



AMERICAN PRAIRIE

Celebrating
the Indomitable
American Spirit

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Ken Burns American Heritage Prize to be awarded to Jimmy Chin
Presented by American Prairie in celebration of the indomitable American spirit

American Prairie is proud to announce that Academy Award-winning filmmaker **Jimmy Chin** has been named the recipient of the 2022 *Ken Burns American Heritage Prize*. The award will be presented May 4, 2022, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The evening's festivities will include remarks by Ken Burns, Jimmy Chin, and American Prairie CEO Alison Fox.

Named in honor of America's most revered visual historian and filmmaker, the [*Ken Burns American Heritage Prize*](#) recognizes individuals whose achievements have advanced our collective understanding of America's heritage and the indomitable American spirit of our people. Nominees for the annual Prize consist of visionary artists, authors, educators, filmmakers, historians, and scientists. The candidates are chosen by a National Jury of distinguished leaders who represent communities across the country and share a common appreciation of America's heritage.

"How do Americans routinely accomplish what others don't even attempt? I think we can trace it back to our innovative and optimistic spirit. To our improvisatory can-do attitude. Jimmy Chin has dedicated his life's work to exploring, documenting, and preserving a variety of landscapes around the world and his personal and professional accomplishments reinforce the nation's understanding of all that is possible." – *Ken Burns*

Jimmy Chin is an Academy Award-winning filmmaker, National Geographic photographer, and professional mountain sports athlete. He has led or participated in cutting-edge expeditions around the world for over 20 years. He made the coveted first ascent of the Shark's Fin on Mount Meru and is one of the only people to ski Mount Everest from the summit. His photographs have graced the covers of *National Geographic Magazine* and the *New York Times Magazine*.

"The nation's landscapes and mountains have provided me with much of my inspiration, both in life and in my work," said Chin. "My hope is that I can help foster a sense of responsibility to protect and preserve these places, both for future generations to enjoy and for their intrinsic value."

Chin and his wife Chai Vasarhelyi have co-produced and co-directed several award-winning documentaries, including *Meru*, which won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival and was on the Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Feature. Their film *Free Solo* won a BAFTA, seven primetime Emmys, and the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Most recently, they directed and produced *The Rescue*, a documentary chronicling the enthralling, against-all-odds story that transfixed the

world in 2018: the daring rescue of twelve boys and their coach from deep inside a flooded cave in Northern Thailand.

“The mission of American Prairie, to create the largest nature reserve in the contiguous United States and restore a complete and fully functioning prairie ecosystem, pushes up against the limits of what we think is possible in the world of conservation,” said Chin. “Much of what I do is in pursuit of exploring the limitlessness of the human spirit and potential. I’ve seen the impossible achieved over and over again. I am honored to receive a prize bearing the name of the inimitable Ken Burns, from an institution whose work is achieving the impossible.”

About American Prairie

American Prairie’s vision is to create a vast and collaboratively managed prairie destination that serves as a fully functioning ecosystem for wildlife, and offers visitors permanent access to the landscape that shaped our nation’s character. American Prairie offers visitors an opportunity to learn about and connect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at americanprairie.org and kenburnsprize.com.

About Ken Burns

[Ken Burns](http://kenburns.com) has been making documentary films for over 40 years. Since the Academy Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Burns has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *The Civil War*; *Baseball*; *Jazz*; *The War*; *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*; *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*; *Jackie Robinson*; *The Vietnam War*; and *Country Music*. His films have been honored with dozens of major awards, including sixteen Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards, and two Oscar nominations; and in September of 2008, at the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, Burns was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

About Jimmy Chin

Jimmy Chin is an Academy Award winning filmmaker, National Geographic photographer, and mountain sports athlete known for his ability to capture extraordinary imagery and stories while climbing and skiing in extremely high-risk environments and expeditions. He began his professional career in 1999, and his talents were quickly recognized by top expedition leaders and outdoor brands. In 2002, he secured a breakthrough assignment to be the cinematographer for a high-profile National Geographic-sponsored trek across Tibet’s Chang Tang Plateau. In 2006, he became one of the only people to ski off the summit of Mount Everest. Chin splits his time between New York City and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, with his wife, filmmaker Chai Vasarhelyi, their daughter, Marina, and son, James.