in the environmental field. He advises that they take as many physical, social and environmental sciences as they can. "They should do this so that they can understand the human psyche of environmental work." Bailey believes that there exists in the environmental field an extreme left and right. And the only way one can accomplish anything in this field is to be firmly in the middle ground. "To do that, you must know the sciences." He also advises young students to study remote sensing. "It helped me to look at resources and management in a whole new light."

Bailey's greatest career highlight has been the implementation of the "Tribal Master Planning" program. He is especially proud of his ability to do work that makes a positive impact on the tribal communities that he works with. Overall, he says that working with them has been a true joy.

As a minority environmental professional, Bailey has noticed that there are very few opportunities for minorities to advance in environmental field. It is dominated by people of European descent. This is disappointing to him because he knows how important environmental issues are to people of color. Despite this observation, however, Bailey remains optimistic. He is proud of his accomplishments and hopes to make bigger strides in his profession for his sake as well as for the sake of other minorities who will go into environmental careers. Thus, Bailey continues to work in the environmental field. "I love it. I live it and breathe it. I like to think I'm making a difference…making things better for others."

David Hahn-Baker

(1959-Present)
Founder and President
Inside-Out Political Consultants
Board Member, Environmental Support Center

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

The second of two children, David Hahn-Baker was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1959. Hahn-Baker graduate from Princeton University in 1981, with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. Hahn-Baker says that growing up in Chicago greatly influenced his interest in the environmental field. He was able to enjoy time outside of the city by going to camp every summer from the time he was 12 until he was 19 years old. His growing fondness for being in the outdoors developed during his time at camp; Hahn-Baker became a camp counselor while in high school and eventually led Outward Bound trips during his time at Princeton.

When Hahn-Baker was twelve years of age, he was introduced to politics by his sixth grade teacher. The teacher, noticing that Hahn-Baker was bored with the class, gave him the book, *Boss*, by Mike Royko to read. "That was [a] key [experience] it was the first political tract I had ever read," says Hahn-Baker.

In 1982 Hahn-Baker received his first job after graduating from college. He was hired by the National Clean Air Coalition, a group of mainstream environmental organizations working together to protect and expand the Clean Air Act. Hahn-Baker was hired to work in the National Clean Air Coalition office to provide information to lobbyists and congress persons regarding the Clean Air Act. Hahn-Baker was also able to work with people involved in grassroots environmental movements around the country. With this job, he liked the idea that he could "pay the bills" while working to leave the world "in as good of shape as I [Hahn-Baker] found it."

For the past fifteen years, Hahn-Baker has been the President of his own political consulting firm in Buffalo, New York. Hahn-Baker says that his firm is able to help national environmental groups improve their networks with local groups. His firm also assists foundations in their development of programs to support environmental protection. "A Big part of my business is helping conventional environmental organizations do a better job with diversity issues and outreach," says Hahn-Baker. He was involved in the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. Hahn-Baker felt that the summit was important for people of color to "make demands, educate themselves and to be involved in environmental issues impacting their communities." Hahn-Baker says that as people of color reach out and expand their environmental movements it is crucial that conventional environmental groups respond positively and not as though they [conventional environmental groups] are doing people of color a favor. He says that conventional environmental groups must begin to see that there is as much a benefit to themselves as to people of color when they [the conventional environmental groups] are involved with environmental justice work.

"Know your own goals! The clearer you are on what you want to accomplish, the more likely you are to succeed. Do not be afraid to make mistakes." David Hahn-Baker, 2005.

In the early 1990s, Hahn-Baker was asked to teach a course on Environmental Advocacy at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment (he filled in for Bunyan Bryant while Bryant was on sabbatical). Before founding his own firm, Hahn-Baker taught at the University of Buffalo (in a social sciences interdisciplinary program) for about four years and at George Washington University for four years. As a teacher, Hahn-Baker taught many sections of different campaign courses, as well as a full course on community organizing and the environment. Hahn-Baker says in a jovial tone, "I like the variety because I have a short attention span."

Hahn-Baker considers his work chairing the city of Buffalo's Pest Management board (BPMB) one of his greatest achievements. The board's mission is to reduce the city's use of and dependence on synthetic toxic chemicals. Hahn-Baker has chaired the board for about nine years and has been a member for fifteen. During his time with the pest management board, it has succeeded in getting the city to stop using the pesticide Sevin – a broad-spectrum insecticide. Eight city council districts have stopped using the pesticide and the last district plans to discontinue its use soon. Hahn-Baker says that there are three phases to the board's work: reactive, low lying fruit (taking advantage of existing opportunities), and the proactive phase. Though BPMB has been successful using all three types of strategies, it was the use of phase-three strategies that resulted in the city phasing out its use of toxic chemicals.

Hahn-Baker has this advice for minorities considering a career in the environment, "Know your own goals! The clearer you are on what you want to accomplish, the more likely you are to succeed. Do not be afraid to make mistakes, people understand that you learn from them and the mistakes make you a better person and professional."

Kemi Balogun

(1978-Present)
Executive Director
Center for Environmental Citizenship

Photo credit: CEC website

At the age of twenty-seven, Kemi Balogun has achieved much in her life. She is currently the Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Citizenship (CEC or EnviroCitizen) in Washington, D.C., but it has not been an easy road. "Being a person of color in a predominately white organization has its ups and downs; being a person of color in the environmental movement is hard," says Balogun.

Balogun is the third of six children (the two older sisters are twins) but she feels as though she were the oldest, "there is such a large gap in ages between the twins and the rest of us; [I] felt like I was the oldest." Her father is a Nigerian-born journalist who received his degree from American University in Washington, D.C., and her mother is an Irish and Native American woman who is an accountant working on government contracts. Balogun grew up in Washington, D.C. and when the time came for her to go to college she did not go far from home; Balogun attended Prince George's Community College in Lago, Maryland. In 2000 she received her

Associates of Arts degree in Business Management and Journalism. While in college, she was involved in community activism. Balogun coached cheerleading and led dance classes at the recreational center in her community; she wanted to help neighborhood youths keep busy and stay out of trouble. She was also involved in activities such as petitioning for the resources needed to clean up her neighborhood and attending Sierra Club events that were promoted around her college campus.

Balogun's first job was with the Washington, D.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). She assisted with the "Girl Power" campaign because it intrigued her that the government was trying to reach out to young girls. Balogun's time at the DHHS taught her that the government is able to make good things happen, but those working on government initiatives put in much effort and do not always get to see the results of their work. After working at DHHS for a while, she decided that working in the non-profit sector would allow her to be more "hands on." Balogun's assessment led her to take a position with the D.C. Coalition for the Homeless (DCCH). "My experience with the DCCH provided me with [another] insight into how the government impacts people," says Balogun. The DCCH only served men; many of them were veterans, mentally ill or had substance abuse problems that resulted in their impoverishment. Though she felt her work there provided a good experience and was very important, Balogun was concerned that the DCCH did not provide services to women. The lack of support for women as well as internal problems prompted her to leave the organization.

Little did she know that her next move would position her to become the first person of color to take on a senior professional position and be the Executive Director of CEC since its inception thirteen years ago. While looking for non-profit work she happened upon an opening with CEC for an administrative assistant position. Balogun was impressed because the Executive Director at the time was a twenty-eight year old woman and the staff was also young, vibrant and empowered. She felt good about working with them so she accepted the position and has been there for five and a half years.

Balogun's time at the CEC hasn't always been smooth. She came close to quitting the job when a former supervisor offended her on numerous occasions and was abusive to her. Soon after joining the organization, she realized that her supervisor was racist and that the organization had hired her because they felt some pressure to replace the one person of color who had been working in the organization and had left. This was the first experience with blatant racism for the then 21-year-old Balogun. Referring to her supervisor, Balogun says, "I did not understand, personally or professionally, how someone could be so racist and evil." She continues, "My supervisor would write me notes saying that I was stupid, and telling me to re-do my work; she would leave the notes on my desk in the reception area for everyone to see." Not surprisingly, there was a high turnover for people of color in the organization. Balogun suffered the humiliation in silence and was advised not to quit. Balogun says, "My mom told me that for me to leave the organization would be allowing my supervisor to win…. [My mother] also pointed out that if I let…[the supervisor] get away with it, then which ever person of color came after me would be treated in the same way. So I stayed."

On one occasion Balogun's supervisor locked her (Balogun) in an office and would not let her leave. The supervisor wanted to speak with Balogun but Balogun did not want to converse with her. Balogun had to scream for someone to let her out of the office. At this she point filed a grievance with the board and a conflict mediator was brought in. Because Balogun's supervisor refused to sign the mediation agreement, Balogun was placed on three month's probation.

However, all was not lost. The intervention by mediators brought positive changes to the organization. A week after the mediation session, CEC brought in Change Works, a diversity consulting firm, to facilitate a

dismantling racism workshop with CEC staff. Former minority employees who had left the organization were invited to participate in the workshop. The abusive supervisor resigned from her position shortly after the workshop (in which several current and former employees confronted her about her behavior and racial attitudes).

As a result of the workshop, Bree Carlson – who facilitated the session – became a very influential person in Balogun's life. Carlson knew the history of racism at CEC very well. Moreover, as a person of color, she also understood what is what like to be the only person of color in a predominately white organization. As a result, Carlson was able to help Balogun find a new direction for her life and career. Balogun says that "Bree [Carlson] changed my life in many ways and has been very instrumental in my staying on with the CEC."

Joshua Feldmark was the Executive Director who held the position before Balogun. She learned much from Feldmark as the two became friends. "Feldmark believes in clarity. He believes that, no matter the job title, everyone's input and opinions were important and worthy of being considered. Race truly did not matter to him. Feldmark would use ideas from other managers and his administrative assistant alike. I saw him move from being an organizer in the CEC, to a fundraiser and then Executive Director," Balogun says. She looked up to him as she watched him grow.

"Do not be deterred because the environmental movement is a predominately white one, know that you can have white allies. Some people feel the same way you do regardless of their color and the environment can mean a lot of different things…" Kemi Balogun, 2005.

Balogun's work at the CEC puts her in touch with hundreds of students from around the country. Each year the CEC hosts a Summer Training Academy (STA) in which about 40 students from around the country come to Washington, D.C. for a week of environmental leadership training and political strategizing. The STAs often result in some of the participants joining the organization or becoming organizers. The students participating in STA's all-expenses-paid training are mostly white. Because she felt that minorities have a different perspective on environmental issues and because communities of color suffer many environmental injustices, Balogun felt it would be prudent for the CEC to host a minority version of the STA to increase the participation of students of color in the event. She proposed the idea and lobbied for support in the organization. Despite the inclusion of environmental justice issues on the agenda of STA training for many years, there was much opposition within the organization to the idea of a minority STA. Some of her colleagues felt that such an undertaking would not be an efficient use of time and that the cost and work involved in organizing the event (such as securing funding and finding staff for the event) would not manifest itself in measurable results. Having an all-minority event would mean establishing a safe zone for concerns and discussions, etc. Balogun also wanted to hire minority organizers to help with the event as well. Balogun argued that not only would this event be great for the students, it would also allow the CEC staff to enhance their skills and broaden their perspectives. Balogun felt that though there might be some discomfort in an organization attempting to recruit and train groups that they didn't normally communicate with, the end result would be growth in the CEC.

In 2004, Balogun's dream finally came to fruition. The CEC received 150 applications from minority students all over the country and the training session turned out to be a great experience for everyone involved. The CEC had established a goal of increasing diversity in organization, so Balogun used that goal to push CEC to walk their talk and organize a minority STA. Seeing the minority STA become a reality has been the highlight of Balogun's career thus far. Though CEC planned to hold the traditional as well as the minority

STAs in 2005, neither event was held because of lack of funding.

Balogun stays in contact with many of the students participating in CEC events. She also mentors intensively. She is a mentor to a young woman in her community. Her protégé went to the Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School for Public Policy in Washington, D.C. As part of the curriculum requirements at Cesar Chavez, students are required to complete a community service project. Her protégé came to CEC to fulfill her requirement and was assigned to shadow Balogun. The student expressed surprise at seeing a young black woman like Balogun in such an influential position in a predominantly white organization. Balogun's protégé refers to her as a "big sister," a role that Balogun takes very seriously. Balogun feels that the interaction with her mentee has given her (Balogun) more insight into herself and career. Balogun is trying to encourage her protégé to go to college by showing her different types of college campuses. Balogun hopes her mentee realizes the many choices she has in life.

Balogun says that she wants to empower people who do not know the extent of their power. Traditional environmental issues are important to her, but she feels that she can make the most difference by working on environmental justice issues in her community. Balogun considers her ability to work with local activists to make changes, and being able to motivate her community as her most significant achievements to date. "People are now able to use me as a resource and that makes me very proud," she says.

Balogun wants other minorities to realize that this environmental movement is not the same as the one in the 1970s. "The movement is not only about tree huggers and being a vegetarian…it is broad…it is about being consciously aware of your surroundings," she says. Balogun also advises, "Do not be deterred because the environmental movement is a predominately white one, know that you can have white allies. Some people feel the same way you do regardless of their color and the environment can mean a lot of different things. The movement can be defined by whatever you want it to be and by wherever you want to make your most impact."

Janine Bascomb (a pseudonym)

(1957-Present)
Conservationist
Department of the Interior

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Janine Bascomb (a pseudonym) was born in 1957 as the youngest of eleven children. Having spent the days of her childhood exploring the outdoors with her family, Bascomb knew at an early age that she would pursue a career in the environmental field. She has been active in the field since she graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor's degree in fisheries biology in 1980.

Bascomb's first environmental job was in a fish hatchery where she worked in a lab monitoring fish health as well as raising and stocking minnows. She rapidly progressed professionally and now heads a habitat

conservation program for the Department of the Interior. In this position, she works to develop programs that help people to value and respect wetlands. She also analyzes proposed projects to determine their potential impacts on migratory fish and birds.

While Bascomb is a senior-level conservationist, she enjoys watching others advance in the agency and lists this as one of the highlights of her career. She is proud of their hard work and dedication and enjoys supporting and celebrating their accomplishments. She feels that people's accomplishments are sometimes diminished. When this occurs, it marks a low point in her career. Taking pride and enjoyment in the achievements of others helps to keep her in the environmental field. Another thing that keeps her involved in the environment is the desire to dispel myths about minority participation in environmental issues. She is also driven to stay in conservation because of her concerns for natural resources and human health – particularly the health of minorities. .

Bascomb credits her mentors, including project leaders and family members, with helping her to achieve great success. She firmly believes in the benefits that arise from having, and serving as, a mentor. Thus, she makes an effort to be available as a mentor for others. Bascomb accepts as many speaking engagements as possible and often meets with individuals over lunch or dinner to discuss career issues with them. She is also active in environmental groups like the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) which seeks to promote the development of diverse leaders. As for the advice that Bascomb often gives to those she mentors, she encourages students to find positive mentors, to be flexible in their mobility, and to be an agent of change by discovering who they are and what it is that they do best.

"There are connections between natural resources and human health. I am concerned for the health of all people, including people of color." Janine Bascomb, 2005.

Frances Beasley

(1949-Present)
Assistant Director of Environmental Policy and Planning
Department of Public Utilities
City of Columbus, Ohio

Photo credit: Ian Robinson

Though she grew up in Columbus, Ohio, Frances Beasley was born in Georgia on October 15, 1949. She is the oldest of four children born to Mary Annelle Beasley-Martin, a former case worker, and Willy James Beasley, a former truck driver and laborer. At the time she was growing up, Columbus had problems common to a lot of urban cities like crime, blight and poverty, but it was not until Beasley began her work in the environment

that she realized the environmental implications of her neighborhood's condition. Beasley began her college career at Ohio State University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in political science. When she graduated, she was not looking for a career in the environmental sector. Her first exposure to the environmental field came when she took a job as a secretary in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Ohio DNR). After that experience, she decided to look into careers in the environment and went back to Ohio State University to get a master's degree in Natural Resource and Environmental Policy in 1993. She worked for the Ohio DNR on oil and gas reclamation, recycling and strip mining. Beasley also has had an interest in water policy and the health of waterways. During her tenure at the Ohio DNR, she served as a program manager on the Ohio Greenways project. She played a major role in projects educating communities about water quality, and the placement of identification signs at all the major waterways throughout Columbus.

Beasley is currently the Assistant Director of Environmental Policy and Planning for the Department of Public Utilities for the City of Columbus. She considers the highlight of her career to be her appointment to this post by Columbus' Mayor Michael B. Coleman. She considers her most significant achievement to be her on-going work in promoting environmental interests that are inclusive, such as environmental justice and urban environmental education. She credits her career advancement to the fact that she pursued advanced studies in the field. She is currently working on her doctorate at Ohio State. She counts several professors among her mentors, including Ohio State Professor Don Floyd and Professors Paul Mohai, Bunyan Bryant and Dorceta Taylor at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. According to Beasley, these professors gave her insight into a broader perspective of the environment. She also credits her grandfather, who was a farmer, with influencing her. Beasley says she "learned a lot by being around him."

"Where we live, work and play is the infrastructure of life. Caring for that has to be a priority for all of us." Frances Beasley, 2004.

There have been many highs and lows in Beasley's career. As a woman of color, she found it difficult to get the types of employment that seemed more readily available to her male peers earlier in her career. She also felt that the environmental field was not generally "receptive to minorities or women." Despite these initial obstacles, she has remained in the field because she loves her work and feels it is important to protect all forms of the environment, including "where we live, work, and play." She has always provided mentorship to minorities interested in the environmental field by working on minority job recruitment at the Ohio DNR, being active in Ohio State University's Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) chapter and by conducting research that would be of interest to African American and urban audiences. She has also worked on recruitment and retention of minorities at Ohio State's School of Natural Resources and with the public school system of Columbus to include diversity in environmental education programs. She feels that minorities interested in the environment should work towards the academic credentials needed for the field and should gain relevant job experiences through internships. She advises young professionals not to let money be an overriding factor in career decisions. She also encourages minorities not to limit their career options. Finally she encourages young professionals not to get discouraged by the challenges they may face and to remember that "there is not always a straight path to the top."

Patrick Broyles

(1950-Present)
Soil Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
United States Department of Agriculture
Board Member, American Indian-Alaska Native Employee Association of the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Patrick Broyles was born on July 5, 1950 – the second of four children. He was raised in Oklahoma by Nick, an associate at Rockwell International, and Elzetta, a registered nurse. Broyles states that the character and people of Oklahoma shaped who he is and helped to establish his early interest in the environmental field.

Broyles earned both a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture and a Master of Science degree in Rangeland Management from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. These degrees helped to provide him with the technical knowledge essential for advancing throughout his career.

Broyles's first environmental job was as a range conservationist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service, currently the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. This position allowed Broyles to work with local ranchers to help them determine the proper stocking rates (carrying capacity) on their lands which, in turn, impacts the severity of soil erosion. Since 1977, Broyles has held a plethora of positions within the NRCS throughout the Midwest. He credits the advancements in his career to his technical knowledge, "I have very good technical background in the science of plants and what to do to stop soil erosion," says Broyles. He is currently a soil conservationist at the Plant Material Center in Manhattan, Kansas. His responsibilities include outreach to Indian tribes, conducting ethno-botany research, and studying the medicinal and cultural uses of plants.

Broyles has also been very active in minority and professional organizations. He is a board member of the American Indian-Alaskan Native Employee Association for the NRCS. In addition, he is a board member for the Society of American Indian Government Employees.

While Broyles has held many positions with the NRCS throughout the years, he cites the recognition he has received from the various offices for his hard work as the highlight of his career. In 1998, he received a Pendleton blanket from the American Indian-Alaskan Native Employee Association for the NRCS as a token of their appreciation for the work he has done in the field of conservation. In addition, before moving from his position in Cottonwood Falls to his current position in Manhattan, the Middle Creek Watershed District recognized his work with a plaque. Broyles felt very honored to receive such recognitions.

"I wanted to do something that I enjoyed. It's not high paying but I think I made the right choice." Patrick Broyles, 2005.

These highlights have been tempered by an incident that resulted in the creation of a new position for Broyles. While working as a district conservationist in Cottonwood Falls, Broyles undertook work that was unpopular with many locals. This work included cooperating with the National Park Service to conduct a

plant inventory and making stocking rate recommendations for the establishment of a new, highly contested park, as well as seeking out and working with traditionally underserved landowners. Despite the fact that Broyles was working within agency guidelines, many long-time locals were opposed to such work. Thus, a new position that met his needs and the desires of the Cottonwood Falls community was created for him in Manhattan. While the move was difficult at first, it has turned out to be a positive change. Despite this low-point, Broyles has stayed in the environmental field because it is work that he enjoys, "It's not high paying, but I think I made the right choice."

Broyles has had much success with the NRCS and credits much of his success to his mentors, Dick Bogard and Harland Ditz. Broyles describes Bogard, his district conservationist, as a very ethical person who always plays by the rules. He demonstrated to Broyles that one should work in accordance with the regulations. Broyles had the opportunity to observe Ditz, a national range conservationist, work with ranchers and was impressed with the level of knowledge that he possessed. According to Broyles, "he knew his stuff backwards and forwards" and Broyles was able to learn a great deal from him.

Broyles also serves as a mentor for American Indian students and collegians. He provides students with advice and guidance regarding their career searches and working with recruiters. Broyles reflects on the guidance that he provides, "I don't tell them what to do. I let them make their own decisions. I just try to throw out different alternatives." Broyles suggests that students obtain a good education and become active in minority associations. Further, he suggests that students demonstrate a strong work ethic. If students are able to achieve that combination, he is confident that they will go far.

Bunyan Bryant

(1935-Present)
Professor
School of Natural Resources and Environment
University of Michigan

Bunyan Bryant was born on March 6, 1935 to Bunyan and Christalee Bryant in Little Rock, Arkansas. At the age of eighteen, Bryant moved with his family to Flint, Michigan. In his childhood and teenage years, the role models Bryant encountered led him to limit his aspirations.

After graduating from Flint Northern High School, Bryant obtained a position at General Motors Plant Six. The work was tough with early mornings, long hours and an accident-prone environment. However, as Bryant began meeting more people from the Detroit area, his interests and goals broadened. Bryant's mother always valued education highly and this value, along with the influence of his friends, led him to enroll at Eastern Michigan University. He earned his bachelors degree in 1958. He went on to complete a Master's of Social Work at the University of Michigan in 1965. He also got a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan in 1970.

Bryant was an Assistant Project Director at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (ISR) from 1968-1979. Much of his work at ISR focused on the Civil Rights Movement and providing intervention,

mediation, and negotiation in racial conflicts within schools and educational arenas. He was also active in the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) as a process consultant. However, a series of events unfolded that led Bryant to the School of Natural Resources (later renamed School of Natural Resources and Environment – SNRE).

The Institute for Social Research was undergoing a priority shift in terms of the funding provided to projects. At the same time, SNRE was undergoing an organizational and curricular change. While Bryant was working at ISR, he received a call from an SNRE professor, William Stapp, encouraging him to consider a position at the school. Stapp was familiar with Bryant's work in the civil rights, negotiations, education, and group process. He thought that these would complement the ecology curriculum quite well. Thus, Bryant found himself as an Assistant Professor of Natural Resources at SNRE.

The year was 1972 and social issues were just emerging within the traditional ecology and forestry curricula. By lobbying others and developing a strong support network, Bryant and his colleagues were able to succeed in putting in place an Environmental Advocacy curricular track at the school. Bryant emphasizes the important role that Jim Crowfoot, Bill Stapp, and students played in this success. Together they built a strong learning community that included student-led workshops, retreats and dinners. Bryant was able to progress throughout his career – which includes 34 years at the University of Michigan – by being dedicated to his work and earning the respect of others.

"*A strong support system makes the difference in how one runs the race. It determines if one will be a sprinter or a long-distance runner*." Bunyan Bryant, 2005.

In addition to teaching in SNRE, Bryant has also been involved in hosting workshops regarding racism and race relations for the University of Michigan's Medical School and the School of Social Work. He is also active with a host of community groups working to increase capacity in minority areas.

In addition to the support of his immediate colleagues, Bryant looked to several mentors for guidance. Bryant names Mark Chesler, Ron Lippitt and Miles Horton as being important figures in his career. These mentors provided perspective and feedback on issues related to consulting, writing and pedagogy. While Bryant does not mentor others in the formal sense, he actively serves as a resource for students in SNRE. He is often unaware of his impact on others until he receives a letter or postcard in the mail from a former student or acquaintance thanking him for his support and guidance. Thus, in his everyday activities as a professor, he is able to shape and mentor students.

Bryant's career has been full of many accomplishments. However, he is most proud of helping to develop the Environmental Justice Program at SNRE and of his creation of the Environmental Justice Initiative (also in SNRE). The Environmental Justice program has attained the status of one of the major programs in the school. SNRE's Environmental Justice Program – the first in the country to offer a full slate of environmental justice courses and specializations leading to bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees in environmental justice – serves as a model for similar programs. The Environmental Justice Initiative is able to provide information, resources and support to environmental justice organizations and communities in need of help.

Bryant has also gained a national reputation for his scholarly work and environmental justice activism. He and colleague – Paul Mohai – played important roles in the early environmental justice movement by organizing a seminal conference on "Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards" at SNRE in 1990. Bryant and Mohai were also active in the Michigan Coalition – a

group of conferees who formed an advisory group to the Environmental Protection Agency and worked with the agency on developing early environmental justice guidelines. The Michigan Coalition also helped to organize the First National People of Color Summit. Bryant and Mohai also collaborated to publish an edited volume containing the papers from the conference that was published in 1992. The book, *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards*, is an important volume in early environmental justice writings. Since then Bryant has sat on numerous local, state and national environmental justice committees. He has also published many articles and book chapters on the topic.

Bryant acknowledges that environmental justice work and research has not always been fully supported. However, he has continued to work in the field because he believes it is important for minorities to be able to have access to all resources and to protect their communities. Bryant has received many awards including the Outstanding Alumni Award from his high school in Flint and the Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship at the University for outstanding teaching and work with undergraduates.

When asked what advice he would give to individuals interested in a career in the environmental field, Bryant replied, "It is hard to facilitate change. One should be careful to pick his/her battles. It is also important to build a strong support system. A strong support system makes the difference in how one runs the race. It determines if one will be a sprinter or a long-distance runner."

Robert D. Bullard

(1946-Present)
Professor
Founder and Director
Environmental Justice Resource Center
Clark-Atlanta University

Robert D. Bullard was born to Myrtle and Nehemiah Bullard in Elba, Alabama, the fourth of five children. He began his academic career at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, where he majored in history and government with a minor in sociology. He studied sociology at the graduate level, receiving his master's from Atlanta University (now Clark-Atlanta University) and his Ph.D. from Iowa State University.

Though Bullard is one of the pioneers of environmental justice research, scholarship and activism, his environmental career began somewhat unexpectedly. His first environmental job was as an Urban Planner in Des Moines while he was still graduate school. The job, which involved working on community development, as well as transportation and housing issues, provided the early foundation for some of the environmental justice work he did later on. When Bullard began his urban planning work, the memories of growing up in segregated Alabama during the 1950s and 1960s, were still fresh in his mind. His childhood experiences made him aware of how communities developed and grew, residential patterns were created and perpetuated, and how benefits and sanctions were distributed along racial lines. However, those experiences provided an important

lens through which he would view and analyze urban and rural dynamics in other parts of the country.

After Bullard graduated from Iowa Sate, he moved to Houston to teach at Texas Southern University (TSU). Bullard continues to aspire to the model he finds in the career of W. E. B. DuBois. To this end he has molded his career to combine teaching, research, and activism. The job at TSU allowed him to devote half his time to being the Research Director of an urban research center and the other half to teaching. The activism component of his work came through his research. Bullard collaborated with Linda McKeever Bullard, an attorney representing an African American community in a law suit (*Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management, Inc.*) where she employed civil rights law to protest environmental discrimination. Bullard collected data for the lawsuit from 1978-1979 and published an article about the case. This set the tone for further sociological research by applying social scientific inquiry to questions and events related to law, civil rights, environment, and policy. So, when asked how he became interested in a career in the environmental field, Bullard laughingly replies, "I was backed into it!"

He elaborates further on his philosophical approach to his work. "From my earliest moments in academia," he says, "I wanted to make sure I kept my feet grounded in the community while publishing in mainstream journals and cutting-edge publications that were left of center that looked at racism and African Americans. I wanted to make sure my research was used, like DuBois', and that it pushed the envelope, whether it was smart growth, transportation, or housing."

Bullard now directs the Environmental Justice Research Center (EJRC) at his alma mater, Clark-Atlanta University, where he also holds the Ware professorship – an endowed chair in the Department of Sociology. The EJRC sits at the intersection of research, teaching, policy, and technical assistance to communities. Because of the institutional support the university provides, the center is able to provide broad-based assistance to many people.

Throughout his career, Bullard has mentored many students from a wide variety of backgrounds. For instance, the majority of his students in Texas were black, but in Tennessee they were mostly white. He spent his time at more than one campus in the University of California system – there the students were from an array of ethnic backgrounds. Bullard feels mentoring students is very important, and he has been surprised over the years byhow many students have kept in touch with him while becoming successful in a variety of fields. "Education is about training and learning and teaching and sharing," he says. "I am surprised…how many lives I have touched."

Because of the pervasiveness of environmental racism and great interest in the topic, many students seek him out as a thesis advisor. One of Bullard's former protégés, Glenn Johnson, who moved from University of Tennessee to Atlanta, worked with and co-authored several publications with him. Johnson is now one of Bullard's colleagues in the Sociology Department at Clark-Atlanta University. Bullard sees a need for diversifying the field of sociology as well as creating venues for publication for young social scientists of color. He tries to facilitate this process offering them publication opportunities in books and journals. He also tries to help young scholars advance their careers in environmental organizations, government and academia in any way he can.

"We have to work even harder to hold the ground and for the notion that equal justice is for all communities and that we're all created equal." - Bob Bullard, 2005.

Perhaps Bullard's emphasis on mentoring comes from the experiences he had with his own mentors. Bullard's uncle was an educator and influenced him a great deal. He explained, "Educators, scholars, and

activists have always been a big hit with me!" He recalls that his grandmother "was a strong advocate of education, of standing on your own two feet and not letting anybody ride your back. She instilled that in me, in my father, and my parents [also] instilled it in me." Bullard explains that there are others he admires who have influenced also. "There are lots of heroes and sheroes in my life, but the people who came before me—Martin Luther King, Jr.; Malcom X; Fannie Lou Hamer; Frederick Douglass—who really combined telling the truth and not letting things come back and get you—repercussions—just because you're standing for social justice" are the ones who stand out the most.

Bullard has written several influential books including: *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*; *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*; and *Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism and New Routes to Equity*. Bullard says, "My upbringings did not shelter me from the fact that all societies are not created equal, (including) access to paved roads, sewers, and water. Nobody had to get me a movie ticket to see this. I saw it with my own eyes. And some of this exists today, the residual of Jim Crow in southern rural communities" is still alive and well.

Bullard has served on a number of prominent committees and boards. He was a member of President Clinton's Transition Team in 1990, where he served in the Natural Resources Cluster. He also served as Chair of the Health and Research Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, which was formed to advise the EPA Administrator. He and other environmental justice advocates collaborated with the National Institute of Health Sciences to organize the "Symposium on Health and Research Needs to Ensure Environmental Justice," Bullard was also one of the witnesses to President Clinton's signing of the Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898.

The evolution of the way "environment" has come to be defined is what keeps Bullard in the environmental field. According to him, "Environment is everything: where we work, play and live, and if we continue to keep that definition, we can advance the movement for justice in almost every field, from housing to employment…." Today environmental justice "is a household concept," says Bullard. He considers his most significant achievement to have been the publication of *Dumping in Dixie* in 1990. When Bullard first tried to get it published, he had great difficulty convincing the publishers that books using "environment and race in the same sentence" would sell. Today the book is in its third printing and there are hundreds of environmental justice books and articles in circulation.

To have watched the "environmental justice movement break out of the closet" has been the highlight of Bullard's career. In the 1970s and early 1980s, "hardly anyone acknowledged environmental justice or environmental racism. To see it blossom and grow and to have had some small part in it—and to see lawyers and doctors and students and toxicologists deal with it—and to see it as a field that can expand with any other field" is what amazes Bullard the most. As for current activity in the environmental justice movement, Bullard looks forward to increasing interest and activity among diverse populations, particularly as the linkages between environmental justice and health increases.

Bullard finds the recent political "rollbacks" to be the most disappointing moments of his career. "The gains made over the past twenty years are being dismantled, whether is it the EPA and environmental justice or trying to increase the numbers of people of color scientists through affirmative action. Even to see conservative people of color attacking Title VI of the Civil Rights Act—people who are part of our constituency—it's a low point not only in my career but in advancing a movement." Bullard's disappointment with the current state of affairs has not discouraged him. He believes that "We have to work even harder to hold the ground and for the notion that equal justice is for all communities and that we're all created equal."

Bullard's message to minorities who are considering a career in the environmental field is: "It's a great field. The opportunities are unlimited. The fact is that we're still under-represented in almost every [component of the environmental field], so it's an area where you can have not only a great career, but great impact. The latter is where a legacy can be left. The field is growing and advancing. It's important that minority students have a significant stake in what happens in communities of color—not to say that every black student lives in a black neighborhood—but you can have an impact, whether on a reservation, a barrio or an ethnic enclave. The issue of environmental health is not a sexy topic or a sexy career, but a matter of life and death. We have to be researchers and advance the field, but if you can get elected to office or direct an environmental office—government or organization—you can contribute beyond the individual level and have a huge impact." Bullard's advice comes from a lifetime of research, teaching and activism.

Gary Candelaria

(1951-Present)
Deputy Manager
Harpers Ferry, National Park Service

Gary Candelaria was born and raised in Los Angeles by his father, Joseph, who worked as a welder and his mother, Alvina, who worked as a secretary. His parents often took Gary and his two siblings on camping trips to national parks where he grew to love and appreciate the outdoors and nature. During those trips, he would talk to park rangers from the National Park Service (NPS) about their job and was fascinated by their work. Thus at age 11, Candelaria decided that he wanted to become a park ranger as well.

Candelaria attended Oregon State University and earned a Bachelor's degree in Forestry in 1974. He earned his Master's of Liberal Studies in 1993 from the University of Oklahoma. His first environmental job was an internship with Weyerhaeuser Company in 1971. During his internship, Candelaria did regeneration studies, took tree measurements, and worked on logging operations. Seeking further, he became a recreation guard for the US Forest Service in 1973. As a recreation guard, he maintained campgrounds in the backcountry of the Cascades in Washington and communicated forest management practices and recreation activities to visitors.

"You don't have to be in the military to serve your country…I can't think of anything I'd rather do with my life than to work in the National Park Service." Gary Candelaria, 2005.

After graduating, he was recruited by the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon and began to work for the federal agency as a forester. In 1975, Candelaria became an intake park ranger for the National Park Service. Throughout his tenure with the organization, he has held several titles, such as Park Ranger, Chief Ranger, and Superintendent. He has worked all over the country, in states such as Missouri, New York, Alaska, Wyoming, and California. Each move across the country was also a move up the career ladder. In addition to hard work and dedication, he says his career advancement was a natural part of working for

the NPS. "My advancement was a normal progression of title changes, responsibility, and salary increases. It's the result of staying with the National Park Service for a long time."

Candelaria is currently Deputy Manager for the Harpers Ferry Center. He supervises the staff that designs interpretive media, does publication of Harper's Ferry Center material, and creates exhibits and films for use in national parks. "We have an outstanding collection of writers, designers, planners, producers, editors, etc. who help provide the interpretive media for national parks across the country."

Throughout his career as an environmental professional, Candelaria has had numerous mentors who were very supportive of him. Boyd Evison (deceased) served as the Regional Director of the Alaskan park that Candelaria worked at and later was his immediate supervisor while Candelaria was a Superintendent in Wyoming. Evison gave him great advice, and served as an excellent role model. John Cook, Regional Director in Alaska and Denver, gave Candelaria insight into the way the NPS operated and encouraged him to become a successful manager and leader. Roger Kennedy, Director of NPS, "was a helpful and brilliant man" who shared his years of experience in the private sector and government with Candelaria. Candelaria was also able to observe John Reynolds, his supervisor in California, and learn about the director's position. Although none of his mentors were minorities, Candelaria believes that they didn't care about the fact that he was a minority; all that mattered to his mentors was that he was dedicated to his job. In turn, Candelaria mentored and recruited Native Alaskans to work in the park service while he was working in Alaska. Now he mentors a young Hispanic man.

The highlight of Candelaria's career came when he went to Alaska in 1999 to manage the 13-million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the largest unit of the National Park Service. A low point of his career was coming to the realization that working for the NPS is emotionally draining and came at a high price. It often took a toll on personal relationships. Additionally, there are times when Park Service employees and policies affect the lives of the people who live near the parks; this is a strain also. Despite these low points, Candelaria remained in the environmental field because of his firm belief that the parks should be managed for public use and for future generations. "You don't have to be in the military to serve your country…I can't think of anything I'd rather do with my life." Being involved in the great legacy of helping to preserve national parks, building facilities for the parks, and working with people both inside and outside of the NPS has been his greatest reward.

Candelaria has been involved with several programs related to diversity. He has served as an equal opportunity counselor for the NPS, and was the Hispanic program manager in the old North Atlantic Region of the NPS, recruiting Hispanics from colleges and universities. He has spoken at conventions and conferences in an effort to recruit people of color to the join the NPS. He also encourages the NPS to provide park information to people in the various languages that are spoken in the US, and he encourages all people to use the parks.

When considering a career in the environmental field, Candelaria advises minorities that people of color have as much at stake as anybody in using or losing public lands, and that there simply are not enough minorities working in the environmental field. Many minorities view public lands and the outdoors differently, and their ideas and perspectives are just as valid as those of whites. Having more minorities in public land management would encourage greater use of the public lands by diverse people. "Everyone should feel welcome and inclusive in using the lands of the U.S., because every acre of public land belongs to us all."

Don Chen

(1967-Present)
Executive Director
Smart Growth America

Don Chen has been interested in the environmental field since he was a boy growing up in the suburbs of New Jersey. His father, a former professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and his mother, a retired librarian of children's books instilled a "sense of social responsibility" in Don and his sibling. While growing up, Chen was influenced by his traditional Chinese upbringing and had a strong awareness of environmental issues, social justice and fairness. He was able to explore his interests more fully in college when he studied environmental policy.

Don Chen attended Yale University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and later, a Masters in Environmental Studies. During the course of his undergraduate studies, he spent most of his time volunteering in New Haven on hunger and social issues by supporting soup kitchens and shelters through community organizing and fundraising. Influenced by works of Robert Bullard, Charles Lee, and Bunyan Bryant in the 1980s, Chen knew that he wanted to focus on urban environmental and justice issues upon leaving Yale. Chen kicked off his career following his Bachelor's degree by working for the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency during 1989 and 1990, an agency that had was established in 1988. Chen was hired to be an English speechwriter for an administrator there, but also witnessed high levels of environmental contamination and environmental injustices.

Poor zoning practices for industries, farms, and residential areas led citizens to complain to the Taiwanese EPA about health problems in their villages. Chen became frustrated with the lack of response to these complaints on behalf of the Taiwanese government, feeling they did not own up to many of the responsibilities that the government should have shouldered. This taught him an important lesson about politics and grassroots environmental issues. After working in Taiwan for a year, Chen returned to Yale obtain his Master's degree in 1990.

While completing his master's studies, Chen also began working as a researcher at the World Resources Institute studying transportation issues. Here, Chen connected with Jessica Matthews and her group "Surface Transportation Policy Project," and worked to provide an alternative to President Bush's highway bill. Chen was responsible for producing a research paper entitled, "The Going Rate: What it Really Costs to Drive," which discusses the societal impacts of transportation, including monetary costs of air pollution, cost for the military, pain and suffering related to traffic accidents, and productivity loss due to traffic congestions.

Chen also worked for two years as a Senior Research Associate for the Rocky Mountain Institute, concentrating on transportation policy. Here, he met Amory Lovins, "a brilliant man" who taught Chen "how to think about environmental problems." Through Lovins, Chen was connected with the Energy and Equity Roundtable, a group working on social equity and energy issues. After working at the Rocky Mountain Institute until 1994, Chen went to work for the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) for six years, where he served as research director. Chen left the STTP to found Smart Growth America in 2000. Chen's interest in land use, transportation, and urban sprawl led him to

found Smart Growth America in 2000, an organization in which he serves as Executive Director and CEO. Smart Growth is a national coalition of groups working together to eliminate needless sprawl and promote environmentally influenced decisions on development, health, housing and transportation.

"You don't have to be a professional environmentalist to help the environmental cause." Don Chen, 2004.

