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Welcome to this celebration!

The past two years have been hard and we are delighted to be sharing this moment of joy with you. Today we are recognizing and honoring all of the women, especially women of color, who have provided the backbone of support to our communities.

The women and organization being recognized are trail blazers and community champions who approach their work with particular attention to the unique triumphs and hardship that live at the intersection of race and gender. We honor these women as examples of great community, compassion, and care for others.

Women and girls need real and lasting impact that will create structural change and remove barriers to equity. This requires the participation and robust collaboration from every one of us gathered here today. We thank you for taking this opportunity to gather with us in community to take strides in achieving race and gender equity.

Today we celebrate the inaugural Equity Awards winners, but we know this work belongs to all of us!

Angela Reynolds, CEO
Melanie Gefert-Azur, Board President

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Artist Statement

From the artist, Mary Hakim:

“The hand is the most frequently symbolized part of the human body. Traditionally, they represent work, blessing, expression, and giving. According to Aristotle, the hand is the “tool of tools.” While making these awards, the artist reflected on the women’s sources of strength, power, and protection. Each award has a hand carved Adinkra symbol that originates from Ghana, West Africa. For these awards, a specific adinkra symbol was selected to honor the work of each awardee by reflecting their positive contributions and attributes.”
People are at the heart of what we do.

It can be easy to forget to stop and appreciate this place: our community. At Huntington, we see it as our responsibility to not just appreciate Pittsburgh, but to always be looking for ways to make it better. That’s why we’re making a number of investments right here. Check them out at huntington.com/Community. Because when our communities thrive, we all live better.

We want our workforce to reflect our customer base. That’s why we’ve launched a multi-year plan to increase diversity hiring in a dynamic environment that celebrates difference.

Visit our Careers page to learn more. Apply today at peoples-gas.com/careers

Peoples is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Equal opportunity is provided to all employees and applicants for employment. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations to enable applicants with disabilities to have equal opportunity to apply for job openings.
Gisele Barreto Fetterman, the Second Lady of Pennsylvania (or as she prefers, “SLOP”) is a trailblazer in her own right. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Gisele’s mother took her and her younger brother to the United States when she was seven, all of them undocumented immigrants. They lived in a one-room apartment in New York City and were teaching themselves English while her mother worked cleaning hotels and houses. After 15 years of living in the shadows, Gisele received her green card in 2004 and became a United States citizen in 2009.

She has devoted her life to helping others, with a focus on nutrition, food equity and meeting Pennsylvanians’ basic needs. Gisele opened the Free Store, distributing household goods, baby items and bicycles to those in need, and co-founded 412 Food Rescue and For Good PGH. Most recently she founded The Hollander Project, a business incubator for female entrepreneurs.

Gisele is an unapologetic advocate for marginalized groups, especially the immigrant community as she herself was once a Dreamer. As an advocate, an activist, and a hugger, Gisele is always making a difference in her community with her big heart on full display.
Patrice is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana and has resided in Pittsburgh since 1996. She holds a B.S. in Psychology from Purdue University and graduated from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in May 2013, where she was awarded The Michael Wilson Keith Memorial Prize in Homiletics. As the Associate Pastor for Mission Ministries at East Liberty Presbyterian Church (ELPC), Patrice provides staff support to, walks with, and encourages members to actively engage in local and international mission through the work of the ELPC Mission Board, the Facing Systemic Racism, Justice, Peace, and Neighbors Mission Committees, and the Board of Deacons.

Patrice is committed to and volunteers in the community - currently serving on the Board and as president of East Liberty Development, Inc and on the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Boards of Directors, where she formally served as the Vice-Chair of the Board; and currently serves on the Executive Committee, the Governance Committee (co-chair), and the Student Life and Enrollment Committee (vice-chair). Patrice serves on the Pittsburgh Presbytery Commission of Preparation for Ministry where she supports and mentors individuals discerning their call into pastoral ministry. She previously served on the boards of the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater and Open Hand Ministries, the justice-based housing ministry. Patrice was instrumental in founding and providing leadership for the Commission Baptist Church, on the Northside of Pittsburgh. Ordained in the Baptist Denomination (2005), in 2016, Patrice was ordained as a Teaching Elder and Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Patrice’s greatest joys are serving God’s people and the gift of her family - sons, Johannon and Ian, “daughters-in-love,” Kori and Debbie and her amazing and phenomenal grandchildren, Kaylin and Johannon, II.

Brittany Boyd is a Pittsburgh native hailing from Pittsburgh’s Northside neighborhood, and currently living in the West End. A Howard University graduate, she holds a Bachelors of Arts, with a major in English Literature and a minor in Pre-Legal Communications. She is also an alum of Columbia University’s Summer Arts Program, having completed a Film Production course of study. Instead of going the planned law school route upon graduation, Brittany was pulled back to her first love – the arts.

While focused on performing arts, she found it incredibly difficult to find acting roles for Black women, even with the assistance of being signed by a local talent agency. She decided then, if she wanted more roles for Black women, she’d have to write them herself. This led to her creating the web series entitled “#LWB (Living While Black). #LWB is centered around Nia, a young Black woman who is trying to make sense of relationships, societal strains and mental health issues as a person of color in America. This project propelled Brittany to create her own lane, so to speak, and in 2017, she became Founder and Owner of Brittany Leanna Productions LLC., a production company whose mission is focused on promoting equity through art. Through her small business, she offers affordable marketing services including photography, videography, and web design. Brittany also serves as an active Board Officer for both the New Hazlett Theater (Representation Matters Chair) and the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (Secretary).
Abbey Mui, Founder and Executive Director, re:Bloom

Abbey is the Founder & Executive Director at re:Bloom, a non-profit web agency whose mission is to make tech accessible and affordable to small women & minority small businesses owners. Abbey graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in May 2020 with a B.S. in Information Systems. Since its founding in April 2020, re:Bloom has worked with over 30 volunteers to help more than 25 small businesses build websites, launch e-commerce, prototype, and more. Currently, they’re working with Neighborhood Allies, Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Bridgeway Capital to support small businesses in any way they can. They’re really excited to be a part of Ascender’s 2020-2021 Incubation Class and partners with community organizations such as Neighborhood Allies, All for All Coalition, and YWCA.

