



THE ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

2026
HUMAN RIGHTS
AWARDS DINNER

Thursday, June 11

WELCOME TO THE DINNER

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

5:00 - 7:00 PM

Reception and Silent Auction

6:30 - 7:00 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM

Silent Auction Closes

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Main Program

AUCTION INFORMATION



To register for the auction, scan the QR code or go to <https://HRAD2026.fundraiser.bid>

To bid, scan the QR codes next to each item or check out all the items online. All proceeds support our mission.

The auction closes at 7:00 p.m. CDT. You will receive a text message when another guest outbids you. Happy bidding!

You will receive a text message notifying you of any items won. Make sure to claim your items as you leave the event tonight. For virtual attendees, we will contact you to arrange pick-up or delivery of any items won.

OUR MESSAGE TO YOU

Welcome to the 2026 Human Rights Awards Dinner.

When our founders gathered in 1983 with a mission to make international human rights standards real, they were on to something. They understood that each of us has a part to play in defending human rights.

Today, that vision is more urgent than ever.

This year, we felt the weight of unchecked federal power — and we did not back down. Powered by our extraordinary pro bono community, we challenged policies designed to deny Somali Minnesotans a fair day in court. We demanded public access to immigration courts and attorney access to people in detention. We stopped ICE from detaining and transferring refugees out of state.

And on top of that, we kept doing our work.

Providing legal help in thousands of immigration cases. Monitoring hundreds of court hearings. Partnering with human rights defenders around the globe to abolish the death penalty, demand LGBTIQ+ human rights, and end violence against women in an increasingly authoritarian world.

Today we are proud to join the Minnesota Habeas Project, working alongside our partners to free people from detention. And we are honored to be implementing the Minnesota Truth Council, collecting the stories of Minnesotans harmed by Operations Metro Surge and PARRIS — and of Minnesota's resilience. Every story matters and we invite you to make your story part of the historical record.

None of this happens without you.

Our volunteers. Our donors. Our community. When you say yes, we can say yes to fighting for human rights.

We know the work is far from over. So tonight, we celebrate the people whose courage inspires us to never give up — and we recommit together to the work ahead.



Michele Garnett McKenzie
Executive Director

EVENT LEADERSHIP

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Julianne Bye	Loan Huynh
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Bindi Swammi	Pat Brenna
Cheryl Olseth	Rachel Hamlin
Jill Field	Sam Walling
Karen Evans	X. Kevin Zhao

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DON & ARVONNE FRASER HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD WINNER

In honor of Don & Arvonne Fraser, this award is presented to an individual or organization with sustained dedication and unwavering commitment to promoting human rights.

RIGHT REVEREND MARIANN EDGAR BUDDE

The Right Reverend **Mariann Edgar Budde** is the 2026 recipient of the Don and Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award. We honor Bishop Budde for her commitment to human rights and the dignity of all people, particularly for her public defense of immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those excluded from power. Her book, *How We Learn to Be Brave*, describes the moments in our lives when we must act with courage and the importance of what we do afterward. Bishop Budde became the first woman elected as spiritual leader of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C., and she previously served as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis for 18 years.



Photo Credit: Episcopal Diocese of Washington

VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

Volunteers are the driving force of The Advocates for Human Rights. Each year, we honor individuals who have made an extraordinary difference in advancing our mission.

MOHAMMED DUKULY

Mohammed Dukuly (aka Duke) has volunteered with The Advocates for Human Rights for more than 25 years. Since 2000, Duke has been sharing his interpretation and translation skills in multiple languages. He has translated documents and interpreted in asylum interviews and during the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings in Minnesota, among other projects. In response to the surge, Duke has contributed hundreds of volunteer interpretation and translation hours that have helped asylum seekers from Guinea and Liberia share their stories and communicate with their volunteer attorneys.



Photo Credit: Bill Cameron



REBECCA SCHILLER

Rebecca Schiller is a dedicated volunteer for The Advocates for Human Rights whose legal expertise and commitment to justice have strengthened human rights work locally and globally. After more than 30 years practicing real estate and commercial litigation—and serving as managing partner until selling her firm in 2018—she now runs a solo practice with a strong pro bono focus. Through The Advocates, Rebecca has represented asylum seekers, supported our documentation of human rights abuses by gathering information from Russian and Belarusian human rights defenders, participated in UN advocacy in Geneva, and monitored gender-based violence cases with the WATCH program.



FRANCESCA CERAVOLO

Francesca Ceravolo holds a Master's Degree in Law (cum laude) from the University of Milan and a Master of Arts in Human Rights from University College London. As an International Justice Legal Intern at The Advocates for Human Rights from April 2024 to December 2025, she supported advocacy across a wide range of issues, with a particular focus on the death penalty, gender-based violence, and the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. She drafted and delivered oral statements before UN human rights bodies, contributed to Universal Periodic Review submissions and advocacy documents, researched and drafted UN treaty-body reports, and participated in The Advocates' advocacy trip to the UN Office in Geneva.