Chen's mentors include Hank Dittmar, Don's boss at STTP, and Roy Kientz, who headed up the organization after Dittmar left. As mentors, they gave him opportunities to spread his wings as a professional by giving him responsibilities and allowing him to succeed, fail, and learn from his mistakes while he was testing out his skills. Through this, he was able to understand his limitations and feel proud of what he was doing. In addition to launching Smart Growth America in 2000, Chen also took part in founding the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP), a mentoring organization for people of color in the environmental field. In addition to mentoring, ELP conducts diversity and technical training, writing workshops, and community building trainings. ELP also helps its participants to think about the future of environmental leadership, what it should look like, and how people of color can prepare for a career in environmental leadership.

The highlight of Chen's career has been that he is fortunate to have great mentors and colleagues who inspire him to take his ideas and put them into motion by creating his own non-profit advocacy group. "Building Smart Growth America from an idea to a successful and thriving organization has been great." Chen cites his career low-point as the feeling of disillusionment about the Taiwanese government's lack of willingness to respond to dire environmental health crisis at the point when he left his position with the Taiwan EPA. At that time, he developed a cynical view about how government serves industry more than people.

Working in the environment is Don Chen's life passion. His most significant achievement occurred in 2000, when he realized he had matured and had become the advocate that he had always wanted to be. At the time, Chen was doing a speaking tour of six Australian cities and was thought of as an international expert on transportation and smart growth. He also had an article published *Scientific American.*

Chen believes that the professional environmental field needs minorities because minorities are the people who tend to bear the brunt of environmental harm in America, so it is important to have people stand up so that communities are taken care of. He advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field that, "You don't have to be a professional environmentalist to help the environmental cause." He continues that a minority student can enter a variety of fields and still bring an environmental knowledge base and awareness to that field and be influential in improving environmental quality in America. The smart growth sector shows that every sector in society makes an environmental contribution and impacts the environment. "It doesn't matter what you do but it does matter what you think and what you prioritize in your career." Don Chen's diverse career background certainly demonstrates that there are many ways to serve in the environmental field.

Carol Vallee Crouch

(1950-Present)
District Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resource Conservation Service

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Carol Vallee Crouch is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation in Pablo, Montana. Carol was born in Yakima, Washington on December 24, 1950 to John and the late Ada Vallee. Mr. Vallee was a former Boeing Company employee. Mrs. Ada Vallee, a former homemaker, worked briefly in electronics. She helped to design and build the first Automatic Teller Machine. Carol is the oldest of eight children. Crouch and her family moved frequently due to her father's profession. She graduated from Richardson High School in Texas, a top-ranked school, where she had wealthy classmates who expected to go to college and could easily afford to pay for it. Initially she did not think she could afford to go to college, thus she postponed her college education. She worked as a dental consultant for 20 years but became interested in the environment as she saw that it was connected to occupational health and observed changes in the environment over the years. She also believed that preserving Indian land and setting a positive example for youth in Indian country was important. These factors motivated her to get a higher education.

Crouch has earned several environmental degrees, including a Bachelors degree in Environmental Management from East Central University, a Masters of Public Health in Occupational Environmental Health from Oklahoma State University in 1999, a Masters of Science in Environmental Management from the University of Oklahoma in 2002, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Management from Oklahoma State University in 2004. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected her for the Tribal Lands Environmental Science Program in 1997. This led to an internship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) in 1998. She later received the national Presidential Fellowship for Water, Energy and the Environment in 2002 for doctoral students. She has worked with the NRCS in the areas of water resource management, water quality, outreach, NRCS Emergency Watershed Program, and served as the point of contact between NRCS and the 39 tribes of Oklahoma.

Crouch is currently a district conservationist in McClain, Oklahoma for NRCS. Her projects include working with national tribal organizations to promote the conservation of natural and cultural resources and ensuring that agencies abide by environmental policies and regulations. NRCS has also asked her to undertake the rewarding opportunity of recruiting American Indian college students for careers with NRCS in the areas of environment science and natural resources. She considers this the highlight of her career. Crouch has mentored several students through the U.S. Department of Labor's JEM-SET Demonstration project. This mentoring program, sponsored by the agency's Women's Bureau, is designed to match female professionals to female students of color at universities around the country. She is currently a mentor for three American Indian college students who are also members of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), all three students are pursuing degrees in the field of environmental science,

natural resources, and environmental engineering. She has also been able to independently help 72 American Indian students secure funding and attend colleges; many of these students were sent to her through personal connections.

"I am hopeful that progress can be made to protect future generations from environmental hazards." Carol Vallee Crouch, 2005.

Crouch has had to overcome tremendous personal losses but has had the support of her children and several mentors. Over the years, she has lost her mother, brother and daughter-in-law. She has also had to support her father when he suffered from a brain tumor and of her son when he lost his sight in one eye. Her children – whom she considers her most significant achievement – refused to let her give up on her educational goals. Additionally, her mentors from the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Marlene Reddoor from the EPA and John B. Herrington – the first American Indian astronaut to fly in space from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration – also encouraged her to continue with her studies despite the personal tragedies. Darrel Dominick, NRCS State Conservationist of Oklahoma supported, encouraged and made it possible for her to work fulltime for NRCS through the student trainee program while she was attending university. Mike Smolen, an Oklahoma State University professor who served as her dissertation chair, also encouraged her during her family crises. Her work with American Indian youth has allowed her to see how little information they receive about educational opportunities and about environmental issues. She feels this lack information and access is connected to the many environmental injustices American Indian communities already face.

Despite these challenges, Crouch has remained in the environmental field because of several policies that have been written to protect American Indians, the environment, and natural resources over the past seven years. This has made her hopeful that progress can be made to protect future generations from environmental hazards, such as nuclear facilities and Superfund sites. She has also played a role in bridging knowledge gaps about American Indian culture. She works with other American Indians to present Harmony Workshops to government employees so they can learn about proper protocol and cultural practices for working effectively with tribal communities. For American Indian youth considering environmental careers, Crouch encourages them to be committed to their education. She also shares an elder's belief that all people are connected to the earth's resources and an Indian proverb "treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children" and advises American Indian youth to work to improve environmental conditions no matter what field they are in. Crouch wants more American Indians to go to college and especially to earn doctorates, as she feels that very few American Indians obtain this level of education. She continues work diligently towards her goal. Her courage and determination in pursuing her goals serve as a great example of what is possible for young people of color all over the country.

Ramon Cruz

(1976-Present)
Policy Analyst
Environmental Defense

Ramon Cruz was born in 1976. He grew up in Puerto Rico – an island where the rainforest and ocean allowed him to develop an awareness of biodiversity issues at an early age. Living on a small island like Puerto Rico also allowed Cruz to understand the concept of limited natural resources. His mother, a marine biology teacher, also helped him to understand the dynamics of natural systems. As a result, Cruz became keenly interested in the environment as a young boy.

Cruz is also interested in social issues as well. He considers himself a liberal and feels the environment is one of the most important concerns for people of his generation. To be an effective activist for both people and the environment, he wanted to be knowledgeable about the issues. As an undergraduate at American University in Washington, D.C., Cruz was awarded a fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. The goal of the fellowship was to provide students of color greater access to various educational opportunities. The fellowship allowed Cruz to intern in Brasilia, Brazil for a year. During the internship, he was able to take graduate courses and conduct research. He collaborated with the Esquel Group to study studied methods of monitoring desertification that used socioeconomic indicators.

Cruz graduated from American University and received a bachelor's degree in international development and history. He got dual masters degrees in public policy (with an emphasis on environmental policy) and urban planning from Princeton University. The Woodrow Wilson Fellowship funded one year of his master's degree. It was very gratifying having such a fellowship. It prevented him from incurring a large debt. Because he didn't have large loans to repay, he could consider going into public service upon graduation. Cruz explored that possibility and was offered a position with a government agency. However, the timing was not right. His job offer coincided with President Bush's stay in office and the declining influence of the Environmental Protection Agency. Thus Cruz decided not to accept the position with the agency. He did not think he could be content working in a place where he "couldn't disclose proper scientific data" because of political pressure. Working in the private sector was not a high priority for him at the time either.

Throughout his academic and professional career, Cruz has received great advice and encouragement from various people in his life. One of those people was a woman he met who was involved in the Latin American struggles during the 1960. She encouraged him to pursue his interest in environmental work. Cruz attributes his direction in life to her. His history professor at American University was another source of inspiration. He supported Cruz's commitment to social issues and helped him to think critically about what happens to people of color in society. Cruz's also cites his supervisor at the Caribbean Environment and Development Institute in Puerto Rico with motivating him to be more focused on politics and social change. Lastly, Cruz credits a former chief scientist at Environmental Defense with helping him to seek a position with the organization. It was that scientist who encouraged Cruz to apply for a job there after the two met at Princeton. Cruz took his advice and currently works for the

Environmental Defense as a Policy Analyst. He is happy with his decision to work at Environmental Defense and says that "it feels good to be in a big organization where people listen to you…"

"It is an important discussion – diversity within the large green groups…it is a priority for me." Ramon Cruz, 2005.

In his position, Cruz conducts policy analysis in the Living Cities program, and spends a portion of his time with the Ocean's program working on Caribbean coastal development and sustainable practices. He has been nominated for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Environmental Justice Advisory Group. The group advises the state on environmental justice policy. He is also part of the Environmental Justice Committee as well as the Staff Advisory Committee at Environmental Defense. Both committees support his vision of helping minorities to join the environmental movement. "One of my goals has been to foster [the inclusion of] more people of color within the organization and to be more proactive on issues affecting minority communities."

Cruz knows how important mentoring is to the development of young students. Thus, Cruz participates in a program in which he goes to Princeton for one weekend a year to spend time with students. He stays in touch with some of his mentees and sends them information on career opportunities from time to time. He has also been able to speak to many Latino college students at the annual conferences hosted by the National Hispanic Environmental Council. In addition, Cruz has participated in the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science's annual conference and the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

Besides mentoring, there have been other exciting moments during Cruz's career. For instance, he says that "working at Viequez [Puerto Rico] was inspirational." Cruz was one of the protestors jailed during the campaign against the Naval Ammunition Facility on Viequez Island; he later organized a conference about it at Princeton. He was also able to meet Jesse Jackson during the protests. Cruz is excited about a project he is currently involved in with the New York City Council. According to Cruz, the project has allowed him to do many things – including having contact with people in the New York City's mayor's office. He says, "…it's exciting to have a connection to decision makers." The same project now puts him in meetings almost daily with members of the city council to brief them on a solid waste system policy that he's worked on. He has been able to lobby hard for something that has a chance to become real. Reporters often call him for quotes. Cruz believes that "it's not just one thing [that is the high point of my career]...but a culmination of many."

Likewise Cruz says that there has not been one thing that he identifies as a particularly low point in his career. In general, his career has been rising. At 29 years of age, he is still young and has only had five to six years of work experience. However, he does admit that conflicts stemming from the social dynamics of the workplace do arise from time to time. He also says there are times when it is hard to deal with the "voice" or the opinions of some people in the organization who are very powerful and influential. In addition to being one of the youngest junior staff in the organization, Cruz is the only person of color and one of few people on staff with an accent. He is always aware of these differences and says that "You do often feel prejudice from others, but…[having characteristics that make you stand out] impacts how confident you feel about yourself while in a group."

For Cruz, a strong commitment to thinking that the struggle for environmental protection and equality is necessary has kept him going in a place like New York City where many people and riveted by sensational or

superficial issues. He listens to his conscience and he knows that he is doing the right thing for himself and society. These convictions allow him to stick to his career path. He wants to be consistent in his career choices in order to become influential enough to one day have a "voice" that can make a difference.

When asked what advice he would give to other minorities considering a career in the environment Cruz says, "Get a good grounding in the issues…scientific evidence. Ultimately this route [an environmental career] is an option too...not just those professions that allow you to move up on the social…economic ladder." He wants to stress that "the environment" also includes urban issues "…it isn't just conservation or recycling. Environmental justice is also important. This niche represents an opportunity, a challenge…there is a lot to do here…remember that [as a minority] you bring a different perspective that others in this field typically don't hear or see."

Danielle Deane

(1973-Present)
Program Officer
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Photo credit: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation website

The oldest of four children, Danielle Deane was born in Trinidad and Tobago in 1973. Her mother was a teacher and her father a business man. Though it is a small island, Trinidad is plagued by environmental problems such as water pollution, industrial hazards, deforestation, and soil erosion. The awareness of such problems influenced Deane's career aspirations. She loved to study geography and thought often about the relationship between people and earth. This made her decide to focus her studies on the environment.

Trinidad has the British system of education in which students are forced to specialize at a young age. Though she was very interested in the environment, Deane wanted to explore other topics before specializing. Consequently she decided to attend college in the United States where she would have more time to decide what she wanted to focus on. One of her friends had gone to and liked Williams College in Massachusetts so Deane applied and received a scholarship to the school. She majored in political economy with a concentration in environmental studies. While attending Williams, Deane was recruited by the Sierra Club to work as a canvasser and field manager one summer. She was the team leader for a group of canvassers who organized support for a wetlands bill and conducted a membership drive for the organization.

She has also conducted research with NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Deane is also a Fellow of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment program. Upon graduation from Williams Deane wanted to obtain business experience. Consequently, she took a position as a financial risk analyst/broker at Guy Carpenter & Company – the international reinsurance arm of Marsh & McLennan Companies.

"It may be helpful to pursue opportunities outside of the environmental field…in order to develop a broad skills set before settling on one aspect or position in the [environmental] field." Danielle Deane, 2005.

She then went to London to get a Master of Science in Environment and Development. She enjoyed her experience at the London School of Economics (LSE). She was happy to be in a class with a "great group of international students," but was a little disappointed that – in her opinion – LSE didn't challenge the economic status quo. In fact, she was generally disappointed to find that all of the graduate programs that she researched seemed to be much more conservative than she had expected them to be. Deane wanted to work in the environmental field on issues that affected people of color. She wanted to be involved in ways that would influence policy. As a result, one of her mentors suggested she consider working in a foundation because they made grants and influenced policy. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation was one of those recommended to Deane. She is now a Program Officer for the Environment at the foundation where she is responsible for the New Constituencies for the Environment Program. In this position she facilitates strategic development, grant making and is responsible for the analysis, current policy, and research for proposed grants. Deane is also responsible for outreach related to the program. In this capacity she is able to influence the building of a more diverse environmental field in California.

Besides her passion and belief that she can make a difference, Deane attributes some of her success to several mentors that she has had over the years. Kai Lee, the Director for the Center of Environmental Studies at Williams, helped Deane with her intellectual development. Lee was one of Deane's thesis advisors; he was influential in helping her become academically rigorous as she developed her thinking about environmentalism. Lee is still a key advisor, and continues to guide Deane in her career decisions. Another of her thesis advisors, Jennifer Phillips, helped her to develop an international perspective. In addition, Hal Harvey, her current boss at the Hewlett Foundation, had contributed to her growth in the areas of environmental policy, philanthropy and political change in the environmental field. C. Harris, Jim Hansen, and Professor Shanti Singham have also influenced Deane's thinking about social justice issues, working with multicultural groups, politics, and Caribbean affairs.

Deane advises those seeking environmental careers to "Make sure you obtain a rigorous graduate school experience. Find strong mentors in the field and get experience in two or three different types of positions. It may be helpful to pursue opportunities outside of the environmental field; for example working in the business world for awhile in order to develop a broad skills set before settling on one aspect or position in the field.

Information in this profile was supplemented by information found on The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation website. See: http://www.hewlett.org/AboutUs/Staff/danielleDeane.htm.

Jane Delgado

(1953-Present)
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Alliance for Hispanic Health

Jane Delgado was born on June 17, 1953 to Lucy Delgado, a former factory worker. Her mother played a very important role in her life and instilled values in her that emphasized community, service, education, and faith. Her interest in the connections between the environment and health began when she was in 5th grade when she wrote a paper on smoking air pollution from busses, and their contributions to lung disease. She would carry her strong educational values with her in life.

Delgado obtained her Bachelors in Psychology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz in 1973. She got two master's degrees in Social and Personality Psychology (New York University, 1975) and Urban and Policy Sciences (W. Averell Harriman School of Urban and Policy Sciences, 1981) as well as a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (SUNY Stony Brook, 1981).

Upon graduation from college, her first job was as the Children's Talent Coordinator for the popular television show, *Sesame Street*, where she was responsible for selecting and casting the children who appeared on the show. She would later work as a senior policy analyst for the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, responding to health concerns from across the United States. Delgado dealt with environmental health issues such as the factors contributing to the rising incidence of premature puberty in Puerto Rico. One of Delgado's key mentors, the former Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Margaret Heckler, encouraged Delgado to take her current position as President and CEO of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health. Heckler told her to take the opportunity, as it was rare for women to be offered leadership positions. In her current position, Delgado has a variety of responsibilities, ranging from serving on national boards, directing research, administering budget and financial operations, advocating health policy, improving consumer health education, public speaking, and media relations. She is also a founding board member of the Ocean Awareness Project, an initiative that educates communities about the ocean and its impacts on humans.

Delgado has been successful in her career because of the inspiration of her mother and the support of her husband and daughter. She also credits her advancement to getting a good education, taking positions that matched her values, working hard and many wonderful mentors, e.g., Mary Bundy, Henrietta Villaescusa, Bruce Kresge, and John Marshall. Her greatest achievement is having "wonderful and smart people who continue to toil with [her]." The highlight of her career is knowing how well the Alliance serves Hispanics and knowing that projects are done successfully.

"I can look back and say that I've tried to make this a better world…I've maintained my principles and values."
Jane Delgado, 2005.

Delgado's work also takes her consistently into the realm of diversity, and, as a Hispanic woman, she brings a different perspective to the leadership meetings she attends. She is inclusive in all the work she does and strives to make that the norm. Delgado has mentored

younger staff people in her office, encouraging and supporting them in their professional and educational endeavors. It is for the younger generations that Delgado has stayed in the environmental field, particularly in order to make the world a better place for her daughter and for her daughter's future generations. She advises minorities interested in the environmental field to be diligent but to pick and choose what issues to work on because one person cannot fix all problems…but as she says, "You make a difference by the ones you do fix!"

Michael Dorsey

(1971-Present)
Lecturer, Dartmouth College
Board Member Sierra Club and
the Environmental Leadership Program

Michael Dorsey was born on May 28, 1971 to Michael Lee and Katherine Dorsey, former employees of the Xerox Corporation and American Airlines respectively. Dorsey grew up in the Midwest, in Michigan and Ohio. While growing up, Dorsey witnessed hyper-segregation firsthand. This early cognition of racism and segregation combined with Dorsey's involvement in the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club allowed him to develop a firm understanding of ethics, justice and the environment.

Dorsey received his Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Policy from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment in 1993. He continued his education at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where he earned his Master of Forest Science degree in 1996. Dorsey completed a second Master's degree in Anthropology at John Hopkins University. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Natural Resource Policy from the University of Michigan.

"I'm certainly interested in teaching people about the environment." Michael Dorsey, 2005.

Dorsey has always had an interest in teaching and educational systems. After finishing his BS degree at the University of Michigan, he remained on campus and taught an environmental justice course in 1994. He now holds a lecturer position at Dartmouth College in the Environmental Studies Department. Dorsey hopes to be promoted to an assistant professorship when he completes his dissertation.

While Dorsey has spent a lot of time in academia, he has also been active in the Sierra Club. Dorsey joined the Sierra Club when he was 13. His participation increased when he studied at the University of Michigan in the early 1990s because he was able to be active in the Ann Arbor chapter. As a member of the U.S. State Department delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Dorsey met Michele Perrault, an International Vice President of the Sierra Club. It was Michelle who suggested to Dorsey that he run for a position on the Board of Directors for Sierra Club. In 1994, Dorsey decided to act upon her advice and he interviewed for the position. While interviewers did not nominate him for the board position, all was not lost. Dorsey was approached by Chad Hanson the

founder of the John Muir Project to end commercial logging on public lands. Hanson suggested that Dorsey run for the board as a petition candidate. With Hanson's help, Dorsey was able to collect enough signatures to be placed on the ballot and he was soon elected to the board. Dorsey has since worked in a variety of capacities with the Sierra Club. He has also served on the board of the Environmental Leadership Program.

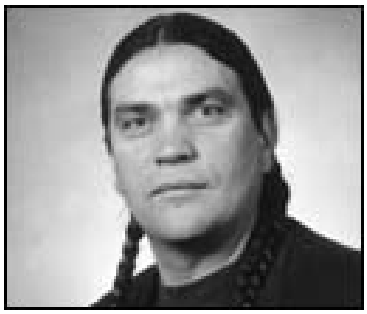
Dorsey acknowledges three individuals who played important roles in mentoring him and shaping his interests: his grandmother, Bunyan Bryant and David Brower. Dorsey's grandmother was, and still is, a trade-unionist. She previously worked for a Ford factory and is very pro-union. She understands the role of unions in balancing the inhumane treatment of workers in global capitalism. She impressed upon Dorsey that the union is an important voice of labor and thus, an important voice for the oppressed. Bunyan Bryant is Professor at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment and a pioneer in the field of Environmental Justice. Dorsey describes Bryant as being very humble, even in the face of immeasurable difficulty. Bryant helped to guide Dorsey through the maze of options and requirements in academia. Dorsey also admires David Brower whom he describes as a "lifetime environmentalist." As the founder of Friends of the Earth, League of Conservation Voters, and former Executive Director of the Sierra Club, Brower was always pursuing new avenues. Dorsey said, "What most impresses me about him is his voracious appetite for change… [He worked for change] literally until he fell in the grave." These three striking individuals provided Dorsey with much appreciated guidance and inspiration.

Dorsey's strong involvement with the Environmental Justice movement also led to an intense low point in his life. Dorsey recalled obtaining a copy of a memo from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discussing the potential of the environmental justice movement to integrate social justice, environmental justice, religion, peace, and human rights and merge these disparate constituencies. The memo urged government officials to take steps to block the environmental justice movement before it reached the "flash point" and outlined a strategy for preventing this from happening. Dorsey cried when he read the memo because it "gives you insight into how apartheid still works in this country…it was very disturbing." Despite this low point, Dorsey remained strong and active in the environmental field as the field provides a provocative means to deal with many of the world's problems.

In his capacity as a faculty member at Dartmouth College, Dorsey is in a position to provide students with advice regarding career choices and opportunities. Over the years, Dorsey has had a great variety of opportunities that have allowed him to meet, interact, and befriend a variety of people. He sees "the meaningful and insightful relations I've established with a broad cross-section of colleagues around the globe" as the highlight of his career.

Ivan Dozier

(1960-Present)
Assistant State Conservationist for Programs
Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture



Like his six brothers and sisters, Ivan Dozier was born on a small family farm in southern Illinois. In addition to being a homemaker, his mother was well versed in the use of plants and the identification of wildlife. As a result, Dozier developed an interest in the environment while he was still young. He attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he studied agriculture. Dozier then went on to obtain a master's degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield in 1992.

Dozier's first job was a part-time conservation aid position with – what was at the time – the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). He worked on and designed conservation practices. While working part-time with the SCS, there was a technician who took an interest in Dozier and made him feel that he had a future in the field. Currently the State Conservationist in Illinois serves as a role model and provides an atmosphere of acceptance and support. Dozier never forgot the affirmation he received from his first mentor, and decided to help others in the same way by being a mentor himself. He mentors minority and non-minority students and employees alike. For instance, he recruited a young American Indian man to work for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Dozier took the young man under his tutelage, guided him, kept him focused, and helped his protégé take advantage of the opportunities that came his way.

Dozier did this because he remembered what it was like to be unsure of the direction his life was taking. The first year he worked full-time with the agency was a very difficult one for him. Dozier was placed in a location four and a half hours from his hometown. Being away from his home and family for the first time and working in an office where the other employees didn't always share his values, made him question his career and place in the NRCS. At the time he didn't have an active mentor, and so he questioned what wanted to do or should be doing.

"Seeking internships and attending career fairs are a must."
Ivan Dozier, 2005.

Ultimately, he decided to stick with his career in the environmental field and with the NRCS because he realized he really enjoyed the work he was doing. After serving ten years as a District Conservationist, Dozier accepted a position working as a full-time American Indian Liaison for NRCS. He felt this job allowed him to blend his cultural background and educational experience and use them in his work. He kept that position for three years before moving into his current one. Dozier also moved to another location and found that there were people there who shared his values. This made him feel more comfortable and confident in his

situation. Dozier is currently an Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. He feels that the agency does good things for people and the earth as a whole; he is satisfied with the conservation programs. "The higher you go in rank and…[the more] experience [you have], the more influence you can have on a particular office. That allows you to 'sell' certain parts of programs…emphasizing the importance of native plants for instance…you are able to share that interest.'" Dozier enjoys being able to bring people together and help them to see new perspectives on their resource management plans; '"[t]here is satisfaction in seeing the 'light' come on,'" he says.

Dozier served on the Illinois NRCS State Civil Rights Committee for seven years; he also had the responsibilities of being the American Indian Special Emphasis Program Manager for several years. That service eventually led to a nomination for a position on NRCS' National Civil Rights Committee which he received and kept for three years. The committee was charged with diversity issues and deciding what could be done to improve minority participation in the field and the agency. They used employment data to inform them and brainstormed about recruitment and retention. Dozier says, "It's a challenge because there are not many minorities involved in conventional agriculture." He suggests that individuals interested in a career in the environmental field start the discovery process early because the government hiring process can be intimidating. "Not knowing what was out there was a big part of the frustration but I eventually realized that it [the government hiring process] is not as complicated as some [think]…Seeking internships and attending career fairs are a must."

Dan Durett

(1950-Present)
Director of the Minority Programs Office
National Council for Science and the Environment
President of the Board
Council for U.S. Land Care Initiative

Photo credit: NCSE website

Born in 1950, Dan Durett was raised in Brooklyn, New York in the Marcy Public Housing Projects. As a result he realized that no matter where you come from, you don't have to be limited by your circumstances. Durett's mother, a nurse's aid and his father, a maintenance worker, raised him and his five siblings. He was President of his the Senior Class of Eastern District High School. He also received the John F. Kennedy Citizenship Award in 1968. He attended the State University of New York at Binghamton, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in history. He later earned a master's degree in history from Atlanta University in 1973. Durett also did graduate studies at Emory University – completing it in 1976. While at Emory, he became interested in the environmental field because of his work in historic preservation and urban environmental issues.

In 1975 Durett began working in the conservation field when the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office asked him to help put together the nominations for Martin Luther King, Jr. National Landmark and Atlanta University's National Register Historic District.

In 1978 Durett became the Technical Preservation Historian to the National Park Service's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS). After leaving the HCRS, he joined the staff of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There he established the Minority Heritage Initiative – a program intended to introduce diversity issues into the National Trust's outreach efforts.

He continued working in conservation and during the 1980s the Department of Recreation and Parks as well as the Parks and People Foundation in Baltimore asked him to assist in raising funds from public and private sources to help revitalize the city's parks and recreation resources. While working on this project, Durett wrote the Druid Hill Park Impact Study.

From 1995-1998, Durett worked with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and while there, he established the Department of Environmental Education Programs (DEEP). DEEP's work centered on a $5 million EPA-funded Program for Environmental Justice Education and Research (PJER) that helped 75 percent of UNCF institutions to engage in environmental activities on the campuses and in the communities.

Durett also helped to establish Strategy for Ecology Education Development and Sustainability (SEEDS) in 1996. SEEDS -- funded by the Mellon Foundation – grew out of a partnership with the Ecological Society of America (ESA). The goal of SEEDS is to increase the number of minority students studying and pursuing careers in ecology. SEEDS was one of the first attempts to develop collaborative efforts with a scientific professional association like ESA and a consortium of historically black colleges and universities. Since the program's inception, ESA chapters have been established in 18 minority-serving institutions. Durett began another program in 1997. The program, funded by the Hutson Endowment, was a partnership with the Texas Consortium for Water Quality Research and four Texas-based minority-serving institutions. This program involved students at four Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Texas doing water quality research in minority areas.

Durett also developed the Building Environmental Stewardship (BES) project in 1997. The program – funded by the Department of Energy – was a partnership with Second Nature. The idea was to bring together UNCF institutions to work on issues of sustainability. BES also sought to provide technical assistance and networking opportunities to participants.

Durett also helped to establish the CSX Scholars Program in 1998. This program arose out of a collaborative effort between UNCF, the National Audubon Society and CSX. The $1.5 million scholarship program provided one-year renewable scholarships to outstanding students at historically black colleges and universities plus paid summer internships at CSX and the Audubon.

Durett is currently the Director of the Minority Programs Office for the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) and is responsible for outreach at minority serving institutions. He works with their science departments on campus, assisting the students in understanding the range of federal programs that can help them.

Durett is also a mentor to aspiring youth. He encourages students to pursue advanced degrees and recognize that every challenge can also be an opportunity.

His experience has given him national and international exposure. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Second Annual Norman A. Berg Award, a national award presented by the Soil and Water Conservation Society. He is now the President of the Board of the Council for U.S. Land Care Initiative – the first person of color to hold such a position in a national organization of this type.

Durett was mentored by Dr. Clarence A. Bacoate, the chair of the history department at Clark Atlanta University. Bacoate encouraged his students to ask questions and work hard. Durett also saw Bacoate as

a very courageous man who fought to dismantle segregation in Atlanta.

"I have a very comprehensive perspective when it comes to the environment." Dan Durett, 2005.

Durett has enjoyed mentoring students over the years. He counts it as one of the many highlights of his career. The biggest highlight of Durett's career, however, was meeting Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg, South Africa at the presidential palace in 1998. Durett was there to present a paper on environmental issues and policy at an international conference, the African and African-American Summit. Meeting Mr. Mandela was a great honor for Durett and one he says he will never forget.

Durett has also experienced some discouraging moments in his career. He cites the lowest point of his career as the fact that diversity is not yet realized today. "We're still fighting the same demons in terms of racism and expanding diversity," he says. He has experienced racism in his life and in some aspects of his career, however, Durett remains in the environmental field because he has been able to "see the difference one individual can make." This includes the mainstream environmental movement as well as schools and places of employment. "I have a very comprehensive perspective when it comes to the environment." Durett's most significant achievement has been "inspiring young people to recognize that they can do what I've done and better." He is also proud that he is encouraging of faculty as well students. He advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field to do the best they can and not settle for less.

This profile was supplemented with information from "Dan Durett – Biography," http://www.swcs-nationalcapital.org/Durett_Bio.htm.

Dudley Edmondson

(1962-Present
Freelance Wildlife Photographer

Photo credit: Raptor Works website

Dudley Edmondson was born in 1962. Edmondson and his two siblings were raised by their parents Doug, a retired steel-worker and Betty, a housewife in Columbus, Ohio. Growing up, Edmondson was exposed to nature and the outdoors constantly. During those times, Edmondson found comfort, peace and quiet. "Getting outdoors on family picnics that were usually every other weekend was my way of exploring the world." Thus began is lifelong love of nature and the environment.

Edmondson currently works part-time as a pharmacy technician at SMBC Pharmacy. He spends the remainder of his time doing wildlife photography. He has worked as a pharmacy technician and photographer for

the last fifteen years. Edmondson says he began doing photography because "… I was looking for way to meld the things I was interested in." He loved nature, being outdoors and wildlife. He also loved art and being creative. Thus the camera was a tool for him to blend art with the outdoors. He started using his art professionally by taking lots of photos and submitting them to various magazines across the country. These were mostly bird magazines; early on he also submitted articles with his photos. That, he says, was the easiest way to have his photos featured.

In 1997, he began submitting photos for picture books and bird guides. It was at that time that he met and began to work with an author of nature books, Stan Tekiela and Adventure Publications. Tekiela wrote field guides to the birds, flowers and trees for each state around the country. Edmondson took most of the photos that were featured in those books. The partnership with Tekiela and Adventure Publications lasted until 2003

The partnership was a great opportunity for him personally and financially. It allowed him to begin working on his own wildlife book. It also allowed him to travel, do what he loved and get paid for it. Edmondson has traveled all over the continent from Nome, Alaska and Churchill, Manitoba to Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada. He has also spent time photographing subjects from the Texas coast to the southeastern mangrove swamps of Florida. There are few habitats that he has not worked in.

At the time the partnership between Edmondson, Tekiela and Adventure Publications ended, he branched out on his own and pursued his dream more fully. This project has been both exciting and frightening for him. Edmondson has never written a book before. He is confident, however, that the end result will reflect the knowledge of and respect he has for wildlife. Edmondson has had many great moments throughout his career but this book, once completed, will be the highlight of his career. He considers it to be his most significant achievement. "My book project, it's very important to me."

Edmondson did not have mentors but he did have "heroes" or role models that he looked up to. The first being Myles Davis, jazz musician, who Edmondson says was an inspiration. "Myles Davis believed in staying true to your self no matter what others said or thought." Edmondson has incorporated this belief into his life and his craft. Another role model for Edmondson is Gordon Parks. Parks was the only famous black photographer that Edmondson knew of as a youth who was successfully living off of his art.

"You're not going to make lots of money but there is peace of mind, and you realize that getting in the field is not for money but for quality of life and the occupation." Dudley Edmondson, 2005.

Edmondson has not been a formal mentor. He has, however, participated in a few workshops that allowed him to speak to young minority students about what he does as a photographer and how rewarding it is. He is also a member of an African-American men's group that raises funds to give scholarships to minority students who are pursuing career in law enforcement. Their goal is to try to diversify law enforcement.

Edmondson advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field to keep in mind that a career should be fulfilling, despite the salary. "You're not going to make lots of money but there is peace of mind, and you realize that getting in the field is not for money but for quality of life and the occupation." He also warns them not to let the views of others hinder them from pursuing a career in the environmental field. He has encountered that as a youth and as an adult and knows how disheartening it is to have others look down on your dreams. Even if it means pursuing a dream without

support, one must have courage to do it alone. "…if its something they really want to do, then they should figure out how to do it on their own [if they have to]."

This profile was supplemented by information from the Raptor Works website. See: http://www.raptorworks.com/aboutme.html.

Torri Estrada

(1969-Present)
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Torri Estrada – the youngest of six children – was born on November 13, 1969 to Lionel and Harlean Estrada. Growing up in Montclair, California, made Estrada him keenly aware of altered landscapes, pollution, and the environment. It also influenced his career path.

Estrada's interest in environmental justice was peaked when he took a class taught by Carl Anthony at University of California, Berkeley. Estrada earned a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science Policy Management and Anthropology from Berkeley in 1992. While in college he was a volunteer in a student group which worked on environmental justice issues. After graduation from Berkeley, Estrada worked in a variety of positions, including work as an environmental educator in Oakland, California; a diversity coordinator for the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) and a brownfields redevelopment analyst for the Urban Habitat Program. In 1995 Estrada decided to pursue graduate studies by enrolling in the master's program at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. While there he specialized in environmental justice.

Estrada is currently a Program Officer with the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock. He believes that a key social-change strategy is to fund the work of community-based organizations. His grantmaking work supports environmental justice, reproductive rights, immigrant organizing, criminal justice, globalization and global justice, and media reform work.

While Estrada is committed to – and proud of – his current position at Veatch, he cites his position with the Urban Habitat Program as the highlight of his career. In that position, he gained a tremendous amount of knowledge while working for an organization that was run by people of color. However, he does acknowledge that upon moving away from the West Coast, he felt detached from his work and unsure of what to do. He thinks of this time period as the low point of his career.

"A key social-change strategy is to fund community-based organizations." Torri Estrada, 2005.

Estrada's mentors have been critical to his success. One of his mentors, Carl Anthony, has been a role model and a leader in the movement environmental and racial justice. He also credits a colleague with showing him the ropes of how to do environmental consulting work. Estrada is constantly seeking new

mentors. In turn, he mentors to others. For instance, he remains in contact with many of the students who participated in the environmental education program he ran. Further, as a graduate student at the University of Michigan, he was a leader in an environmental justice group. Through this group, he mentored undergraduates and trained them to do community-based work. He has also had the opportunity to mentor many women of color as well as a result of his many endeavors. Estrada cites his role in mentoring emerging leaders as his most significant achievement.

In addition to his work as a mentor, Estrada has been involved in a variety of programs related to diversity. His position with the ECO was as the diversity coordinator where he was able to advocate for people of color. He is also on the board of the Environmental Leadership Program headquartered in New Haven, Connecticut. This group is working on the development of an anti-racism/discrimination curriculum. He is also actively encouraging communities and organizations of color to build alliances together.

Estrada encourages individuals interested in the environmental field to recognize that the field is broad and can be incorporated into many issues and organizations. Environmental work can be found in many places that address social or racial justice. Many people of color can be found doing environmental work in a host of non-profit organizations. However, Estrada does warn that work in the mainstream environmental field may be lonely for people of color. He suggests building a network of individuals that one can turn to for support and to make it a priority to stay in touch with these people.

Beryl Fernandes

President
Fernandes & Associates, Inc.
Member of the Seattle Planning Commission
Member of the King County Growth Management Commission

Beryl Fernandes was born and raised in Zanzibar, East Africa and has since spent the majority of her life in Seattle, Washington. Beryl grew up with five brothers while her father worked for the government; her mother was a housewife. Coming from a family with no funds to send children to college, she learned to be self-reliant at an early age. She earned scholarships to Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Fernandes earned a Bachelor's of Arts in Philosophy with a minor in sociology. She later got an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in urban planning and environmental engineering from the University of Washington in Seattle. Beryl is an avid outdoors person and appreciates having well-preserved, natural environments in which to hike, backpack, climb, ski, kayak, run, and cycle.

Beryl became interested in a career in the environment when she and some of her neighbors worked to restore Thornton Creek, a polluted urban stream that drained into Lake Washington. This effort began a discussion about developing a mechanism to addresses other urban drainage problems; the campaign culminated in the establishment of the Seattle Drainage

Utility. This project was a catalyst for Fernandes, exposing her to the scientific as well as the socio-political issues involved in doing environmental work. The project left a lasting appreciation for the work, the challenges of citizen volunteers and the need to approach environmental stewardship from a community-based perspective. The Thornton Creek project also highlighted the interconnectedness of multiple disciplines and perspectives and shaped Beryl's decision to pursue an interdisciplinary doctorate.

Fernandes' first environmental job was as a county recycling policy manager, followed by the positions of lead policy analyst and advisor to the Snohomish County Council and Seattle City Council. She was also the Executive Director of the Seattle Urban Resources Partnership, a program that used federal grants with local matches to fund environmental projects specifically earmarked for low-income, inner city communities. She has also served as Regional Director for the Washington State Department of Ecology, as well as headed her own consulting firm.

Fernandes is currently the president of Fernandes & Associates, Inc., an urban, regional and environmental planning consulting firm in Seattle. Her consulting projects range from environmental and community conflict resolution and mediation, to collaborative planning, multi-cultural community engagement, sustainable development, environmental impact analysis, urban planning, policy analysis and development, and program evaluation. Fernandes has worked on contentious projects in which she succeeded in bringing about mutually satisfying solutions, resulting in long-term collaboration among opponents.

She has also lectured and conducted seminars for professionals and students. Fernandes has served on numerous boards and commissions, including the Seattle Planning Commission, and the King Country Growth Management Commission. Beryl has always maintained an active presence and contact with low-income communities and with communities of color through volunteer work. She has been an outdoor activity leader – taking inner-city kids and juvenile offenders hiking, back packing, and snowshoeing. She also volunteers with projects providing access to technology and training for inner-city youths.

Fernandes cites Brian Mar, her first professor of color, as her mentor. He was the first person to take an interest in her academically and professionally, "he was a brilliant, creative scholar who encouraged and supported me as I charted my own course in the field." Mar's influence has helped Beryl to stick with a career in the environment, despite the enormous challenges of being the first and only person of color in most of the environmental jobs she has held. Fernades emphasizes that the perspectives that people of color bring to the field are often unique, invaluable, and under-appreciated. "A look at the demographic make-up of our communities, with the large, growing minority populations very quickly suggests that the inclusion of minorities in the environmental field, their engagement in developing solutions, is not only desirable – but indispensable."

Fernandes is a strong supporter of mentoring programs and has been a mentor to minority students from elementary to university levels. She has provided them with access and exposure to the environmental field through outdoor activities, urban stream restoration, and community garden projects. Beryl has offered guidance to her mentees and has helped place people in various job positions, stressing the importance of helping others in a similar way. "To be effective in the environmental world, the environmental field needs to be based not only in science but in a number of disciplines, depending on the project or problem."

The highlight of Beryl Fernandes' career came when she had the opportunity to provide environmental grant funds to low-income, inner-city communities of color so that they could develop their projects. "It was incredibly satisfying to work with youth and adults of color and share their excitement in participating in

environmental stewardship." Additional highlights include being asked to brief cabinet members in Washington, DC and an award for outstanding service from the former Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, James Lyons. The lowest point of Fernandes' career was realizing that there has been very little progress in diversifying the environmental profession in the twenty-first century.