Marisa C. Williams, CEO, North Hills Affordable Housing (HEARTH)

Marisa has always been passionate about creating opportunities for those in need, particularly women and children. After working in financial services for 10 years, she decided to allow passion and purpose work to intersect; leading her to join the nonprofit sector. Marisa has spent the past 7 years doing her “heartwork” across Allegheny County. “It’s important to note that the work of community organizations is no less hard than the corporate sector; however the reward comes from our intention to lead with integrity and grit when solving the world’s problems. In 2020, Marisa was chosen to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of HEARTH; North Hills Affordable Housing. “All the work we do is connected; we want to build healthy families, who produce amazingly whole and healthy children, regardless of their zip code. Those children will then go on to become the leaders we need for future generations. It’s a cycle.” Marisa leads by keeping people at the heart of everything she does. “People first, Projects second.”

Marisa is extremely involved in the Pittsburgh community; she recognizes her responsibility and is passionate about serving the community where she works, and lives. Marisa is a Pittsburgh Magazine “40 Under 40” alum, and serves on the following boards; Johnson Institute for Responsible Leadership, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and the RAD Advisory board. She was recently appointed onto the PA State Law Enforcement Citizen Advisory Commission.

She is a proud alum of the University of Pittsburgh and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. Marisa is a native of Media, PA. She currently lives in Cranberry, PA with her husband Eugene and they are the proud parents to Eugene D. Williams IV.
Mary Martin

Mary Martin is a native Pittsburgh artist and art educator. She earned bachelor’s degrees in both Architecture and Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design. Her work has been exhibited in art galleries and cultural institutions nationally. Currently, she is a high school visual art instructor at Winchester Thurston School. She is an active member of Women of Visions, Inc., a Pittsburgh-based arts collective of African American women visual artists. She is also a teacher/leader of the Yan Taru Muslim Women’s Educational and Charitable organization and a board member of the Muslim Women’s Association of Pittsburgh.

She has also had numerous collaborative experiences with local arts institutions. Her involvement includes programming, grant writing, curating, consulting for organizations such as: August Wilson African American Cultural Center, the Andy Warhol Museum, The Society for Contemporary Craft, and Heinz History Center. She has served on artist review panels for the August Wilson Center Fellowship Program, Heinz Endowments Small Arts Initiatives Programs, Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Programs, The Pittsburgh Foundation’s Multicultural Arts Initiative, and the Ohio Arts Council.

Mary produces both functional and sculptural works. Intricate carvings and linear patterning adorn her functional and sculptural artworks. These creatively woven markings and forms affirm her ancestry. Her artwork speaks to her identity, familial bonds, spirituality, and her endless search for peace.

THANK YOU!

YWCA Greater Pittsburgh is grateful to Mary Martin for her donation of these beautiful custom works. Thank you for joining and supporting us in honoring the 2021 Equity Award Winners.
ABOUT US

A member of a nationally recognized movement with a mission to eliminate racism and empower women, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh has been working for equity and change for over 150 years.

We understand that racial and economic equity are inseparable from women's empowerment and that meaningful change requires deliberate action that challenges the status quo and centers the experience of women of color. Women and girls of color face daily discrimination and social injustice. They are more likely to experience gender-based violence, and they face more barriers to quality care. Women of color are often their families' primary source of income, yet many lack access to childcare, safe housing, and health care.

In response, we offer accessible childcare, an education continuum from 6 weeks through middle school, emergency basic needs, supportive housing, and our Center for Race and Gender Equity. All our programs are designed to empower the individuals that we serve educationally, socially, and economically.

Last year, we introduced our renewed Strategic Direction in support of The One Imperative: to thrust our collective power towards the elimination of racism, wherever it exists, by any means necessary. Through collaborative action with our nonprofit partners and the Greater Pittsburgh community, we will continue to work to reduce disparities and address their impact as long as they persist.

Achieving our mission of eliminating racism and empowering women and creating a Greater Pittsburgh that works for all, not some, will require active and continued participation from each of us. Let’s fight for equity, together.
# The Nominees

| Makayla Alaquiva                      | Elaine B. Jenkins                      |
| Tia Laverne Baker                    | Barbara Johnson                        |
| Tia Baker                             | Errika Fearbry Jones                   |
| Dr. Sheila Beasley                    | Dr. Toya S. Jones                      |
| Rhodesia Bey                          | Sara Oliver-Carter                     |
| Rebecca Bykoski                       | Michelle McMurray                      |
| Laura Chu Wiens                       | Dara D Mendez, PhD, MPH                |
| LaRae Cullens                         | Muffy Mendoza                          |
| Esa Davis, MD, MPH, FAAFP             | Fawn Walker Montgomery                 |
| Daren Ellerbee                        | Jennifer Phillip                       |
| Leah Baker Fowler                     | Leigh Solomon Pugliano                 |
| Taliera C. Gibson                     | Jessica Ruffin                         |
| Melody Harris                         | Shemaria Scharmann                     |
| Thomasa Hasty                         | Tomi Taiwo                              |
| Latoya Hawkins                        | Dr. Christine White Taylor             |
| Jackie Hill                           | Ciora Thomas                           |
| Ola Jackson                           | Western Pennsylvania Council of HBCU Alumni |
| Mia Jas                               |                                           |

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