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Coalminer's Daughter in West Virginia, Australian Aboriginal Grandmothers Among Winners of 2003 Goldman Environmental Prize

World's Largest Award for Grassroots Environmentalists Honors Seven Fighting for Clean Energy, Water and against Government Corruption

An Appalachian woman defending her West Virginia community against the devastating practice of mountaintop removal coal mining, two Aboriginal elders from the Australian desert blocking construction of a federal nuclear waste dump, and a Filipino man who led the campaign to institute the world's first nationwide ban on waste incinerators are among the seven recipients of the 14th annual Goldman Environmental Prize being presented in San Francisco on April 14, 2003.

Julia Bonds, this year's North American winner, exemplifies the spirit of the Goldman Prize. Bonds, a former waitress at Pizza Hut, became a full-time activist the moment her grandson stood in a polluted local stream with his fists full of dead fish and asked, "What's wrong with these fish?"

Working 90 hours a week, Bonds has confronted long odds to stop the environmentally devastating practice of mountaintop removal coal mining in the West Virginia Appalachians where her family has lived for generations. Mountaintop removal has been catastrophic for Appalachia's public health, landscape, air and waterways, and has forced the evacuation of entire towns. When the Bush Administration successfully appealed a court ruling that mountaintop removal mining violated clean water laws, Bonds re-doubled her efforts and continues to face down the region's most powerful industry and their allies in Washington.

The Goldman Environmental Prize is given annually to grassroots environmental heroes from six geographic areas: Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands and Island Nations,

North America, and South and Central America. (Two winners will share the Island Nations award this year.) The Prize includes a no-strings-attached award of $125,000. As the largest award of its kind, the Goldman Environmental Prize has been called the "Nobel Prize for the Environment."

In addition to the above-mentioned recipients, this year's winners include a Nigerian man standing against industrial logging of his country's last intact rainforest, a Peruvian community organizer proposing cost-saving solutions to fishmeal factory pollution, and a Spanish professor campaigning to keep a massive water redistribution plan from devastating the natural landscape.

The 2003 Goldman Environmental Prize winners are:

Africa: Odigha Odigha, Nigeria

Forest protection activist Odigha Odigha of Cross River State, Nigeria, won unprecedented protections for Nigeria's last remaining rainforests. Odigha was instrumental in creating a statewide logging moratorium and has educated hundreds of forest communities on sustainable forestry practices. Through his proposal for the country's first Forestry Commission's mandate and structure, Odigha's biggest achievement has been getting civil society and forest community representation in all forest management policies.

Asia: Von Hernandez, Philippines

Von Hernandez organized campaigns against waste incinerators in the Philippines, which release cancer-causing dioxins into the air. Hernandez's campaigns led the Philippines to institute the world's first nationwide ban on waste incinerators. He continues to lead the battle to keep the incinerator ban in place despite intense industry pressure and government corruption.

Central and South America: Maria Elena Foronda Farro, Peru

Peruvian community organizer Maria Elena Foronda Farro spearheaded a campaign to clean up Peru's fishmeal industry, which spews untreated industrial waste from smokestacks into streams causing cholera outbreaks, fungal skin diseases and the worst pollution problems in Peru's coastal cities. Foronda has successfully forged partnerships between community groups, fishmeal producers and the government to institute sustainable, environmentally sound and profitable business practices for fishmeal production.

Europe: Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Spain

Physicist and economics professor Pedro Arrojo-Agudo is the principal architect behind the campaign to stop Spain's National Hydrological Plan from damming and re-routing the country's last remaining free-flowing rivers. Arrojo is leading a new wave of activism to end the failed water management policies of damming and diverting rivers, and forging a sustainable water future based on conservation, recycling and smarter agricultural choices.

Islands and Island Nations:
Eileen Kampakuta Brown and Eileen Wani Wingfield, Australia
Aboriginal elders Eileen Kampakuta Brown and Eileen Wani Wingfield are at the
forefront of the campaign to block construction of a nuclear waste dump in their
South Australian desert homeland. Since the British nuclear bomb tests of the 1950's,
South Australia's traditional Aboriginal homelands have been one of the testing and
dumping grounds for the world's nuclear industry, causing asthma attacks, birth
defects and cancer as well as poisoning the environment and wildlife. Now, Brown
and Wingfield are leading their communities in an international campaign to say
"Irati Wanti"—the poison, leave it.

North America: Julia Bonds, West Virgina
A coal miner's daughter and native West Virginian, Julia Bonds is leading the
campaign to stop mountaintop removal coal mining. This highly destructive "strip
mining on steroids" is ravaging communities throughout Appalachia, turning river
valleys into mining waste dumps, driving up asthma rates and forcing whole
communities to abandon their homes.

"This year's winners have looked beyond themselves, often risking freedom or safety,
to inspire their communities to fight for environmental protections," said Richard N.
Goldman, founder of the Goldman Environmental Prize. "In the current political
climate, it is more important than ever to recognize people who are working to
protect the health of their water, air and community resources. We are honored to
recognize work that exemplifies how much can be accomplished when ordinary
people take extraordinary action to protect the health of our planet."

About the Goldman Environmental Prize
The Goldman Environmental Prize allows individuals to continue winning
environmental victories against the odds and inspire ordinary people to take
extraordinary actions to protect the world. The Goldman Environmental Prize was
created in 1990 by civic leaders and philanthropists Richard N. Goldman and his late
wife, Rhoda H. Goldman. Richard Goldman founded Goldman Insurance Services in
San Francisco. Rhoda Goldman was a descendant of Levi Strauss, the founder of the
worldwide clothing company.

The Goldman Environmental Prize winners are selected by an international jury from
confidential nominations submitted by a worldwide network of environmental
organizations and individuals. Prize winners participate in a 10-day tour of San
Francisco and Washington, D.C., for an awards ceremony and presentation, news
conferences, media briefings, and meetings with political, public policy, financial and
environmental leaders.

ATTENTION EDITORS: Detailed biographical information and photographs of all of
the winners are available. Broadcast-quality video of the winners in their home

countries will be available on an embargoed basis. Advance interviews and tapings prior to the April 14th announcement can be arranged with some recipients. Prize winners will be in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., in mid-April. Use contacts above for more information and to schedule an interview.

Background on the prize and previous winners is available at www.goldmanprize.org.

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