Despite the challenges, Beryl Fernandes has remained in the environmental field and has accomplished a great deal. She has been recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for her work and is confident that she has been an effective mentor and role model for many young people of color. Fernandes considers her role in providing access and exposure to other people of color, especially youth, into the environmental field a significant achievement. She also cites her role in bringing attention to the lack of diversity in the field and the negative impact this has on minority communities as another major achievement. Fernandes has been involved in diversity programs with the University of Washington, the American Planning Association, The Professional Planner's Council, inner-city youth outdoor leadership programs, the state of Washington governor's office, and in legislative and natural resource agencies.

Fernandes cautions minorities considering a career in the environmental field that getting into environmental professions can be tough because the job descriptions and criteria for success tend to favor those already in the agencies or organizations. "Survival can also be a challenge because there are so few minorities and often little support from others." Going in prepared for an insulated field with few people of color can help, especially if one acts proactively to develop an appropriate support network. Fernandes continues to develop networks to improve the diversification of the environmental field and she continues working on empowering people of all ages who have worked with her.

Myron Floyd

(1960-Present)
Associate Professor
Recreation, Parks and Tourism Management
North Carolina State University

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Myron Floyd was born on January 23, 1960 in South Carolina. He is the youngest child of Stephen and Ernestine, a farmer and carpenter and a school teacher, respectively. In retrospect, Floyd recognizes that growing up in a rural, farming community influenced his decision to pursue an environmental career. Large, cultivated lands make him feel at home and he is attached to the mix of farmland and countryside.

Floyd earned his bachelors degree in Recreation and Park Administration from Clemson University in 1983. After working as a Park Ranger in the South Carolina State Park Service doing primarily maintenance work and some interpretation, he was promoted to a park management position. However, he felt that there was more for him to do. Thus, he did a master's degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at Clemson University in 1986. He

completed his Ph.D. from Texas A&M in 1991; he focused on recreation and resource development for his doctorate.

After completing his doctorate, Floyd returned to Clemson as a faculty member. Since then he has been on the faculty of Texas A&M and the University of Florida. He recently accepted a position at North Carolina State University and will begin teaching there in fall 2005. Throughout his career, his research has focused on methodology and contemporary theories in recreation and leisure.

As Floyd has progressed through the academic ranks, several individuals have served as mentors for him; Robert Becker, Frances McGuire, Richard Conover, and James Gramman. Robert Becker was Floyd's master's advisor. He was very influential in shaping Floyd's work by providing not only advice but also funding for Floyd's research projects. Dr. Frances McGuire was an integral member of Floyd's thesis committee while Dr. Richard Conover exposed him to the politics of natural resources and outdoor recreation. James Gramman was Floyd's Ph.D. advisor. He served as a steady, positive role model for Floyd. Floyd also acknowledges that are many additional people that have been quick to give advice when called upon.

As a faculty member, Floyd is in a position to mentor and work with promising students. He has served on masters and doctoral committees for students. He encourages students who demonstrate the potential to be great environmentalists. He accomplishes this by involving them in his research and teaching as well as by making them aware of the opportunities that are available to them. He believes that the environmental field is a good way to go and regularly encourages students to consider environmental careers. Floyd believes that the field is often overlooked which is sad because the field is filled with potential great opportunities. As he makes his move to North Carolina State University, the idea of mentoring is on his mind. He hopes to advise more students of color who are interested in environmental science and environmental justice.

"It's always good to be in a position where you can help people and give something back." Myron Floyd, 2005.

As a minority male, Floyd recognizes that he has not always received the level of respect that he should receive as a professor. He has found that individuals are often not as forgiving of minor mistakes and can be very critical. Those times are noticeable and discouraging. However, he notes that once he gets to know people that often changes. His advisors prepared him for this; he makes a point of reaching out to young people in the field to help prepare them for what they are likely to encounter professionally. As Floyd sees it, "It is important that they have someone to identify with as it can be rough being the only black faculty member in a department."

While Floyd believes that he has not yet seen the greatest moment of his career, he has enjoyed his work to date. Regarding the environment, Floyd says, "It's good work, helping people. It challenges you intellectually and emotionally as you work with people who are different than you. I'm naturally curious. I like learning and reading. The quest for knowledge is what motivates me. When you get an article or a grant proposal accepted, those are the small things that are great about this. It's always good to be in a position where you can help people and give something back. It's something we all need and I like being in this position where I can influence others and help others reach their goals. In turn, I hope they'll do the same thing."

Rory Fraser

(1953-Present)
Associate Professor
Alabama A&M University
Department of Plant and Soil Science
Director for the Center for Forestry and Ecosystem Assessment

Photo credit: Alabama A&M website

Rory Fraser was born in Guyana on September 5, 1953. He is the second of five children of the late George Fraser, a former diplomatic service employee and lawyer, and the late Bhanu Fraser, a former geography teacher. Growing up in Guyana was a major influence in his decision to pursue an environmental career, as Fraser always lived close to nature. While he was a youngster the country was heavily forested so Fraser developed an interest in forest resources at a young age. As a high school student, he worked for the Forest Commission in Guyana and later he worked as a science teacher. His informal mentors included the Chief of the Forest Service in Guyana, who played an important role in arranging a scholarship for him to attend the University of New Brunswick in Canada at the age of 25.

During his time as an undergraduate he held several summer internships, including work with the Canadian Forest Service Laboratory, a sawmill project in Guyana, and a project at Virginia Tech working on improving the strength of materials. He graduated from college and worked as an Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer of a forestry company in Jamaica for three years. This experience gave him an extensive overview of the forest products industry – from tree plantings to marketing.

Later, with the encouragement from his Virginia Tech internship supervisor, he returned to school. He decided to pursue a master's degree and a doctorate in Forestry Services from the Pennsylvania State University. Upon completing his coursework in 1991, he decided to leave Penn State to work as an international trade specialist at the West Virginia University while finishing his dissertation.

After graduating in 1993, the former Director of the Forest Economics Program at West Virginia University offered him a teaching position. His appointment came at a time when the Society of American Foresters (SAF) was pressuring the University to recruit more minorities to serve on the faculty and to attend the university. This caused escalating tensions during Dr. Fraser's last two years in the department. Fraser often felt that some of his colleagues viewed him simply as a minority hire who lacked the merits of other faculty.

At the low point in his career, he left this position after five years and seriously questioned whether he should return to academia. He felt quite disenchanted with the systems of preference and racism in the United States. Fraser decided to continue in academia. He found another teaching position in 2000 at Alabama A&M University's Department of Plant and Soil Science. Fraser found this position far more rewarding. One of the missions of Alabama A&M was enhancing the diversity of the forestry profession. At the time Fraser was hired, the university was also in the process of obtaining the SAF accreditation, a move that would it the first of the 1890 institution to achieve such a status.

Fraser has served as Interim Director of their Center for Forest Ecology and is currently the Director of their Center for Ecosystem Assessment. He is the Principal Investigator in several major projects, including a five-million-dollar, five- year project sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Considered the highlight of his career, this grant funds a major environmental impact assessment study of Bankhead National Forest, as well as an initiative to increase the number of African Americans involved in science and engineering. He also works on a project designed to train minority landowners about land management. Currently, Fraser is also part of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Leadership Program, which assists colleges and universities in adapting to the changing economy and its impacts on agriculture. He selected the President of Alabama A& M University to be his sponsor for this initiative.

"For students of color, it is particularly important for them to develop confidence in their ability to work in situations where they are in the minority and to be prepared to handle the challenges associated with race relations." Rory Fraser, 2005.

Fraser has had several mentors during his career. At the Pennsylvania State University, professors such as Dr. L. Yapa in the Geography Department and lecturers and philosophers associated with the Science, Technology, and Society Program, such as the late Ivan Illich, broadened Fraser's perspective of his field. He graduated with a better understanding of the impacts of environmental services on social welfare and economic development for developing countries.

Fraser has taken his vast knowledge and experience and has used it to develop new leaders. One of the reasons he has remained in the environmental field is his desire to give back to others, as many individuals have assisted him throughout his career. He also enjoys his work and sees his role as encouraging cultural diversity in environmental management.

Currently, he participates in the Cultural Diversity Working Group for the National Network of Forest Practitioners and the SAF's Committee on Cultural Diversity. He also mentors several current and former students, as well as faculty. He believes that every student entering his department should be guaranteed a job upon leaving. Fraser utilizes his professional networks with government agencies, such as the United States Forest Service and the Alabama Forest Commission, and private industry to connect students with employment opportunities. He advises students interested in environmental careers to be fully committed to their work and to try new experiences. For students of color, he feels it is particularly important for them to develop confidence in their ability to work in situations where they are in the minority and to be prepared to handle the challenges associated with race relations.

Clarice Gaylord (Retired)

(1943-Present)
Former Director of Environmental Grants
Former Director of the Office of Environmental Justice
Environmental Protection Agency

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Clarice Gaylord, a native of Los Angeles, California, is the second eldest daughter of ten children. Gaylord was born on April 14, 1943, to Clarence Armstrong (deceased), a longshoreman, and Willa Mae Armstrong, a homemaker. After graduating from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) with a bachelor's degree in zoology, Gaylord went on to obtain a doctorate degree from Howard University in 1971.

In just a few minutes of conversation with Gaylord, it is not hard to see where she gets her ambition and drive. Being one of the oldest children in the household, Gaylord had a great deal of responsibility assisting with everyday chores and tasks. Her parents were also a great influence in Gaylord's success. She praises her mother for being outgoing, religious, caring, and a very active community worker. She credits her hard working, practical, and grounded father for instilling a strong work ethic. Some of the most noteworthy lessons that Gaylord learned from her parents were to be humble, to treat others as equals, and most importantly, always be approachable. Gaylord also states that her grandmother influenced her quite a bit. She saw her grandmother as the epitome of strength. Gaylord's grandmother was tough, and very committed to being active in the community.

Despite the stable foundation her family built for her, Gaylord always felt that there was something else out there for her. After graduating from UCLA, she moved away from home, but she never lost sight of the values that her parents had instilled in her, and she always applied them to her work. After 32 years of living on the East Coast, Gaylord returned home when her parents fell ill.

During her time away, Gaylord accomplished many things. Her first position was that of a Health Science Administrator at the National Cancer Institute. There, Gaylord was an administrator for the Tumor-Immunology Program. Through this program, Gaylord researched the immunology of the Epstein Barr Virus, Leukemia Virus, and the Mammary Tumor Virus in mice with cancer. In 1984, the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Research and Development came to the National Cancer Institute looking for minorities to work in his program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He offered Gaylord a job as the Director of the Environmental Grants Program. It was then that Gaylord began to consider working in the environmental field. Working for the EPA exposed Gaylord to issues pertaining to public health and environmental issues.

Gaylord's career has not always been smooth sailing. After completing her senior executive training at the EPA, Gaylord encountered difficulties obtaining the executive positions the training had prepared her for. She watched as others in the organization who went through the same training program got executive positions. As one of the first minority women to go through the program, Gaylord found that she had to deal with an agency unwilling to place her in executive positions. However, after much protesting, Gaylord

decided to use her experience to help change the way minorities were treated in the agency.

Things started to look up in 1992, when Gaylord became the first Director of the EPA's newly-created Office of Environmental Justice. She served in this position for five years. Unfortunately, environmental justice had its critics, and there were several attempts to eradicate the program. Several groups investigated the program. The budget was even revoked at one time. Through the contacts she had built over the years, Gaylord was able to keep the program afloat by getting funding with the help of the Congressional Black Caucus. This was a defining moment in her career that influenced her to continue to work in the field of environmental justice.

"Stay focused. It's important to get diversified work experience in the environmental field. Strive to meet your potential and go beyond. Be sure to get good mentors to help you be as powerful as possible. And make allies of people who are really interested in you and your work. Give back to the community once you've achieved your goal." Clarice Gaylord, 2004.

Gaylord is very dedicated to diversity and the empowerment of minorities in the environmental field. During her tenure at the EPA, she implemented several programs to help promote diversity within the EPA. In 1985, Gaylord started an EPA-sponsored college Minority Intern Program through the Environmental Careers Organization. This program placed minority students in summer internships with the EPA. The program also paid full tuition of students attending Historically Black Colleges and Hispanic Serving Colleges wanting to pursue environmental careers. Although the EPA changed the program in 1990, to include tuition compensation for students attending all types of colleges, the program is still running. Gaylord also served as Chair of the Minority College Diversity Initiative at EPA. Through this exchange program, EPA program officers adopted minority colleges, exchanged personnel, donated supplies and equipment, hired students, and developed lecture series, etc. The Minority College Diversity Initiative is a collaborative effort between the EPA and minority-serving institutions. It began in 1985 and is still in existence today.

This initiative also functioned as a college training program for secretaries at the EPA. The initiative helped the agency to utilize talent that already exists within the institution. At the same time it also provided opportunities for upward mobility for people already working in agency. Many secretaries obtained college degrees through the program and were able to get professional positions through Gaylord's program. In addition, the EPA's Internship program also helped minorities get into managerial positions.

When asked to give advice to minorities considering a career in the environmental field, Gaylord responded by saying that minorities should "Stay focused. It's important to get diversified work experience in the environmental field. Strive to meet your potential and go beyond. Be sure to get good mentors to help you be as powerful as possible. And make allies of people who are really interested in you and your work. Give back to the community once you've achieved your goal."

Throughout the course of her career, Gaylord has had several influential people in her life, and likewise, she has influenced others. Her parents and grandmother gave her the inspiration and drive to jump-start her career, but there have also been many people who have influenced and helped Gaylord's career along the way. Chris Holmes, Assistant Administrator of Administration at the EPA, supported and funded the new Office of Environmental Justice. Gaylord also recognizes William Reilly who appointed her the first Director of the

office of Environmental Justice. Charles Grizzle also played a key role in Gaylord's success. And finally, it Was Felicia Marcus, EPA's Regional Administrator for Region Nine who placed Gaylord in the San Diego Office to help her finish her last three years of her career with the agency. She served as a Senior Policy Analyst while in San Diego.

There have been many people who have aided Gaylord throughout the years, and she tries to do the same for young people starting out in the environmental field. As Gaylord states, "I've always had an open-door policy. I've made recommendations for people coming in who were interested in getting into various special training programs. I mentored everyone, particularly minorities and women who sought career advice and guidance. It was important to serve as a role model to aspiring young professionals in and outside the agency." She has done all that she could to ensure that others do not have to deal with the same injustices she faced.

Clarice Gaylord is an astounding woman. From her humble beginnings as the daughter of a hardworking longshoreman, and a homemaker, Clarice Gaylord has achieved greatness. Overall, Clarice Gaylord has been a great asset to her community.

Frank Gonzalez

(1939-Present)
Leader and Chief Scientist
Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Photo credit: PMEL website

Frank Gonzalez was born in 1939 to Frank Gonzalez Sr. (deceased), a sheet metal worker, and Catherine Sanchez Gonzalez, a piece worker in a box factory. He grew up in San Antonio, Texas with his parents and younger brother and sister. Gonzalez remembers educational opportunities being very limited and extremely expensive in San Antonio when he was coming of age. Thus, after completing high school in 1957, he enlisted in the Marine Corps for three years. Gonzalez was stationed at a base in Guantanamo Bay. Marines were not allowed to leave the base due to poor relations with Cuba, so the soldiers turned to recreational water sports such as snorkeling and scuba diving for entertainment. By participating in these sports, Gonzalez became fascinated with the ocean. Although he did not know it at the time, he would turn his fascination with the sea into a career.

After his stint with the Marine Corps, Gonzalez returned and attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio, where he studied Physics. He says he was "heavy into the hard sciences," but eventually grew tired of working with things that he could not touch. Soon after, he decided to pursue another course of work in physical oceanography. Through this scientific study, Gonzalez was able to apply his expertise of physics to the ocean, and the rest is history. Gonzalez accepted a research assistantship with the department of oceanography at the University of Hawaii, where he was later awarded a master's degree in 1971 for his study

of tropical estuarine physics, and a Ph.D. in 1974 for his work on long ocean wave theory.

According to Gonzalez, scientists are governed in large part by the research that they do, the papers they publish and the leadership responsibilities that they take on. These are all factors that have led to his promotions. In 1977, he accepted his present position with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL) in Seattle, Washington, where his research has focused on the observation and understanding of hazardous ocean waves of all types. He is currently Leader and Chief Scientist of the PMEL Tsunami Research Program and has succeeded in establishing the first deep-sea tsunami-monitoring network on the bottom of the northeastern portion of the Pacific Ocean. PMEL staff work with state governments and state scientists to develop observational systems and Tsunami Forecast systems to reduce the hazards that tsunamis pose to people who live on the coast. In addition to his domestic work, Gonzalez has extended his expertise overseas.

In 1984 he received NOAA's highest award for outstanding research--the NOAA Administrator's Award--for his work on hazardous ocean waves. He was an integral part of the field surveys done after the tsunamis that devastated Nicaragua, Indonesia, and Japan.

As for those people who have helped him get to where he is today, Gonzalez believes that his master's and Ph.D. advisors were his mentors. He says that they shaped his scientific and life philosophies. Now he serves as a mentor to the people who work for him. He makes an effort to hire women and minorities on his research team and gives them advice on topics ranging from life issues to career strategies. He is proud of his relationship with his team; it allows him to be both a mentor and a supervisor to them. He makes it a point to give his employees challenging work and rewards them generously for their hard work and effort. Gonzalez also supports diversity through his membership in the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS).

"Everybody is dedicated here, so there is no question that our work makes a difference." Frank Gonzalez, 2004.

So far, Gonzalez cannot cite a low point in his career. He is very satisfied that he has made a contribution and that his work has always been interesting and exciting. He simply says, "You're always learning, so that's been good."

Frank Gonzalez says that he has had many highlights throughout his career. He is proud that PMEL won a NOAA gold medal for tsunami research. He also says that his experience with Seasat was fascinating. This was the first Earth-orbiting satellite designed for remote sensing of the Earth's oceans that housed the first space-borne synthetic aperture radar (SAR). Gonzalez continues to work in the environmental field because his research team tasks are very important. They are a part of an effort to save property and lives. It is a worthwhile effort in his opinion. "Everybody here is dedicated, so there is no question that our work makes a difference."

Jeffrey L. Gray

(1953-Present)
Senior Associate
Associates in Rural Development
Chair, Food Aid Management Steering Committee

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Jeffrey Gray was born on a military base in North Carolina and was raised in Philadelphia. He began his career as a US Peace Corps volunteer after graduating with his bachelor's degree in political science from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. His three years in the Republic of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) was an eye-opening experience. It helped him gain a better understanding and appreciation of the natural environment around him. He completed a fourth year with the Peace Corps in the US as a recruiter; this cemented his own experiences and interest in pursuing international development work as a career.

For the next 19 years he worked with Africare, an international volunteer organization founded and run by African-Americans. For the first time in his life, he did not feel like a minority. He credits much of his career development to Africare, beginning as a logistician, then administrator, then working his way up to country representative. His work involved tackling important development issues in the African Sahel, namely water supply, farming, agro-forestry, and wind erosion among others.

"As you get involved in the environmental work, you will find that there are many ways you can do it, and it can touch your life and the lives of others." Jeffrey Gray, 2005.

In Africa, he was confronted with the challenges the environment posed on a daily basis, such as the need of villagers for improved water supply and increased food production. The Kaolack Agriculture Enterprise Development (KAED) program perhaps had the single most influence on Gray, where he worked with the community to improve agricultural practices. This project carried out field trials, demonstrating how to turn marginal land into productive agricultural plots that produced crops such as peanuts and millet for personal consumption and sale through the use of natural fertilizers such as composting and manure. This program demonstrated the economic viability of environmental improvements and sustainable development in rural African farming communities. From 1993 to 2001, when Gray left Africare, he was Director of Francophone Africa, overseeing projects in nine African countries. While working at Africare, Gray completed a Masters degree in international administration (graduating magna cum laude) from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

From 2001 to 2003, Gray was Vice President for Food Security at Opportunities Industrialization Center International (OICI). At OICI he oversaw the daily operations of a $ 43.4 million portfolio of development projects in Africa. Working in a competitive environment, Gray conceptualized strategies and interventions that responded to the donor requirements and host government needs. He met with high-level government officials to discuss OICI's development work and negotiated government commitment and financial

support. Gray also managed and mentored a pool of technical specialists that served on multi-national teams.

More recently, Gray became a Senior Associate at Associates in Rural Development (ARD) Inc. ARD Inc. provides consulting services in the form of planning, design, project implementation, and applied research in the five areas of agricultural development, natural resources and environmental management, infrastructure development, institutional development, and information and knowledge management. At ARD, he designs programs and markets ARD consulting services to organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, US Trade Department and others in the area of agriculture, natural resources and environmental management.

Working with the US Peace Corps and two African-American private institutions in African countries has allowed Gray to develop an appreciation of people form a diverse backgrounds and cultures, and fueled a desire to continue to provide services that help people.

Gray's mentors include C. Payne Locus (President and Founder of Africare), Joseph C. Kennedy (Vice President of Africare), Robert Wilson (Regional Director for West Africa at Africare), and the many Africans he came in contact with during his 11 years there. They helped develop his knowledge of agriculture, as well as underscored the importance of connecting Africans with the African Diaspora around the world. His mentors also instilled in him the importance of institutional development and helped him develop his fundraising skills. For his part, Gray enjoys mentoring young people, and considers this one of his greatest contributions. The highlights of Gray's career occurs with the building of wells or vegetable gardens in rural villages or the completion of projects designed to let villagers take full ownership and management of projects.

Perhaps the hardest part of his career has been the political maneuvering. It is particularly disconcerting when politics misdirects the use of development assistance in order to suit the government for its own end. Gray gets frustrated sometimes when a project in which he has poured a lot of energy gets rejected. However, he remains motivated because he knows that the work he does will help some needy individual, family or community. Gray's advice to young people starting out is to be prepared to come in at the ground level, work your way up slowly, and not to give up. Persistence and good work ethic will pay off.

Gray has traveled extensively throughout Africa and is fluent in French. He is also conversant in the African languages of Lingala and Bambara. He is also a member of a number of professional associations, such as the Food Aid Management Steering Committee (Chairperson), Food Aid Consultative Group, Coalition for Food Aid, and Institution for the African Child.

Sally Gutierrez

(1956-Present)
Director
Water Supply and Water Resources Division
Environmental Protection Agency

Sally Gutierrez was born in December 19, 1956 near downtown Houston, Texas. She grew up as the middle child of Mary Carmona, a homemaker, and Donaciano Carmona, a truck driver and welder.

Gutierrez has two brothers and two sisters. When asked how her upbringing has influenced her career, she cites an instance when her mother brought lead into the house without being aware of he impacts it might have had on the family. She now thinks about the health hazards families are exposed to because of their limited economic means. Workers are exposed to occupational hazards because they are not always aware that the products they use can harm them and their families. Gutierrez's personal experiences and the experiences of others in similar circumstances highlight the importance of the work she does. It is now known that lead is poisonous and that children are particularly vulnerable to it. She wants to educate people about ways of keeping their families safe.

In 1980, Gutierrez received her bachelor's degree from the University of Houston. She then went on to obtain her Master's of Science from the University of Texas, Health Science Center at Houston in 1990. She has had a strong interest in science since high school. As she got older, her studies in environmental science fueled that interest. Once she started her master's degree, she was sure that environmental work was what she wanted to do.

Gutierrez's first job was as a sanitarian with the Houston Health Department where she inspected food establishments for safety compliance. Currently, she is the acting director of the Environmental Protection Agency's National Risk Management Research Lab. In this position, she oversees a national research lab that consists of six divisions with over 350-research scientists who are focused on finding technologies and methods to control contaminants in the environment.

In addition to a lot of hard work, Gutierrez attributes her advancement largely to the people in her career who have given her opportunities. Many individuals have supported her as she climbed the career ladder. She says that her mentors were all in supervisory positions. Even now, those same people continue to advise and mentor her to this day. One of the people Gutierrez admires most is Ken Petersen. He was her supervisor at the Houston Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. Gutierrez recalls how Petersen believed in her and provided her with many opportunities and words of encouragement. Mark Lowry was another one of her influential mentors earlier in her career. Lowry was an engineer at that time and he was very supportive of her; always letting her know that she could succeed in attaining her goals.

One of Gutierrez's main goals is to increase the diversity in her field. In order to support this effort, she has forged relationships with New Mexico State University and the University of Puerto Rico where minority faculty and students come to work with scientists in her unit. Although she has a personal interest in promoting the advancement of Hispanics, she also works with historically Black colleges because she wants to enhance all aspects of diversity.

Now that she is established in her career, she extends the same guidance that was graciously extended to her. She works with students and young scientists to help them advance their careers. Gutierrez believes that it is important for the people that she mentors to always stay focused and clear about where they want to go in their respective careers. She works with them to identify where there may be gaps in their work experiences and training and then help them forge a path to develop those skills so that they will be in a better position when job opportunities arise.

"This is some of the most rewarding work... In this work, you can exercise so much creativity. People need you and it doesn't matter what aspect of the field you work in."
Sally Gutierrez, 2004.

Good support can be helpful when pursuing a career or education in any field. However the lack of respect in the work place can often be upsetting and

difficult. Gutierrez knows this from experience. One of the most difficult periods of Gutierrez's career occurred while she worked for the Texas Department of Health. One of the supervisors believed that women were less competent than men. Gutierrez found it difficult to work in this type of environment, so she left the job. Despite this difficult situation, she was able to find other positions where her competence was appreciated and not questioned.

The highlight of Gutierrez's career came when she was hired into her current position as the director of the Water Supply and Resources Division. She is proud to be the first woman to lead this group and was hired as the first Hispanic person in a senior executive service position in the thirty-year history of the EPA. Since she was hired into this position, there have been more women and Hispanics. This is due in part to the barriers that she has broken. Although Gutierrez has had many successes throughout her career, she says that one of her most significant achievements was being elected president of the Texas Environmental Health Association in 1995. The members had to vote for the person that they wanted to lead them and they chose her. She was also recognized by the governor of Texas for the work that she did along the Texas/Mexico border trying to bring safe water to the *colonias*. These are poor communities that have inadequate water infrastructures; where people are sometimes forced to get water out of ditches.

Gutierrez continues to work in the environmental field because she believes that the type of work she does is important to people in this country. She believes that there is nothing more important than the work that she does to protect drinking water. "We take for granted the water that we drink but lots of background work and research is done to ensure that it's safe. The work that many scientists in the laboratories are doing to solve air pollution problems… and things of that nature, are all important. The work that's done in these public agencies is essential to the health of the public at large." Overall, she claims that her work is exciting and she is happy to be able to make a difference.

Sally Gutierrez is a phenomenal person and a great inspiration. When asked what advice she would give to minorities considering a career in the environmental field, she says that she would encourage them because it is a very rewarding field to be in. "They [minorities] have an opportunity to make a difference in people's lives everyday. In this work, you can exercise so much creativity. People need you and it doesn't matter what aspect you work in." She goes on to say, "There is so much that can be done, in a wide variety of ways, when doing environmental protection work. The field is so broad and it's advancing. The EPA has been around for thirty years and we've done good work, but a lot of problems are still complex and so many of our prevention programs are still works in progress. However, they are exciting and very much needed in this day and age."

Reginald "Flip" Hagood

(1945-Present)
Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Business Development
The Student Conservation Association
Board Member, Wilderness Society

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Reginald "Flip" Hagood was born in August 1945 in Washington, D.C. The middle child of Blondell Hagood, a former retail service employee, and Warren Hagood, a former postal employee, Flip grew up in Southeast Washington in close proximity to the Anacostia River. This closeness to nature combined with summer trips to his grandparents' home in rural South Carolina served as a major influence in his decision to pursue an environmental career.

At an early age, Hagood became very familiar with the parks and park staff in his community. After graduating from Howard University in Washington, D.C. with a degree in criminal justice, he obtained his first job working for the National Parks Service (NPS) as a member of its police force. With this job he was able to combine his law enforcement background with his love for the outdoors. Hagood continued his education at American University, graduating with a master's degree in Administration of Justice in 1972. He left law enforcement to become a park ranger, then later a park manager, and finally an employee development specialist and instructor. He finished 30 years of service with the NPS as their Chief of Employee Development and Training where he managed professional development training for NPS employees nationwide. Hagood joined the Student Conservation Association in 1995, and for the past three years he served as their Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Business Development. He is also a Senior Executive for the organization's Washington, D.C. office. Hagood also sits on several boards including the Wilderness Society, the National Outdoor Leadership School, The Park and History Association, and The Institute for Conservation Leadership.

Throughout his career, Hagood sought out mentors whose educational backgrounds were similar to his and whose professions reflected the next step on his career path. His mentors were successful executive-level staff who showed him how to be successful in his career pursuits. One mentor within the human resources field provided him with advice on how to make the transition from criminal justice work to work in professional development and education. Hagood was part of the first generation of public service employees to benefit from federal diversity initiatives and was able to maximize opportunities in leadership where people of color were being sought. Even though the lowest point of his career was feeling unfairly overlooked for a position, he has always considered that a learning experience and has continued to work in the field. Having the ability to connect his love for the outdoors and his love of working with young people is what has kept him engaged in environmental work.

"I love going to work everyday." Reginald "Flip" Hagood, 2005.

Hagood sees mentoring others as a form of personal reinvestment. He has often returned to speak to people of color at his former colleges and works with a wide range of students to help them define strategies for success and to increase their number of professional connections. Hagood considers his work in developing programs to guide young people – especially those from diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities – his most significant achievement. He feels that helping to cultivate young leadership is his biggest reward for all of his efforts. He would advise students of color interested in the environmental field to be flexible in what opportunities they are willing to take, have an innate love for the environment, and to consider themselves "life long learners."

Jennifer Hill-Kelley

(1968-Present)
Environmental Quality Director
Oneida Environmental Health and Safety Department
Board of Trustees, Environmental Leadership Program

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Jennifer Hill-Kelley was born on May 9, 1968 to Mary and Jerry, a housewife, and an economic developer for American Indiian tribes, respectively. Along with her older sister and two younger brothers, Hill-Kelley grew up in Oklahoma and Wisconsin. While growing up Hill-Kelley spent a lot of time in rural settings. As a result, she developed a deep respect for the natural world. Not surprisingly, a career in the environmental field was a perfect fit for her.

Hill-Kelley earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oklahoma with a major in microbiology and a minor in chemistry. She is currently working on a Master's of Science in Environmental Policy and Administration at the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay. She expects to complete this degree in 2006.

"Have confidence in the fact that you have the right to be there and that you have something to say." Jennifer Hill-Kelley, 2005.

As an undergraduate, Hill-Kelley was interested in working in the health field. Thus, she obtained a position as a laboratory technician working in a blood bank. However, she soon learned that this was not what she wanted to do and returned home to study chemistry and work in a chemistry lab where they researched environmental contaminants. Because of her determination, technical experience, and adaptation, Hill-Kelley has worked her way to her current position as the Environmental Quality Director of the Oneida Environmental Health and Safety Department. In this position, she protects tribal natural resources by assessing the potential impact of projects as well as monitoring the compliance of these projects with tribal and federal laws. Hill-Kelley acknowledges that throughout her career she has always been very conscious of being the only American Indian in her workplace; however, she reminds herself and others to "have confidence in the fact that you have the right to be there and you have something to say."

In discussing the highlights and most significant achievements of her career, Hill-Kelley cited the recognition of her professionalism by state agencies as they asked her to assist them in building credibility and professionalism. She is proud not only of her professionalism, but also of her abilities to formulate ideas, utilize local resources, recognize and resolve conflicts, engage the community, and assist individuals in pushing for positive environmental change. These skills have helped her achieve her current level of success.

While Hill-Kelley's career has been filled with positive experiences, there have been challenges and low points as well. In 1998 the Oneida Elected Council signed a Memorandum of Agreement for Natural Resource Regulation on the Reservation. Members of the Council felt they had no other choice. The agreement contained language that Hill-Kelley felt was contrary to federal Indian policy and environmental regulatory jurisdiction on the reservation. Since that time, she has

worked hard to educate herself to be a resource for the tribe, build relationships with elected leadership and other governmental agencies, and explore non-regulatory alternatives to reach resource protection goals. Throughout this, and her career as a whole, Hill-Kelley has had the support of the community. She knows that it is what she was meant to do. Hill-Kelley has found her calling. This confidence has allowed her to stick with a career in the environmental field.

As Hill-Kelley has progressed throughout her life and career, she has looked to her eight aunts as well as Tom Goldtooth for advice and guidance. Her aunts are very civic-minded and have very strong backgrounds in education. They always stressed the importance of recognizing one's abilities and using them. Tom Goldtooth is the Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network. He got her involved in the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and demonstrated to her that it is possible to have a voice for your people and to incorporate your culture and encourage change.

Hill-Kelley has also been an Environmental Leadership Program fellow. This program nurtures the next generation of environmental leaders by providing training, networking and self-assessment opportunities. It is a program that strives to maintain diversity. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees and as a Senior Fellow.

When thinking about what advice to give to minorities in the environmental field, Hill-Kelley states that one never knows enough. It is important to engage the community in one's endeavors. Thus, it will serve one well to get to know the community: who they are, their stories, what they are about. By working as a team with the community, one can find a solution to most environmental concerns.

Albert Huang

(1975-Present)
Environmental Lawyer
Environmental Policy Advocate

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Albert Huang was born to Chen-Ya, a public health physician and Vivian Huang, a homemaker, on January 31, 1975. He grew up with his younger brother and older sister in New Jersey. Huang recalls that New Jersey was a heavily populated place rich with racial diversity when he was growing up. He and his siblings were raised there with a strong sense of community. Unfortunately, New Jersey is also the nation's capital for Superfund sites. These sites are known to impact minorities disproportionately. Huang witnessed this for himself. Living in New Jersey, close to New York, made Huang aware of how population, income levels and diversity affect the quality of living for some people.

Huang first became interested in a career in the environmental field as a high school student canvassing for the Sierra Club. It was a state and national campaign that was involved in grassroots work and his job was getting petitions signed. His first job was as a field manager for the campaigns in the Sierra Club. After that, Huang went on to attend Hamilton College in Upstate New York. He later completed a degree at Vermont Law School. Huang concentrated on environmental law while in law school.

In Huang's early encounters with the environmental movement, he was often the only person of color participating in many activities; he recalls not seeing any other people of color at the various environmental events. That changed, however, when he became involved in environmental justice. Huang noticed that people of color were very involved in the environmental justice movement because there was a direct connection between environmental equity and the discrimination that minorities faced. "People of color are more exposed to environmental pollution in their living and working spaces" says Huang. Thus, minorities see the environmental justice movement as a way of implementing laws and policies that can help to create healthier and better living environments for everyone.

Although the numbers of minorities becoming involved in environmental justice issues was impressive, Huang noticed that few Asians were involved in this movement. In his experience, there tended to be a large number of Hispanics and Blacks involved because they were the ones who were impacted the most. Though Asians also faced many of the same environmental and social concerns, few were involved in environmental justice organizing. This is starting to change as groups like Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) are working to organize Asian-American communities.

"Everyday is good. I'm doing good work, supporting communities that are being impacted that don't the have resources to represent themselves. We try to empower them, encourage them and give them the tools to be leaders in their community. They also teach and inspire us." Albert Huang, 2004.

Huang worked as environmental policy advocate with the Environment, Community and Social Justice (ECSJ – a pseudonym) in California. ECSJ is a community-based environmental justice organization dealing with issues such as toxic wastes in communities of color. Most of the organization's work centers on race, poverty and environmental issues. In addition to the environmental clean-up campaigns they help organize, they also provide legal and technical assistance to low-income communities of color. In ECSJ, lawyers serve as a resource in the communities and they train people to be their own advocates. Community members learn the complexities of the environmental issues they face and how to stand up for themselves. Everyone works together for a common goal and that is something Huang is very proud of. "It's exciting," he says "and I believe in my work. The people we work with give me the drive to keep doing it… seeing the success in the communities."

Huang also draws inspiration from his mentor, Luke Cole. Mr. Cole is an attorney and, according to Huang, a prolific author on environmental justice issues. "He trail-blazed a new model of practicing law in the civil rights movement. He created an empowerment model for community members so that they would be in the forefront of their fight against environmental injustice and lawyers would be used as a last resort."

Huang works with youth organizers as well, in a training program created by the ECSJ. The organizers are young people of color who attend the local high schools and live in communities that are impacted by pollutants and other environmental hazards. The ECSJ's youth training program teaches them how to write about current environmental issues and public advocacy policies. They also learn how to testify against companies responsible for dumping hazardous waste in their communities. Huang explains that this is a program that seeks to teach the participating youth how to find their own voices, make their own decisions and use creative methods to achieve their goals. Huang feels that educating them about the environmental movement and what it means is helpful and rewarding to everyone involved.

The staff and volunteers at ECSJ strive to ensure that there is diversity across the board in the environmental field. They advise city government officials on issues, making sure that the representatives serve the community-based interests, and are reflective of the people in the community. The EHC is dedicated to building coalitions and partnerships within the community.

Huang is modest about his accomplishments. Instead he credits the community members with working hard and being determined to see change. For him there are no career highlights he can pinpoint. Huang says simply that his entire work experience at the ECSJ has been productive and rewarding. "Everyday is good." He says "I'm doing good work, supporting communities that are being impacted, helping people who don't always have the resources to represent themselves. We try to empower them, encourage them and give them the tools to be leaders in their community. They also teach and inspire us. " Before joining the organization however, Huang did experience some frustration in his search for a job after completing law school. Luckily, a friend told him about an opening at the ECSJ. Huang recently moved to New York City to take a position at a leading environmental law organization.

Huang encourages minorities to pursue careers in the environmental field. He believes that it is a great way to give back to the community. Working in this field, Huang says, will make a person look at the word "community" differently. They will see "community" as it relates to people on the local, national and global levels. "It forces a person to think about the world as a more interrelated and interactive body…to engage in and care about the world around them."

Gloria Jeff

(1952-Present)
Director
Michigan Department of Transportation

Michigan Dept. of Transportation site

Gloria Jeff, born April 4, 1952, grew up in Detroit, Michigan with her younger brother. She was raised by her parents, Harietta Jeff a former registered nurse, and her father D. Lee Jeff, a former television repair technician. As a preteen, she saw her godparents relocated from their community by the government because of an urban renewal project. To make matters worse, her godparents could not afford replacement housing. Jeff says this incident sparked her interest in the environmental field.

After high school, Jeff enrolled in the school of engineering at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where she received her bachelor's degree in civil engineering. She studied civil engineering as a supplement to the career she planned to pursue in urban planning. Following completion of her undergraduate degree, she immediately enrolled in the masters program at the University of Michigan where she concentrated in civil engineering and urban planning. She got her masters in 1976. Jeff also has an honorary doctorate from Bennett University.

After receiving her master's degree, Jeff began working for the Detroit Board of Water and Sewage as a junior engineer. While there she was responsible for the design of pump stations and general engineering for the water and sewage infrastructure. This was Jeff's first real introduction to work the environmental field.

Jeff's career has progressed because of her ongoing interest in communities, how they are shaped and how decisions are made at the most fundamental levels. In January of 2003, Jeff became the Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation. As director, she is responsible for all transportation in Michigan – this includes all operations and construction. She is also responsible for the compliance and shaping of environmental regulations. Under Jeff's leadership the Michigan Department of Transportation has won two top awards in 2004: "Employer of the Year" and a "Diversity Leadership Award."

Jeff credits her mentors with helping her to advance in her career. One of her mentors was her Sunday school teacher who was also an engineer. He helped her to understand the impact that engineering has on people's lives on a day-to-day basis. Jeff's mentors have provided her with opportunities and have also helped her understand public policy and organizational dynamics.

"Those that make decisions in our urban and rural environments need to reflect the experiences and backgrounds of those who will be affected." Gloria Jeff, 2005.

As a recipient of helpful advice and great support, Jeff knows how important it is to have someone to go to for guidance. She does what she can to help other people of color in her various places of employment. She takes the opportunity to provide them with an understanding of the hierarchy and the decision-making process in the organization. Jeff has been involved in the mentoring of underrepresented young professionals in every position that she has held.

Jeff makes a point to support diversity efforts whenever possible. Since 1980, Jeff has been involved in the recruitment and retention of minority engineering diversity students at the University of Michigan. She has been involved in diversity studies and oversight committees in the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Planning Association, the Transportation Research Board, the Federal Highway Association, and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Looking back, Jeff cannot identify a low point in her career. She says that she has always been blessed to be in a career of her choosing, not one that she was forced to take. As for the highlight of her career, she hopes that it has not happened yet. If she had to choose, it would be the position that she currently holds. She has the opportunity to shape statewide policy and delivery of statewide services in a manner that reflects the importance of moving people from point A to point B in a way that is environmentally responsible and sustainable. Jeff says that her most significant achievement was the negotiation of technical assistance and technology transfer between the United States Department of Transportation and the Ministry of Transport in the Republic of South Africa.

