

HUMAN RIGHTS  
INSTITUTE



## Kean University's 16th Annual Human Rights Conference

*Freedom, Justice and Equality for All:  
One person can make a difference!*

*Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of  
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*



Friday, December 8, 2023 • Wilkins Theatre at Kean University



Welcome to the 16th Annual Human Rights Institute Conference at Kean University:  
***Freedom, Justice and Equality for All: One person can make a difference!***

As the title of this year's conference states, one person can make an impact on the world. Today's event celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our speakers will share how you can impact your community and the world.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights arose in the aftermath of World War II, which is known as the deadliest military conflict in human history. This war caused profound atrocities that took the lives of tens of millions of people worldwide. In its aftermath and the subsequent founding of the United Nations, a diverse group of representatives from countries around the globe came together to proclaim that ALL humans have the right to live life freely and without persecution.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights combined both Eastern and Western ideas into a document that outlined the human rights that exist simply because we are human beings. These rights are not granted by any country or government or ideological structure but are inherent to every human being. The document was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, constituting the first international legal document to set out fundamental human rights for universal protection. The document is composed of 30 articles and can be viewed at [www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights).

Take time after today's conference to reflect on the rights that you have as a human being and ways that you can make a positive contribution as an Upstander in your community or the world. This can be as simple as helping an elderly neighbor with a repair on their house, volunteering to support a local food pantry, or tutoring a young person in math. You can make a positive difference locally or globally, the journey to making a difference starts with a first step.

As New Jersey's urban research university and an anchor institution for the region, Kean University supports our students and staff in creating new ways to serve our state and local communities. Join us in uplifting our state, country and world by using today's conversations to consider new ways (big or small) you can make a positive impact in your community.

# AGENDA

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## Introduction

John C. Raue, MPA, CPM

*Assistant Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Human Rights Institute*

## Presidential Welcome and Remarks

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.

*President, Kean University*

## Opening Remarks

Felice K. Vazquez, Esq.

*Senior Vice President for Planning and Special Counsel to the President*

- **Speaker John Prendergast** •

Introduced by Robin Landa, MFA

- **Speaker Sophia Kianni** •

Introduced by Daniela Shebitz, Ph.D.

## Audience Engagement Activity

- **Speaker Ndaba Mandela** •

Introduced by Sancha Gray, Ed.D.

## Awards Presentation Ceremony

Outstanding Human Rights Activist Award

Outstanding Young Human Rights Activist Award

Outstanding Student Human Rights Activist Award

Hank Kaplowitz Outstanding Human Rights Educator Award

Outstanding Human Rights School Community of the Year Award

## Closing Remarks

Felice K. Vazquez, Esq.

*Senior Vice President for Planning and Special Counsel to the President*

# SPEAKERS

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## **Ndaba Mandela**

### ***Grandson of Nelson Mandela, Co-Founder & Chairman of Africa Rising Foundation***

Nelson Mandela had a “long walk to freedom,” yet his footprints still remain. Following in the footsteps of his beloved and iconic grandfather, Ndaba Mandela has taken the torch – and ran with it. Today, Nelson Mandela’s legacy lives on as Ndaba continues to keep its beacon of hope bright, fueling its fiery message that one person can make a difference. Thankfully for all, the legacy lives on, as Ndaba was recently named one of the “28 Men of Change” by BET. His recent book, *Going to the Mountain: Life Lessons from My Grandfather, Nelson Mandela*, is the first-ever to tell Nelson Mandela’s life through the eyes of the grandson who was raised by him, chronicling Ndaba’s life living with, and learning from, one of the greatest leaders and humanitarians the world has ever known.

Today, Ndaba is showing the world, through his actions and orations, that Nelson Mandela’s voice and message of freedom still carries and rings true – sounded by a child that became a man under the warm embrace and expert tutelage of one of history’s greatest teachers. Currently, Ndaba is organizing the 95th celebration of Nelson Mandela Day and was also instrumental in creating the International Day of Happiness at the United Nations. He continues to keep Mandela on the world’s mind.