PRO BONO LITIGATION COUNSEL AWARD WINNERS

During the last year, our community, work, and mission have been under attack, but we could fight back in the courts because of **Berger Montague, the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Democracy Forward, Fredrikson, the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), and Stinson**. These six law firms and organizations stepped forward at a critical time to challenge unlawful actions and defend human rights.

Stop the illegal detention of refugees (*U.H.A., et al. v. Bondi, et al.*)

When the Trump administration was sending armed ICE agents door to door to arrest members of our refugee community, whisking them to detention centers in Texas, and interrogating them without access to attorneys in an effort to terminate their status and deport them, **International Refugee Assistance Project, Berger Montague,** and the **Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law** sued, ending these abuses in Minnesota.



Ensure access to counsel (*The Advocates for Human Rights, et al. v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, et al.*) - When ICE was holding people at the Whipple Building in overcrowded conditions, obstructing attorney-client meetings, denying phone access, and rapidly transferring individuals out of state, **Fredrikson** and **Democracy Forward** sued to protect due process, the rule of law, and human dignity.

Fredrikson

**DEMOCRACY
FORWARD**

Protect transparency in our immigration courts (*The Advocates for Human Rights v. Blanche, et al.*) – Without public oversight, government actors can violate human rights with impunity. After nearly 10 years of our immigration court observation project, our volunteers have had obstacles placed in their way, limiting their ability to monitor public proceedings. **Stinson** sued the government to protect due process, government transparency and the First Amendment.

STINSON

Defend basic legal protections (*Hines Immigration Law PLLC, et al. v. Executive Office for Immigration Review, et al.*) — When immigration proceedings for Somali nationals were accelerated on extremely short timelines, making it nearly impossible for attorneys to prepare cases or represent their clients, **Democracy Forward** sued to protect fundamental rights, including the right to counsel and a fair hearing.

**DEMOCRACY
FORWARD**

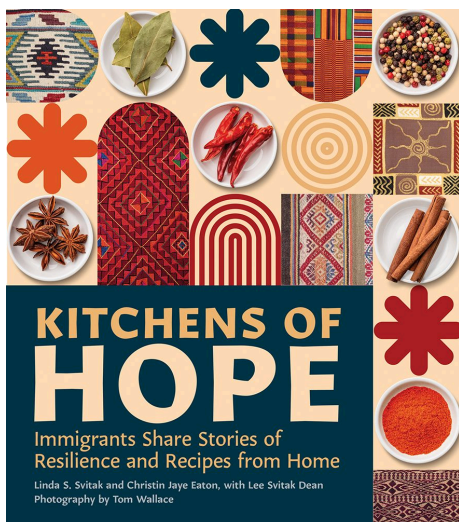
We are grateful for their exceptional commitment and courage and are honored to present these organizations with Pro Bono Awards.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

LEE SVITAK DEAN & TOM WALLACE

After four decades as a food reporter and editor at the Star Tribune, Lee Svitak Dean joined with her sister Linda Svitak and Christin Eaton to collaborate on a cookbook celebrating immigration, with proceeds to benefit The Advocates for Human Rights. *Kitchens of Hope: Immigrants Share Stories of Resilience and Recipes from Home*, a four-year project, was published last summer as immigration landed on the front page of newspapers.

Tom Wallace had an award-winning career in small-town community journalism before arriving at the Star Tribune as a photographer and photo editor. He brought those skills to The Advocates for Human Rights, where he collaborated with the *Kitchens of Hope* team. He spent months photographing both the contributors and their culinary specialties.



THE ADVOCATES STAFF

Zack Alburn	Legal Director, Immigration Legal Services
Anne Applebaum	Director of WATCH Advocacy & Programming
Amy Bergquist	Associate Director, International Justice
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Zoe Martens	Policy Manager, Immigration Court Observation Project
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Peter Olson	Communications & Outreach Coordinator
Marleni Pacheco-Omana	Case Coordinator, Immigration Legal Services
Celeste Panduro Orellana	Program Assistant, International Justice
Rose Park	Women’s Human Rights Director
Sierra Paulsen	Staff Attorney, Immigration Legal Services
Robin Phillips	Senior Advisor & Bishop Budde Senior Fellow
Fredi Ponce Parra	Intake Coordinator, Immigration Legal Services
Jennifer Prestholdt	Deputy Executive Director
Yleana Roman	Managing Attorney, Immigration Legal Services
Thekla Rura-Polley	Development Director
Hanne Sandison	Immigration Legal Services Director
Ricky Santos Wolf	Operations and Human Resources Director
Varshaa Thorali	Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow
JP Trojan	Staff Attorney, Immigration Legal Services
Katherine Veldhuizen	Immigration Legal Hub Project Manager
Cedar Weyker	Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow

THE MN TRUTH COUNCIL



“Minnesotans know what happened in their communities, but too many stories have yet to be heard, documented, and shared...This council will make sure we document Minnesota’s history.” - Gov. Tim Walz

CREATING A PUBLIC RECORD OF MINNESOTA'S TRUTH

The Minnesota Truth Council is an independent, non-partisan body that will create a public historical record of survivor and witness experiences during the surge and produce a report with recommendations for legislative and policy reform to prevent similar abuses from happening again and to help our communities heal.