For minorities considering a career in the environmental field, Jeff offers encouragement. "It is essential that they become involved. Those that make decisions in our urban and rural environments need to reflect the experiences and backgrounds of those who will be affected."

Michael Johnson

(1967-Present)
District Conservation Officer
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Michael Johnson – the second of three children – was born to Caleb and Nancy Johnson in 1967. He grew up on a Hopi reservation. His mother was a school teacher and his father was a military colonel. Growing up on a reservation, Johnson witnessed coal companies extracting the mineral; to do this the companies used scarce drinking water to mine and process the coal. His interest in natural resource policy and Native Americans influenced him to explore a career in the environmental field. Johnson attended Cornell University where he earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture. He later attended Pepperdine University where he earned a master's degree in Public Policy in 2003.

Johnson's first job was working for a Native American non-profit organization conducting research on charitable giving and Indian agriculture. After leaving the non-profit, Johnson worked for the Deputy Undersecretary in Washington, D.C. assisting with tribal colleges and Indian agricultural issues. His first environmental job was with a government agency assisting ranchers and farmers to enhance their conservation practices in the areas of rangeland management, erosion control and watershed management. Today, Johnson remains with the same agency and works as a District Conservation Officer. As a District Conservationist, he is responsible for administering 1.5 million acres of federal trust land and ensuring that the agency communicates effectively while delivering conservation programs that preserve the land.

Michael Johnson was mentored by Dr. Jim Butler, the Deputy Undersecretary in Washington, D.C., who gave him guidance on how to pursue his interests in agriculture. The highlight of Johnson's career was overseeing the installation of a watering facility at a Native American village. The project – which took about 18 months to complete – was constructed rapidly. The lowest point of his career was recognizing that the federal government has minority job programs, but doesn't help minorities gain the requisite skills to take advantage of those opportunities. He has remained in the environmental field because of his respect for the environment. For Johnson, his most significant achievement was obtaining $500,000 from the Hopi Tribe to develop a conservation program.

Johnson is a member of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and the American Indian Employment Association (AIEA). He advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field to find a good mentor; someone who can guide them through various challenges that minorities face in environmental careers. While he is not currently mentoring anyone, his contributions to the environmental field and the Hopi Tribe are certainly inspiring.

Robin Kimmerer

(1953-Present)
Professor of Botany
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Member, American Indian Science and Engineering Society

Robin Kimmerer was born in 1953 to Robert and Patricia Wall in a rural upstate of New York. Growing up she spent most of her time in the woods and fields. It was in this same naturalistic setting that she started to observe plants and cultivate her appreciation for nature. Her parents were also an important factor in her growth as an environmental scientist. It was very important to her parents to conserve the environment, and to appreciate it in all of its glory. When she was a child, her parents gave her a book written by an ecologist, and soon thereafter, she found out that she could have a career based on the study of plants. It was based on this realization that she began her educational track towards a degree in botany.

Kimmerer attended the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry for her undergraduate studies; she earned a degree in Botany in 1975. She attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, obtaining a master's degree in Botany in 1979 and a Ph.D. in Plant Ecology in 1983. Kimmerer held many positions in various companies while she was a student.

In 1975, Kimmerer began working as a microbiologist in on optical division of Bausch & Lomb. Two years after she started her job, Kimmerer decided that corporate America was not for her, and went to grad school. After graduate school, Kimmerer started a family, and worked part-time at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY while raising her children. At Transylvania University, Kimmerer taught field biology and botany. She left Transylvania University to work at Centre College – a liberal arts college in Danville, Kentucky. There, she taught general biology, botany, ecology, field biology, plants and culture, and tropical ecology. She got tenure at Centre College but longed to return to her roots.

Kimmerer returned home to teach at the State University of New York because she felt it was more rewarding to give back to her home state. She was also interested in working with Native Americans, the issues that pertain to this group of minorities, and conducting research that was not possible to do at Transylvania University or Centre College. Kimmerer applied for and got a position at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and has been there for the past eleven years. Her success is attributed to many people that made a great impact on her life.

Kimmerer had several mentors and advisors who helped to guide her. An undergraduate professor Ed Cetchledge, gave her the confidence to persevere even when she did not think she could be a scientist. Mr. Cetchledge was such an important part of her life that they have kept in touch over the years. During graduate school, Kimmerer had advisors and peers who were a great source of support. Specifically, Dr. Orie Loucks took great interest in her work, and counseled her about possible career moves that could be beneficial to her. Because of the help she received, Kimmerer now extends herself to help other minorities in the field.

For example, Kimmerer has helped sponsor the Undergraduate Mentoring in Environmental Biology (UMEB) project, which pairs students of color with faculty members in the enviro-bio sciences while they work together to research environmental biology. Kimmerer is also a part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program. The purpose of this program is to provide students with real-world experiences that involve complex problem-solving. Kimmerer is also a mentor to students on the SUNY campus – a campus on which there are few female and minority environmental faculty. She enjoys mentoring native and non-native students. Kimmerer is also involved in the American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES), and works with the Onondaga nation's school, doing community outreach. She also uses traditional knowledge and science jointly for ecological restoration in research. Lastly, Kimmerer fosters diversity in the field by showing how multiculturalism makes a significant difference in the way that science is carried out. This is particularly true in the field of ecological restoration. Kimmerer enjoys her job and duties, and has experienced many highlights in her career.

In 2003, Kimmerer published her first book entitled, *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*. In the book, she was able to offer several insights into herself, including her experiences as a plant ecologist and her understanding of traditional knowledge. She feels the combination of indigenous and scientific perspectives gave an "authentic voice" to her work. Kimmerer is also credited with starting a program at the university – one dedicated to the study of traditional ecological knowledge. She currently strives to further the aims of that unit. It is important to her to be accepted in the scientific community, but she would also like to be known for bringing a unique perspective to the understanding of plant ecology. Although Kimmerer has had many achievements that she is proud of, times have not always been easy.

A low point of Kimmerer's career is the sense of isolation she has felt throughout her career. The feeling of isolation she experienced is not always in the forefront, but it is there nonetheless. She says that although it is necessary to be a part of "the group" by following the traditional path set by others in her field, she struggles to do her work her own way. Despite these ups and downs, Kimmerer loves her job.

Kimmerer loves to create a community of people interested in strengthening the environmental field. Most importantly, she gets lots of support and recognition from her students; this makes a huge difference, and puts a value on her work. Her most significant achievement was raising two daughters as a single parent while pursuing a career. Her achievements and status within the environmental field make her a great person to turn to for words of wisdom.

Kimmerer speaks to minorities who are considering a career in the environmental field with many words of wisdom. First, she says they should learn about how the system works in order to have credentials, and to bring all of themselves selves to the process of becoming the best in the field. She continues to say that science suffers from narrow vision because it is a self-perpetuating domain riddled with roadblocks. Consequently, students should bring their own unique perspective with them, because it is much needed.

"I was born to be a botanist." Robin Kimmerer, 2004.

Kristie King

(1969-Present)
Diversity Manager
Environmental Careers Organization

Kristie King – the only child of a single mother – was born on August 13, 1969. Early on her mother – a teacher – and her grand parents instilled in her the idea that a good education was essential and that mediocrity was not an option. King's mother was strict and expected her to get good grades. She grew up in a predominantly-white neighborhood in Indianapolis, Indiana.

King says that one of the more positive experiences in her life and one that subsequently led to her career in the environmental field was her decision to attend Central State University – a historically Black university – in Wilberforce, Ohio. She credits the time spent there with helping her to be stronger and more confident in whom she was. She says that, "I received a tremendous amount of support and guidance [there]…it became a second home and was one of the best four years of my life." Not having gone far from home before, King quickly became engrossed in campus activities and lost focus for the first semester. At the end of that semester, she received the first "D" in her life. According to King, "…that brought me back to reality. It was a real shock and after seeing that grade, all the values that had been instilled in me as a child came back to me and I got back to the books." King quickly bounced back and balanced her college activities more effectively from then on.

One of the first courses King took at Central State University was "Introduction to Water Resources." Her Professor saw promise in her and mentioned to King that if she joined the Water Resources Program at the school, she would able to get a scholarship to pursue a degree in that field. She followed his advice, graduated from Central State, and went on to get her Masters in Public Administration (MPA) from Cleveland State University in 1993. The next career move led her to Arlington, Virginia to participate in a year-long fellowship for students with their MPA. The opportunity was provided by the Arlington County Water Pollution Control District working in collaboration with the Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO). After the internship, King continued her career in the environmental field because she felt there was much work to do and plenty of opportunities for people of color in the field.

"Take advantage of every single opportunity! Do research on the field of study you are interested in, make sure you are networking and making connections with the appropriate people…" Kristie King, 2005.

Currently, King is the Diversity Manager at ECO; her job is to oversee national recruitment and outreach efforts and to find and award environmental internships to college students. One of her most significant achievements was organizing a national roundtable for diversity twice. She did not have a

mentor throughout her educational and professional careers, but would have found it helpful. When she first began working for ECO, it was difficult for her being the only person of color in her office and having to deal with stereotypes, but she adjusted. Because of her experiences in trying to establish an environmental career, King gets great fulfillment in helping students of color advance in their own environmental careers. She also feels good about her being able to influence and guide those have not considered environmental careers before meeting her. Hearing from past ECO interns and finding out about their successes are career highlights for King. She has this to say to students, "Take advantage of every single opportunity! Do research on the field of study you are interested in, make sure you are networking and making connections with the appropriate people…have confidence and reassurance to know that you have chosen the best career for yourself and do not be discouraged when you realize you are one of the few people of color in the field…in the office, at conferences, etc."

John Kusano

(1953-Present)
Assistant Director of Human Resources
United States Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture

John Kusano was born in 1953, the middle child of Toshi and Jim Hagimori's three children. Kusano is a third-generation Japanese-American, the grandson of immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the 1920s. Kusano was raised in the San Francisco Bay area where his father owned a restaurant and his mother was a hospital worker. Kusano describes the Bay Area as a place of great natural beauty, where he has always had a strong connection to nature and the outdoors. That bond prompted him to study forestry at the University of California at Santa Cruz and the University of California at Berkley.

Kusano became interested in the environment through his travels--particularly a cross-country trip he took with friends during college where he camped on various public lands and parks for forty-five days. Upon graduation from Berkeley in 1983, Kusano began working as a forester for the United States Forest Service (USFS) in the Department of Agriculture. He focused on restoring ravaged landscapes. In addition to his work as a forester, Kusano was also interested in civil rights issues. Consequently, he helped the agency with diversity recruitment, mentoring and leadership training programs.

In 1990 Kusano formally took on these duties as a member of the Forest Service Civil Rights staff. He eventually advanced to the National Headquarters in Human Resources and Civil rights in 1993. In 1997 he became the director of Civil Rights of the Southwestern region of the Forest Service. After three years in this position, Kusano was promoted to the position he currently holds, Assistant Director of Human Resources.

Kusano notes that he has had many mentors help to guide his career in the USFS. According to Kusano, "People are very generous with their advice in

the Forest Service and in helping folks who are trying to move up in the organization" Kusano explains that foresters with technical expertise, colleagues with management experience and human resources personnel have mentored him throughout his career. He also considers his role as a mentor as "probably the most important thing I do during the course of my day." Kusano heads up a program – Leadership Success – which focuses on identifying and mentoring future leaders of the Forest Service.

"We have such valuable and beautiful public lands in this country; being associated with them has been a pleasure and an honor." John Kusano, 2005.

Working with the public lands and the natural resources they hold is a career highlight for Kusano. As he sees it, "working with people who are involved with public lands is a highlight – they tend to be very dedicated to their jobs and the mission of the agency in preserving and protecting the public lands of this country." The lowest point in his career came as he witnessed downsizing in his agency. "Seeing that occur is always difficult." Nonetheless, he has remained with the Forest Service because he finds the work to be interesting and compelling – he gets to work in great places, with great people, doing great jobs.

Kusano is most proud of creating a recruitment initiative based at the University of California at Davis, which focuses on the recruitment of Asian-Pacific Americans. In other diversity efforts, he currently manages a national program that includes recruitment initiatives at various targeted universities, including historically-Black colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribally-controlled colleges. Kusano advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field "that there are many opportunities and I think it's a growing field, particularly in the area of providing services to and otherwise representing the interests of minority communities." As the fastest growing segment of the American population, minorities are increasingly impacted by what happens in the environment. "It's very important for minorities that have connections back to their communities and to be involved in these issues so that the right decisions get made and the right resources get applied to the right programs." John Kusano's dedication to the US Forest Service, diversity and the environment demonstrates this.

Pam Tau Lee

(1948 -Present)
Coordinator of Public Programs, School of Public Health, University of California at Berkeley
Past Chair and Founding Member,
Asian Pacific Environmental Health Network

Photo credit: Berkeley-LOPH website

Pam Tau Lee puts her activism at the forefront of her work. She grew up in a diverse environment in San Francisco. Moreover, she was immersed in the free speech, anti-war, union, and black power movements – all of which influenced her greatly. Her parents, John and Mignon, taught Lee and her younger sister the value

of hard work. Her mother was first employed as a draftswoman during World War II when women were needed for the war effort; she retired from the California state unemployment office. Her father began work in a storage room in an engineering plant in the 1940s, and by the time he retired, he was employed as an engineer.

Lee graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1969 from California State University, Hayward (now California State University, East Bay). She began work as a student teacher in inner-city Oakland schools with the Teacher Corps – a federally-funded program begun in the 1960s to increase employment in underserved public school districts. As her awareness of the issues facing low-income communities grew, Lee began work as a community organizer. "There was so much activism then…" she says, "I became involved in the student and community movements." In the 1970s, she worked for the Chinese Progressive Organization, in the days "before there were [many] non-profit social justice organizations. We were housed in the International Hotel and funded by members in the community, so it was as if I was part of a collective," she says.

Lee remembers that Chinatown had high rates of tuberculosis because of the poor air quality, long working hours, and lack of open air space. At the time, she did not realize that much of the work she was doing would later become identified as environmental justice issues. The organization Lee worked for also helped workers who went on strike for better wages and working conditions. When she went to organize them, she realized that "ninety-five percent of the workers were of color – hotel workers – African American, Filipino and Chinese. I decided [then and there] to make the transition to become a union organizer." Many of the workers Lee spoke with had experienced the unionization drives of the 1930s, and they advised her, "If you want to be a good organizer, you have to be a worker. So, I became a room cleaner to really understand the work."

While working at a hotel, Lee was elected by her co-workers to a union position, then as a shop steward, and finally asked to join the staff of the union. I quit the job "after two years of cleaning rooms – and maybe I worked almost every job in the hotel, the last day I left my job in the hotel, I was a bartender." Lee realized that even as a hotel worker, she had opportunities most of the people she was trying to unionize didn't. She said, "I had that mobility [in the hotel] because I was American-born and was able to speak English. That's not available to most immigrant hotel workers. I know that."

Lee worked as a union organizer for ten years, where she learned about the lives of immigrant and people of color workers, who she says "were being hired into more backbreaking jobs and the jobs that exposed [them] to really unsafe working conditions" than their white counterparts. She also continued her volunteer work in the community. In the late 1980s, while working as the staff director of the union, Lee was approached by the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley to join their staff and work with laborers in a variety of areas, including farms, hotels, airlines, refineries and nail salons. "It was very hard to leave the union," she says of that decision, "but I saw it as an opportunity to use the 20 years of experience" from the community and join the Labor Occupational Health Program.

Then in 1990, Lee received phone call from Dana Alston, a prominent activist of the environmental justice movement. Lee recalls, "She came to Berkeley, and we had a life-changing moment over a cup of tea! She explained to me that she had heard about the work I had been doing, and she wanted to put it into context for me—and that's when she explained to me the concept of environmental racism." Lee began working with others in the environmental movement, and attended the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 in Washington, D.C. The Asians attending Summit caucused and pledged to bring

message from the meeting back to their various Asian communities, and identify the environmental justice impacts in those communities and organize them.

The United Church of Christ had commissioned a report *Toxic Waste and Race* that focused on minority and low-income communities being located close to toxic waste sites, "so we wanted to be able to understand it better," Lee says. Lee was immediately drawn to the environmental justice framing. "The EJ framework can really raise the conscious(ness) of a community to really address root causes of environmental, sociological, and economic conditions, and because this framework brings in multi-issue perspectives and can bridge multi-racial, multi-ethnic communities. We felt there was real power that could be generated – political power – by bringing these perspectives as a framework and a mission."

"Out of struggle, there will be progress." Pam Tau Lee, 2005.

In 1993, after a two-year dialogue and needs assessment information gathering, Lee helped to create the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN). Lee's role in APEN has been to provide programmatic guidance as a board member and Chair. In these roles, she has taken a special interest in bringing attention to workers of color and unsafe conditions while building bridges with other environmental groups. Lee stepped down as Chair of the Board in spring of 2005 because of term limits.

Lee participated in the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership in 2002. She collaborated with scores of other people attending the Summit to draft the "Principles on Working Together."

Lee is careful to mention the people around her who have been her mentors and colleagues, some of whom she says may not even know that she observes them and learns from them. "Dana Alston: we were good friends until she passed away. She lived in San Francisco for the last few months, and we would drive and look at the Bay and the water. She continued to mentor me until the last few weeks before she died." Lee goes on to name, "Charles Lee, Baldemar Velasquez from Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Nilak Butler from Indigenous Environmental Network, Richard Moore from Southwest Network for Environmental Justice (SNEEJ), Anthony Thigpen at Action for Grassroots Economic and Neighborhood Development Alternatives, Peggy Saika from APEN, and—I know I am forgetting others! I call on them for help and advice," she says. The lowest points of her career have been "the passing of wonderful women in the environmental justice movement: Jean Sindab, Dana Alston, Nilak Butler, Jeanne Guanna from SNEEJ, Patsy Ruth Oliver from Texas. [It is] all very, very sad – the loss of these women who were so young. It was not natural to lose them so young."

The highlights of Lee's career have been participating in the development of the "Principles on Working Together" at Summit II and in the successful organization of Culinary Workers Union 226 in Las Vegas, where she worked with the hotel workers for a year. "The end result of that effort…was that they won the power to make their work safer, and through their work as women and as room attendants they showed real leadership." At the strike vote, Lee said thousands of people turned out and the vote passed with almost unanimous consent. "It was the voice of these women that prior to 2000 had no positions in union or leadership or power on the work-floor, and it was a highlight to be a part of it." Thinking about the future of unions in this country, Lee says, "Out of struggle, there will be progress, so let's hope there will be progress, instead of the opposite. [Do] something constructive rather than destructive."

Lee enjoys being an optimist in a field that continually brings her face to face with social inequities. She says she sustains herself by "Making sure I do not

stay behind my desk!" She continues with advice for there one-on-one engaged with people who want to learn. Stay connected." Lee thinks, and then adds, "Also, I have to fight with myself all the time, in terms of, 'OK, don't let the grant or the money drive where your heart and soul needs to be.' It's much easier to say than to practice. It's a constant, real tension," but one in which she hopes to remain true to her values.

While she was a board member of APEN, Lee tried not to limit herself to board meetings, but to stay involved with the staff. Her mentoring style includes making sure her mentees' needs are met through their work experience. When she works with interns, she says, "I make sure they are doing what they want to do and try to make it happen, whether it's learning about organizing and working in the community or to try testing out their ideas, I work with them from where they're coming from and make sure they understand how to respect and others in her field: set aside time "…where you're out engage with the community and understand [that they're] engaged in two-way learning…. You have to make sure you're not just talking over a table (all the time), but (make it fun and) float down a river and spend some time together!"

To young minorities who are considering entering the environmental field, she says, "Make sure to combine the science with accountability…Find ways in which you can be held accountable to what you're doing, to be able to test out what you're doing and how it is contributing to [the] creat[ion of] more power for the community and information they can use and access so that it can be turned into action. Balance the need to fulfill professional criteria with empowering those who don't have the same access." Lee's own work has improved living and working conditions of countless people; she is an inspiration to many.

Vincent O. Leggett

(1953-Present)
Special Project Coordinator,
Division of Chesapeake Bay Programs
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Founder and President, Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation

Vincent O. Leggett was born on June 26, 1953 to Charlie Leggett, a labor union representative, and Willie Mae Leggett, elementary and special education teacher. He and his three siblings grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, where Leggett's father exposed him to nature through outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting. Leggett would eventually obtain an undergraduate degree in 1975 in Urban Planning and Community Development from Morgan State University, a historically black college in Baltimore. He continued his education at Central Michigan University, receiving a master's degree in Administration in 1999.

Throughout college, Leggett pursued his love of geography and history, but he also nurtured an interest in education. His first job was as an educational planner for Baltimore City Public Schools from 1975 to 1980. Leggett was the supervisor of educational planning and student demographics with Anne Arundel County Public Schools from 1980 to 1987. He served as the Executive Director of the Anne Arundel County Housing Authority

over the next two years. From 1989 to 1999 Leggett served as a Campus Planner and Academic Advisor with Anne Arundel Community College. Maryland Governor William Donald Schafer appointed Leggett to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education for a 5-year term. Leggett was elected vice-president and president of the board during his tenure 1988 to1993.

His early mentors included Dr. John Crew, Sr., Superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools and Dr. Sydney Cousins, Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools in Maryland, who exposed him to urban education and facilities planning; and Mr. Cecil Burton, who worked in the higher education and real estate business. Burton was instrumental in helping Leggett develop the Blacks of the Chesapeake Project in 1984. This initiative was designed to promote conservation and preservation of the environment while highlighting African-American maritime achievements and facilitating the economic success of the marine and seafood industries in the Chesapeake Bay region.

This project became the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF), which Leggett founded in 1999. A year later, the secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recruited Leggett to the position of coordinator of special projects in the DNR's Chesapeake Bay Program Division in Annapolis, Maryland. At the DNR, Leggett serves as a Coordinator of the Patapsco-Back River Tributary Team. This urban-based team is composed of volunteer participants representing diverse interests, state and federal agency staff and local governments and were established to bring Chesapeake Bay clean-up goals down to the local level-encouraging all stakeholders to actively participate in the restoration of their local rivers and the bay. He also continues to develop educational and experiential programs for youth through the BOCF.

Leggett's many career highlights include creating the Blacks of the Chesapeake curriculum, which is being utilized by school systems in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the District of Columbia; the 2000 designation of the BOCF as a "Local Legacy" by the Library of Congress and the U.S. Congress; and authoring two books: *Blacks of the Chesapeake: An Integral Part of Maritime History* (1997) and *The Chesapeake Bay through Ebony Eyes* (1999). For Leggett, another career highlight came in 2002, when Maryland Governor Parris Glendening appointed him an Honorary Admiral of the Chesapeake Bay. This commission is the highest honor that the state of Maryland can bestow upon a private individual in the environmental field. In 2005, Leggett received a nomination by the Annapolis Mayor and Council to the Maritime Hall of Fame.

"The Chesapeake Bay is the greatest natural resource in Maryland and I always had and interest in the history and culture surrounding it." Vince Leggett, 2005.

In his years of working with urban neighborhoods and among communities of color in the Baltimore-Washington area, Leggett has encountered challenges in reaching minority populations and in debunking the myth that the Chesapeake Bay is simply a playground for the wealthy. He has raised interest in bay culture and fostered awareness of such issues as toxins, community right-to-know, and environmental justice. He encourages hands-on restoration work as a way of enhancing community participation and demonstrating their concerns with the state of their environment, despite often being overlooked. In 2002, Leggett co-founded the Chesapeake Ecology Center (CEC). The CEC shares office space with the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation and both organizations are housed in the J. Albert Adams Academy. The alternative-education middle school is located on a beautiful 10-acre campus situated along College Creek in Annapolis. The CEC's conservation landscape demonstration sites and

urban environmental educational programs are designed to reach-out to underserved communities.

He used his resources at the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation to develop the "Exploring the Chesapeake Bay Through Ebony Eyes" program in 2000, which promotes cultural history and the environment with students in K-12 programs as well as undergraduate and graduate schools. Leggett has partnered with other organizations such as the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's School of Natural Resources and Agriculture, Maryland's Coastal Bays National Estuary Program, and the Hampton University's Minorities at Sea Program to encourage minorities to see themselves within the environmental field. He has also worked to define career opportunities for minorities through workshops, seminars, and field trips through the BOCF and Leggett advises minorities interested in the environmental field to hone their math skills, especially algebra. He considers algebra a gateway skill that, once mastered, eases work in the sciences. Leggett believes that understanding technology and developing critical thinking skills at an early age will lay a strong foundation for success in the field.

After working in the education and environmental disciplines for over 30 years, Leggett feels those government agencies and all environmental organizations—including his own should expand minority and urban outreach efforts, develop inclusive policies, and to-improve resource allocations. Despite the challenges of bringing together diverse stakeholders, Leggett remains committed to his work in the environmental field, and hopes "…to be a beacon of light and hope to other minorities."

Penn Loh

(1968-Present)
Executive Director
Alternatives for the Community and Environment

Penn Loh, the oldest of four children, was born and raised in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Loh's mother – a librarian by profession – is primarily a homemaker, and his father is an electrical engineer. Loh followed in his father's foot steps; he went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and got his bachelors degree in electrical engineering. While at MIT, he took a class taught by Noam Chomsky and Louis Kampff called "Intellectuals and Social Responsibility." It made him realize that the jobs engineers were being funneled into were about making money and not about making the world a better place. The course had a profound influence on Loh. It made him reflect on the internship he had in a company that built missiles; he decided that electrical engineering wasn't really for him. He had never considered himself an "environmentalist" so he didn't consider a career in the field right away. At the time Loh believed that being an environmentalist meant recycling and being in the outdoors. Though he thought these things were great, he didn't consider them as pressing or as relevant as issues of social justice or the plight of communities of color. Consequently, he did not pursue an environmental track.

However, right after graduating from MIT, Loh stumbled across an environmental position while searching for work in the non-profit sector. He took a job as an energy research analyst with Tellus, an environmental consulting group. His work was heavily

quantitative – focusing on how much energy could be saved by conservation initiatives. Loh also did some computer programming and developed software for utility companies to use to figure out how much pollution could be abated and how much energy and money could be saved with the implementation of conservation programs. At the time he worked on these projects, corporations were concentrating on demand side management in their conservation efforts. That is, they focused on things such as financing projects to encourage people to switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs. (Such bulbs provide high-quality light, requiring less energy while lasting longer than typical incandescent bulbs.)

Loh received a scholarship to do a master's degree in the Energy and Resources program at the University of California at Berkeley. He graduated in 1994, but not before serving on an Affirmative Action Committee for the program; he wanted to help diversify the student body. Before attending graduate school, Loh had been active in social justice issues; for instance, he was heavily involved in campaigns to reduce air pollution while attending MIT. However, it wasn't until he went to California that he was able to see the connection between social justice and the environment clearly. In his own words, "at UC Berkeley I met people involved in the environmental justice movement which was blossoming in 1992 and realized that I could do work that followed my passion for social justice and still put to use some of the technical skills I had learned in my undergraduate career [to good use]…I was "radicalized" in college. [I] developed a political consciousness. I was involved in activism work on campus at MIT…everything from anti-apartheid to confronting military research….During that time I didn't see the connection between racism and militarism…and the environmental movement." Meeting some undergraduates in the Energy and Resource program who were trying to keep the Environmental Justice Club going after their graduation was an eye opener and turning point in Loh's life. Loh considers those students – though younger than he – his first mentors.

"…Think through what kind of difference you want to make in your life, in this world, and figure out how that can connected to a career." Penn Loh, 2005.

For two years after graduate school, he worked with the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security, a non-profit, research think tank. Loh's work involved looking at water sustainability issues in California. He also worked on environmental justice issues while there. This included working on reports regarding population, immigration and social justice. Finally, finding the connection between the technical skills and social justice application is what made him continue with a career in the environmental field. When Loh returned to the Boston area, he became involved in transportation justice advocacy work. He also helped to strengthen the Greater Boston Environmental Justice Network.

Currently, Loh is the Executive Director at Alternatives for the Community and Environment (ACE). Before becoming the executive director, he held several other positions within ACE. He first started as Director of Research and Development; there were only four people on the staff of ACE at the time. Loh spent about half of his time doing fundraising and the other half in providing technical and communication assistance to many of the programs that aided environmental justice groups. He developed workshops on community mapping and used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to help community groups. He was promoted to Associate Director when the co-directors/founders of organization decided to leave. Loh assumed more of the financial, administration and communication duties of the organization in his new position. The co-founders were very encouraging and wanted him to play a bigger role in the organization once they left. They convinced him he could do it so he

thought he would give it a try. In 2000, the board appointed Loh as the Executive Director when the person who was in that position left after two years with the organization.

As executive director he does a bit of everything. In addition to managing the general affairs of the organization, he is still involved in fundraising, personnel management, board development, and he sometimes acts as a spokesperson for ACE. Since Loh has been the Executive Director, the organization has doubled the size of the staff. It currently has eleven full-time staff as well as part-time youth organizers. Loh has this to say of the organization, "ACE is very diverse. We try to figure out how to go deeper and to live the experience everyday. It isn't just about having a group of people together with different skin colors …What does it mean to be multi-racial and multi-class?…How do we belong to an organization that strives for that and how can we best develop work to fight against some of the institutionalized racism and classicism that is present everywhere?...It is ongoing work."

Within the organization we actively seek people who will grow and advance, perhaps change their job positions. "I think it is my responsibility to make way for the new leadership when my time is up here…I will do this for a while and then move on so someone else can take it to the next level." Loh feels that it is very important for the leadership in the organization to be turned over to someone in the community who advanced through ACE the way he did. Loh says that, "as of now, the organization has a kind of outsider status." For Loh, his career highlights come when he sees people – particularly young ones – feeling empowered and are actively engaged in making a difference in their communities. Loh says there have been many instances of youth growing and exercising leadership over the years.

Loh feels lucky to be able to get paid to do what he is passionate about and at the same time be able to contribute some of his skills in an appropriate way. Knowing that he is contributing to long-term social change and being able to work with "amazingly dedicated" and diverse people has been incredible. As Loh sees it, "The situation that I am in is not typical, it is rare and special." He feels that many of his career choices were a function of him being in the right place at the right time. He said he never could have imagined the path that he has taken, but his life and opportunities have just been an evolution. He says, "I wouldn't be doing this if it was just a job…"

Loh gives this advice to minorities considering a career in the environmental field, "think through what kind of difference you want to make in your life, and in this world and figure out how it can be connected to a career. Put your career in perspective…there is certainly a need to make money, but look at ways to be involved in the field in a way that also makes a difference for communities of color." He adds, "Having a degree does help to open doors, but it [the degree] says nothing about whether you have the commitment or the ability to do the work…for the kind of work we do…you don't need to have a degree. Many of the lead staff at ACE don't have college degrees or are only now working towards one. I am not advocating not going on to higher education, but recognize that you learn a lot just by doing the work. Most things, like how to work with people and communities, you could never learn while in school."

Anai Irarra-Lopez

(1964-Present)
Marketing and Community Engagement Manager
Coalition for Clean Air

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Anai Ibarra-Lopez was born on January 22, 1964 in Guatemala to Edgar Ibarra and Martha Miriam Pineba. Both parents were political activists, constantly organizing for fair wages, equal representation, access to education, and for the reformation of land laws within their country. Ibarra-Lopez's father, Edgar, was killed by the Guatemalan army due to his political activism when she and her fraternal twin sister were quite young; later, her second father, an economist, would also be murdered by the army for his activism. As a result, Ibarra-Lopez's family was marked for life; forced to remain quiet and change their lifestyle while many of their friends lived in exile, the family lived in the shadows and Martha, Ibarra-Lopez's mother, raised four children on her own.

Ibarra-Lopez describes her mother as an incredibly strong woman who raised her in her own image. Despite their hardships, Ibarra-Lopez does not recall ever wanting for anything — certainly not attention or material things. Rather than being crippled by the repression her family was subjected to, Ibarra-Lopez grew up with a very realistic impression that women are as strong and as capable as men. "I see myself as an equal to men," Ibarra-Lopez says, "something that is not necessarily the case for many Latinas."

Ibarra-Lopez attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on a Fulbright Scholarship and graduated with a B.A. in Public Relations and Organizational Communications. Back in Guatemala after graduation, Ibarra-Lopez was hired as the General Manager for a U.S. public relations firm. She would later come to the US with her husband, an American citizen, who had accepted a position at University of California at Los Angeles.

Upon moving to Los Angeles, Ibarra-Lopez started off by volunteering in bilingual education. She did not want her children to lose their native language after moving to America, and was concerned that they would not do well if they learned only English in school. It was through her involvement with other Spanish-speaking parents that Ibarra-Lopez first became aware of environmental justice issues. Though she had known previously that Los Angeles was extremely polluted, she did not realize the degree to which most people that were affected were people of color, and many of them had no one to turn to for help.

"*We play witness to injustices in our own communities. No one can tell our stories for us.*" Anai Ibarra-Lopez, 2005.

Her first paid position in the United States was doing public relations work for Semantic – a company targeting both the Latin American and U.S. Spanish-speaking markets. Ibarra-Lopez took this job because she felt it would be a good learning experience. She thought it provided an opportunity for her to learn how corporations worked from the inside. From her experience working in public relations in Guatemala, she knew that she was much more interested in clients who worked in social equity and social cost marketing rather than those pursuing corporate, for-profit work. When she

realized that her employers focused their energies on searching for "terrorists" on the internet, she quit her job.

Ibarra-Lopez then went on to work with various political campaigns. She began working for the Kucinich campaign in Los Angeles as a volunteer because she felt strongly that he was sincere and believed in his position. Within two months Ibarra-Lopez was hired as the National Media Outreach Coordinator for the campaign. Ibarra-Lopez considers Dennis Kucinich to be a very important mentor in her life. He inspired her to become more involved in politics because he was direct; stood up for his beliefs; was outspoken against the war; and spoke like an activist – not a politician.

Ibarra-Lopez's current position at the Coalition for Clean Air (CCA) was created for her from a grant. Since she joined CAA, the organization has grown from five to twenty people. Her job is to engage communities of different constituencies – from community members to the Latino media to legislators and to educate them about air, toxics and environmental justice issues in and around Los Angeles. In addition, Ibarra-Lopez promotes the CCA to the public. She works on increasing public awareness of what the CCA does; this she hopes will help the organization to increase their membership and donor base.

Ibarra-Lopez believes that everyone has a voice and deserves to be heard. The highlight of her career has been the opportunity to reach very simple, humble people who feel that their stories may never be shared. Her career and life experience, as well as her ability to speak to people in their native tongue, allows people to open up and feel more comfortable. Ibarra-Lopez believes her most significant achievement to be the role she plays in making it possible for workers to testify in front of legislators. The opportunity she has helped to create—to help people by interpreting what they are saying without changing their words—has empowered many people to feel confident enough to exercise their legal rights. Nothing tops being able to watch the faces of both sides engaged in dialogue, and to watch legislators open their eyes as the workers' stories unfold, Ibarra-Lopez says.

Ibarra-Lopez believes that minorities should seriously consider the pursuit of a career in the environmental field because it is a wonderful way to make a contribution to their own communities. "No one will do something for us unless we do it ourselves," she states. "We play witness to injustices in our own communities. No can tell the story better than the people themselves."

Leslie Lowe

(1951-Present)
Director
Energy and Environment Program
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Leslie Lowe was born in New York City on July 14, 1951. Her mother, Mary Johnson Lowe, was an attorney who later became a federal judge; and her step-father, Ivan Michael – also an attorney, was the first black Planning Commissioner for the City of New York. Growing up she spent her summers in the mountains in Pennsylvania and these memories have indirectly influenced her career. Lowe attended Bennington

College in Vermont where she majored in French Literature and Philosophy. She received a Bachelor of the Arts degree in 1973. After receiving a Master's degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, she studied economics and social history in Paris. Lowe earned a law degree from Harvard University in 1980. She focused on international business and finance because she initially wanted to be a tax attorney. After leaving Harvard, she went to work on Wall Street for a large firm doing international transactions. This work was not fulfilling for her, so she left it to work for the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. She began to work in environmental law as a clerk for Judge Earnest Rosenberger. Environmental law was a relatively new field in the early 1980s and Lowe became the environmental law expert in chambers; conducting legal research and writing opinions.

Next, Lowe went to work as Assistant Commissioner for Operations and Policy for the New York City Department of General Services in 1990. Her responsibilities included reviewing policies and ensuring that the agencies' procedures conformed to the new city charter requirements and environmental policies. After leaving General Services, Lowe became the Executive Director of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA), an umbrella group composed of grassroots organizations. Currently, Lowe is Director of the Energy and Environment program at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) a membership organization of over 275 religious institutional investors. At ICCR, Lowe organizes shareholder campaigns and researches corporate impacts on global warming, the world-wide water crisis, genetically modified foods, and toxic pollution for ICCR members.

Lowe attributes a large part of her success to her mentors. Her parents served as role models. According to Lowe, she "grew up where law and politics were always on the table." She mentions Ken Knuckles, who was the Commissioner of General Services and gave her opportunities and responsibility to run the agency. When he was away, she was second in command. She credits Justice Ernest Rosenberger for what he taught her. She found him to be an excellent judge, thoughtful and fair in his hearings. From him, she learned the importance being a good lawyer. Lastly, she names Barbara Warren from the Consumer Policy Institute of the Consumer Union. Warren was a board member at NYCEJA. Lowe says that she is an amazing activist; dedicated, and a smart no-nonsense person who was all about getting work done.

Lowe speaks highly of her mentors and of the importance of mentoring. Despite her own demanding responsibilities, she finds time to mentor others. She has mentored one of her colleagues from the environmental justice movement, Majora Carter, founder and executive director of the Sustainable South Bronx organization. She has been a mentor to Emily Chan, a young woman from Canada who was a student interested in environmental justice and wanted to help NYCEJA support the struggle of the City's Community Gardeners. She has also mentored Omar Freilla, another former NYCEJA employee, who founded the Green Worker Cooperative – an organization that does architectural salvage work.

"You do it because it's right…You don't quit because the job is hard. When obstacles arise, it makes me want to fight that much harder." Leslie Lowe, 2004.

In addition to her dedication to helping others move forward in their careers, Lowe has been involved with diversity efforts on many levels, including speaking out against biased or prejudicial actions and serving on the board of her Greenwich Village neighborhood. As a board member, she has fought to preserve the historic district. She uses this same fighting spirit when she goes

into neighborhoods with people of color that are burdened with pollution, where the buildings and houses are dilapidated and there are no green parks where children can play. In such neighborhoods she often finds a lack of organizational sophistication and little understanding of how the government works or how decisions are made. A large part of her job is to facilitate the dialogue between such communities, government and industry. Together with community activists, they find pressure points in the system through letter writing, participation in public hearings, protests, and negotiation.

The highlight of Lowe's career was the Organization Strengthening Award NYCEJA received from the Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation in 2000 for its "outstanding contribution to the environmental movement." NYCEJA also won an award from the New York Citizen's Environmental Coalition during her tenure.

Lowe has also experienced some discouraging moments. She finds that the lowest point of her career came when the Garden Coalition that she represented lost the lawsuit to protect the community gardens from real estate development. Despite the fact that the gardeners had improved the vacant, garbage-ridden lots by planting and maintaining the gardens at their own expense as community amenities, they did not own the land. Challenging government action in the courts is always difficult, but for low-income people the time and cost involved make it prohibitive. Lowe realized that, "courts are rarely an effective venue for communities to protect themselves against environmental harm, especially for poor communities. They don't have money to make campaign contributions that buy access to the politicians who run the system."

When asked why she has stuck with a career in the environmental field, she says, "You do it because it's right…You don't quit because the job is hard. When obstacles arise, it makes me want to fight that much harder." At ICCR, she does legal analysis of corporate reporting for conformity with the Securities and Exchange Commission rules and keeps up with developments in environmental law, so she uses her legal skills in her work. She also enjoys working with wonderful people who are smart, savvy and committed. She says that she does not do this job for money, she likes what she does and she has fun.

Joseph Lyou

(1960-Present)
Executive Director
California Environmental Rights Alliance

Among Joseph Lyou's most significant achievements as an environmental justice activist is the pivotal role he played in halting construction of the proposed nuclear waste dump site at Ward Valley, the culmination of a decade-long struggle led by a coalition of Native American tribes, environmental organizations, city and state governments, and other grassroots social justice organizations . Using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Lyou was able to uncover data that the USGS had kept secret from the public and stop the Department of the Interior from proceeding with the decimation of Ward Valley, a Native American sacred site and critical habitat to the threatened desert tortoise.