Now, Ndaba Mandela entertains and inspires audiences with tales only he could tell in his presentations exclusively through the American Program Bureau. With pride and presence, Ndaba speaks passionately about Africa, its people and its future – which is looking brighter than ever. This is good news, not only for the continent, but also for corporations looking to get in on the ground floor of a steadily rising nation, embracing its vast potential and natural resources. In fact, Ndaba is the co-founder and co-chairman of the Africa Rising Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting a positive image of Africa around the world and to increasing its potential for growth in the areas of education, employment and international corporate alliances for profit and partnership. Ndaba also serves as an executive director of UN AIDS, which seeks to end discrimination around HIV/AIDS through the power of football.



## **Sophia Kianni**

### ***Founder of Climate Cardinals and the Youngest Appointed United Nations Advisor***

Sophia Kianni is an Iranian-American activist studying science, technology, and society at Stanford University. She is the founder and executive director of Climate Cardinals, an international nonprofit with 9,000 volunteers in 40+ countries working to translate climate information into over 100 languages. She represents the U.S. as the youngest member of the inaugural United Nations Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. She sits on boards and advisory councils for *The New York Times*, World Economic Forum, Web Summit, Inkey List, Iris Project, JUV Consulting, Ashoka, and the American Lung Association.

Sophia has amassed a following of over 200,000 across social media platforms and her work has been featured in news outlets including *Forbes*, CNN, *Vogue*, *Business Insider*, BBC, NPR, *ELLE*, *TIME Magazine*, *The Guardian*, NBC, and even on the front page of *The Washington Post*. She was previously a fellow with *PBS NewsHour* and has written for news outlets such as *The Washington Post*, *MTV News*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Teen Vogue*. She is a prolific public speaker and has spoken at universities across the world including Columbia University, UC Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, Cambridge University, and Harvard University. She won the TED global idea competition and her debut TED Talk has 1.5+ million views.

She has been named VICE Media's youngest Human of the Year, a National Geographic Young Explorer, among *Business Insider's Climate Action 30*, one of *Teen Vogue's 21 under 21*, and a *Forbes 30 under 30* honoree.



## **John Prendergast**

***New York Times best-selling author and co-founder of The Sentry***

John Prendergast is a human rights and anti-corruption activist as well as a *New York Times* best-selling author. He is the co-founder with actor George Clooney of The Sentry, an investigative and policy team that follows the dirty money connected to war criminals and transnational war profiteers.

John has worked for the White House, the State Department, two members of Congress, the National Intelligence Council, UNICEF, Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, and the U.S. Institute of Peace. During his time in government, John was part of the negotiating team behind the successful two-year mediation led by Anthony Lake which ended the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the deadliest war in the world at the time. He was also part of peace processes for Burundi (led by President Nelson Mandela), Sudan and DR Congo.

John is the author or co-author of eleven books, two of which he co-authored with Don Cheadle. John has been awarded seven honorary doctorates. John also co-founded The Enough Project, a policy organization aimed at countering genocide and crimes against humanity and the predecessor to The Sentry. He has been a big brother in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program for nearly 40 years to ten different boys, as well as a youth counselor and basketball coach.

To learn more about The Sentry, visit its website at [www.thesentry.org](http://www.thesentry.org)

# AWARD WINNERS

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## **Outstanding Human Rights Activist Award**

Ndaba Mandela

## **Outstanding Youth Human Rights Activist Award**

Sophia Kianni

## **Outstanding Student Human Rights Activist Award**

Sara Mora

## **The Hank Kaplowitz Outstanding Human Rights Educator Award**

Tamika A. Pollins, Ed.D.

## **Outstanding Human Rights School Community of the Year Award**

Team Harmony of Randolph Township High School



As a public university, we at Kean have an obligation to provide a forum for discussion about contemporary social justice issues and to help students and community members understand these concerns and the tools they need to address them.

[humanrights@kean.edu](mailto:humanrights@kean.edu)

[kean.edu/HRI](http://kean.edu/HRI)