



Fact Sheet

April, 2024

Outstanding Americans by Choice Initiative

Established in January 2006, the Outstanding Americans by Choice initiative recognizes the significant contributions and achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us all as Americans.

Throughout each year, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services recognizes individuals who chose to become Americans and have made significant contributions to both their community and the United States. In recognizing these individuals, we hope to inspire and encourage new immigrants and new citizens alike to participate in their communities and exercise the important rights and responsibilities that accompany U.S. citizenship. Since 2006, the Outstanding Americans by Choice initiative has recognized:

- More than 150 men and women from a variety of backgrounds and nearly all sectors of society;
- Recipients from more than 50 countries, including Afghanistan, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Germany, Haiti, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom;
- Such notable Americans¹ as **Carlos M. Gutierrez**, former U.S. secretary of commerce; **Indra K. Nooyi**, chairman and chief executive officer of PepsiCo; **Elie Wiesel**, author and Nobel Peace Prize winner; **Gerda Weissmann Klein**, founder of Citizenship Counts, Holocaust survivor, author, and human rights activist; **Tibor “Ted” Rubin**, U.S. Army corporal and Medal of Honor Recipient; **Madeleine Albright**, former U.S. secretary of state; **Khaled Hosseini**, author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and goodwill envoy for the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; **Mariano Rivera**, former professional baseball pitcher for the New York Yankees and founder of the Mariano Rivera Foundation; **Samantha Power**, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations; **Florent Groberg**, retired U.S. Army captain and Medal of Honor recipient; **Teresa Romero**, president of United Farm Workers; **Imaculé Ilibagiza**, author and motivational speaker; **Sandra Lindsay**, director of patient care services for critical care and the first person to take the COVID-19 vaccine; **José Andrés**, celebrity chef and advocate for displaced persons globally; and **Meb Keflezighi**, professional long distance runner.

A recipient of the Outstanding Americans by Choice recognition must:

- Be a naturalized U.S. citizen for at least three years at the time of recognition;
- Have exhibited leadership and outstanding achievements in at least one of the following categories: professional/business, cultural and the arts, community service and civic participation, government service, military service, or overcoming adversity; and
- Have demonstrated responsible citizenship and a commitment to this country and the common civic values that unite us all as Americans.

For more information on the Outstanding Americans by Choice initiative or to see the biographies of past recipients, please visit uscis.gov/citizenship/civic-integration/outstanding-americans-by-choice.

¹ The professional titles of the recipients included in this fact sheet were current at the time of their recognition.