Lyou first became interested in environmental justice issues through the Committee to Bridge the Gap (CBG), a nuclear watch group that focuses on arms control and nuclear safety, nuclear terrorism, and cleaning up contaminated sites. Lyou took the job with CBG in 1990, after receiving his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz; it was through CBG that he would join the fight to save Ward Valley. Lyou stayed with the organization for 10 years, and was the Executive Director when he left.

From there, Lyou went on to spend three years at the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, in order to focus more specifically on Environmental Justice issues. As Director of Programs, Lyou was responsible for the development and implementation of programs that would allow those who are underrepresented to be heard in environmental policymaking process.

Today, Joseph Lyou is the Executive Director of the California Environmental Rights Alliance (CERA), an organization that he founded with the goals of improving community health and achieving environmental justice in California. CERA's Community Empowerment Program, for example, aims to provide members of impacted communities with the technical assistance and training necessary to take back the control of their own neighborhoods. Through educational outreach and community-initiated decision-making, CERA hopes to "change the dynamics of environmental decision-making processes by promoting the participation of communities of color, low-income residents, and other underrepresented populations."

"Environmental work is rewarding; you can make a difference. But it can be fun too! We laugh, play and socialize. There is a sense of community that is rewarding both professionally and personally." Joseph Lyou, 2005.

Lyou is the younger of two children, and was born in 1960 to Joseph and Kay Lyou, a retired journalist/publisher and a semi-retired editor, respectively. He was raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles, but does not credit his surroundings as an influence in what would later turn out to be a career in the environmental field. Instead, Lyou feels that his interest in social justice work was fueled in part by the values instilled in him by his parents, as well as by the political climate in which he was reared; events such as Viet Nam and Watergate were catalysts for a future spent addressing the ills of government.

Throughout his career in the environmental field, Lyou has seen many victories, both big and small, as well as a few setbacks. Though work can be frustrating and overwhelming at times, Lyou continues to be encouraged by the successes he has been a part of. Also, the more he learns about the worst environmental problems currently affecting public health, the more motivated he is to continue to fight. Lyou's mentor, Dan Hirsch at Committee to Bridge the Gap, taught him how to be an effective activist, and he continues to learn each day from his colleagues.

CERA has recently made it a priority to identify and mentor the next generation of activists. This summer, a third-year law student at UCLA has been shadowing Lyou in an effort to learn the ins and outs of a career as an effective environmental justice advocate. He thinks that the intern brings a wonderful perspective to the work that they are doing, and hopes that she will join them to work full-time in the fall. Lyou believes that minorities should seriously consider committing themselves to a career in the environmental field for many reasons, not the least of which is because it is rewarding and indeed possible to make a difference. According to Lyou, "It can be fun too! We laugh, play and socialize. There is a sense of community here that is rewarding both professionally and personally."

Roberto Maisonnave

(1970-present)
Nutrient Management Specialist and
Soil Scientist

Roberto Maisonnave was born and raised in Buenos Aries, Argentina. His mother, Dina Maisonnave, was a homemaker and his father, Jorge Maisonnave was an accounting manager in a large automotive company. During his childhood, Maisonnave spent a great deal of time tending to his father's farm and had an early connection with agriculture.

This appreciation of agriculture led Maisonnave to study it in college. As an undergraduate student in the Agronomy College, Maisonnave took a class titled, "American Socio-cultural Systems: hunters and fruit collectors." He performed well in the class and impressed his professor who later invited him to join his research group. Maisonnave's teacher was awarded a fellowship from an American organization called *Earth Watch* to finance his studies. His *Earth Watch* group traveled to the Paraguay-Bolivia-Brazil frontier and spent a month in a native village close to the Paraguayan town of Bahia Negra. The natives of this group are called the Chamacocos and Maisonnave led the evaluation of their potential to incorporate agricultural activities at the family and community level. Although this research project was not a required component of Maisonnave's concentration program, his participation with this group significantly added to the richness of his undergraduate experience.

Maisonnave wrote his undergraduate thesis dissertation on arsenic water pollution in rural areas, which helped to gain him much recognition. This recognition opened many doors for him and opened doors for many future opportunities as well. He received a B.S. in agricultural engineering in 1998.

After Maisonnave received his bachelors degree, he began his masters studies at the University of Buenos Aries. While studying for his masters degree, Maisonnave developed an interest in the environmental field as a teacher assistant. As a teaching assistant, he did presentations at the University of Buenos and was in charge of water, soil, and sludge samples. Maisonnave held this position from 1998 to 2002. In 2002 he received his M.S. in Environmental Science.

Maisonnave's work as a teaching assistant and a young researcher helped him to advance in his career because of the experience he gained and contacts that he made. While working towards his Masters degree, he studied feed yards, an alternative to grazing cows where the cattle are put into small pens. This causes a serious environmental impact on surface and ground waters and Maisonnave was the first person to study this in Argentina. Because of his work on this topic, the World Bank and the Argentina government gave him a fellowship. This work also helped to secure him a three-month internship with Texas A & M University.

Upon completing his internship with Texas A & M, Maisonnave returned to Argentina to finish his masters degree and research for his dissertation. He applied and was accepted to a four year Ph.D. fellowship program with the University of Buenos Aires. Texas A & M then offered him a Ph.D. fellowship as well. While deciding which university to attend, a friend at Texas A & M notified him that an agribusiness firm was looking for someone with his work and research experiences. Ultimately, Maisonnave chose the position with agribusiness firm because he felt that the experience that he would gain would best advance his career.

The agribusiness firm is one the largest producers of pigs with one million pigs annually. Maisonnave is currently working as a nutrient management specialist and environmental soil scientist at Guymon, Oklahoma. He is responsible for sites located in Kansas, Colorado, and Texas as well and is in charge of a state-of-the-art hog manure waste treatment system. The manure is used as organic fertilizer for crops and it is given to farmers so that they can save money on commercial fertilizers. He is also the soil scientist of the company and works closely with management plants.

He credits his mentor, Dr. John Sweeten of Texas A & M University, with being a great influence on him throughout his endeavors. Sweeten hosted him when he came from Argentina, recommended him for his current position, and has always supported Maisonnave's hard work and dreams. Dr. Alicia Fabrizio de Iorio with the Chemistry Lab at University of Buenos Aires was also the first person that had introduced Maisonnave on the Environmental Sciences world and is still a great support to every life project he has. Maisonnave knows the importance of being a mentor as well. He is familiar with the difficulties associated with working in a foreign country, so he mentors individuals hired to raise the pigs from countries such as Mexico and Peru. He helps them with their transition from their respective countries to the United States by giving them advice on how to secure loans for cars and homes. He also shows them how to work with the corporation and he teaches them about environmental issues.

Maisonnave has been fortunate enough to have many great opportunities, but he has not always been able to seize all of them. One of Maisonnave's most difficult decisions was to turn down the doctoral fellowship from the University of Buenos Aries. Sixteen hundred people applied for the fellowship; only 50 people were selected. He was grateful that he got his current position, but at the same time he was frustrated that he had to close that door for the rest of his life. He was not sure if he would be successful in his new position in the corporate world.

Improvement is essential and Maisonnave feels that there is always room to improve oneself. He is extremely proud of the challenge that his current position provides. He has worked for two years in his capacity as a nutrient management specialist and environmental soil scientist. Both he and the company feel that he is a perfect match.

"*At some point, you have to prove why you are here.*"
Roberto Maisonave, 2004.

Maisonnave is also proud of the level of education that he has received from the University of Buenos Aries. There are many people in Argentina who do not have the funds to pursue an education, nor do they have access to the opportunities that he has had; this makes him feel very fortunate.

He has been able to make his hard work pay off. Maisonnave believes that his most significant achievement has been his ability to succeed in the corporate world despite the barriers that he has faced. It has been difficult for him to make the transition from academia to the corporate world especially because of the language and cultural differences that he has had to overcome. However, all of these things have enriched his experience.

Maisonnave advises minorities who are considering a career in the environmental field to try to understand and be knowledgeable of the regulations of whatever program they would like to be a part of. He also notes that people probably expect more out of him because he is a minority. He says, "At some point, you need to prove why you are here."

Leticia Magana-Marquez

(1963-Present)
Associate Professor of Biology
San Francisco State University

Leticia Magana-Marquez was born on August 15, 1963 as the first of four children. She was raised in Sacramento, California by her parents Lupe Marquez, a former factory worker and housekeeper, and Jesus Marquez, a former construction worker. Growing up in Sacramento, Magana-Marquez felt a strong sense that Mexicans citizens were second-class. She has been dedicated to changing that mentality.

Magana-Marquez attended Stanford University where she received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Biological Sciences in 1986. She went on to receive her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of California-Berkeley in 1991. She became interested in a career in the environmental field as a graduate student at UC Berkeley where she worked in the laboratory of Dr. Michael Chamberlin. Members of his laboratory studied the genetics of a soil bacterium, *Bacillus subtilis*.

Magana-Marquez's first job was at San Francisco State University where she remains a Biology professor and scientist. More specifically, she is a microbial geneticist, studying the genes responsible for particular behaviors in several bacteria that reside in the soil. She divides her time between research, teaching, and doing educational outreach service. Currently, Magana-Marquez is a tenured professor at San Francisco State where she has been teaching for eleven years. She is the first Latina to be tenured and promoted to full professor in the College of Science and Engineering at San Francisco State and she says, "It's a real achievement…I craft my position in such a way that it meets my commitment to my community and to my science." Magana-Marquez also has a commitment to empowering minority students to pursue research careers.

Despite Magana-Marquez's success, she says that she has never had a typical mentor. She believes that the best mentoring happens when a team of individuals work together to promote an individual's work. In fact, several individuals have provided Marquez-Magana moral and professional support. Michael Chamberlin, professor of Biochemistry at UC-Berkeley, taught her to be precise in her scientific thinking and effective in her scientific communication. Rhoda Cales, owner of Weekend in Español, a Spanish emersion program for adults, taught Magana-Marquez teaching techniques. She learned that teaching is more than sitting in class and giving presentations; it is also engaging students.

"I craft my position in such a way that it meets my commitment to my community and to my science." Leticia Magana-Marquez, 2004.

Magana-Marquez showed her dedication to becoming an effective teacher by attending workshops focused on teacher training. She aspired to be a Latina scientist committed to both her job and her family. Unfortunately, that type of mentor was not available to her, so she became that person. Magana-Marquez's lack of a typical mentor makes her fully aware of the importance of being mentored. Through her endeavors, she makes certain that others can have what she did not. As a graduate student, she started Scientists of Color, a graduate student organization aimed at creating minority social support and a professional network on

campus. At Stanford, Magana-Marquez was involved with the Stanford Multicultural Scientists that helped to create a summer research program for underrepresented minorities. She served as a mentor for the students and also assisted in their training.

Magana-Marquez mentors undergraduate students from all over the country. She also mentors new and younger faculty at San Francisco State. She acknowledges that in the beginning, there is so much for them to learn and know; it can be overwhelming at times. She let's them know that she is there to help them. As for the recognition that she receives for this work, Magana-Marquez says that the appreciation of her students is enough. Her mentees often thank her and she finds their gratitude to be rewarding. Magana-Marquez advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field to find mentors that can make them feel that they belong in the science field. These mentors should promote their best interests and encourage networking. She believes that mentors should be able to demystify the whole process of going forward into the environmental sector and give students ideas and options regarding their next steps. Magana-Marquez says that while many scientists recognize the need for diversity in nature, they are reluctant to promote racial diversity in science research. She feels that diversity in science research and work brings creative thinking, new views, and solutions to problems.

When asked what had been the greatest obstacle that she had encountered in her biological studies, she replied that it was the fact that the professors neither looked like her, nor did they sound like her, and in turn, she felt that she could not communicate with them. Later, when she decided to become a professor, she knew that it would allow her the opportunity to be a person with whom students of color could connect.

Magana-Marquez cites the highlight of her career as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Mentor Award that she received in 2001 for her outreach efforts as a graduate student at UC Berkeley and as a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford. She finds her most significant achievement to be the work that she did on the role of Sigma-D in controlling motility functions in *Bacillus subtilis*. She was responsible for much of this work and it demonstrates the role and regulation of this factor in controlling the bacterium's ability to move in its soil environment. Undoubtedly Magana-Marquez's fortitude and dedication have enabled her to achieve success in her profession. She is a committed mother, scientist, professor and mentor; these roles have served to make her a great source of inspiration as well.

Graciela Martinez

(1945-Present)
Director
Farm Labor Program (Proyecto Campesino)
American Friends Service Committee

From Self-Help Enterprises website

Graciela Martinez was born on January 29, 1945 in Harlingen, Texas. She is the youngest of four children born to Jose and Paula Martinez. Jose Martinez was a stonemason and her mother Paula, was a housewife and a farm worker. Graciela Martinez and her family moved from Harlingen to Farmersville, California when she was ten years old. It was at that time that she began learning more about the

environment. These lessons were not formal or taught in a school setting but they would be just as informative.

Paula Martinez began taking her daughter to work with her in the gladiola fields. Although the weather was hot and uncomfortable during those times, Mrs. Martinez took pains to make sure that both of them were well covered. Martinez says that at first she did not understand why her mother would immediately remove and wash the outer clothing they wore when they got home. Eventually, her mother explained that she did not want the pesticides from the fruit and in the air to get on their skin. Martinez remembers how children would chase after the trucks that would send off billows of yellow smoke throughout her neighborhood. This was also a pesticide, used to kill the mosquitoes, and just as damaging to the health of the people in that community. Martinez says that at a young age she was aware that there exposure to certain things in the environment that could do harm.

After graduating from high school, Martinez started working for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) as a typist in 1965. During that time, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement were gaining force. Martinez wanted to be a part of it, so she quit her job and became Cesar Chavez's secretary. Martinez was an active volunteer in the USW. Part of her duties included distributing newsletters about the group's cause and picketing in support of the farm workers. From there she went to work for the Legal Department of United Farm Workers. Since then, Martinez has been active both as a volunteer and as a professional employee in many environmental and community based organizations. After leaving the UFW, she worked in Delano, California for a non-profit legal service program called the California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA). Martinez later went on to work for several other law offices and says that she learned a lot throughout her work experience. She speaks Spanish and English fluently and this helped her when she was self-employed for ten years as a notary public. "The people who came to me for my services couldn't afford it from others. I would help people who needed interpreters in court. So I was well known in the community."

"The issues that affect us are important. We need water, and it's polluted. We're losing agricultural lands because farmers can't afford the insurance…We've got to let people know about these things. We're going to have to change it for the future, for our kids, for our grandkids. I want to be apart of that." Graciela Martinez, 2004.

She is one of the founders of the community group called Concerned Citizens of Goshen. As for her current job, Martinez says it was blessing from God. One day she saw an ad in the paper for an assistant coordinator position with the AFSC. She applied and was immediately hired. "It was a 360-degree turn for me ... I am a chair person of the board that I helped start when I was 20 years old.

Martinez says that her most significant achievement is being the director of the same program that she started working on with when she was young. AFSC will soon be celebrating its 50-year anniversary and Martinez is very proud of that. "We've done so much good work for community members and with farm workers especially. They are a very important group. I also love working with teenagers, helping them to learn more about these issues."

Martinez has also experienced some low points in her career. She recalled one instance in which she was working with a Mexican immigrant that was unlawfully arrested and held for immediate deportation. He went to trial and was released subsequently, however the police refused to release his records and identification, which proved that he was a legal resident. Martinez and others at the AFSC worked very hard to arrange for him to pick up his documents with dignity and without trouble. Upon going to retrieve his papers, however, he was picked up

and sent to a detention center in New Mexico. His family blamed Martinez for this and she was very distressed by it. And yet she continued to work with the man and the authorities. Eventually, his legal residency status was restored and he was able to rejoin his family. It was a hard time for her but she felt that it was just one of many hurdles that came with the job. Overall, she believes that the rewards far outweigh the difficulties.

Martinez identified four mentors who have helped her become the person she is today. The first mentor was her mother, who taught her spirituality, love and perseverance. The second mentor was her grade school teacher, Mrs. Henninger. The hugs and kind words she gave made Martinez feel good about herself, and assured her that she was doing well in her endeavors as a student and person. The third was her business teacher in high school who also an encouraged her. Martinez says she used to be insecure about herself during that time, and her teacher recommended that she join the journalism club. This allowed her to shift her focus from her surroundings and towards the better things in life. Lastly she credits Bard and Olga McAllister, who were the managers of the AFSC program with giving her lots of support. Martinez says that Bard and his wife Olga opened up opportunities that changed the course of her life. They took her to communities where the AFSC was working, to talk to people and to see how farm workers elsewhere lived. This drove her to tackle the cause and effects of environmental contamination.

Martinez is currently working for the AFSC on a radio show (GRITO 900 AM, KBIF) called "The Voice of the Community." The program addresses issues concerning water, health, immigration, and unfair labor practices. AFSC received a lot of help with the radio program from the Women in Broadcast Foundation. This foundation encourages women to be involved in broadcasting, and its organizers helped to bring young women to the AFSC radio show throughout the years. Martinez says the radio program is very important. "The show can be used as a tool to disseminate information and organize the community."

Martinez states her reason for sticking with her career in the environmental field by saying, "… because I'm a victim, my family members are victims and my neighbors are victims. So you have to get out of your own community sometimes to make an impact. The issues that affect us are important. We need water, and it's polluted. We're losing agricultural lands because farmers can't afford insurance…We've got to let people know about these things. We're going to have to change it for the future, for our kids, for our grandkids. I want to be apart of that."

Lee Ann Martinez

(1957-Present)
Associate Professor, Colorado State University - Pueblo
Program Director, National Science Foundation

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Lee Ann Martinez was born in 1957 in Lake Arrowhead in Southern California. She is the second of five children born to Daniel Martinez, a Spanish teacher and Barbara Martinez, a children's librarian. Growing up in Lake Arrowhead California, a rural mountain community, Martinez spent a great deal of time outdoors. She also spent time with her grandmother who lived near the beach. When visiting with her grandmother, Martinez

would often do a lot of camping as well. She says that her early experiences with nature greatly influenced her decision to pursue a career in the environmental field.

After high school, Martinez attended the University of California at Santa Barbara where she majored in Aquatic Biology. The summer before she graduated she had a student internship with the Brookhaven National Laboratory. As an intern, Martinez did research on the acidification of lakes in the Adirondack Mountains. She graduated in 1979 with a bachelor's degree and secured another student internship as a backcountry ranger at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. There, Martinez assisted in prescribed burning, fire fighting and science research with a focus on fire ecology. It proved to be a great opportunity for Martinez as she was able to combine her love for the outdoors with fieldwork.

Martinez went on to do a master's degree at the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1982. While pursuing her master's, Martinez was also appointed as a teaching assistant. Martinez went to Cornell University to study for her doctorate. She received her Ph.D. in ecology in 1987. While at Cornell, she had more teaching assistantships in introductory biology and aquatic insects courses. Martinez describes her advancement in her career as incremental because each experience opened another door for her. The work she did on the acid lakes project at Brookhaven was her introduction into field research and gave her the background to be hired as a ranger. By graduate school, she had had three summers of field research that helped her get into graduate school. Martinez is currently an Associate Professor of Biology at Colorado State University – Pueblo. In 2003, Martinez, on temporary leave from Colorado State University, worked for the National Science Foundation as a Program Officer for the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Martinez's professional advancement was due, in part, to the support of people who have helped her with her academic endeavors. When Martinez was an undergraduate, she did an independent research project on the effects of acid on algae and her advisor, John Melack, helped her with experimental designs and thinking through data collection techniques. During her graduate studies, Martinez's master's advisor, Mary Silver, taught her how to give polished presentations at science conferences and gave her numerous teaching tips. Lastly, Martinez credits Barbara Peckarsky, her Ph.D. advisor, with being helpful in teaching her how to write grant proposals. Both Silver and Peckarsky have children of their own, so they demonstrated to her that having a family and a career was definitely possible.

Fully aware of the importance of having a good mentor, Martinez mentors other colleagues and students in a variety of ways. She was profiled in an article in the National Science Teachers Association's magazine (*Quantum Magazine*). She was a member of the board of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science from 1996-1998. She gets one to two inquiries a month from students who are doing biographies on her for science classes and enjoys discussing her career with them. Martinez also advises her own students on career and academic issues.

"[We have] problems with environmental justice, under representation of minorities in the movement, and yet we're the ones who experience the most problems with environmental degradation." Lee Ann Martinez, 2004.

Martinez has had a successful career thus far, but there have been some challenging moments as well. The most discouraging experience occurred when she applied for faculty positions and felt that she was not being seriously considered. At times she feels like universities are only interested in having minorities in the candidate pool, not in hiring them. Martinez has had some highlights in her career also. One such highlight came when her master's research was published on the

cover of a science magazine. She is also very proud of her two daughters and her ability to juggle a career and a family.

Another of her significant achievements was the recognition she received for an outreach project related to the Mars Pathfinder Mission that she did with schoolchildren through the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. She also considered it a significant achievement when she was invited to be a Program Officer at the National Science Foundation. She has also received the Fulbright award to do work in West Africa. She worked on adaptive technology, introducing composting toilets in communities.

Martinez says that the type of work that she does is important in global science and for the future of the environment and this has made her stick with the environmental field. Most of all she finds that she gets enough recognition along the way to keep her going and that it is a worthwhile way to spend her time.

Martinez encourages more minorities to consider a career in the environmental field because she believes that their viewpoint is needed. She believes that minority communities have more at stake than other communities, so it would be in their best interest to continue to do the work that would positively impact those communities. Martinez feels that minorities are most affected by issues such as environmental justice and environmental degradation, so minorities should be most concerned with these issues.

Bharat Mathur

(1947-Present)
Acting Regional Administrator
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Photo credit: Illinois EPA website

Bharat Mathur was born on July 14, 1947 in New Delhi, India. He is the eldest of two children born to Jagdifh and Sarala Mathur. Jagdifh Mathur, now deceased, was a federal government employee in New Delhi. Sarala Mathur was a homemaker who spent much of her time volunteering. In addition to his father, Mathur also had many other relatives who worked for the government. This influenced him early in life to find a career within the government.

Mathur studied Civil Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay as an undergraduate student. He went on to obtain a Masters degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Iowa. Unfortunately, after finishing his first Masters degree, Mathur could not find a job. After speaking with a former professor at the University of Iowa who was also the chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering, Mathur was offered an assistantship in environmental engineering. This was his first exposure to the environmental field and he developed an interest in environmental issues. He immediately began the master's degree program in environmental engineering. It was during that time that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began developing. Mathur became familiar with the agency's work and the various environmental issues they were trying to address in the country at that time. He was impressed with their mission and decided that he wanted to work for the EPA.

Mathur was initially hired in the Division of Water Pollution Control and his duties required him to administer tests to waste water treatment plant operators and grade them to determine if they could pass state required exams. He also reviewed wastewater treatment plant operating reports. This first job was not exciting, so Mathur stayed there for six months until he could move to a permanent position in the Water Treatment Program. In his new post, he issued construction and operating permits for sewer systems and treatment plants.

As time went on, Mathur moved up the hierarchy to become a supervisor. He left the Water Treatment Program for the Air Pollution Program; he stayed in this unit for six years. Mathur later became the manager of part of the EPA's Waste programs – he remained in this position for three years. From there, he became the manager of the entire air program. Mathur was the head of the Illinois Air Pollution Control Program for ten years. He then applied for a senior executive position with the EPA in Chicago and became the Director of the Air and Radiation Program. After a year and a half, Mathur was promoted to be the post of Deputy Regional Administrator for the EPA's Region 5 office in Chicago. Currently, he is the Acting Regional Administrator; he manages 2,150 people. Mathur works to implement federal programs within six states in addition to working with communities within the region to help solve environmental problems. In all, Mathur has worked for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for the twenty-six years and he continues to work there because he feels he can make a difference.

Though he has never had a formal mentor, Mathur has known a few people who gave him guidance when he needed it. These were usually his supervisors. He says that it can be beneficial to have someone in the work place who can offer good information when necessary. "In my experience, if you run into an individual who will spend time with you, will give you advice and is good at their job, that's the best mentoring that you can get." In return, Mathur tries to be available to other minorities in the environmental field who may have questions and want suggestions on how they may further their own careers. He discusses promotional opportunities within the EPA with them and what he believes it takes to advance in the organization.

"In my experience, if you run into an individual who will spend time with you, will give you advice and is good at their job, that's the best mentoring that you can get." Bharat Mathur, 2004.

While working at the EPA, Mathur has been involved in developing a diversity action plan and working with the management staff to implement it. This plan, he says, is focused on equity and fairness in the hiring process. It includes visiting universities and colleges as part of the recruitment strategy, making sure the agency is fair and equitable in providing training for all employees, and making sure that each of the programs in the agency are implemented in a manner that includes environmental justice concerns all across the region.

Mathur feels that the experience that he gained by working in the various programs and departments of the EPA have helped his career. Mathur sought out opportunities and was rewarded. Each move from one position or program to the next offered job skills and promotions that helped him.

Mathur works in the environmental field because he enjoys it. He thinks that it is a very good field for public policy issues. Over the years he's come to realize that policy issues are what excite and intrigue him the most. Mathur says that as a government employee, there are numerous opportunities to be involved in making policy and making a difference in the quality of life for people.

Among his most significant accomplishments, Mathur counts obtaining a tenured position in the EPA as the head of the Air Pollution Control Program. He is also proud of his involvement in implementing many different programs that helped to bring Chicago's air quality federal and state compliance.

Norris McDonald

(1953-Present)
Founder and President
African American Environmentalist Association (AAEA)

Norris McDonald was born in 1953 to Sandy Norris McDonald, Sr. and Katie Louvenia Best. As the eldest child of a high school principal and an assistant in the public school system, Norris grew up in a very stable and conservative suburban North Carolina home. He stayed in the state of North Carolina for college, earning his Bachelors of Education from Wake Forest University in 1977. However, it was neither his hometown nor university training that stimulated his interest in environmental issues. Rather, it was the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident in 1979.

Six months after the accident at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, McDonald joined an environmental group. McDonald worked as the director of an energy conservation project with Friends of the Earth (FOE). His primary work included research, media relations, public education, lobbying, and fundraising efforts. It was during his involvement with FOE that the environmental field and movement piqued his interest. It was also during this time that McDonald discovered the lack of minority involvement within the field. For instance in 1979 there were no black professionals in environmental groups in the Washington, D.C area. As a result, in 1985 McDonald founded the African American Environmentalist Association (AAEA).

The AAEA was founded on the premise that the lack of diversity in the traditional environmental movement translated into a lack of black and minority perspective on environmental issues. Thus, the primary goal of AAEA is to address issues that are important to minority communities. This work includes working with local, state, and national leaders on issues like clean air and clean water – particularly in Washington, D.C. It also includes collaborating with traditional environmental groups that have a presence in the nation's capital. Collaborations have included the establishment of a water resources program, internships, research projects, publications, and even shared office space. These collaborative efforts as well as work on other environmental issues have allowed McDonald's perspective on environmental and energy policy to grow significantly. They have also allowed him to meet many people, including important actors in the environmental movement.

"The environment is important to the survival of the entire planet." Norris McDonald, 2004.

Two people, in particular, played especially important roles in McDonald's life. McDonald considers both Dick Gregory and Joe Downey important mentors in his life. McDonald refers to Dick as the "godfather of the environmental justice movement." Dick was a founding board member and McDonald was his protégé. Dick assisted McDonald with professional and personal issues when necessary. Joe Downey, a successful environmental businessman, was also instrumental in McDonald's life. He showed McDonald the roadmap to setting up a successful environmental organization. He also inspired McDonald to take helicopter lessons, a skill that has proven very useful in environmental work as it assists McDonald in traveling to various sites. McDonald speaks positively of the role that mentors have played in his life. In turn, he has also been a mentor for others.

McDonald believes that a major part of his job is to increase black participation within the environmental movement. The AAEA had an active internship program throughout the 1980s and 90s. A total of 50 interns have worked with the organization. Some of these interns have gone on to work as environmental lawyers while others are working with national environmental organizations and federal and agencies like the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

When mentoring minorities in the environmental field, McDonald likes to encourage mentees to "do their homework." By this McDonald means that the environmental field is broad. It encompasses issues relating energy, water, air, chemistry, and other social and natural sciences. These fields are complex and require a long period of time to master. Further, the environmental field addresses a number of cross-cutting issues and there are many ideas of how to best handle environmental problems. He advises against relying too heavily on others for information and perspectives regarding environmental events and, instead, encourages young professionals to generate their own policy and world views by doing their homework and becoming informed, active agents of change.

McDonald cites the discovery and ability to work with nuclear power as the highlight of his career. He is proud of AAEA's ability to promote practical environmental solutions, including nuclear power and electric vehicles. McDonald considers his work in the passage of federal energy and civil rights policies to be his most significant professional achievement. He worked on the Shared Energy Savings Act of 1986 which was signed by Ronald Reagan. Also included is the No Fear Act, a historic civil rights piece of legislation. His most significant personal accomplishment is being the single parent of a son. His son is the most important person in his life.

While McDonald has accomplished much in the environmental movement, he acknowledges that it has been very difficult. He found himself unable to build a large organization because of a chronic illness (asthma) and the fact that he is a single parent. However, despite these difficulties, McDonald has stuck with a career in the environmental field.

McDonald states that the environment is important to survival of the entire planet, and this includes minority communities. It is this thought that has kept him an active participant in the environmental field and in the movement to encourage greater minority involvement in environmental affairs.

Angela Johnson Meszaros

(1963-Present)
Director of Policy and General Council
California Environmental Rights Alliance

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

When asked about the highlight of her career, Angela Johnson Meszaros immediately thinks of her colleagues. "It's their combination of community organizing and professionalism that brings work to life for me," Meszaros says. "It's just amazing to work and learn from them." While she was the Executive Director of the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, Meszaros organized a monthly luncheon series to bring together people from around Los Angeles area who work on environmental justice issues. Meszaros believes that it is important on many levels for activists, community members and professionals to get to know one another and bond when they are not involved in a crisis. These monthly luncheons – which are still ongoing – started a large number of friendships and collaborations in addition to building knowledge and information sharing.

"If the air, water or food causes you to have serious problems or even die, you can't enjoy any of the other things that you hold dear." Angela Johnson Meszaros, 2005.

Meszaros is currently the Director of Policy and General Council at the California Environmental Rights Alliance (CERA) where she works to develop state and regional policies to monitor the implementation of air, toxics and land-use planning policies in low-income communities of color. Meszaros' interest in an environmental career began during law school at the University of Southern California (USC), when her civil rights law class reviewed the environmental justice movement for a case study on childhood lead poisoning. She was so inspired by what she learned that she entered a year-long fellowship as a Project Coordinator for Lead Safe California in 1994. There, Meszaros helped to build a coalition in Los Angeles to facilitate drafting state legislation geared towards removing lead hazards from homes.

In 1995, Meszaros started the Environmental Justice Resource Network (EJRN) with funds from an Echoing Green fellowship. The EJRN was founded to provide legal, educational, and technical assistance to low-income communities of color affected by environmental hazards. Later, Meszaros worked at the Environmental Defense as Executive Director of the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, and as a researcher at USC before accepting her current position at CERA.

Meszaros was born on October 23, 1941, and is one of three children. She was raised by her parents, Leroy, a delivery truck driver, and Nettie, a bookkeeper, in Vallejo, California. Meszaros does not believe that her childhood in Northern California had a strong influence on her future career path.

Of all the people that she has worked with over the years, Meszaros was most influenced by her mentor Bill Lannlee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund's Western Regional Counsel. Lannlee taught Meszaros about the role and limitations of using the law to accomplish social and political goals, as well as how she can use her

perspective as a person of color working in the legal profession to protect low-income communities from hazards. Meszaros also values the wide range of community members she has had the opportunity to work with; each has taught her valuable lessons regarding how to interact with communities that you are not a part of, how to hold the issues at hand in the forefront of the struggle (rather than getting lost in law or policy), and to always keep your humanity when thinking about how to address the issues you are confronting.

Meszaros continues to work in the environmental field not only because of her colleagues, but because the environment is the foundation for everything she considers important. "If the air, water or food causes you to have serious problems or even die, you can't enjoy any of the other things that you hold dear," Meszaros says. She has standard advice for minorities who are looking to work for an environmental organization: find a way to work more directly with impacted communities, for this is not always easy with most mainstream organizations. In fact, everyone—no matter what line of work one is in—should find a way to incorporate environmental issues into the work they do.

Miguel A. Mora

(1950-Present)
Research Scientist
United States Geological Survey

Photo credit: Ian Robinson

Miguel A. Mora was born in 1950 to Alejandro, a farmer and Elena Mora, a stay-at-home mother. Mora, the second of seven children, grew up in a small village in Totolán, Mexico. Throughout his childhood, Mora was constantly outdoors and had contact with nature everyday. As a result, he gained a great appreciation for the environment. Mora's childhood exposure to nature would lead him to pursue a career in ecotoxicology.

When Mora was a senior in high school, he received his first environmental position in a laboratory with the wildlife Department of a governmental agency in Mexico City. While there, he was a technician who assisted the biologists with lab and fieldwork. It was during those years that Mora made the move that would help him become the person he is today. He decided to pursue an undergraduate education at the National Polytechnic Institute. Shortly after completing his bachelors, Mora attended the University of California at Davis to study for his Ph.D. in ecology in 1990.

"[Ecology] It's fun! Stick to your goals, and the rewards will come through in the end. There are a lot of opportunities in the environmental field that are very pleasant." Miguel Mora, 2004.

"Education is the key to success" says Mora, who was able to secure a post-doctoral position upon completion of his doctorate. Mora also attended many events that helped influential people become familiar with his name and research. During various scientific meetings, Mora met scientists who worked in the field of wildlife and general ecotoxicology; this was vital to his

professional development as a scientist. Networking gave him the opportunity to meet many people who helped him with his career development. Mora was invited to apply for an open position as a research scientist for the U.S. Geological Survey. He applied for the position and was accepted; he remains there to this day.

Mora says he advanced to his current position by "getting the job done." This entailed doing research, publishing papers and presenting at scientific conferences. Mentors made a difference in Mora's life. Throughout his undergraduate and graduate studies, Mora had great mentors and he gives them credit for helping him to advance. His advisors in undergraduate and graduate school and his family all served as mentors by providing him with "the right advice at the right time," and helping him to focus his efforts on his research projects. Because of the invaluable assistance he received from others, Mora mentors others through his membership in the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). SACNAS is an organization that promotes quality education in the sciences. They also support increasing the number of minorities pursuing degrees in the environmental field. For the past ten years, Mora has been actively involved with SACNAS.

Mora also conducts seminars and scientific meetings to help prepare students for careers in the sciences. Mora works to diversify the environmental field through his work in SACNAS and by sitting committees such as the gender and diversity committee of the Wildlife Society.

Mora has gone through stressful periods over the course of his career. The highlight of Mora's life was getting what he says was a great education and obtaining his Ph.D. in ecology. This was especially rewarding to Mora because his parents were very poor and could not provide any financial assistance for his college education. When Mora was in high school, it was very difficult to get a job that would also allow him to complete his studies. Mora says that the school system in Mexico was not as flexible as it was in the United States, thus, he had to find a way to afford an education. In Mexico, the priority was to make money in order to survive, not to go to school. The time for studying was limited, and knowing that he was always tethering on the brink of financial ruin was very stressful. Every year that Mora completed or advanced in school was a great accomplishment for him. He says that his greatest achievement was the completion of his research regarding the impact of environment contaminants on bird populations. He has also had some difficulties in his career. Mora says that the lowest point of his career came when he was close to losing his job because of budget cuts within the company under which he is currently employed. During that time, Mora had worked for the U.S. Geological Survey for three years and there were a lot of budget cuts. As a result of the agency's financial troubles, many people were forced to resign. Mora was worried, but he was able to maintain his job. Through the ups and downs of his career, Mora remained committed to his profession because he loved being outdoors and found his job to be more rewarding than working in other professions.

Mora believes that working in the environmental field is fun work. For people that are considering a career in the environmental field, Mora says to "Stick to your goals, and the rewards will come through in the end. There are a lot of opportunities in the environmental field that are very pleasant."

Y. Armando Neito

(1951-Present)
Director for Outreach, Communications and Community Engagement
Coalition for Clean Air

Y. Armando Nieto was born, as were his three brothers and one sister, in Long Beach, California. Nieto's father was a construction worker and his mother an activist. Nieto, it seems, was destined to be an environmental and social justice activist; his mother worked for Cesar Chavez for a time and went on to open a house of sanctuary for Salvadorian refugees. Having grown up on the coast of California, he saw oil development change the landscape of the shoreline and has been fighting drilling off the California coast ever since. "Growing up I was the president of everything in school; that and the Vietnam War influenced me," he says.

Nieto began an undergraduate career at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1969. However, after being unjustly beaten and jailed following anti-war protests and a fire at the Bank of America, Nieto was "turned off" of school. Despite not finishing his formal education, Nieto continued to develop as an activist went on to accomplish a great deal. Eventually, he and others who were wrongfully accused of arson negotiated a settlement for the sum of $100,000. The group used the money to found an organization called the Isla Vista Community Service Center. The Center served as a point for disseminating information and as a community gathering place.

"Do not settle for crumbs, hold our leaders accountable." - Armando Nieto, 2005.

Nieto saw the environmental movement as a way to highlight social justice and equity concerns. "The environmental movement is a way to reach a broader group of people on social justice issues," he says. He first became active in the environmental affairs in 1995 when he joined the staff of the Environmental Defense Center, a central coast public interest law firm, as Executive Director.

During his career, Nieto has been able to develop expertise in fundraising and coalition building. He is proud that he has survived to be one of the respected elders in the field, "there now exists, and is accepted, a mediocre level of leadership, people have it [the desire to be a good leader] beaten out of them," Nieto says. He says that he feels heartbreak when he becomes acquainted with people who are not willing to believe in themselves and are not willing to move forward. Nieto currently sits on several boards including: the National Earth Share Federation and the Santa Barbara ChannelKeeper, as well as service on the advisory boards of the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, and the National Conference for Community and Justice. Nieto is a member of Hispanics in Philanthropy and the National Alliance of Hispanics in Health.

Nieto considers Hispanics in Philanthropy to be one of the most effective networking groups in the country. It has become more diverse over the years and has allowed him to grow and to mentor others in the organization. Nieto was recruited by the Coalition for

Clean Air (CCA) when the organization received funding from the William and Flora Hewlett foundation to aid in building the environmental movement in California. He is charged with bridging non-traditional communities throughout the state in order to expand the meaning of the environment. As Director of Outreach, Communication and Community Engagement, Nieto says, "I am the money guy."

Nieto says that two overarching dynamics in this country are not about demographics, but are the paradigm of the white male and of the economy. Nieto says that the current paradigm is "hard dying." He also says that because there is not enough money in [government] budgets, there is not enough money for social services. "The reality is that the country is made up of [large numbers of] people of color and we as a… [group] do not know how to work together," Nieto says. He continues, "I come in to be a bridge builder." Nieto educates the community on the environmental issues facing them and then aids them in their campaign to change what is happening to them. Nieto gives this advice to those growing in the movement, "do not settle for crumbs, no matter what path you have taken, higher education or not, you can be both successful and a role model."

Na'taki Osborne

(1974-Present)
National Leadership Coordinator
National Wildlife Federation
West Atlanta Watershed Alliance

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Na'taki Osborne was born in 1974 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana near Cancer Alley – the pollution-ridden corridor along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Her mother, Mamie, an English professor and her father, Cassie, the provost at Mississippi Valley State University, raised her and her sibling. When her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, Na'taki realized that her neighbors were also experiencing health problems and wondered if they could be linked to industrial pollution. Na'taki decided that she wanted to be an agent of change and help communities with environmental concerns.

She first heard of environmental justice in 1992 and wanted to become a part of the movement because it was a good way to stay informed, study science, as well as understand the political, economic, and social implications of environmental justice. Osborne earned a Bachelor of Science in 1996, majoring in chemistry and environmental engineering at Spellman College and the Georgia Institute of Technology. She later earned a Master's of Public Health & Environment and Occupational Health from Emory University in 2002.

Osborne's first environmental job was as an EPA intern in 1994, working for the Superfund & Hazardous Waste Division on remediation projects. She did educational outreach with neighborhoods with waste sites, learning about residents' health concerns and helping to identify technologies that could be used to clean up the sites. "I was excited to be part of the solution." The community challenged her to think about her role as both a community member and as a government employee. While interning for the EPA, Osborne decided that she wanted to work at the grassroots level, being active in the process of challenging polluters and holding those who were responsible for environmental harm accountable for the problems residents face.

Osborne also interned with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) during her years as an undergraduate. From 1993 to 1996, Na'taki earned a research fellowship, working in the environmental research lab at Spellman College in Atlanta. In 1997 Osborne began working for the NWF full time, serving a primarily low-income, minority community in Atlanta, Georgia. She worked on the issues of sustainable communities, environmental education, environmental justice advocacy, community organizing, eliminating environmental stressors, watershed and green space protection, and environmental health.

