



WOMEN IN SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS VIRTUAL CERMONY HONORS & CELEBRATES 11 NEW SUSTAINABILITY TRAILBLAZERS

May 3, 2022 – The WSLA Alumnae Group announced this year’s stellar sustainability leaders in a virtual Women in Sustainability Leadership Awards (WSLA) ceremony April 28. The WSLA Class of 2022 will join the most powerful women at the forefront of sustainability who are making a difference in the world by initiating lasting change. No other organization recognizes highly accomplished women in sustainability from such diverse, global, and multi-professional segments that impact sustainability.

Over 70 people worldwide logged onto the uplifting virtual ceremony. The ceremony started with an introduction by awards emcee Rochelle Routman, WSLA Alumnae Group’s President and Chairperson of the Board, toasting lead Diamond Sponsor HMTX Industries with a signature WSLA basil gin gimlet as she welcomed the new winners into the WSLA fold. Said Routman, “WSLA now totals 96 of the most accomplished, tough, and resilient women who have dedicated their lives to creating a better world, one that is socially JUST and nurtures planet Earth and supports the continued evolution of life on it. Our commitment to mentorship is at the heart of this organization. This award is not a one-time recognition, it is a community of leaders that serve as a network and support system.”

Janice Lao set the stage for the event by performing the entertainment segment. Janice is a WSLA alumna, Environmental Scientist and a Development Economist whose life’s work is in making businesses a force for good. Lao’s visual and poetic rap performance video “Anticipation” questions why women and climate change aren’t taken seriously today and how the establishment edits these truths away. “Hoping and waiting with so much anticipation” visually explores the potential long-term impact of that denial upon our children and the world.

The Keynote speaker was Elizabeth Todd-Breland. Author of [A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago Since the 1960s](#), she is Associate Professor of History and an affiliated faculty member in Black Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research and teaching focus is on U.S. urban history, African American history, and the history of education. She also organizes professional development workshops and develops curricula on African America history, urban education, and racial justice.

Todd-Breland spoke about the wealth of knowledge we can learn from Black women educators and organizers about women’s leadership, struggles for racial and gender equity, and how to advocate for yourself professionally and for the benefit of your broader community at the same time. “Is public education a right?”, asked Todd-Breland. “Certainly, it’s an enduring part of the U.S. democratic social contract and the prime vehicle for the purported national value of social mobility. Public schools are one of the few institutions through which families come into direct contact with the state on a daily basis. The tensions between the contested meanings and purposes of schooling make them key sites of conflict and political activity, as well as key sites for mediating between the government and the everyday aspirations and challenges that people experience within their communities.”

Said Lisa Colicchio, WSLA Alumnae Group Vice President, “I’m really pleased that the 11 WSLA winners of 2022 represent a diverse group from tech, healthcare, green building, communications, transportation, and firms ranging in size from small business owners up to fortune 500 companies. I’m absolutely thrilled that we have global representation from India, China, United Kingdom and Latin America this year in addition to the US as this further expands our strength in diversity.”

Kathleen Smith, WSLA Board Member, introduced the winners of the WSLA Awards Class of 2022, saying, “While each of the women honored tonight brings a unique set of skills, talents, experiences, and perspectives, all 11 share a passion and dedication to creating a just and sustainable world for all. They have excelled in their fields and in their careers to make significant, lasting, and positive change. They are committed to mentoring other women, to cultivating other women leaders, and to creating pathways for women to excel as they champion sustainability and contribute to positive change in their industries and the world.”

And the winners are....

- **Bess Winston, Managing Director and Founder, Winston Agency**
- **Cindy Wallis-Lage, Executive Director, Sustainability and Resilience, Black & Veatch**
- **Heidi de Cienfuegos, Co-founder and Director, B100arquitectos**
- **Jill Dumain, Global VP Sustainability Solutions, SGS**
- **Dr. Kath Williams, President, Kath Williams + Associates**
- **Mili Majumdar, Managing Director, GBCI India; Senior Vice President , U.S Green Building Council**
- **Monica Nakielski, Vice President, Sustainability, Advocate Aurora Health**
- **Carrie Harris, Head of Sustainability, British Airways**
- **Fahmida Bangert, Global Head of Circular Economy for Iron Mountain; ESG Lead for Asset Lifecycle Management (ITRenew)**
- **Grace Kwok, Chairman & Executive Director, Allied Sustainability and Environmental Consultants Group Limited**
- **Pamela Alabaster, SVP, Global Head of Sustainability and Social Impact, Mattel**

Heather Clancy, VP and Editorial Director for WSLA’s media sponsor GreenBiz and a WSLA board member, closed the evening with a reflection on Servant Leadership. She described a Servant Leader as someone who embodies the characteristics of an ability to listen, an appreciation for people, a sense of humility, willingness to trust others, and last but not least, a caring heart. “In my mind,” concluded Clancy, “Every WSLA award winner - not just the women we are recognized tonight - embodies these powerful ideals.”

ABOUT THE WSLA ALUMNAE GROUP

WSLA Alumnae Group is comprised of 96 of the most influential women and WSLA Awards recipients who have become a powerful force in creating a more sustainable world. The group’s summits, service activities, and mentorship opportunities are paving the way in sustainability and for future leaders in the field. For more information, visit <https://www.wsla.global>

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