The Advocates for Human Rights is the implementing partner of the Minnesota Truth Council.

DOCUMENTING THE FULL STORY—THE HARMS & OUR RESILIENCE

Through stories from everyday Minnesotans and publicly available data, the Minnesota Truth Council will document:

- The human rights violations resulting from the surge, including physical, psychological, familial, economic, and civic harm; and
- How Minnesotans showed up for one another with compassion, courage, and resilience.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The Truth Council would like stories from anyone who experienced harm, witnessed what happened, or was part of the community response. People do not need to be in Minnesota today to contribute a story if they have firsthand knowledge of the surge. You can choose to contribute a story anonymously if you do not want your name to be shared publicly.



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Listen to the Music

Brandi Carlile and Bruce Springsteen Stand Up for The Advocates

The first months of 2026 were trying times for our state. Immigrants were under attack, literally and figuratively, as some in government and their acolytes continued their relentless assault on basic human rights. These were also months in which we saw the very best of the human spirit – proof that America is still a land of hopes and dreams for those who demand justice for all. Americana artist and multiple-Grammy winner Brandi Carlile and rock legend Bruce Springsteen were two who

represented that enduring human spirit for good. Both singled out The Advocates for Human Rights for our work, joining committed partners and volunteers to address some of the world's most intractable human rights issues. We are beyond grateful for their support. We are proud to stand with them.

In February, Brandi Carlile took the stage at Target Center in Minneapolis in front of an adoring live crowd and a livestream audience on the streaming



The Advocates staff at the Brandi Carlile concert

service Veeps. Brandi's career began in the early 2000s, and since that time she has been a spokesperson for justice to a devoted and growing audience. She made her tour stop in Minneapolis a fundraiser titled "Be Human: A Concert for Minneapolis." Brandi raised precious awareness and vital funds for The Advocates for Human Rights as one of her chosen charities for the benefit.

In March, Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band kicked off the "Land of Hopes and Dreams" tour at the same venue in Minneapolis. The tour is devoted to raising awareness and action in the fight for justice, particularly in the face of an oppressive administration and the brutal, deadly tactics employed in ICE operations. The Advocates was Bruce's chosen organization for the Minneapolis show and, like Brandi, he brought us further into the public eye while providing essential financial support.

What does their support mean for The Advocates? We are more visible to other people who want to be part of the fight for justice, building a bigger human rights movement. The funds that were raised also provided a desperately needed boost as we confront new challenges and opportunities in the wake of the largest

immigration enforcement operation in our country's history.

There is so much more to do. We again thank Brandi Carlile and Bruce Springsteen for their faith in us and their support for our mission. We thank the countless volunteers and staff who have worked tirelessly to promote justice. We thank the generous people who have donated funds to support human rights.

We are in it for the long haul. We hope you join us (and Brandi and Bruce) in our continued defense of dignity, equality, and justice.

*By Pat Courtemanche,
Volunteer on the
Communications Committee*



The Sankhu Palubari Community School (SPCS) in Nepal began in 1999 with 20 kindergarten students in a single room. Today, SPCS has 380 students and more than 1,000 graduates, many of whom are now working in medicine, engineering, business and education. SPCS is breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty and transforming communities in powerful ways.



ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

As a member of The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, we work tirelessly to raise awareness of the issue and abolish the death penalty. The number of countries that have abolished the death penalty far outweighs those that retain it, and the momentum keeps growing.

"The death penalty is always incompatible with the prohibition of torture and the protection of human dignity, and . . . the only reliable means of ensuring compliance with these obligations is abolition." — The UN Special Rapporteur on Executions

The Advocates for Human Rights



Supporting the Leaders Making a Difference

We are proud to support this year's **Human Rights Awards Dinner** and to work with **The Advocates for Human Rights** in its mission to advance human rights around the globe.

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We congratulate this year's award recipients and recognize the organization's mission to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law.

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Dorsey & Whitney is committed to The Advocates for Human Rights and its mission of implementing international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law.

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We stand with The Advocates in their belief that every individual has the power to drive change and advance human rights. Through their powerful model of volunteer engagement, The Advocates not only lead vital research and advocacy efforts—they inspire and empower a growing community of human rights champions.



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