Today, Osborne holds the position of National Leadership Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation. She helps to provide community members with technical training, environmental education, and advocacy training so that they have the tools to improve their quality of life. "It's all about connecting them to environmental professionals and governmental entities that might help them to find their voice and develop their own vision for environmental protection." Throughout her career, Na'taki has had many mentors, but two in particular were especially helpful. Sherrill Marcus, of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice in Atlanta, Georgia challenged her to think about things in different ways and inspired her to challenge the status quo. Richard Bright, the pastor of a local church in Atlanta, Associate Director and Coordinator of Environmental Projects at the Prevention Resource Center at Morehouse School of Medicine, and Community Environmental Health instructor also founded the Environmental Trust Group, the first black organization in Atlanta to address environmental concerns. Bright took Osborne under his tutelage and nurtured her interest in environmental health and justice.

Osborne has an ongoing mentoring relationship with Spellman College, visiting the campus to speak about their environmental task force and talking to students who are studying environmental science. She has had various speaking engagements across the country at National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) events and Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) conferences where she speaks about the issues surrounding environmental justice and opportunities in the field such as internships, fellowships, jobs and volunteer opportunities. In 1995, Na'taki developed an environmental mentorship program for Atlanta communities, which involved training college students from Atlanta in environmental education. The students then taught elementary students about environmental uses. Although the program no longer exists, it provided a model for the NWF's Earth Tomorrow program.

"Mentoring is a big part of what I do and it's both formal and informal at times…it's important that we mentor, inspire, and raise up the next generation of environmental leaders." Na'taki Osborne, 2004.

The highlight of Osborne's career has been seeing the successful changes that take place in the communities she works in, such as shutting down landfills, passing environmental legislation, and acquiring green space and protecting it from future development. The lowest point of her career has been witnessing some of the battles the NWF has lost. She has seen the City of Atlanta develop policies that will negatively impact communities, particularly communities of color. Osborne remains in the environmental field because she believes that if change is going to happen, it'll be up to her. "This work is part of my calling…helping communities to empower themselves and be change agents."

Osborne cites her role in helping to build the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance as her most significant achievement. She is pleased with the many things the organization has accomplished related to environmental health issues and green space protection. "I've been a part of building this organization and it's totally volunteer run. I think that our organization is on the rise, bringing

together the West Atlanta community on issues surrounding environmental quality."

As a member of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Na'taki has worked to expose the people in her association to environmental justice issues. She helps NSBE members to get involved in environmental issues, be responsive to their communities, and understand that their roles as minority scientists and engineers can contribute positively to the movement. Osborne currently serves on the steering committee for ECO's National Advisory Council for the Conservation Careers Diversity Mapping Project as well as serving on the Environmental Leadership Program's (ELP) board of directors, co-chairing the Diversity Committee. She is also ELP's senior fellow and is working on one of their projects, a book about the contributions of women of color to environmental justice.

Na'taki advises minorities considering a career in the environmental field to learn as much as they can from different vantage points. "Be sure to gain that education by being involved in the community (doing hands-on work) as well as by taking courses. Find a place of interest and get involved. Take advantage of opportunities that can help you reach your goal." Osborne's expertise on a wide variety of environmental issues and commitment to diversity and mentoring truly benefits the movement for environmental justice.

David N. Pellow

(1969-Present)
Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies
University of California, San Diego

Photo credit: CCW-OSH website

David Pellow, though in many ways still at the dawn of his academic career, is a trailblazer who brings truth and innovation to his research, teaching, and community work. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies from University of Tennessee, in Knoxville. In 1998, he received a Ph.D. in Sociology from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He is currently an Associate Professor at the University of California, San Diego, where he directs the California Cultures in Comparative Perspective program.

The second of three children, Pellow spent most of his childhood in Nashville, Tennessee. The spirit of inquiry runs in his veins; the environment only heightens that sense of wonderment and the desire to search for answers. Moreover, his biological mother and adopted parents are all researchers and professors, and Nashville provided a natural environment rich with caves, lakes, and forests that Pellow explored extensively with his father. His parents not only taught him how to be inquisitive, but they also encouraged him to incorporate his political views into his work. "I am a southern man, so I never saw any shortage of social inequality, but I was lucky to have access to natural environmental amenities…. My parents were involved in the civil rights movement.., and they were role models for turning out students who would go on to do work in their communities." Pellow cites the racial, industrial, and natural histories of the South as factors that influenced his work profoundly.

"I was always personally interested in ecology and environmental issues, hiking, mountains, fishing, and animal rights work; I was also working on racial justice

issues, but no one else was working on it. When I went to [the University of] Tennessee, a professor there told me that the previous year there had been a visiting professor who did that kind of work." That professor was none other than Robert Bullard, who currently directs the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark-Atlanta University. Pellow contacted Bullard, who told him about the environmental justice movements' activities and who eventually became a mentor and a friend to him.

As he embarked on his graduate study, Pellow found mentors at many other universities through conferences, including Bunyan Bryant and Dorceta Taylor at the University of Michigan. For Pellow, mentors of color were especially important. "It was great…psychologically, because I could envision my work as a career, and I was able to model myself after them, knowing I could make an original contribution as I read their books." Pellow learned from his mentors that his drive to become a scholar-activist would mean maintaining quality in his academic work and accountability to the communities in which he works. "I noticed about their careers that as much as I wanted to do applied work grounded in community struggles, I always had to make sure I was being professional and was publishing to advance the career. [Yet], everything I have published came from community activists and is grounded in community research and the environmental justice community." Pellow sees his connections to community organizations as essential to his ability to remain "sane, unlike many in the academy who are people of color." He encourages his own students and mentees, whether at UCSD or at universities across the country, to follow a similar path, much as his own mentors did for him. Pellow is sure to mention that his relationships with his mentees are collegial, as he feels he has much to learn from them as well.

Pellow holds a strong belief in making the connections between faculty, students, and community concerns. He started the California Cultures in Comparative Perspective (CCCP) program in response to the "attack" on affirmative action in California. The program is a "diversity initiative on campus that does not violate the law, Proposition 209, which phased out affirmative action. We wanted to hire experts on diversity, so the idea is to hire these people and hope that they are of different racial backgrounds," he says. Through the CCCP, faculty who are experts in ethnic issues in California have been hired in several departments. These professors are able to help students make connections between ethnic issues in California and those of the entire world.

"Work your ass off, be confident…work like you've got some business, and network to find out what people have done to advance their careers, as long as you can maintain your integrity to get there, but first and foremost, make sure you do something you love…." David Pellow, 2005.

Under Pellow's leadership, the CCCP supported the university's approval of a Minor in California Cultures, which enables students to receive credit for internships and fieldwork conducted in community organizations in the state. The CCCP also facilitates the Activist-Scholars Dialogue. This program creates a campus forum for community leaders from California to discuss their work and to critique the university, creating a rich and needed discourse, according to Pellow. Out of these highly-anticipated and well-attended discussions have arisen partnerships, resource exchange and collaboration. Pellow believes this type of community-based learning should become commonplace. "I have only been here three years, but when I was told that nothing like this has been done before, I was stunned, given the level of resources available at the university. It's all about breaking down barriers of town and gown and the elitism of the university," he says. Pellow's mission is to ensure the university serves the needs of all members of the

community. "All the work we (CCCP) do is with organizations and communities working with immigrants, people of color, refugees, women, children, (people with) HIV/AIDS. Where the need is the greatest, the university should be there, especially…a public university."

Pellow's work as an environmental sociologist helps him stay committed to the environmental field. "It's a subfield that has a lot to offer and is unique," he says. "On the whole, sociology on the whole as a discipline continues to ignore the relationship of humans and the environment, so as a sociologist, I feel I can do a lot." He enjoys working on the margins of his disciplines and conducting "original work with a unique voice." This includes his work in ethnic studies, a discipline which Pellow believes "has ignored the connection between humans, the environment, and communities of color." He continues, "Of all fields, [ethnic studies] should be incorporating environmental justice, so again I am on the fringe, but in a place I am comfortable."

The work Pellow conducts in San Diego and around the world pushes academic fields to reconsider their accountability to the communities in which they operate. He helped launch the International Campaign for Responsible Technology, a global network of scholars and activists working to address the impact of the technology industry while producing original economic, sociological, and environmental research. The impetus for the campaign arose from the publication of Pellow's book *The Silicon Valley of Dreams: Environmental Injustice, Immigrant Workers, and the High-Tech Global Economy*. Pellow considers the highlight of his career thus far to be the affirmation he received from the people in the primary community organization featured in the book. "The community activists are using it to fundraise and to boost their legitimacy," he says. "That kind of affirmation from community activists who weren't [upset] at me [believing I was] using it just to pad my own career but [happy] that they could use it as a tool" is all too rare.

Though Pellow retains legitimacy with many community-based organizations, he feels that he at times must fight for recognition as a relevant voice outside of academia, and those moments have been some of the lowest in his career. "Many times, whether it's a team of scientists, GIS [(Geographic Information Science)] representatives, or people on a reservation, people outside the academy are trained to think only scientists can add value and knowledge and make a case to government or courts, and they look at me as a sociologist and can't figure out what I'm adding to the conversation, so I'm often on the spot to make the case for what I do." Pellow manages to find the self-examination and explanation useful. "All too often academics don't have to make a case for what they do, and that can lead communities down the wrong path. We all need to be questioned!"

Pellow retains a commitment to justice for all in a field that does not always reward activism. He offers strong advice for students of color who are considering a career in the environmental field: hard-earned lessons from his own journey. "Work your ass off, be confident, stand up straight, work like you've got some business, and network to find out what people have done to advance their careers, as long as you can maintain your integrity to get there, but first and foremost, make sure you do something you love…. As a person of color, you will already be doing that just by your very existence, but you have a responsibility to represent and make us proud and make sure you are doing good for the planet and for people. Anyone who doesn't want to help—just wants to advance their career—should not be in this field. Look for ways to link whatever work you do to the needs of real people and the environment, and always seek out help and mentorship. Don't be afraid to knock on doors and make phone calls and create a network of support, because sooner or later you'll be called upon to do the same thing." And in this manner, Pellow is making a difference to students, academics, and communities affected by injustice all over the world.

Swati Prakash

(1975-Present)
Environmental Health Director
West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Born to Indian immigrants on August 7, 1975, Swati Prakash is the older of two children born to Mrs. Madhavi Prakash, an administrator, and Mr. Jaya Prakash, an electrical engineer. Prakash grew up in a white, lower middle class community close to the industrial corridor of Northeast New Jersey – home to petrochemical refineries, industrial facilities and incinerators. She also grew up swimming in Farrington Lake in North Brunswick, while an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site was located nearby. Just two years ago, Prakash discovered that her high school was built atop a medical waste dump.

Though her suburb was home to Superfund sites Prakash felt that, overall, she "couldn't complain" about her quality of life and that it was obvious that this privilege was not something that everyone experienced. Prakash first became involved in environmentalism in what she calls the "classic suburban American fashion"—through hiking and camping with the Girl Scouts as a child, and later working with her high school's environmental group, CLEAN (Committee to Lessen Environmental Abuse Now) when she was a sophomore. Through this work she eventually became involved with the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) and the Greens/Greens Party USA. She was also involved with an anti-racism group at her high school, Students Helping Overcome Tensions. She was aware that she was the only person in the school involved in both an anti-racism and an environmental group at the same time. In her junior year, her involvement with SEAC and the Greens helped her learn about an incinerator that was being proposed for Rahway, a poor community of color nearby. Prakash decided to get involved in the fight to prevent its opening; she thought that Rahway was chosen because "it was poor and black." Prakash also took this opportunity to bridge her anti-racism and environmental activism. She made contact with the Black Student Union as well as the environmental groups at her high school to get them to tackle this issue collectively, but was unsuccessful in getting to groups to work on the issue. All was not lost though, by working on the anti-incinerator campaign, Prakash became more aware of fact that privilege and injustice in the environmental realm were highly racialized.

The following year – 1993 – Prakash attended a national gathering of the SEAC in Berkeley, California. She was the high school representative from New Jersey. She recalls being absolutely shocked to arrive at the conference site and find a room full of "people every color but white." Thinking she was in the wrong place, she turned to leave, but two organizers stepped forward and welcomed her to the "people of color" caucus of SEAC. This was the first time Prakash was to ever hear the term people of color. The caucus included a day-long anti-racism training session. Prakash thinks of this day as her "politicizing moment." She met many people from the Deep South who were working on environmental justice and referred to it as a movement—in part thanks to the fairly recent National People of Color Environmental Justice Summit in 1991. As many other youth of color gave her exposure to a wide array of environmental issues through the lens of racism and discrimination, Prakash began to understand the patterns of environmental racism that were pervasive throughout the United States. It was also the first time she felt that she

did not have to trade off her identity as a South Asian person with her desire to be an environmentalist. It was also the first time she felt pride in identifying as a person of color who cared deeply about environmental issues. Prakash's politicizing experiences over that long weekend resonated well with her spiritual and cultural foundation as a Hindu, "with its central tenet that all things that exist are interconnected, woven from the same fabric, and are the reflection of a higher power." Prakash reasoned that environmental degradation—and especially environmental racism—was the worst manifestation of doing wrong by that higher power. Her path was thus carved: Prakash has since dedicated her life and career to furthering the goals of the environmental justice movement.

Prakash holds a Bachelor's of Art degree from Harvard College in Environmental Science and Public Policy. She obtained a Master's of Science degree from Harvard University's School of Public Health in Environmental Health (with a focus in Environmental Science and Engineering) in 2000. Finding it difficult to make connections with environmental justice groups in the Cambridge and Boston area, after her first year of college she turned her attention to anti-racism work. This culminated in her senior year with her organizing a national student conference called "Act '97," – a conference by, for, and about student activists of color.

While at Harvard, Prakash mostly focused on the health effects of air pollution, working for a small environmental justice group in Boston and as the outreach and events coordinator for the EPA's Urban Environmental Initiative (New England Region). She also served as the youngest member of the National Council of the Greens/Green Party USA, and SEAC. After graduating from Harvard, she worked as a project director for the Environmental Diversity Forum.

Prakash is currently the Director of Environmental Health and Community-based Research programs at West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT), where she has worked for over five years to educate and empower community residents to address environmental health issues, promote community-driven environmental health research, and conduct air pollution monitoring and reduction projects. At WE ACT, Prakash provides technical assistance and support for community organizing efforts to improve environmental health, both locally and nationally.

"…*All things that exist are interconnected, woven from the same fabric, and are the reflection of a higher power.*" Swati Prakash, 2005.

Prakash currently sits on the advisory board of the Environmental Justice and Health Union and on the Board of Trustees of the Environmental Leadership Program. She serves as coordinator of the Community Outreach and Education Program at the NIEHS Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan as well as serving on various EPA advisory panels related to asthma research and children's health. She has also volunteered as a youth leadership trainer with organizations in Boston and New York. In addition, Prakash is a 2004 Board Member of the Public Health Association of New York City and 2001-2003 Fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program. Finally, Prakash collaborates with the Columbia School of Public Health on several community-based research projects addressing asthma, air pollution and children's health.

Since she began at WE ACT, Prakash has led the NIEHS Environmental Justice Partnerships for Communication grant—a four-year grant from the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences to enhance and expand the community-driven research agenda to address environmental justice issues. Prakash was instrumental in WE ACT's filing of a Title VI complaint against the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in 2000, charging the MTA with disproportionately siting diesel bus depots and parking lots in minority

neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan. She provided much of the research needed to draft the complaint, while helping organize the affected communities through WE ACT's "If you Live Uptown, Breathe at Your Own Risk" campaign.

Prakash coordinates and conducts WE ACT's research projects related to asthma and indoor air quality in collaboration with the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. The results of many of the studies co-authored by WE ACT have been used to pressure the MTA to invest in alternative fuels.

Prakash's greatest passion at WE ACT has been the Environmental Health & Justice Leadership Training – an intensive academy designed to provide community residents and other leaders with the environmental health and science basics about issues affecting local neighborhoods. Her tireless efforts have increased environmental literacy and public health awareness by training nearly 80 New York City community leaders to understand environmental health issues and to advocate for their concerns to be addressed. Also under Prakash's leadership, WE ACT guest-edited the April 2002 special supplement of *Environmental Health Perspectives*, a peer-reviewed environmental health science journal. This special issue, dedicated to environmental justice and community-based participatory research, featured 25 articles discussing the results research in minority and low-income communities throughout the United States. It was the first time a community-based organization guest edited an issue of this scientific journal. Two years later, in an attempt to make research findings more accessible to those communities most affected by environmental health issues, Prakash guided WE ACT's work in co-editing and publishing the Winter 2004 issue of *Race, Poverty, and Environment*. This journal, published by Urban Habitat, focused on the theme of "Using Research for Environmental Justice." Prakash also served a moderator and planner for the 2004 EPA "Science of Environmental Justice" conference in Boston. The conference brought together 275 EPA employees, environmental justice activists, and others to discuss how the EPA may structure its science research agenda to better incorporate community-based participatory research methods and cumulative risk assessment.

With Prakash's leadership, West Harlem Environmental Action's Environmental Health Program has consistently served as a bridge between low-income communities of color, researchers, and policymakers. Her tireless efforts of community leadership development, community-based research projects, and advocacy within the scientific and public health communities are an asset to the environmental health and justice movements.

Roylene Rides at the Door

(1969-Present)
Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations
Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

Photo credit: Ian Robinson

Roylene Rides at the Door was born on August 19, 1969 and was raised on the Blackfeet reservation outside of Browning, Montana. She is the oldest of two children and the daughter of Cynthia Rides at the Door, a teacher, and Roy Rides at the Door, a Natural Resources Officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Her

family has cared for horses on their remote ranch that has been in the family for five generations. Life on the ranch, her cultural values of caring for the land and her father's work in the natural resources field contributed to what she felt was her destiny – a career in conservation.

Like her father, she attended Montana State University, graduating in 1991 with a bachelor's in range science with a minor in soils. She has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA- NRCS) for 15 years, starting as a soil conservationist during her college years. After graduating, she continued to do soil conservation planning for six years, before she was promoted to District Conservationist of a field office in Shelby, Montana. Another promotion came after two years in Shelby, taking Rides at the Door to Phoenix, Arizona to serve as the American Indian Liaison for the state. Though she worked with 21 tribes in negotiating agreements, explaining policy procedures and raising awareness of the NRCS, she was frustrated with her lack of authority and inability to implement her recommendations. This led her to apply for her current position as the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, where she supervises 21 offices – including two tribal offices – and manages 60 employees for the Southeast Oklahoma region. This job placed her in a decision-making position as a part of a leadership team; now she can implement policies and procedures. Rides at the Door has been a voice for groups in Oklahoma who had difficulty participating in programs and the policy-making process. She has helped to promote Farm Bill programs and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical and cost-share assistance to private landowners to improve wildlife habitats on their property. Her work with the NRCS has allowed her to grow both personally and professionally. She takes great pride in allowing her employees to work in a way that is most productive and comfortable for them and adjusts her management style according to each individual. Among the many awards she has received throughout her career, the merit award she got from her employees is the one that has meant the most to her.

"*I was told I had a journey to make and that I was destined to do great things.*" Roylene Rides at the Door, 2005.

As young American Indian woman, she has encountered many roadblocks in her agency. Sometimes people in the agency have been unintentionally disrespectful of American Indian culture, yet she has not let this discourage her. She has seen these events as opportunities to educate people on American Indian culture. In addition to her family, Rides at the Door has had many other inspiring mentors who have provided her with support, including the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Members of the organization encouraged her to stay in school; to her, they are like members of her family. Mentors like Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee nation; Darrel Dominick, her current supervisor and only American Indian state conservationist for NRCS; and, Richard Vigil, who organized a harmony cadre within the NRCS called Working Effectively with American Indians have been very supportive of her. Rides at the Door also considers her colleagues in the American Indian-Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) for NRCS a very important part of her support network. Without the support of these mentors and organizations, she would never have thought it possible to have her current goals – to become the first American Indian female state conservationist. She is in the process of applying for such position.

Rides at the Door says her agency is rare in that it allows her to educate people about American Indian culture. She often speaks with young American Indians about their culture. The AIANEA also has an elder's

council that keeps employees connected to the community and maintains the important cultural tradition of honoring the knowledge and strength that older members can share with others. She has helped to run workshops on Native culture through the agency, and they have held over 60 workshops with over 3,000 participants. She keeps photos of the workshop participants in her office as a reminder that there are people who are genuinely interested in her culture and traditions. Rides at the Door has continued to work in the environmental field because she is in a position to raise awareness of American Indian culture and wants her people to be proud of who they are. The fact that the agency's land preservation work benefits everyone has been her major motivator to stay in the field. Her advice for people of color interested in the environmental field is to focus on the big picture and not become discouraged because their values are different from that of the mainstream. Her cultural awareness work has allowed her to realize that people of all cultures have many things in common and that valuing all cultures is important.

Jerome Ringo

(1955-Present)
Chair of the Board
National Wildlife Federation

Jerome Ringo was born on March 2, 1955 to Earl Ringo, a retired postal worker and Nellie Ringo, a nurse. The third of six children, Ringo grew up in Lake Charles, Louisiana during the Civil Rights era. His father worked to racially integrate public schools in Louisiana. As the first minority student at his middle school, Ringo learned the importance of diversity at an early age.

Ringo attended college, intending to major in education at both Louisiana Technical University and McNeese State University. However, before he was able to complete his degree, he was lured into the petrochemical industry by its high salary in 1975. This particular industry focuses on the production of gasoline, rocket fuel, and plastics – many of which contain cancer causing chemicals. As he began observing the negative impacts of the industry's pollution on local communities – primarily poor, minority communities – Ringo began organizing community environmental groups. His work with community groups did please the chemical industry, consequently, he officially retired from the petrochemical industry in 1997 to begin a career in environmental advocacy.

"I reflect on what I've learned with help from God…and I go forward." Jerome Ringo 2004.

While much of Ringo's early environmental work was as a volunteer, he was able to have a positive impact on local communities as well as open doors to future employment. Ringo began his volunteering with the Calcasieu League for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN), an affiliate of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation,

in 1991. As the first black member of the organization, he assisted black communities by finding individuals to represent their interests at hearings. He also assisted with lobbying efforts as he worked to influence government to change the laws that allowed companies to pollute near residential neighborhoods.

Ringo's involvement with CLEAN provided the experience necessary for him to be elected vice president of Louisiana Wildlife Federation. It was during this time that Ringo realized the lack of minority involvement in the environmental movement, despite the high impacts that pollution had on their communities. When Ringo began working with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in 1991, he was the only black person in the 20,000-member-strong organization.

Currently, Ringo is serving as the Chair of the board of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) which is the largest environmental organization in the country. NWF has 4.5 million members and 700 employees. He was asked to run for the board in 1995 and was elected in 1996. Today, he is not only the first black chair of the board of the National Wildlife Federation in its 70-year history, but also the first black person to head the board of a major conservation organization.

Ringo's position gave him many opportunities to be involved with conservation efforts worldwide. In 1998 he was a delegate to the Global Warming Treaty Negotiations in Kyoto, Japan (Ringo was the only black person selected to speak at the negotiations). In 1999 he was selected as the National Wildlife Federation's delegate for a United Nations conference on sustainable development in New York. Further, he had the honor of speaking at the Central American conference on sustainable development in Belize City, Belize. He lists these accomplishments among his most significant achievements.

Ringo has been inspired and led by a host of mentors throughout his life and environmental career. Ringo spoke of the important role that his parents played in shaping his career path; they always instilled passion in him, passion for not only for people but also for equality and justice. He also considers Martin Luther King a mentor. Ringo has spent hours listening and absorbing the messages of Martin Luther King's speeches. Furthermore, the perseverance demonstrated by Martin Luther King makes him an ideal role model for Ringo. Finally, Ringo clings to the guiding principle that when one believes in self and God, the sky is the limit and all goals are achievable. Not only has Ringo been inspired and led by others, he has proven himself to be a great leader, role model and mentor for others.

Ringo aspires to give students opportunities to develop themselves while bringing change and benefits to their communities. Thus, for the last ten years, Ringo has traveled extensively to speak about the importance of a minority presence in conservation. He has addressed a host of historically-Black colleges as well as audiences at other universities, including the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. Here he spoke on diversity in the conservation field with his colleague Mark Van Putten, as part of the Martin Luther King Day celebration.

Ringo has engaged in other efforts to increase diversity in the environmental movement. This includes work with environmental justice groups. He also speaks at hearings of the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington. Finally, he works with 100 Black Men of American when their interns visit the National Wildlife Federation to make them aware of the environmental opportunities and careers that await them.

While Ringo has achieved great success within the environmental field, he faced many barriers. The most significant of which was his battle with drugs. While he has been drug-free for the last fifteen years, the experience gave him a good perspective on life and a renewed appreciation for it. Ringo states that the experience is always with him, giving him an appreciation for where he is because he knows where he came from. He is able to reflect upon what he has learned and move forward. It is an experience that strengthens his power as

a mentor as it has helped him to realize that anyone can pick themselves up and move forward if they possess desire, passion, will, and faith.

Despite the difficulties along the way, Ringo has persevered and made a great impact upon the environmental movement. He cites the recognition that environmental work is work that is still undone; this motivates him to stick with the movement. He recognizes that the environmental movement needs all people to be involved as there is still much work to be done. Ringo has a strong desire to be a part of that work.

Ringo would like to see more minorities consider careers in conservation. The environmental field benefits generations to come and allows individuals to have a large impact. It is a field where there are tremendous benefits and results for your own city, state, and country, as well as the world. Engaging in environmental work allows one to leave his or her footprint in the sand. While the greatest highlight of his career is yet to come, he anticipates that it will be when people of color take on more leadership roles within the conservation movement, making it inclusive of all people.

Jennifer Roberts

(1974-Present)
Postdoctoral Fellow
National Academies of Science
Board Member of Environmental Studies and Toxicology

Jennifer Roberts was born on April 10, 1974 in Buffalo, New York. She is the eldest of three children and her mother, Denise Vassar, is a schoolteacher. Roberts attended Brown University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in Health and Society. She went on to obtain a Masters of Public Health in Environmental and Occupational Health from Emory University, and in 2004 obtained a doctorate in Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences from Johns Hopkins University.

Roberts first became interested in a career in the public health field as an undergraduate at Brown University. During that time, she was enrolled in the premedical program. She says that she was always interested in science and medicine; however, her actual major was in public health. She eventually decided that it would be beneficial to obtain an MPH. Roberts initially began studying behavior but she soon realized that it was grounded in a great deal of theory. She then changed to the environmental health tract. Roberts felt that it was a much better fit because it combined hard science, policy and statistical analysis.

While in graduate school, Roberts had various research assistant and internship positions. During her first summer at Emory, she worked as an intern at the Dekalb County Board of Environmental Health where she was responsible for conducting pool inspections and radon testing. Following this, Roberts worked on a research project funded by the American Cancer Society where she gathered information on carcinogenic exposures. She summarized that information for lay readers so that they would be informed of the risks posed by carcinogens. From there, Roberts went on to become a data specialist at the Planned Parenthood organization in Georgia. Here she was responsible for soliciting and administering donations.

During her first summer at John Hopkins University, Roberts worked on an air pollution study in

South Baltimore. Roberts recalls that South Baltimore was an industrial area with very high cancer rates and the research she worked on attempted to identify the levels of pollutants in the air. That following summer, Roberts became an intern at the National Academies of Science. As an intern, she evaluated children's health.

Roberts has recently completed a post-doctoral appointment with the Board of Environmental Studies and Toxicology with The National Academies of Science in Washington, DC. While there she worked in a research capacity. One research project involved evaluating toxicity testing methods. She asked and strived to answer the questions, "Where do we go from here? Are animal models a necessity or how can we better extrapolate animal data to humans?" and "What is the future of toxicity testing in terms of methodology?" She currently works for ChemRisk, an environmental consulting firm in San Francisco that specializes in toxicology, industrial hygiene, epidemiology, and risk assessment research and services.

Throughout the course of her studies, Roberts has had many positive influences; mentors who have helped her immensely. One of her mentors was Ellen Silbergeld, an advisor, whom Roberts says was very supportive of her while she was worked on her dissertation. Ellen was very accessible for advising and provided new perspectives on her field of research. Patrick Breysse was her first advisor at Johns Hopkins and he assisted her immensely. With his help, she could be awarded an NRSA (National Research Service Award) through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Margo Schwab, a former professor, was another mentor who provided her with invaluable advice during all four years of her educational training at Johns Hopkins.

Lastly, Nga Tran, an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins and Senior Managing Scientist at Exponent provided valuable advice. Dr. Tran is an individual who is doing work that Roberts ultimately would like to do. Dr. Tran also assisted her with strengthening her dissertation topic. It was encouraging to Roberts to see that her goals were attainable based on the experiences and work of Dr. Tran.

Roberts is just beginning her career within the fields of environmental health sciences and public health. Although she has not yet had the opportunity to share her experiences with other minorities, it is a piece of her career that she is looking forward to. She is looking forward to introducing the field of environmental health to people of color and demonstrating all of the different opportunities that are available. Not only does Roberts hope to mentor on an individual basis but she also wants to start a mentoring program for students of color.

The highlight of Roberts's career so far, has been presenting her research and seeing the effects of her dissertation research on the urban community in which she did her research. The health department in the city of Baltimore is attempting to incorporate her recommendations into their policies and behaviors. Thus, it is great for Roberts to see her work influencing policy. Roberts's work has moved policy in a way that helps minority and urban communities.

For all the highs that come with going after one's goals, there are also hardships that come along the way. Roberts experienced this when she fell into a period of illness while working on her doctorate and was ultimately diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Throughout that period, she was concerned that she would not be able to complete her degree. However, her advisors were a tremendous support system for her.

"It is such a broad field that it can accommodate many interests, including policy, science, advocacy, consulting…It is possible to find your niche." Jennifer Roberts, 2004.

Ultimately Roberts knows how important the environment is which is why she is pursuing a career in the environmental field. She says that the environment is a

field that affects everyone. Everyone breathes air, drinks water and so forth. However, people of color are sometimes disproportionately affected by the contaminants within the environment. Because Roberts is a woman of color, this brought the issue to a personal level. She is able to identify environmental agents that negatively affect people and work towards the prevention of illness. This focus on the preventative side of health is especially appealing when viewed through the lens of risk assessment and management. Further, the environmental health field brings together science, risk modeling, stats and policy; all the areas that she enjoys.

Roberts is proud of having finished school and of now working in the field that she is passionate about and doing the work she enjoys. Her ultimate goal, which is currently being fulfilled through her work in environmental and public health, is to use what she has learned to help people. In her experience, Roberts has found that there are misconceptions about minorities in the environmental field. Roberts would advise minorities considering a career in the environmental field not to let those views alter their route. She also believes that young people should not narrow their options before looking into what is offered in the environmental field. The environmental field is also open to volunteer opportunities for people who want to help but do not know if they want environmental studies to be their main field. "It is such a broad field that it can accommodate many interests, including policy, science, advocacy, consulting, and so forth." She says, "It is possible to find your niche."

Nina Roberts

(1960-Present)
Assistant Professor
Recreation and Leisure Studies
San Francisco State University

Nina Roberts was born on December 10, 1960 in New York City to James and Colette Roberts, a retired businessman and freelance artist respectively. Roberts, along with her parents, two sisters and brother, moved frequently throughout the Northeast living New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. metropolitan areas. She attributes her life-long quest to find a sanctuary to having lived in such densely-populated areas during her childhood. For Roberts, this sanctuary is the outdoors. She regularly attended camp as a child then moved up the ranks to be a camp counselor. This sparked her interest in recreation, natural resource management and environmental education. Thus, she embraces the value of being able to develop a career and make a living in the outdoors.

Roberts has taken her education and interest in the environmental field seriously. She earned a bachelor's degree in Physical Education and Outdoor Recreation from Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts, a master's degree in Outdoor Recreation and Resource Management from the University of Maryland, College Park, and, in 2003, she earned a Ph.D. from Colorado State University in Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources Management.

"Determine and understand your own values and judgments and how they may shape your attitudes and beliefs about the natural world and other peoples' connection to it." Nina Roberts, 2005.

Roberts began her work in the environmental field with a job as the Assistant Director of a recreation community center affiliated with the YMCA of Greater Boston. While her job description and goals were very broad, her overall responsibilities focused on providing recreational and environmental activities for youth whose families resided in low-income communities. This position solidified her interest in the field of outdoor recreation. She has since held a variety of positions including work with the National Park Service, Student Conservation Association, and other non-governmental organization. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies at San Francisco State University. She focuses on teaching and research in related to youth development, outdoor recreation, and leadership.

Roberts' career is filled with many great accomplishments. However, she is most proud of her work as the National Coordinator of the "Take Back the Trails" initiative in 1997. This initiative invited 30,000 women and male allies across the country to hike, backpack, or go camping over the Memorial Day weekend to demonstrate their commitment and belief in opposing violence against women while they are participating in outdoor recreation. Roberts led the national committee that coordinated the event and made it a huge success. This event, along with others, has given Roberts significant visibility in the environmental field. Consequently, she has been in a position to connect with and mentor young minorities across the country.

Connecting with those she works with has not always been an easy task. Roberts cites the difficulty she had in communicating with the director of a small non-governmental organization as one particular low point in her career. The actions of the director uncovered his bias and prejudice, making it a struggle for Roberts to relate to and communicate with him. However, the goals that she accomplished for the youths involved in the program, combined with her respect for the outdoors has kept Roberts in the environmental field.

Roberts respects the environment as her "teacher". She finds that she discovers more about herself and the world through spending time outdoors than any other place. Further, maintaining a career in the environmental field allows her to not only work towards educating people about environmental protection but also allows her to have a voice in political decision-making. These aspects of the environmental field have kept her active and engaged – even during the challenging times.

The advice and examples set by Roberts' mentors have also played a role in her successes and perseverance. When asked who Roberts considers to be her mentors, five individuals immediately came to mind; Jan Harris, Flip Hagood, Liz Titus, Iantha Gantt-Wright, and Bill Gwaltney. Jan Harris was her undergraduate academic advisor. Harris was influential in shaping Roberts's career decisions. Flip Hagood was her supervisor during her time with the Student Conservation Association (SCA). Hagood demonstrated tremendous faith and trust in her and the decisions she made. She appreciates this show of confidence, as well as the amazing advice that he provided. Liz Titus is the founder of the SCA. She opened the doors to women in natural resources in many ways and provided opportunities for girls and young women to learn about natural resources. Iantha Gantt-Wright is the former cultural diversity manager at the National Parks Conservation Association. Together they have brainstormed ways to create change. They possessed a similar energy that allowed them to work well together. Finally, Bill Gwaltney supervised her research fellowship at Rocky Mountain National Park. He opened many doors for her with the National Park Service and has been her champion as she has pursued a career within the agency.

Just as others have served as important mentors for Roberts, she has served as a mentor for others who have participated in the various programs she has been affiliated with. In addition, her unusual heritage of East Indian, British and West Indian affords her the

opportunity to mentor others in very different and unique ways. Roberts' work as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Maryland, George Mason University and Colorado State University allowed her to spend time with students, including minorities, interested in the environmental field. In addition, she was in constant contact with young adults during the time she worked for the SCA. She was able to share the value of natural resources and the benefits of an environmental career with them.

As Roberts interacts with young women and minorities, her greatest piece of advice is to learn to effectively cross cultural boundaries and to communicate about one's goals and love of nature. She also suggests that individuals should try to put themselves in leadership positions as often as possible, especially those that will provide multiple perspectives to traditional settings. Finally, Roberts advises that individuals find ways to better understand themselves. That is, "Determine and understand your own values and judgments and how they may shape your attitudes and beliefs about the natural world and other peoples' connection to it."

Donald Rodriguez

(1951-Present)
Assistant Professor
Program Coordinator
Environmental Science and Resource Management
California State University – Channel Islands

Photo credit: CSUCI website

Donald Rodriguez was born in 1951 to Emanuel and Nartissa Rodriquez. Their family lived in San Leandro, California, near the San Francisco Bay area. Rodriguez was introduced the natural world at a young age as each summer his family would take a two-week camping trip to Yosemite National Park. These early trips left an indelible mark on him; through them gained an appreciation for natural settings and the environment.

Rodriguez graduated with a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from San Jose State University in 1977. He followed this with a master's degree in environmental education from Cal State East Bay in 1985. He completed his education with a Ph.D. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University in 1996.

"The environmental field is more a way of life than a career direction. If [individuals] have [environmental science] as a personal interest, they'll be successful in terms of finding a niche in the environmental arena. People can combine vocation with avocation. It's not lucrative but it has intrinsic rewards." Donald Rodriguez, 2005.

Throughout his undergraduate studies, Rodriguez worked as a seasonal naturalist at the East Bay Regional Park District. As part of his responsibilities, he gave interpretive talks to visitors. He also worked as a seasonal wildlife biologist with the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A). These early positions reinforced his interest in the environmental field.

His career in academia began in 1992 as a graduate student. Upon completion of his doctorate in 1996, he was appointed as a faculty member in the College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University.

Rodriguez is currently a faculty member and the Program Coordinator for the Environmental Science and Resource Management program at California State University, Channel Islands (CSUCI) in Camarillo. He credits his advancement to the positive media attention he has received as well as his publication record.

Throughout his career, Rodriguez has been guided by a host of people. He acknowledges Ron Stecker, a faculty member in the entomology department at San Jose State University, for sparking his interest in ecological topics. His master's advisor also served as a great influence in the realm of environmental education and interpretation. Rodriguez's Ph.D. advisor at Colorado State University assisted him with networking by introducing him to key individuals who worked in parks and protected lands. Overall, his career has been filled with people who helped to guide him and intensify his interest in pursuing a career in the environmental field. He says, "I've continued to grow through these mentors…They came during critical points in my development… [they] helped to keep me moving during my academic career towards environmental science."

Having benefited from the guidance of mentors, Rodriguez understands the importance of mentoring others. He helped to develop the Colorado Youth Naturally Program in Denver and Fort Collins in the early 1990s. He also created the educational component for the Youth in Natural Resources Program for the State of Colorado. In addition, he worked with the Hispanic Environmental Coalition in Washington, D.C. to help get other Hispanic organizations in higher education to become more interested in environmental affairs. He gives the following advice to individuals interested in a career in the environmental field, "The environmental field is more a way of life than a career direction. If [individuals] have [environmental science] as a personal interest, they'll be successful in terms of finding a niche in the environmental arena. People can combine vocation with avocation. It's not lucrative but it has intrinsic rewards."

Despite his many years in the environmental field, Rodriguez is only able to recall one low point in his career, and he is now able to see that point as a positive. Rodriguez was not offered tenure at Colorado State University. Soon after being denied tenure, he was appointed as the Program Coordinator of the Environmental Science and Resource Management at CSUCI. While not receiving tenure was the low point, being appointed as program coordinator allowed him to become more involved in the recruitment and retention of students – this is a positive experience.

Rodriguez's career has been filled with positive experiences. He is able to recall a host of career highlights, including his participation with the "Mosaic in Motion" conference, program development, media attention, international experience, and many awards and recognitions. Working with the Mosaic in Motion conference was a great opportunity to work with other diverse people in the environmental field. Being invited to begin the environmental program at CSUCI was a great honor. Rodriguez considers his inclusion in a video narrated by Christopher Reed regarding wilderness and cultivating minority interests as a highlight as well. Finally, Rodriguez has been honored as the recipient of the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund award in 1996, the Enos Mills award from the National Association for Interpretation in 1995, and, in 2000, he received an award from the city of Fort Collins, Colorado for his work in natural resource protection and environmental stewardship.

While these great accomplishments, awards and highlights have undoubtedly played a role in Rodriguez's decision to maintain a career in the environmental field, he credits the students for being the primary reason he stuck with a career in the environmental field; "Seeing them become interested

and energized about environmental studies and moving into the environmental arena, maybe the result of me helping them. That's been the thing that has been the most rewarding."

Mily Trevino Sauceda

(1958-Present)
Executive Director
Lideres Campesinos

Mily Trevino Sauceda was born on April 6, 1958 to Francisca Sosa-Barba, a farm worker, and Leopoldo Trevino Guerra, a former farm worker and the current owner and editor of a Spanish newspaper. The third of ten children, Sauceda was born in Washington but moved frequently throughout her childhood, living in Washington, Idaho and Mexico before settling in California as an adult. Growing up in a migrant family, Sauceda became keenly aware of the hardships, problems and needs of migrant farmers. This greatly influenced her decision to devote her career to the social justice and environmental work.

Sauceda began working as a farm laborer at the young age of eight. She continued working in the fields until she was fifteen years old. Through her late teens and early twenties, Sauceda worked in a series of positions, including clerical and managerial work for a furniture store in Mexico and for the United Farm Workers as an activist. In 1981, at the age of 23, Sauceda began working as a paralegal and community organizer with the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA). Through this position, she learned about a variety of environmental issues related to agriculture, including pesticide use and legal remedies. This position also opened the channels for her current position as the Executive Director of Lideres Campesinos.

In 1988, CRLA collaborated with Mujeres Mexicanas (Mexican Women) to complete an assessment of social, political, health, housing, and educational needs of the people served by the organization. Her work with this group sparked the idea to organize women on a larger scale around similar issues. Thus, she started organizing a regional group. Her efforts resulted in a statewide coalition. The group continued to grow, and in 1997, received non-profit status. Members elected her as the executive director because to the vision and energy that she dedicated to the group. That same year, Sauceda obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Chicano and Women's Studies from California State University in Fullerton.

Making the transition from a young farm worker to the executive directorship of an organization she founded is quite an accomplishment. Sauceda credits her success to the influence of her family and co-workers. Sauceda's brother, Jose Trevino, has always been a source of encouragement and support. He encouraged her to continue her education and supported her decision to return to school. Furthermore, when Sauceda's

husband died in 1995, he provided tremendous support to her and her son. Sauceda's co-workers always encouraged her to follow her dreams and not to limit herself. She is grateful for being surrounded by people who have always believed in her and were sources of motivation, advice and inspiration.

"What goes around comes around. Whatever you do in life is going to have an effect. If you've done something good, then it's going to come back to you." Mily Trevino Sauceda, 2005.

Sauceda is willing to share her knowledge and experience with others. She has worked with her sisters and colleagues to ensure that they learn about, and gain experience with community organizing as well as social and political issues. This knowledge and experience has provided them with leadership and mentoring skills. In addition, Sauceda is a soccer coach. She makes a point of hiring some of the girls who she coaches. She works with them to organize their work and schooling so that they develop marketable skills that will lead to good employment opportunities. She encourages individuals interested in a career in the environmental field to learn about the community in which one is working, "It will keep you open and receptive about what's going on and when you have that information with you, you'll be more successful because you'll understand your roots. It will help you to continue to be original and you will retain your sense of identity and what you've become and what you will do in the future."

Sauceda is proud of the visibility that farm worker women have achieved. They have started to challenge the stereotypes that have formed surrounding farm workers and Latinas. They have successfully presented themselves as smart, capable women. While it has been difficult to acknowledge the oppression that minority women have internalized, she is proud of the many women who have progressed. She is proud of the women who came to her for mentoring and have since become mentors themselves. Sauceda remains in the environmental field because, "What goes around comes around. Whatever you do in life is going to have an effect. If you've done something good, then it's going to come back to you."

Peggy M. Shepard

(1946-Present)
Executive Director
West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.

Photo credit: WE ACT website

Born in September 16, 1946, Peggy Shepard is the oldest of six children by Mrs. Evelyn Shepard, a housewife, and Dr. George Shepard, a retired gynecologist. Shepard grew up in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, where – in addition to having access to a beautiful park nearby her home and to a big backyard to play in – she commuted 30 minutes to the rural, scenic areas where she attended Solebury and Newton Friends

schools in Pennsylvania. Such early exposure to green and natural areas increased Shepard's appreciation for nature and for the more traditional concept of environmentalism. Understanding the unequal distribution of environmental hazards in poor communities of color relative to their lack of access to such environmental amenities, Shepard declares that the issues that she is currently working on are issues she began thinking about in those years.

Shepard graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor's of Art degree in English in 1967. She also took graduate courses at Baruch College in New York City from 1983 to 1985. Shepard is currently the Executive Director of West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc (WE ACT). Under her leadership the organization operates programs in environmental health, environmental education, and community and youth empowerment, and has cooperative partnerships with physicians and scientists at leading medical institutions.

A former journalist, Shepard was the first African-American beat reporter for *The Indianapolis News*. She was a copy editor for *The San Juan Star* and a researcher for *Time-Life Books*. She also served as an editor for the popular magazines like *Redbook, Essence,* and *Black Enterprise*. Unsatisfied with the narrow scope of what those magazines covered, Shepard moved to New York in 1971 to begin a publishing career. In 1979, she began a career in government as a speechwriter, assuming the first of several positions with the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Working in this organization helped prepare her for a career in social activism. In addition, she served as the Women's Outreach Coordinator for the New York City Comptroller's Office; then became a Democratic District Leader, representing West Harlem from 1985 to 1993. She also served as the President of the National Women's Political Caucus from 1993 until 1997.

In 2002, Ms Shepard was elected the first female chair of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) to the U.S. EPA. She is currently co-chair of the Northeast Environmental Justice Network and sits on the board of the Environmental Justice Fund. She is also a member of the National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council of the National Institute of Health and serves on the Institute of Medicine's committee "Ethics of Housing-Related Health Hazard Research Involving Children, Youth, and Families." Shepard is also a member of the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and sits on the boards of the national and New York State League of Conservation Voters, Environmental Defense, New York Earth Day, Citizen Action of New York, the Children's Environmental Health Network, and Healthy Schools Network, Inc. Finally, she is an advisory board member of the Bellevue Occupational and Environmental Medicine Clinic; the Harlem Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; and Mt. Sinai's Children's Environmental Health Center.

In 1988, concerned about the noxious odors emitted by the North River sewage treatment plant, Shepard helped to organize an act of civil disobedience during which she and six other community organizers were arrested for obstructing traffic near the plant. She subsequently co-founded West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. in 1988, which four years later, helped win a lawsuit against New York City, resulting in the creation of a $55 million odor abatement plan, a $1.1 million settlement fund for the West Harlem community. The settlement also led to an agreement with Natural Resources Defense Council to monitor the implementation of the consent agreement between the city and state as well as the five-year plan to fix the North River Plant.

Since then Shepard has turned a small group of committed volunteers into a professionally staffed environmental justice non-profit organization. WE ACT was New York's first environmental justice organization; it was created to improve environmental health in communities of color. WE ACT currently works on environmental and social justice, land use, waterfront

development, brownfields redevelopment; transportation and air pollution, open space, and environmental health issues. Shepard has also rallied the support of political leaders and the Transit Workers Union in a successful public education campaign that is helping the city make a transition from gas-powered to natural gas-powered buses and depots.

"We expect that activists and researchers will come from far and wide to strategize and find resources to assist them in battling the preventable environmental threats prevalent in too many communities of color." - Shepard, 2005.

Shepard's dedication to community-based participatory research led to a partnership with the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. She is a co-investigator of the Columbia Children's Environmental Health Center's Community Outreach and Translational Research group which is seeking to improve children's environmental health in northern Manhattan and the South Bronx. She is a community partner of the NIEHS Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan at Columbia and principal investigator of an NIEHS grant to foster communications and partnerships between researchers, clinicians and community on environmental health education and outreach. Shepard is co-author or contributor to several articles published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. She was also a guest editor of a special supplement of the afore-mentioned journal entitled, *Advancing Environmental Justice Through Community-Based Participatory Research*, published in April 2002. She has also published environmental justice articles in the *Fordham Environmental Law Journal*.

Shepard received the Dean's Distinguished Service Award in 2004 from the Columbia University's School of Public Health and was the recipient of the 10th Annual Heinz Award for the Environment from the Heinz Foundation in December 2003. In 2000, Shepard received the Union Square Award from the Fund for the City of New York for her grassroots leadership and advocacy, and in 1998 received the Earth Day Award for Excellence in Environmental Advocacy from Earth Day New York. In 1997, she received the Susan B. Anthony Award from the National Organization of Women's New York City Chapter and in 1993 she received the City Club of New York's Earthling Award for Environmental Justice, and the New York State Environmental Woman of Action award by Tambrands, Inc. She was recognized by *National Wildlife Magazine* as one of the People Who Make a Difference and in 1991, she received the Life of the City Award from *NY Woman Magazine*, and the New Yorker for New York Award from the Citizens Committee of New York in 1990.

Shepard asserts that all of the issues currently on WE ACT's agenda are very important and thus difficult to rank in order of importance. However, an important organizational focus is WE ACT's Sustainable Development program. WE ACT has recently launched a capital campaign to support the construction and maintenance of its new home: The New York City Environmental Justice Center. This abandoned Harlem townhouse will be renovated as a state-of-the-art "green" building, serving as a major new resource for supporting the advocacy, organizing, research and education work of environmental justice activists locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. "The Center will act as a beacon for communities and individuals grappling with environmental hazards," says Shepard. "We expect that activists and researchers will come from far and wide to strategize and find resources to assist them in battling the preventable environmental threats prevalent in too many communities of color."

WE ACT is also involved in the revitalization of the Harlem waterfront. The community-driven plan for the Harlem Piers area, called "Harlem on the River," was established through an extensive planning process initiated by WE ACT in collaboration with Community

Board 9, community members, businesspeople, local development groups, and elected officials. These groups participated in numerous design meeting and public forums to produce a community vision for the Harlem Piers. In 2000, WE ACT organized a mail campaign in which thousands of postcards were sent to the Manhattan Borough President and the Environmental Defense Council (EDC) to stop plans for a tourist hotel and to request that the EDC incorporate the community's vision (which features a park and restaurant) more fully into plans for the waterfront. WE ACT has since been invited by the EDC to participate in a task force – the Harlem Piers Working Committee – to help facilitate the planning and development for the site. Shepard, recognizing an opportunity to promote economic and sustainable community growth collaborated with Community Board 9 to seek funding to help plan for the revitalization of the waterfront. She has since appointed a Waterfront Park Program Manager in the WE ACT office to help with the project.

Shepard is a tireless crusader for environmental justice who combines grassroots mobilization with environmental advocacy and scientific research. She is one of the foremost environmental advocates. Because of her work, Shepard has been invited to speak at numerous universities on environmental justice and community-based health research.

This interview was supplemented with information taken from the following webpage: http://www.weact.org/staff/peggy_shepard/index.html; http://www.weact.org/history.html; and http://www.weact.org/hotr/index.html.

Pamela Silas

(1959-Present)
Executive Director
American Indian Science and Engineering Society

Pam Silas was born on September 1, 1959 to Marilynn and John Silas. Until the age of 14, Silas grew up in foster homes throughout the Milwaukee area. At fourteen, she began living with her birth mother in Chicago. Her use of the social services system as a child influenced her career path – she wanted to work towards changing the system and developing programs that helped people to help themselves.

Silas graduated from DePaul University with a degree in economics in 1991. Upon graduation, Silas joined the American Indian Economic Development Association (AIEDA) as the Housing Coordinator. In this position, she assisted the Chicago American Indian community – 94 percent of who are renters – with their housing needs. She provided workshops on tenant rights and home ownership as well as crisis mediation and intervention services. As the organization grew, she was promoted to Program Director where she oversaw programs in housing, research and advocacy, and cultural arts. With this experience, she took a position with the Metropolitan Tenants Organization where she worked on aggressive grassroots campaigns defending and promoting tenant rights. These early jobs exposed her to environmental issues as she worked on problems related to lead poisoning and mold. She is currently the Executive Director of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Throughout her career, Silas has relied on a host of mentors. She has met a variety of minority professionals through a project designed to build capacity for organizations in communities of color involved in grassroots organizing. These colleagues became central to her training on grassroots issues and organizing. Most were older than she was so they were happy to share their organizing strategies and techniques with her. They challenged her in her beliefs and actions, and helped her to reflect on some of the more difficult periods of her life. They also provided history and political strength when she needed it in her work. Silas also depended on members from the Chicago Native American community. They shared Indian history with her, including accounts of past policies that still had ramifications that manifested themselves in the socio-economic problems of Native communities. They also helped to instill cultural values in her.

Silas serves as a mentor to others. She has provided pro-bono consulting services to start-up non-profit organizations and mentors volunteer board and staff in organizational development and grassroots organizing. She has also worked with Americorp Vista volunteer organizers. Silas encourages those who she mentors that there are many roles that need to be filled, from activism to law to hard science. The need for more assistance is great and all people are needed. She also notes that as she ages and gains more experience, she is spending more time on mentoring others as well as being involved in more mutually beneficial relationships with her mentors.

"*The need is great and we need you.*" Pam Silas, 2005.

The professional and personal experiences of Silas' life have led to a variety of highlights. However, Silas is especially proud of the prestigious national award given out by the Harvard School of American Indian Economic Development that a program she helped to develop received. The program, the Menominee Community Center of Chicago, was recognized because of its success in bridging the Reservation tribal community with its urban members in Chicago. Through this project, Silas was able to utilize her organizing skills to do what many thought was impossible.

While the positive moments are numerous, Silas recalls the moment when she lost her naiveté. After being recruited to a large national foundation and dedicating her intellectual and community resources for over three years to create a successful demonstration project and raising the funds to get the project started, she was dismissed before being able to see the project materialize. She believes that her gender and race were likely reasons she was let go.

Despite such a moment, Silas maintained a career in the environmental field because the environment is so important in American Indian culture and communities. As she sees it, most issues involve some element of the environment – the environment cannot be isolated from other issues.

Harvey Sinclair (a pseudonym)

(1975-Present)
District Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Harvey Sinclair (a pseudonym) was the fourth child of the family. Born in 1975, Sinclair was raised in a small, rural farm town in Arkansas. The community was primarily based in agriculture, farming to be more specific. Because f the prominence agriculture played in his life early on, Sinclair gravitated towards a career in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He is currently a District Conservationist with the agency.

Sinclair's first job was with the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation when he was a sophomore in high school. Sinclair participated in a leadership development internship program that involved working with local farmers and networking with leaders from various agricultural agencies. As part of the internship he assisted farmers with routine farming activities like cultivating and harvesting crops. Because of the connections he made during this internship, he was hired as an intern with the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) during his senior year of high school.

Throughout his life, Sinclair was supported and encouraged by people in his local community. His teachers, fellow church members, parents and other community leaders all had a hand in his career and accomplishments. Most of his mentors were men – some racial minorities – and much older. He has found mentors in and cultivated relationships with people within his agency. Sinclair says, "I enjoy the job and the relationships I've built within the agency; there is a feeling of being part of an extended family."

Sinclair attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff as an undergraduate and received a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy there. In 2000 he received his Master's of Science degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He says that he considers himself "a pretty positive person" so putting a finger on a low point in his career is tough. He feels that while he was introduced to the environmental field early on, he believes that pursing the two environmental degrees helped him to advance his career. While he started in an entry-level position in the Department of Agriculture, he moved into a management position by the time he finished his master's degree. Sinclair felt that he had accomplished a major feat when he got a management position. Recently, he has been asked to recruit students from the region to work at the agency. When asked what advice he would give to minorities interested in environmental careers, he said, "It is a field where the opportunities are broad; just because you may have a particular educational background, don't rule out looking at agriculture as a profession. There are many aspects of the field that you can pretty much apply any type of educational experience to and be successful."

Chitra Staley

(1949-Present)
Founder and Financial Analyst
Program Works

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Chitra Staley was the first of two children born to Vijay and Raji Raghavan in October, 1949. Staley's parents reside in India. Her mother is a homemaker and her father is a university administrator. Growing up, Staley was encouraged to pursue a career in the sciences. When the time came for her to choose a university, Staley decided to migrate to the United States and study biology at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. She became interested in environmental studies as an undergraduate. According to Staley, "I was always a naturalist growing up." Staley went on to obtain a Master's degree in Botany in 1973 from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and then her Master's of Business Administration (MBA) in 1982 from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. Staley continued to take environmental science courses even when she was doing her MBA. Her first job was as a seventh and tenth grade teacher. She took this position because she had a difficult time finding a job in the environmental field after she graduated. Luckily for her, she had obtained a teaching certificate "as a type of insurance." That certificate, allowed her to gain employment.

Finally, Staley found work in the environmental field for about three years before President Nixon came into office. However, working in the environmental field was short-lived. "With the Republican administration in office there was very little funding for environmental projects…consequently there was less and less work offered in the field," she says. At this time, Staley decided to go back to school and study finance. Staley hoped to combine her interest in finance with her interests in biology and the environmental sciences. Staley says, "At first I did not know how to go about it…but knew there had to be some kind of connection." Staley wanted to do more than "analyze firms dealing with biology." While reading various environmental magazines, she learned about a firm that did financially-responsible investing. By sheer coincidence, Staley sat next to one of the senior people in the firm while riding the train home one day. As Staley sat beside a woman reading an investment book she had recently read, she (Staley) introduced herself and the two began talking. When Staley realized the woman belonged to the same investment firm she read about in the magazine article, she did not hesitate to express her interest in working for them. The woman told Staley that there were currently no openings, but the two exchanged contact information and kept in touch. As she recalls, "Three years and one day after I met that woman on the train she called me and asked me to come in for an interview. There was stiff competition for the job, but I was offered the position." There was a male applicant with more experience in the investment field than Staley, but her perseverance, enthusiasm and pleasant personality made Staley the number on choice for the company.

Staley joined the firm as an environmental consultant. The firm had just obtained a contract to conduct a study of an eight-thousand-acre parcel of land in Rhode Island that was going to be flooded to build a reservoir. Staley had prior knowledge of the project as she did a study similar to this for her thesis. As a result she was hired to help with the environmental impact

assessment (EIS) for the area. As a result of the EIS, the firm was able to stop the reservoir project.

"Get the proper academic credentials, work in a government agency to gain some experience and then move into the private sector." Chitra Staley, 2005.

Though Staley learned a lot while working with this firm, she found out that, "The finance business is tough for white women and horrendous for women of color." She was also getting tired of being "overworked and underpaid." Consequently, she decided to take control of her own destiny and establish her own business. Her company provides money management and socially-responsible investing services. Staley says that she is motivated by "looking at the big picture and realizing that every little bit helps [the environment]."

Staley used to be a member of National Association of Security Professionals, a group dedicated to promoting the careers of people of color in the financial services field. While an active member, she helped others in the organization by disseminating information about job opportunities. She has also lobbied to get more minorities hired into professional positions. Staley has this to say to those considering a career in the environment, "get the proper academic credentials, work in a government agency to gain some experience and then move into the private sector." Staley has just been elected to the board of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation in New York. The foundation – which funds many environmental justice and other grassroots organizations – practices socially-responsible investing. It is built into the mission statement of the foundation. Staley hopes this kind of mission-related investing will spread to other foundations.

Robert G. Stanton (retired)

(1940-Present)
Former Director
National Park Service
Board of Trustees, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council Member

Photo credit:
National Park Service website

Robert Stanton, a native of Forth Worth, Texas, was born on November 22, 1940. He grew up in Mosier Valley, one of the oldest communities in Texas. The town was founded by African Americans shortly after the Civil War. His mother was a short-order cook and his father was a hay contractor. Mr. Stanton earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas in 1963. He then pursued graduate studies at Boston University in Massachusetts. He has also completed numerous professional developmental programs in conservation, administrative management, and executive leadership. He has been awarded three honorary doctoral degrees: Doctor of Science, from Huston-Tillotson; Doctor of Environmental Stewardship from Unity College in Unity, Maine; and Doctor of Public Policy from

Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Mr. Stanton began his Federal career after a college recruitment offer from former Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, who was recruiting employees from historically black colleges and universities. Traveling to a national park for the first time, Stanton's first position was a seasonal park ranger at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming during the summers of 1962 and 1963. After two years as the Director of Public Relations and Alumni Affairs at Huston-Tillotson College, he took a full-time position with the National Park Service in 1966 as a personnel management and public information specialist at Park Service headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1969, he moved to National Capital Parks-Central as a management assistant, and in 1970, became superintendent of the unit. A year later he was appointed superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park and in 1974, he became Deputy Regional Director of the Southeast Region in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1977, Stanton returned to Washington, D.C. headquarters as Assistant Director of Park Operations, and in 1978 was appointed Deputy Regional Director of the National Capital Region. In 1987, he returned to headquarters as Associate Director for Operations and a year later became Regional Director of the National Capital Region.

A lifelong conservationist and experienced public administrator, Mr. Stanton was unanimously confirmed as the 15th Director of the National Park Service in 1997 and served as the Director until the end of the Clinton Administration in January 2001. He was the first Director to undergo confirmation hearings before the United States Senate and the first minority to serve in the position since the National Parks Service was established in 1916. As Director of the National Park Service, Stanton had policy-making, management, and administrative responsibilities for the National Park system's 384 natural, cultural, and recreational areas, the National Trail system, National Register of Historic Places, Youth Conservation Corps programs, and international affairs. He was responsible for providing assistance to American Indian tribal governments, state and local governments, colleges and universities, and communities with respect to conservation, recreation, and cultural resources partnership programs. Stanton managed a workforce of 20,000 employees and an annual budget of $2.3 billion.

Robert Stanton is a Senior Fellow at Texas A&M University in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism. He recently served as a consultant for the Natural Resources Council of America. From 2001 through 2003, he served as the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Area's ambassador for the Fifth World Parks Congress held in September, 2003 in Durban, South Africa. In the fall of 2002, Stanton was also a Visiting Professor of the Practice of Conservation at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

His bipartisan and inclusive approach to problem solving and cooperative land stewardship earned him tremendous respect and admiration, enabling him to build effective relations with the U.S. Congress, and with diverse organizations and leaders. Under his leadership, the National Park Service's budget increased by 28 percent. Major park preservation and visitor service programs were also initiated including the Natural Resource Challenge, Public Lands Corps, Diversity Action Plans, and co-sponsorship of the Save America's Treasures program. In addition, several major legislative initiatives were enacted during his tenure, including the authorization of nine new parks, the National Park Omnibus Improvement Act, Reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Act, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, and the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

He has been cited in several professional and technical publications and has served as a keynote speaker at university convocations and major national and international conferences. He has served on several committees and boards including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Board of Trustees, Wolf

Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts Board of Directors, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, and the National Park Foundation.

Stanton also serves on the board of several environmental organizations including the Student Conservation Association, Inc., the National Audubon Society, Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park, Unity College Woods Hole Research Center, Environmental Law Institute, Casey Trees Endowment Fund, and Eastern National and Guest Services, Inc. He is a fellow of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, an associate of the Roundtable Associates, Inc.., member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Diversity Council, and Chair of the Trustees of the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation.

He has been nationally recognized with numerous awards and citations from professional, governmental, and civil organizations for meritorious public service, conservation leadership, youth development, and diversity in employment and public programs. His awards include The Distinguished Service Award (from the U.S. Department of Interior, 1987), The President's Rank of Distinguished Senior Executive Award (from the Office of the President of the United States, 1993), The Frederick Guthiem Excellence in Planning Award (from the American Planning Association, 1997), the Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award (IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, 2001) and the Carter G. Woodson History Maker Award (from the Association for Study of African American Life and History, 2002).

This biography was supplemented by information from the following websites:
http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/biography.asp?bioindex=820&category=civicMakers

http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=1451&folder_id=966.

Carlos Suarez

(1967-Present)
Acting California Deputy State Conservationist
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Carlos Suarez was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico on January 22, 1967 to Olimpia Suarez, a former teacher at a school for the blind, and Rafael Suarez, a restaurant owner. Suarez loved being around nature and would often visit urban parks and lakes within San Juan. He also developed an interest in the environment because there were frequent droughts and water shortages in San Juan. The water quality was also poor. The water problems were exacerbated by rapid population growth and excessive demands for water. As an undergraduate, he focused on soil and water issues. He obtained a degree in Agricultural Engineering and Technology from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez campus in 1992. He later received his Masters of Science degree in Environmental Studies from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania in 1997.

After he graduated from University of Puerto Rico, he worked as a soil conservationist for the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) in Martinsburg, West Virginia. He implemented plans for soil and water conservation management, nutrient management, animal waste management, and croplands. His ultimate goal is to be a state conservationist, and he has worked all over the country for the NRCS, steadily advancing in his career and moving towards his goal. After West Virginia, he moved to Pennsylvania to work as a District Conservationist. Suarez then held the position of Program Manager, working on best management practices as well as financial and technical assistance programs. Suarez then left the country to work in Nicaragua as a watershed advisor on the American Embassy's Hurricane Mitch reconstruction project. He considers this experience to be one of the highlights of his career. For the two years he worked on the project, he was able to assist over 500,000 people to rehabilitate their water systems and agricultural lands. After returning to the United States, Suarez resumed work for the NRCS as an Assistant State Conservationist in Wisconsin, supervising a staff of 60 and managing the field operations of the state for four years. In 2004, he became a Deputy State Conservationist for Nebraska, managing budgets and personnel under the Chief of State and coordinating the implementation of technical assistance programs. He currently serves the same role in the state of California as the Acting Deputy State Conservationist.

"Talk with people in the field who have careers similar to the one you want to pursue." Carlos Suarez, 2005.

Suarez has had two key mentors who have helped him advance in his career. One is a current high-level NRCS official whose career path mirrors Mora's own professional aspirations. The two are good friends. This mentor gives Mora general advice as well as tips on how to enhance his chances of getting promotions. His second mentor worked as a human resources manager in one of his former offices. This mentor helped him understand management affairs and provided him with institutional knowledge about the agency.

One of Suarez's other career highlights has been serving as a mentor to others. He engages less experienced employees in the same career development process that he has gone through. He has 15 employees that he mentors regularly. He helps them with career counseling and development. His goal is for them to advance farther than he has in their careers. Suarez has also played a major role within the agency in recruiting students of color – this entails recruiting from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions. The USDA has a partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. Suarez has worked as a recruiter through this partnership to bring more students into the natural resources field. He has also supported initiatives to recruit more women into the agency.

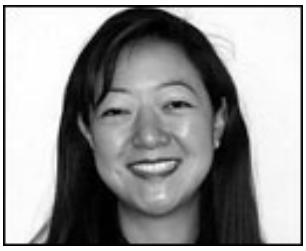
Suarez continue to work in the environmental field because he knows he has made a difference in people's lives by working to protect the environment and natural resources. His work on the Hurricane Mitch project and his work with providing technical and financial assistance to others have touched the lives of countless people.

For students interested in a career in the environment, Suarez recommends that they talk with people in the field who have had careers similar to the profession they want to pursue. Seeking out mentors and getting involved with student organizations that have an environmental focus are key pieces of advice he also offers. Finally, students who may not have internships within government agencies should not be deterred from seeking out mentors in this sector. He suggests that a

phone call to an agency or an extensive internet search to find out what steps are needed to reach a desired career goal will help students understand what they need to do to be successful.

Rhea Suh

(1970-Present)
Program Officer
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Member, Asian-American Pacific Islander in Philanthropy Assoc.



Rhea Suh was raised by her father Chung-Ha Suh, a professor, and her mother, Young-Ja Suh, a floral designer. Growing up in Boulder, Colorado, Suh was exposed to the rugged natural beauty of the Rockies from a young age. She was privileged to participate in a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, camping and skiing. By the time she was ready for college however, she was ready for a change of scenery. She decided to go to Columbia University. Despite the dramatic difference in natural environments, she continued to be passionate about the environment and chose to major in environmental science.

While at Columbia, her definition of environmentalism expanded to include issues like urban redevelopment and questions of sustainability. Her education helped shape her attitudes about the environment from a view that predominately featured the "green" aspects of the field to one that also addressed the "brown" issues of pollution and remediation.

Suh completed her undergraduate studies in 1992 with a double major in environmental science and education, and was also certified as a high school teacher. She then went on to teach earth science in high school, and at the time, believed that this would be her chosen career. However, after a few years of teaching, Suh decided to reconsider whether or not the education field was where she wanted to be.

After some soul searching, Suh decided to return to her home town. Upon her return to Boulder, Suh found work as a waitress but she still continued to look for opportunities to learn about different of sectors of the environmental field. She had long been interested in politics, and decided to volunteer for an elected official. Through a series of events she attributed to "random luck," she was hired by Ben Nighthorse Campbell – a new U.S. Senator from Colorado – to be his state representative on environmental issues.

In Colorado, Suh worked on federal environmental issues like violations of the Clean Air and Water Acts, Superfund sites, the decommissioning of the Rocky Flats nuclear facility, and public lands. She was ultimately transferred to Campbell's Washington D.C. office to serve as a legislative assistant assigned to cover the Energy and Natural Resources committee. Her experience there was invaluable. It gave her an in-depth perspective on how policy was crafted, as well as an understanding of the politics around environmental issues. However, it was also difficult. Senator Campbell switched political affiliations during her tenure, a move which Suh both characterizes as "a valuable exposure to different perspectives," and "personally challenging."

Ultimately, Suh decided to take a break from politics and decided to go back into the education field. She went to Harvard University to obtain a master's in education.

During her time at Harvard, Suh focused on the intersection between the environment and education. In particular, Suh developed a master's project at the Kennedy School of Government working with the National Park Service. The Park Service had been concerned for some time that they were not reaching a diverse enough audience. Her project helped the Park Service think through the options for how they could create a formalized educational program that could help bring the parks into classrooms around the country. In 1998, Suh completed her master's degree and was offered a job in environmental policy. Currently, Suh is a program officer for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. As a program officer, she manages the program's portfolio of grants designed to protect the ecosystems of the western part of North America.

Suh has had much success during her time at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and attributes much of her accomplishments to the guidance of her mentors. One of these individuals is her first supervisor at the Hewlett Foundation, Michael Fischer. She describes Fischer as an early pioneer in efforts to diversify the environmental movement. As head of the Sierra Club in the early 1990s, Fischer promoted environmental justice initiatives and the need to hire more people of color in the national environmental organizations. She describes him as going out of his way to support her career development as a young person of color, helping her get involved in professional organizations and develop projects on diversity for organizations which Hewlett funded. Suh also describes her current boss, Hal Harvey, as another key mentor. She considers him a leader in the philanthropic sector, and as "sharp as you can get around strategic and substantive issues." He has helped her develop her skills around strategy, writing, communication and politics, and has supported her personal and professional growth. She credits these two mentors—both for providing consistent and flexible support—as well as the Hewlett Foundation to her career accomplishments.

Suh has not directly mentored any minorities in the environmental field, but her extensive involvement with and dedication to the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) benefits many minorities in the environmental field. EGA is a professional association for foundations that give money to environmental causes. They have briefings and annual meetings to discuss crucial issues that are presently important to the advancement of the environmental field. Suh is very active in this group, serving as the chair and vice chair of committees, and has consistently championed issues of diversity and equity as part of the organization's agenda. Her commitment to diversity in the environmental field is exemplary. She has helped to design workshops that address issues of race, community and equity in the context of the environment, and was asked to be the keynote speaker at one of their conferences to discuss diversity and her feelings as a person of color within the context of a predominately white organization.

"The environmental community is at a crossroads redefining themselves and who they are to Americans." Rhea Suh, 2005.

Suh is still involved as a board member of EGA and serves on its inclusive practices committee. She is also a member of the Asian-American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy Association. Despite the changes that she has brought about, Suh says that if you were to ask her today if she feels like she is now a member of the club, she would have to say that she is still not quite sure if she is. She says, "Even though I know more people now and have close friends, more often than not, [I] walk into environmental conferences where I am the only person of color. I am increasingly worried about the stark contrast

between the demographics of our constituency and the demographics of the states and country that we live in." She says that there are so few people of color in the field that when one comes along, there is still a tendency to expect him or her to represent the points of view of all people of color, regardless of what race, ethnic or social class they may be.

Suh says that she has stayed in the environmental field because she cares a lot about it. She feels lucky that she can have a job that she's passionate about. She also believes she is in a good position to try to make a difference on issues that she really cares about. The thing she says she is most proud of in her career has been the opportunity that she has had to develop a greater awareness of diversity issues in the environmental field.

For minorities considering a career in the environmental field, Suh says, "There are lots of opportunities for people of color to play profound roles in the environmental movement. The environmental community is at a crossroads, redefining themselves and who they are to Americans. Minorities should play a role in shaping what the next generation of environmentalism becomes and what it can mean for more Americans. If environmental groups don't diversify—both organizationally and substantively, the environmental movement will be forever impaired. We need to recognize the limitations that our homogeneity places upon our ability to create sustainable social change and then we need to change the way to do our business. That, I believe, is the only way that the environmental movement will remain relevant and effective in the years to come."

Quita Sullivan

(1961-Present)
Staff Attorney
Alternatives for Community and Environment

Quita Sullivan was born on July 22, 1961 to Reverend Kenneth Nelson and Joan Green, a minister and retired diversity and negotiations consultant, respectively. She grew up spending her time between Chicago, Illinois and Long Island, New York. She attended school in the inner city of Chicago living with her father during the academic year and returning to Long Island to live with her mother for the summer months. These two settings allowed Sullivan to witness the unique needs of inner city communities as well to observe the vast differences between Long Island life on the reservation and life in the surrounding communities of mansions and golf courses.

Sullivan holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theater from Knox College and Master of Arts in Dramaturgy from the State University of New York in Stony Brook. She earned her law degree in 1997 from Wayne State University.

The path Sullivan followed to the environmental field is one with many twists and turns. She always dreamed of opening a medical clinic and theater in a small town. This dream evolved as she settled into her family life and obtained a position working with an

environmental engineering firm as a secretary and technician. In this position, Sullivan wrote reports and proposals regarding environmental remediation. While her colleagues in the environmental engineering firm encouraged her to return to school to obtain an additional degree in environmental engineering, Sullivan chose a slightly different direction: law school. Sullivan enrolled at Wayne State University and obtained her law degree in 1997.

While enrolled at Wayne State University, Sullivan interned with the Sugar Law Center, a non-profit whose mission is to provide legal advocacy and support to oppressed and disenfranchised individuals and communities as well as those seeking social change. As an intern, she helped to establish the organization's first environmental justice attorney position which she filled upon completing her degree. Sullivan worked with the Sugar Law Center from 1997 until September 2000 when she left to begin her current work as the Staff Attorney and Program Director for Alternatives for Community and Environment in Roxbury, Massachusetts. She credits having a sincere interest in the issues and communities with which she works as having helped her to progress through her environmental career.

"I hope that somewhere along the line I have instigated change." Quita Sullivan, 2005.

In addition to her interest in environmental issues, mentors have also assisted Sullivan. Kary Moss was Sullivan's supervisor while she worked with the Sugar Law Center. Moss encouraged Sullivan to engage in more organizing and training work. Sullivan's late cousin, a Native American activist, played an important role in Sullivan's life by helping her to keep her Native American identity even when she was away from the reservation. Finally, Sullivan credits her mother and husband with helping to keep her career on target.

In return, Sullivan works with young environmental professionals, especially those studying law. Sullivan advises them on how to maintain balance in life, assists them with networking, writes letters of recommendation, and lends a sympathetic ear to their frustrations. Further, she works with the Environmental Leadership Program, a program that strives to maintain diversity while nurturing the next generation of environmental leaders by providing training, networking and self-assessment opportunities. Sullivan encourages young minorities considering a career in the environmental field to think outside of the box and to be open to the many options available in the environmental field as the environmental field encompasses social justice work as well as public health work. An environmental aspect can be found in all issues.

Working in a position that requires great community engagement has had its ups and downs for Sullivan. While the people and communities with whom she works and truly cares about has kept her motivated and in the environmental field, it has also been the cause of her lowest career moments. Sullivan puts tremendous effort into community organizing and often feels discouraged when community members do not attend the events she has planned. Nonetheless, she has tremendous hope that somewhere along the way her work and actions have instigated change.

While community engagement has not always been at the level desired by Sullivan, she is still confident that her message is being heard. At the age of eight, Sullivan's son offered to chain himself to a tree as a demonstration of his support for her work. It was at that moment that she knew that he was making connections with her work. Noting that her career is not yet over, Sullivan cites this moment as the highlight of her career to date.

Elena Takaki

(1971-Present)
Director of Education
Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Elena Takaki was born on October 15, 1971 to Karen Whitcher and James Takaki in Plymouth, Michigan. Growing up, Takaki loved to ride horses – an activity which allowed her to appreciate the outdoors. After high school, she attended the University of Michigan for both her bachelor's and master's degrees. Takaki has a Bachelor's in Natural Resource Policy and Behavior and a Master's in Educational Studies and Environmental Science. Takaki first became interested in an environmental career when she wrote a paper on recycling in one of her first undergraduate environmental courses. That essay sparked her interest in other aspects of environmental preservation and led her to transfer from the College of Literature, Science and Arts to the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE).

Takaki's first job in the environment field was working for the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Midwest Campus Ecology Program. She worked with faculty, staff and students on various services aimed at improving the environment on their campuses. In Illinois, she worked with a student group that began promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at their agriculture-based school. At the University of Minnesota-Duluth, she collaborated with a student group and purchasing department staff to centralize the university's chemical purchasing process. As a result of this project, the hazardous chemicals used on the campus were tracked and controlled more effectively. Takaki has also worked with other student groups to help start recycling programs.

Today, Takaki continues to work with students and teachers on environmental solutions as the Director of Education for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. She originally applied for a job as a Tributary Team Coordinator, but during the job interview, the employer mentioned the possibility of her obtaining a position in the education department. Takaki's qualifications and skills were better suited for the post so she decided to apply for it. She says she is glad she made that decision. She hopes that her work can inspire others to learn more about the environment and to preserve it.

"To minorities and non-minorities alike, just make sure you choose a path that you feel is personally and professionally fulfilling." Elena Takaki, 2004.

Takaki has been actively involved with diversity efforts as well. She has developed an environmental justice curriculum related to smart-growth issues, reinvesting in communities, brown field development, and sprawl. She currently teaches workshops to promote this curriculum. Through the program TEAM (Teaching Environmental Awareness in Maryland), she and other advisors teach volunteers about the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, hands-on activities are conducted with students from grades 2 through 8. One such program in TEAM is called the Chesapeake Watermen; it focuses on the careers and

lives of watermen and the way their activities are the Chesapeake Bay. By participating in the program, students are given the opportunity to hear stories and poetry written by black watermen, create their own menus for a restaurant and enact a "typical day" in the life of a waterman. Takaki believes that there is a great need to understand the contributions of minorities to the Chesapeake Bay economy and their investment in a healthy Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

Takaki credits two mentors with helping her get to where she is today. Bill Stapp, she says, was an example of what could be accomplished through dedication and commitment. Takaki's graduate student advisor, Joe Krajcik, was also helpful in giving her guidance in her career path. She continues to apply what they taught her in her work today. For those considering a career in the environmental field, she advises minorities and non-minorities alike to "make sure you choose a path that you feel is personally and professionally fulfilling."

Paul Turner

(1966-Present)
Assistant Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Yale University

Paul Turner was born the second of three children to Rev. Eugene and Sylvia Turner in Philadelphia and grew up in Syracuse, New York. He received his B.A. in Biological Science from the University of Rochester in 1988 and his Ph.D. in Microbial Ecology and Evolution from Michigan State in 1995. Turner is currently an assistant professor at Yale University in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

Turner credits his mentors with helping him to become a professor at one of the country's most prestigious universities. He began his college career intent on becoming an engineer but became increasingly disinterested in his engineering courses. Meanwhile, his studies in biological science were making a lasting impression. It was through a University of Rochester program that links students to faculty mentors that Turner was encouraged by Drs. John Jaenike and Andrew Dobson to pursue graduate study in the biological sciences. These mentors not only opened his eyes to the possibility of graduate study, but also took the time to explain what the graduate school experience might entail. Turner, while excited at the prospect, was still not convinced.

After completing his undergraduate studies, Turner decided to take some time to ponder his next steps in life while gaining more experience in environmental research. He submitted applications for internship positions and received a four-month position with the National Audubon Society at a wildlife sanctuary in Monson, Maine. During his work in Maine, Turner recalled the memories of his childhood in Syracuse where his family lived on the outskirts of town near forests, lakes

and other natural areas. His father is a retired Presbyterian minister who served as the Executive of the Synod of the Northeast, while his mother is a retired public school teacher from the Syracuse school district. Turner spent his childhood observing animals in their natural environment, and his work in the wildlife sanctuary reinvigorated this wonder and excitement. Thus, he decided to pursue a career in the biological sciences. He applied to Ph.D. programs and began is doctoral studies at the University of California, Irvine in 1989. He later transferred to MichiganState University (MSU) in 1991.

Dr. Richard Lenski of MSU became Turner's next mentor. Turner cites Lenski as his role model for high-quality research and for the ability to translate his studies to the general public in both written and oral form with enthusiasm and clarity. Turner found protégés of his own in the undergraduates who came into the lab to conduct research beginning in graduate school and continuing through his postdoctoral positions. Like Turner, many of these students were African-American. The Science, Technology and Research Scholars (STARS) program at Yale allows Turner to continue mentoring under-represented students through an intensive eight-week summer program which allows students to conduct research on campus. He also advises two minority students who are working toward doctorates under his tutelage. For all of his mentees, Turner tries to model the character traits he respected in Lenski – the ability to remain focused, the commitment to quality research, and enthusiasm for work and communication. In return, he says, "It's great to see them come in, work with them, and see their growth."

Turner took what he called the "traditional steps" in his career after he left Maine – graduate school, post-doctorates followed by an assistant professorship. He teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses at Yale, but a great deal of his time is spent on research and overseeing data collection. Yet, Turner sees his life achievements as anything but ordinary. "Landing a job at a highly ranked Ivy institution," he says, "I just—I just didn't, when I was an undergrad, even consider that graduate school would be a good idea, and even taking the [Audubon] internship, which paid almost nothing, to decide whether a career in biological science would be good—I just never thought I would be a professor at one of the world's leading educational institutions, not to mention that people of color are underrepresented in the research sciences."

"Seek the counsel of those who have been before you—those with similar experiences of overcoming obstacles at major institutions—because they are there to help you. All people can be excellent mentors, regardless of ethnic background, but we [minorities] have experience that other potential mentors without that experience may not provide. I am delighted to lend advice if [you] feel comfortable as a minority student coming to me." Paul Turner, 2005.

But Turner is not one to only look to the academic establishment for accolades. When he became the face on the cover of the 2003 annual Top Ten Emerging Scholars of Color in "Black Issues in Higher Education," Turner felt he had really accomplished something. "I am proud to be recognized not only by my scientific peers, but that people of my own ethnic background recognize me." Turner has been involved in a number of diversity-related programs, including a postdoctoral program of the National Science Foundation which brings together recipients of the awards with younger scientists who receive those awards in following years, consequently diversifying and strengthening related support structures in scientific fields.

Paul Turner's advice to minorities considering a career in the environmental field is as follows: "There may be apparent obstacles, but if you have a genuine appreciation for the environmental sciences, don't give

up, because you can overcome them." Paul sees himself and his colleagues who come from under-represented groups as a support structure that has the potential to both foster students' passion for learning as well as navigate their way through academia. "Seek the counsel of those who have been before you—those with similar experiences of overcoming obstacles at major institutions—because they are there to help you. All people can be excellent mentors, regardless of ethnic background, but we [minorities] have experience that other potential mentors without that experience may not provide. I am delighted to lend advice if [you] feel comfortable as a minority student coming to me."

Even though Turner struggles with the amount of time and energy he must set aside to seek funding for his research – especially in the current economic climate – he remains committed to his work because of his genuine love for research, for teaching, and for interacting with young scientists who have an appreciation for the ways biological processes work. Turner realizes that he could have taken a job in biotechnology that would have paid a handsome salary and eliminated his frustrations with the "grant treadmill," but his love for "testing the [scientific] theories, and teaching young people in the sciences and getting them excited" sustains him in his academic career. Paul Turner's life is a testament to the valuable role mentors can play in shaping not only one person's life, but the lives of the myriads of others who follow in their footsteps.

Bertha Venegas

(1965-Present)
Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator
Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agricultures
President, National Organization of Professional
Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

Bertha Venegas was born in Eagle Path, Texas to Bertha and Jose, a housewife and rancher, in 1965. Having grown up raising animals, growing crops, and being involved with the 4-H, a career in natural resource management seemed natural.

A first generation college graduate, Venegas graduated from Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in Agriculture. She went to work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a soil conservationist where she worked to provide technical information to private landowners in order to increase conservation efforts and effectiveness. Venegas continued to perform well and advanced through the government ranks by completing jobs assigned to her well and by taking on special assignments in order to gain better experiences. She presently works as the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator Liaison to the Alamo Resource Conservation and Development Council.

It is the achievement of her current position that Venegas considers the highlight of her career. There are only 23 people in her position across the state; the application process was very competitive and the applicant pool large. It took her a considerable amount

of time to gain the experience and knowledge necessary to successfully obtain a position of this kind.

Venegas describes the fun she has had in the position and in the agency. It is rewarding to help people in rural communities and provide resources for the development of youth and elderly recreation centers. However, Venegas does acknowledge that there have been times where her clients have had a hard time accepting her as a conservation professional because of her gender and race. Thus, she has made an exceptional effort to provide these clients with relevant information and demonstrate her knowledge and professionalism.

Venegas' supervisors and technical specialists have been instrumental in her career. From them she was able to glean knowledge that helped her advance. Recognizing the importance of mentors and having minorities working in the environmental field, Venegas often works with minorities interested in pursuing a career with the USDA. She helps with applications by providing tips on pertinent information that should be included on the application as well as by providing counseling on what positions applicants should consider. Further, she often serves as a reference for strong candidates.

"It is rewarding to help people in rural communities and provide resources for the development of youth and elderly recreation centers." Bertha Venegas, 2005.

In addition to serving as a mentor for minorities interested in working for the NRCS, Venegas has also been involved with the Federal Women's Program in Texas. This group works to recruit, retain and promote women within agencies through programs such as leadership development. She has served as the National President for the National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resources Conservation Services Employees. This group works to provide opportunities for Hispanics in the NRCS. Venegas' hard work and dedication was recognized in 1997 when she won the National Civil Rights Award.

Venegas recommends that individuals considering a career in the environmental field glean as much knowledge as possible from supervisors and professionals who have been in the field. She also recommends that individuals be mobile and willing to consider different types of positions. As Venegas demonstrates, a career in the environmental field can be highly enjoyable, successful, and productive.

Phoukham Vongkhamdy

(1964-Present)
District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
United States Department of Agriculture

Phoukham Vongkhamdy was born and raised on a family farm in Laos, which produced rice for sustenance. Other crops, such as mango, papaya, coconut, chili pepper, yam, sugarcane, and tobacco also grew on the farm. His family raised silk worms for silk production. There was also livestock on the farm including water buffaloes, chickens, and pigs. He escaped from the communist Laotian regime in the fall of 1980. He then lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for 5

months before immigrating to the United States in February of 1981. He lived with his foster family in St. Cloud, Minnesota for five years before venturing out on his own. One of the eldest of seven children, his early farming experiences instilled in him a love of the outdoors. This respect for and enjoyment of the outdoors prompted Vongkhamdy to pursue a career in the environmental field.

Vongkhamdy graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science in Soil Science. He used the university's career placement services to land a summer internship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Minnesota. During his time as an intern he was able to demonstrate the depth of his knowledge and work ethic. He did so well that he was offered a permanent full-time position as a soil conservationist upon graduation.

Vongkhamdy has stayed with the agency where he's worked as a Soil Conservationist, State Outreach Coordinator and District Conservationist. He is currently serving as a District Conservationist. His work responsibilities include providing technical assistance to landowners applying conservation measures to their property. These measures are intended to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and improve the quality of the environment.

The NRCS provided a career coach from the state office to offer Vongkhamdy advice on job-related matters. The advice, which was centered on career development, was much appreciated. Vongkhamdy stated that this advice was really helpful in enabling him to grow with the agency. He suggests that students and individuals starting their careers take advantage of any mentoring opportunities that may be available. The combination of having a support system in the workplace and being able to work with people to conserve natural resources makes the NRCS a great fit for Vongkhamdy. He considers working with people and being able to protect the environment, the highlights of his career.

The opportunity to work with people and the land motivates Vongkhamdy to continue working in the environmental field. He possesses a passion for helping people and this job allows him to fulfill it. Having grown up on a small farm himself, he is able to relate to the farmers he works with.

"Take advantage of all mentoring opportunities."
Phoukham Vongkhamdy, 2005.

In addition to his work in conservation, Vongkhamdy has worked as the Asian and Pacific Islander program manager to recruit minorities to work for the NRCS. He serves in an advisory role for recruitment and serves as a cultural and ethnic bridge between the Asian Pacific Islander communities and the agency.

As Vongkhamdy works to recruit minorities into the environmental field, he suggests that individuals interested in working in the environmental field, especially with the NRCS agency, need to work hard and take their education seriously. He suggests that students take the required soil and plant courses. Further, Vongkhamdy stresses the importance of having a positive attitude. Vongkhamdy demonstrates that by combining technical knowledge with interpersonal skills and a willingness to work hard, one can make a difference in the environmental field.

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon

(1975-Present)
Assistant Director, Children's Environmental Health Network
Chair of the American Public Health Association
Environmental Health Section

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon was born March 23, 1975 and is the eldest of three children. A native of New York, Nsedu was born and raised in Buffalo. Her parents, Otu and Carol Obot, remain in New York where Mrs. Obot is a counselor at the Lakeview Shock Facility in western New York. Mr. Obot, currently a law school student, runs a wine store in Buffalo.

Witherspoon has roots in both America and Nigeria – the land of her father. When she was a year old, Witherspoon spent year in Nigeria before her family moved back to the U.S. Being there, she says, taught her to have respect for culture, not to take anything for granted, and to count every day as a blessing. Undoubtedly, these values are reflected in Witherspoon's work as a professional in the environmental field.

Witherspoon began her higher education at Siena College in central New York where she was a pre-medical biology major. After graduation, Witherspoon attended graduate school at George Washington University in Washington D.C. There, she studied maternal and child health before she obtained her Masters in Public Health. It was at George Washington that she first became interested in the environmental field.

Witherspoon began taking environmental courses. She became interested in how certain environmental issues were related to children's health outcomes. Witherspoon's love for children and her understanding of their vulnerability led her to consider a career that could help make their environment a better place. She felt that environmental preventative measures helped her connect her interests well.

Witherspoon's first job was as a membership coordinator in the Transplant Recipient International Organization (TRIO). It is a non-profit, member-driven organization that promotes education and awareness around transplant issues. For a small annual fee, members can access the resources of the organization. TRIO provides support to transplant recipients, family members and donors. Initially, Witherspoon began as a graduate assistant in the organization and was later promoted to the membership services coordinator position during her second year of graduate school. Witherspoon says that her job was very rewarding because, "I was personally involved in trying to relieve some of the financial stress and emotional stress that occurs during the transplant process." Even though her work experience with TRIO was not environmental in nature, it did have a public health focus.

Today, Witherspoon works for the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN). CEHN is a national non-profit organization with a mission to promote a safe and healthy environment for all children. Their definition of environment, says Witherspoon, "includes the built, biological and chemical." In this organization, Witherspoon's commitment to the health of children is combined with an element of environmental awareness and safety. CEHN, was originally founded in California and Witherspoon began working there as a community outreach specialist in 2000. Later that year, the executive director of CEHN moved to what is now the

headquarters of the organization, to Washington D.C. Witherspoon moved with them.

By her second year, in 2001, she was promoted to the assistant directorship. The executive director offered the position to Witherspoon and soon began to prepare her to eventually take on the director position. He felt that this would broaden the staff structure for the organization. Witherspoon recalls that he was the spokesperson for the organization and would regularly speak at conferences, workshops and seminars. As important as this task was, it was also very demanding on him and he did not want continue to do it alone. He began to groom Witherspoon to take on this responsibility to prepare her to eventually become director of the organization.

"I was just trying this out after graduate school because it had a preventive health component with children at hand, but I've found it to be a passionate cause and work." Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, 2004.

Witherspoon has had influential mentors along the way. The first is her grandmother who Witherspoon describes as a strong, spiritually focused, driven, and career-oriented individual. Witherspoon says that her grandmother was raised in Nigeria and that gave her the benefit of a multi-cultural perspective. Witherspoon says, "She's helped me prioritize things in the course of my life. In addition to my parents, she has set me on a career path that is ethically and morally fulfilling." The second person to help Witherspoon in her career is the executive director who hired her for the Children's Environmental Network. She says that he has "showed me a passion for the field through his own example and has connected me with other colleagues in the field. He was also one of the first people to tell me that any of us at any time could have been making three times what we're making now but the reality is that few of us can say that we love our jobs." In some of Witherspoon's environmental justice work, she came across a reverend with the United Church of Christ, a woman, who Witherspoon says "took me under her wing from day one and continued to look out for me. Not just in terms of providing part-time consulting opportunities, but in helping to find ways of involving faith-based entities in our kind of work." Overall Witherspoon believes that this woman has helped her to advance her professional development.

Since becoming an assistant director, Witherspoon herself has mentored graduate student assistants and medical school fellows. For the last two years, she has mentored people from Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) as well as volunteers from the AmeriCorps program. As a result of her guidance, she says, "there are a lot of young professionals who come through our office and say that they really appreciate and enjoy their time with us".

Witherspoon's initial decision to go into the environmental field was tentative. She says, "I was just trying this out after graduate school because it had a preventive health component with children at hand, but I've found it to be a passionate cause and work." Witherspoon feels that even as a young professional, she has made a difference in her field and in people's lives as well. However, she does concede that working for non-profits can also be a challenge. Sometimes the pressure of financial the constraints can be a burden on her and the staff. For example, she says, "not knowing if a grant will come in to help our program and staff can be very stressful." Luckily, she has the help and support of her colleagues. "These are the ones," Witherspoon says, "who are in the trenches, networking and joining together – they are all supportive, positive and intelligent people." It makes the difficulties easier to deal with in the face of overwhelming support and dedication to the cause. More importantly, Witherspoon

feels that having the opportunity to come in contact with families and communities who go through environmental health struggles and help them is rewarding. "Just seeing them smile when we're able to help them and bring them resources makes a huge difference."

As for her most significant achievement, Witherspoon says that it is being an assistant executive director and not yet being thirty years old. "It's amazing. In the course of my career path, I haven't had a position that I haven't enjoyed. I like challenging myself to raise the bar." Witherspoon is also one of the youngest chairs of the American Public Health Association's Environmental Section. It is a two-year term that she started in 2004.

Witherspoon's advice for other minorities interested in the environmental field is, "Don't be discouraged when you don't see too many of us, especially black women-- we are here. True, there are toxicologists and biologists who come in and they are mostly male, but there are many of us who are out here as well doing this work. I've also found that there is a great supportive community of minority professionals who are involved and will provide guidance and help."

Beverly Wright

(1947-Present)

Founder and Executive Director
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice
Xavier University of New Orleans

Photo credit: DSCEJ website

Beverly Wright attributes some of her success to her innate ability to recognize injustice and willingness to fight to correct it. Her early childhood experiences influenced her decision to embark on a career in the environmental field. Growing up in New Orleans, Louisiana, Wright was no stranger to blatant racial discrimination. Born on October 1, 1947 to Evelyn and Morris Bates, Wright's parents were quick to explain to her the wrongness of racial discrimination. Once when she was a little girl riding a bus with her mother, Wright asked what was meant by the sign behind the driver's seat that read "No Colored," her mother quickly responded, "It's wrong." The early lessons about racial injustice prepared Wright for a future fighting for equality and justice.

Wright received her B.A. in Sociology at Grambling University. She then pursued graduate studies at the State University of New York (SUNY) - Buffalo. Her interest in environmental issues was first kindled by Dr. Adeline Levine who introduced her to the events occurring at Love Canal, New York. Through Levine, Wright learned of the dedication and trust needed in social justice activism. The Love Canal experience proved to be a valuable lesson in scholar activism for Wright.

Environmental justice moved to the forefront of Wright's career when she began working with fellow environmental justice scholar and activist, Robert Bullard. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Bullard was documenting cases in Houston, Texas in which predominantly African American communities were witnessing highly-polluting industries relocating in their neighborhoods. The collaboration with Bullard led Wright to start examining the relationship between ill health along riverine

corridors in New Orleans and industrial pollution. Her research uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) spatial mapping techniques to examine the relationship between race, space and the incidence of disease in the region.

"We don't go into communities to try to help. We want them to see what we are about and come to us. It's easier that way." Beverly Wright, 2005.

After participating in the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment's conference on "Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards" in 1990, Wright got more involved in political activism around environmental justice issues. She was one of the original members of the Michigan Coalition – a group of conferees who attended the Michigan conference and decided to form an advisory committee to work with the Environmental Protection agency on developing environmental justice policies and to plan the 1992 First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. She served as a member of the Leadership Summit's National Advisory Committee. She was also a member of the Planning and Protocol Committees for the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences' Health and Research Needs to Ensure Environmental Justice National Symposium. Wright has testified at environmental justice hearings and helped to develop an environmental transition paper for the Clinton administration. Wright and several others witnessed President Clinton's signing of the Environmental Justice Executive Order (12898). She also served on the U.S. EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC).

Wright considers her work at the grassroots level the most rewarding of her career and the work she is most proud of. She is the founder and currently the Director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) at Xavier University in New Orleans. DSCEJ was established to create a bridge between communities experiencing environmental injustice, policymakers and academic scientists and researchers. Focusing on the Lower Mississippi River corridor, DSCEJ has adopted a "communiveristy" approach wherein university researchers collaborate with activists on community-driven projects. According to Wright, "We don't go into communities to try to help. We want them to see what we are about and come to us. It's easier that way."

DSCEJ offers workshops in which community members are taught about environmental-justice-related issues like legal procedures, pollution prevention, computing, GIS mapping, and environmental monitoring and reporting procedures. As Wright sees it, one of the most important programs at DSCEJ is the Worker Training Project. The program is designed to get young men and women into the workforce. The program trains workers to become licensed abatement specialists; they work to remove asbestos and other hazardous materials. "Enabling local citizens to work in their communities to clean up the pollution is an effective tool in creating jobs for young men and women," says Wright. She also collaborates with Bullard's Environmental Justice Resource Center (EJRC) at Clark Atlanta University on projects like these on many occasions.

Wright received an award for her outstanding achievements and national recognition in the field of environmental justice from her alma mater, SUNY Buffalo. She continues to serve on several prominent committees. She is a member of the New Orleans Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee and is a member of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs Brownfields Consortium. She has chaired the New Orleans Mayor's Committee on Solid Waste. Wright has also been appointed to the Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Advisory Board, the U. S. Commission of Civil Rights for

the state of Louisiana and to the City of New Orleans' Select Committee for the Sewerage and Water Board.

Wright is currently developing a new project called "Clean and Just Production." The aim of the project is to work with industries in Louisiana to get them to subscribe to the Clean and Just Production criteria. The goal is to encourage industries to consider the entire life cycle of a product and develop mitigation strategies that will reduce health and environmental impacts. Wright hopes that the pilot project will be implemented on a larger scale soon.

Gwen Wright

(1962-Present)

Director of Corporate, Foundation and Government Relations
Organization of Tropical Studies
Duke University

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Gwen Wright was always encouraged do the best that she could and to have a profession that she loved. Her mother, Anease Wright, a homemaker, and her father David Wright (deceased), a maintenance worker for the *Albany Herald* taught her these values at an early age. She grew up with her parents, an older sister, and two older brothers in a rural area of Albany, Georgia where agriculture was the main feature of life.

Wright decided to pursue her undergraduate studies close to home at Albany State University. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's degree in Physiology in 1985. Upon graduation, she worked for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a revenue officer. She describes the work that she did there as nice. The setting was comfortable and the salary was good, but the work was not for her. After working for the IRS for four years, she decided to change gears and work in an academic setting.

Wright was initially involved in development when she began working in academia. She was first hired to work in the Grants and Special Programs Office of Darton College. While there, she developed an interest for grants and contracts and continued to work at Darton College for the two years. Before long, she wanted a change of pace so she went to work for a development department at Albany Technical College (formerly Albany Technical Institute). Again she decided she wanted a change, this time in job and scenery so she moved to North Carolina she was hired as the director of Corporate Foundations and Grants at Wesleyan College.

Wright then went on to receive her Master's of Public Administration from North Carolina State University. Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at Duke University.

Wright's decision to pursue her doctorate at Duke influenced her decision to get a job at the university. While reading a newspaper, she saw a job advertisement for a fundraising position at the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) at Duke University and she applied. Wright was hired in 2000 as Director of Corporate, Foundation and Government Relations for OTS. In her capacity, she oversees grants and contracts and serves as a liaison between her organization and funding agencies. Although it was happenstance that brought her to the environmental field, she says, "As I think about it, it was fortuitous that I came

to be here because it's so enriching to be here and to be involved in something that I wasn't a part of before."

"I don't look at my profession as a series of highs and lows. I don't focus on them because it's not individual moments that define who I am. It's the journey and seeing how far I've come and how I'm thriving in this field. So it's all memorable for me." - Gwen Wright, 2004.

Wright says that there were so few minority women in the development field during the early stages of her career, and as a result she had not been fortunate enough to have a mentor to guide her. Although she is appreciative of the encouragement and support she has received from friends and colleagues, she does acknowledge that the lack of individuals who could serve as mentors is a drawback of the development field. In light of this, she hopes that she can be a mentor and encourage other minority women to pursue careers in this area. She does this by attending conferences to meet minority students interested in seeking help with their career choices.

In addition to Wright's personal efforts to increase diversity, her organization has a Minority Scholars Program that seeks to increase the number of minority students in the OTS study-abroad program to Costa Rica and to South Africa by providing funding for scholarships and fellowships for their program. The OTS also recently had a symposium on fostering diversity in environmental and biological sciences. Students were able to create posters and presentations on these issues and a panel of guest speakers discussed the importance of retaining and recruiting students of color in those fields.

When asked about the highest and lowest points of her career, Wright says, "I don't look at my profession as a series of highs and lows. I don't focus on them because it's not individual moments that define who I am." She goes on to say, "It's the journey and seeing how far I've come and how I'm thriving in this field. So it's all memorable for me." Wright impacts one life at a time and she finds that to be her most significant achievement. Students come to her and tell her about their experience in her program and it is wonderful for her because she feels that they are determined to use what they are learning.

Wright has stuck with the environmental field because she feels that OTS is a great organization that has achieved nationwide success. She is happy with her position; it keeps her busy. She feels that the work she and her co-workers do is important and it is rewarding for her to see the difference that they make in the lives of students. She says, "It emboldens me to continue on. The lives of the students are literally transformed…they feel that they can make a difference."

Wright believes that one of the keys to increasing diversity in the environmental field is to make minorities aware of the field at an early age. She believes that children should be exposed to environmental opportunities in elementary school. They should know what the issues are, they need to know what they can do to help, and that the environmental field holds true career options for them. She finds it sad that there are so few people of color involved when more are needed to addresses the issues concerning their communities. Luckily, there are people like her in the environmental field who are dedicated to changing this current situation. She will continue to be a positive influence by impacting one life at a time.

Iantha Gantt-Wright

President, Founder
The Kenian Group
Member, The Diversity Working Group

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Iantha Gantt-Wright was born on September 2, 1954. She was the fifth of eight children born to Irene Harris and Tom Price. After her father left the family, Irene was left with Gantt-Wright and her seven sisters and brothers. With her mother unemployed, and her father out of the picture, Gantt-Wright and her family struggled to stay afloat.

Gantt-Wright grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, in a community not far from the Chesapeake Bay in an area known as the Fifties. The Fifties was a fifty-foot hill that was filled with beautiful trees; it had a stream running through it. Later in Gantt-Wright 's life, she would use this area of her community to reconnect and center herself. Despite her family's situation, Gantt-Wright went on to receive a bachelor's degree in Organizational Development, and is currently working on her Masters Degree at Trinity College in Washington D.C.

After the death of her sister in 1986, Gantt-Wright was at a crossroads in her life. She was left with the responsibility of taking care of her deceased sister's two children, and she was contemplating a career change. After much time working in the field of broadcasting, Gantt-Wright decided to search the local newspapers for a new job.

"Reaching back as you climb, always bring [others] along with you. And being there for them as the go through the process..." Iantha Gantt-Wright, 2004.

She found a job ad for an organization called the Clean Water Action. Two of the major concerns of the organization were protecting children in the Baltimore and Chesapeake Bay areas, and eradicating lead in Baltimore homes. There were many factors that led Gantt-Wright to take this job. For one, Gantt-Wright loved the Chesapeake Bay. It brought her back to her childhood, of which she has the fondest memories. Also, she wanted to help create a better world for her niece, nephew, and for the whole African-American community that resides in Baltimore, as well. Gantt-Wright felt that this opportunity was something that was going to change her life in a very important way. This was the beginning of her involvement with the environmental field.

Gantt-Wright got her first taste of the environmental profession when she worked as a canvasser. She was a door-to-door political educator. She went around the Chesapeake Bay informing people about efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay as well as about lead poisoning and asbestos. She was so successful at this that she was promoted to trainer and later field manager. From there, she was promoted to Canvas Director in Philadelphia. After her one year stint as Canvas Director, Gantt-Wright moved on to become a supervisor in Houston, Texas for two years, and later in Austin, Texas.

Gantt-Wright relishes the idea of making a difference as an individual. Gantt-Wright is currently the president of her own company called the Kenian Group. The goal of her company is to provide consulting on diversity issues to environmental groups. Part of the

Kenian Group's job is to assist in the building, maintaining, and sustaining of members and workforces within environmental organizations that reflect the people of this country.

Gantt-Wright's main goal is to promote diversity within the environmental field. She has been involved in many diversity-related programs throughout her career. She worked in the Junior Ranger Program, which targets 8-14 year olds; the National Parks Communication Program, which provides access, services, and programs to national parks; and the Environmental Diversity Group, which creates a forum that meets monthly to create a sustained effort in the environmental community. This is a place where minorities can grow and engage with other people of color. Gantt-Wright has also coordinated the Mosaic conferences, which brought together people from a variety of backgrounds to discuss current environmental issues.

Although Gantt-Wright is very successful today, she was not always this fortunate. Earlier in her career, Gantt-Wright admits that she never actually felt like she was part of some of the organizations she worked with. Although she enjoyed working in these organizations, Gantt-Wright felt like something was missing. For example, she wanted to relate her work at Clean Water to her passion and aspiration to help people of color. Gantt-Wright wanted to use her past, and the things she'd learned to help her advance her future efforts.

Gantt-Wright's commitment and passion for supporting minorities is always apparent. For this reason, she is especially troubled when people of color express the concern that they do not feel included in environmental decision-making. As a result, she has devoted much of her career to making this happen.

In 1999, Gantt-Wright received an award from Robert Stanton, then Director of the National Park Service at a Mosaic conference. This was hands down, one of the biggest highlights of Gantt-Wright's career. The award was for stellar deeds in advancing diversity. This wasn't however, the only award Gantt-Wright received. She received another award from Outward Bound Adventures Inc. in Los Angeles. Outward Bound is an environmental organization that seeks to educate young, at-risk teens about social and environmental issues.

All of Gantt-Wright's awards marked great moments of Gantt-Wright's career. Perhaps her most significant achievement was when she helped three young men who had worked with her on a daily basis. These three young men were incredibly passionate about the work that the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPCA) was doing. Gantt-Wright helped to make these young men's aspirations become a reality. Gantt-Wright jumps at any opportunity to present people of color with resources that they, under most circumstances, would not have access to. As Gantt-Wright sees it, "Reaching back as you climb, always bring [others] along with you. And being there for them as they go through the process…" is the most important aspect of success.

Through all of Gantt-Wright's ups and downs, the driving force that has kept her working in the environmental profession were her many mentors, and the fact that she truly believed that she was making a difference in her community. With Clean Water and NPCA, Gantt-Wright felt that she served as a "door buster," creating access for people who wouldn't have had access to the realm of environmental work.

Gantt-Wright's first mentor was an African-American man at Clean Water named Robert. Despite all of the harassment Robert received from the police and people in the neighborhoods as he canvassed, he was very dedicated to his work. She also mentions Jeff Connors, Marguerite Young, a supervisor at Clean Water, and Tom St. Hilar, Gantt-Wright 's first boss at NPCA. Ira Hutchinson, Executive Director of a group for African-Americans known as the Round Table Association, was another person from NPCA who had a large influence on

Gantt-Wright's career. Ira was the first person Gantt-Wright met when she started working for NPCA. He guided her through the process of getting to know the organization and people.

Gantt-Wright also looked up to Robert Stanton. He was the first African-American to become director of the National Parks Service. Stanton was a person who had always been there for Gantt-Wright. He was always very supportive, and it was important to him that his organization be engaged in diversity issues. Stanton helped with funding for project, and overall, he helped with Gantt-Wright's success at NPCA. Reginald (Flip) Hagood of the Student Conservation Association was also instrumental in Gantt-Wright's career. His constant support, direction, and insight into the world of environmental organizations was a great asset to Gantt-Wright. Eventually, their dynamic relationship led to a partnership between the two of them at the Junior Rangers Program. John Kadlar was also an inspiration to Gantt-Wright. Although John passed away during his time as the Director for CWA, he shared Gantt-Wright's love for the Chesapeake Bay, and provided lots of support and knowledge for her. His commitment and compassion for Chesapeake Bay was what inspired Gantt-Wright. John fought for the Chesapeake Bay until the end of his life.

Gantt-Wright has had numerous influential mentors throughout her career, so she would like to give others the same insight and care to other minorities entering the environmental field. Gantt-Wright has devoted much of her time to working with interns entering the NPCA. Gantt-Wright provides them with access, experience, and history. She teaches them about national environmental issues. Gantt-Wright also teaches the interns about the industries and environmental fieldwork. Essentially, Gantt-Wright tries to be there for others. She wants to be a person with whom others can share ideas or come to for comfort and support.

Iantha Gantt-Wright has been a pivotal member of the environmental movement, particularly as it relates to diversifying the environmental field. Through her many accomplishments, and even some setbacks, Gantt-Wright has always found time to help others in their search for their niche in the environmental field. Gantt-Wright's advice for those new to the environmental field is, "Just do it! Find mentors. Trust your own desire and enjoy what you do. When you get into this field, be sure to take advantage of opportunities. Take time to spend time in those places that allow you to reflect on why you're doing what you do. Visit national parks, state parks and streams. It's a recreational universe, protect and enjoy it!"

Ruth Yanai

(1958-Present)
Associate Professor
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Ruth Yanai was born in suburban New Jersey to Hideydsu and Esther VanDeWart, a chemist and housewife, in 1958. As a young child, Ruth gained a comfort in the chemical sciences due to the influence of her father while gaining an appreciation of nature and

wild areas by the trips to the Pine Barrens led by her mother.

Ruth's first job was in a rock fracture lab at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Ruth states that the location of the job was more important than the job itself. By remaining in New Haven, Ruth was able to take more classes and gain more exposure to the field of geology. Ruth did not intend on staying in New Haven as an academic until a graduate student friend recommended that Ruth pursue the National Science Foundation (NSF) Fellowship in Geology. By receiving this prestigious fellowship, Ruth was able to fund her graduate studies. After completing Bachelors of Arts in Geology and Geophysics at Yale, Ruth remained in New Haven to complete her masters and a doctorate in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Since obtaining her PhD in 1991, Yanai has worked in the research and academic field, including work with the Center for Environmental Research at Cornell University and the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research. She is currently an associate professor at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse. She appreciates the small size of the school as well as the balance between teaching and research. Most importantly, Yanai describes her job as fun. She especially has fun in the early, creative stages of research as well as in the writing phases. With her creativity, passion, competitive drive, and strong writing skills, Yanai has been successful in securing grants. Over the past five years, she has secured nearly $2,000,000 in research funding. Thus, she finds it rewarding to be able to not only see her ideas and research happen but also to be able to support students financially. For Yanai, the environmental field has been fun all the way and that is what has kept her in both the environmental and academic fields.

Describing her career as fun all the way does not mean that there have not been challenging and frustrating moments along the way. With hectic research and travel schedules, it has been difficult to coordinate research, writing, and deadlines with all of the people involved in producing high-quality work. Thus, there have been times when Yanai struggled to complete her work with her usual positive attitude and energy. However, she has worked through those moments and continued with the fun.

The support and advice of mentors played a role in shaping Yanai's career. Yanai credits four individuals; Herb Bormann, Phil Follins, Tony Federer, and Tim Fahey as being important mentors. These individual's combined talent and advice have helped to shape the outcome of her dissertation, publications, and career.

"*It has been fun all the way!*" Ruth Yanai, 2005.

While not completely sure of her role as a mentor for students, it is an idea that Yanai has been giving a lot of thought to recently. She is active in the Promotion of Women in Science group which holds quarterly seminars to increase individuals' exposure to the work of professional women. Potlucks are held regularly and they often invite young girls onto campus to expose them to the work that women in science are currently doing. In addition, she is recognized by female Asian students as a positive role model in regards to self-expression and assertiveness. However, Yanai notes that not all students and colleagues view her as an Asian woman due to her mixed Japanese and Caucasian heritage.

With her strong record of publications, grants, and teaching, Yanai is certainly proud of her professional accomplishments. However, she recognizes that balance is good and works hard to balance not only the activities within her professional life but also to balance her professional and personal life. Yanai is active in track and field and was the National Masters Indoor Track and

Field Champion in the 800 meter run in 2002. Further, she was the Masters Women Champion of the Upstate Cross Country Series in 2001 and 2002. Finally, Yanai is most proud of her success as a single mom.

Christina Yin

Environmental Protection Specialist
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Tina Yin, the second of Martin Yin and Scotty Jackson's four children, was born in Washington, D.C. Her father was in retail and her mother was a teaching assistant. Between the ages of three and nine, she lived just outside of Shreveport, Louisiana. Her family then moved to Singapore and lived there until she was 18 years old. While there, she graduated from an international high school. Afterwards, she lived in Texas for a year and moved to the northeast to attend college. Yin says that moving around gave her perspective on how small the world is and how our actions can affect people in other places.

Yin says that her high school science teacher motivated her to enter the environmental field. Her teacher was very inspirational, exposed students to environmental issues, and taught them that how their lives had an impact on the entire earth. After high school, Yin attended the State University of New York-Binghamton where she majored in environmental studies.

"You can actually do some good through this [a conservation career]." Christina Yin, 2005.

Upon graduating from SUNY-Binghamton in 1996, Yin applied for a job at American Rivers, a non-profit organization in Washington, DC. She learned about this job through an advertisement in an environmental opportunities newsletter. Yin started as a conservation assistant on the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program and the Urban Rivers Program. After a year, her focus shifted to community river programs where she worked with minority communities to help them develop partnerships with other groups so that they could become more involved in the fate of the rivers in their communities. She eventually left American Rivers. The National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASC), an organization in Washington D.C. which she had collaborated with while working at American Rivers, recruited her. Yin accepted the position.

While at NASC, Yin worked on the Government Relations Staff doing environmental programs. A large number of the corps members were minorities between the ages of 18-24 and they did conservation work such as building trails and planting trees. She was able to get these corps members to consider conservation careers – something they may not have thought of before.

Eventually, Yin decided that graduate school would be the best option for her and while in D.C., it became very clear to her that without a graduate degree, she would not go very far in the environmental field. She had been working for four years and knew exactly what she wanted to do; this allowed her to make

an informed decision about what type of program she would choose. Yin received a master's degree from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment in 2002 where she focused on Resource Policy and Management. At Michigan, she did research on community based water resource management. She also volunteered as a monitor on the Global Positioning Systems.

Yin was the recipient of the prestigious Presidential Management Internship Fellowship in 2002. She served her internship with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Currently, Yin is an Environmental Protection Specialist at the Region 9 office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in San Francisco, California. In this capacity, she works on non-point source pollution issues in the state. She has also worked with the Environmental Justice Team at the EPA and was on a selection panel of environmental grants.

Yin says that the highlight of her career is the gratification that she has gotten from being able to work in a field that she enjoys and wants to be in. She feels privileged to be working in an environment with so many dedicated, hard-working people. She has stuck with a career in the environmental field because of her passion for the issues and she is convinced that this is what she ought to be doing. She likes the idea that, "You can actually do some good through this."

For minorities, considering a career in the environmental field, Yin says, "Stick with it." When she looks around she says that although there are lots of women, there are not many racial minorities and it would be nice to see things even out a bit. She says, "Look for the opportunities that are out there."

Kolu Zigbi

(1962-Present)
Program Officer
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Co-Chair of the People of Color Caucus of the National Network of Grantmakers

Photo credit: Dorceta E. Taylor

Kolu Zigbi – the first child of Charlie and Ersilia Crawford – was born on April 30, 1962. Zigbi grew up in the Bronx, New York City, spending much of her childhood in a local park where her mother taught her about edible wild herbs and encouraged tree climbing and her grandmother convinced her that God indeed did live in trees.

While in high school Zigbi traveled to Liberia and for the first time, walked throughout Bruyema, the homeland of her large paternal clan. Bruyema, is located in a remote, mountainous region of the country. As a student at Stanford University she completed a self-designed, joint undergraduate major in Rural Development Studies with a focus on West Africa. Her second major was African and African-American Studies. While at Stanford, she returned to Bruyema to study indigenous knowledge systems, land use and decision-making practices. In particular, she documented road construction efforts and was struck by the challenges clan members faced in obtaining technical assistance. Access to external resources – like that available through the World Bank – was contingent on

the growing of cash crops. In the case of timber companies, villagers were expected to relinquish their land and its resources in exchange for cash. According to Zigbi, "The stories of how outside 'experts' misled and even took advantage of people are too numerous to describe, but that convinced me that local people know best how to manage their environments and that national and international policies often create obstacles to achieving economic and environmental sustainability." This experience largely shaped Zigbi's belief in collective action, "My belief in collective action really came from what I saw in my clan where people had been able to build schools and clinics in the middle of the rainforest with very little help from outside agencies."

Although Zigbi dreamed of returning to Bruyema to work with clan members, she also believed she could make a more valuable contribution by first gaining work experience in her hometown, New York City. In 1985 Zigbi returned to New York to work as a childcare worker in a residential drug treatment program. She was promoted to group therapist and later Director of Admissions, but the longer she stayed with the program, the more critical she became of its underlying ideology. She didn't agree with the exclusive focus on individual responsibility as the sole mechanism for change. She thought there should also be a focus on collective action as a vehicle for change at the community level also. As her disenchantment grew, she explored the idea of a career change. She decided to study regional planning so that she could enhance her understanding of how resources and polices dictated opportunities available to individuals and communities. She completed her masters in City and Regional Planning at Cornell University in 1990. During the time she pursued graduate studies, villages in Bruyema were burned by political dissidents and the country disintegrated into chaos and horror.

Zigbi decided to continue working in New York City in ways that allowed her to express the values she had developed in Bruyema. In the early 1990's she accepted her first official environmental position as an affordable housing advocate and organizer in New York City. She coordinated a peer-training network for tenant and community organizers, co-founded a Harlem-based tenants' organization and advocated for affordable housing and the better enforcement of the city's housing code.

While working as an organizer, Zigbi was invited to serve on the Community Funding Board of the North Star Fund. Through this position, she gained insight into the practice of grant making as well as other social justice issues and groups in New York City. She used the skills gained from this experience to re-vamp a small grants program for a citywide, non-profit training and technical assistance organization that helped neighborhood-based volunteer groups – many of which addressed local environmental issues. Zigbi received a Revson Fellowship in 1999; the fellowship allowed her to take additional environmental courses at Columbia University. After this, Zigbi was hired as Program Officer at the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. She is responsible for the foundation's funding in New York City and of the sustainable agriculture and food systems grants.

Zigbi says that she never had a formal mentor with whom she touched bases with on a regular basis, but she does acknowledge many individuals who have been instrumental to her advancement. She names her grandfather, Leh Leh Crawford, who taught her the meaning of collective self-determination and the importance of respecting and understanding indigenous knowledge. Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, the former president of the University of Liberia, helped develop her thinking about how indigenous knowledge systems and educational practices could be integrated with the dominant western systems to create a more meaningful experience for rural Liberians. Zigbi also

acknowledges that Adisa Douglas, a program officer at the Public Welfare Foundation, sets an example for her as an African-American woman who has survived and advanced in philanthropy over the course of 30 years. The president of the Noyes Foundation, Vic DeLuca, and her other colleagues – Wilma Montanez and Millie Buchanan – are a tremendous resource for her because they are all former executive directors of grassroots organizations.

"…People living in…communities [of color] bear toxic burdens in their bodies and need and deserve to eat pesticide- and hormone-free foods rich in nutrients..." Kolu Zigbi, 2004.

Zigbi does not maintain any formal mentee relationships, but she does take advantage of many opportunities to provide encouragement and support for people in the non-profit world and in philanthropy. Over the last four years, Noyes has participated in the Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) internship program for students of color interested in exploring philanthropy. Zigbi served as the co-chair of the People of Color Caucus of the National Network of Grantmakers (NNG) in 2003 and 2004. She continues to serve on the group's steering committee and is particularly interested in ensuring that NNG play a leadership role in helping philanthropic organizations understand racial inequality and promote social justice through their grantmaking practices. Zigbi currently co-chairs the Steering committee of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders group – a working group of the Environmental Grantmakers Association. She hopes that through her involvement, the group will focus more on the strategic importance of issues facing people of color.

When asked about the highlight of her career, Zigbi says, "My idea of a successful life is having many moments of satisfaction rather than one or two major 'highlights.'" Zigbi continues to work for environmental justice, and includes what she calls "food justice" under that rubric. She feels that the concept of food justice extends the idea of environmentally sustainable production to encompass issues of economic justice for workers in the food system as well as access to food and nutritional health. She says "people living in… communities [of color] bear toxic burdens in their bodies and need and deserve to eat pesticide- and hormone-free foods rich in nutrients. Instead people of color communities are inundated with junk foods and fast foods. Rather than the foods we eat helping us survive they are contributing to chronic illness."