

## List of 2021 Adoption Awardees Announced Ahead of National Adoption Month

*Harvard professor, congressional members, and national journalist to be honored at annual awards event*

October 18, 2021 – Alexandria, VA –National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is pleased to announce **Dr. Elizabeth Bartholet** as the 2021 inductee to the Adoption Hall of Fame. This award is given annually to recognize those who exhibit outstanding dedication, service, and sacrifice to the cause of adoption and those who have positively impacted the practice of adoption. NCFA will also be presenting **Senator Roger Wicker (MS)**, **Representative Adam Smith (WA)** & **Sidley Austin LLP** each with the Friend of Adoption Award, as well as **Kathryn Jean Lopez** with the Excellence in Adoption Media Award.

The 2021 Adoption Hall of Fame ceremony and reception will be held November 2nd in downtown Washington, D.C. Each year since 1982, NCFA has recognized those who have made significant contributions to building a culture that supports all members of the adoption community. The roll of past honorees includes presidents and members of Congress, business and philanthropic leaders, child welfare professionals, and ordinary Americans who have made significant contributions to strengthening adoption to provide every child with a loving, permanent family.

### About Dr. Elizabeth Bartholet

*Adoption Hall of Fame Award*

National Council For Adoption is proud to announce the induction of Dr. Elizabeth Bartholet into the Adoption Hall of Fame. Dr. Bartholet is the Morris Wasserstein Public Interest Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. She is also the founder and faculty director of the Child Advocacy Program (CAP) at Harvard Law School. Dr. Bartholet became an advocate for adoption following her own international adoption journey. Over the years, Dr. Bartholet has used her platform to advocate for international adoption and child welfare around the world. Dr. Bartholet's work has been published in *The Boston Globe*, *Global Policy*, and *The Journal of Law & Ethics of Human Rights*, as well as numerous law reviews.

"For decades, Dr. Bartholet has worked tirelessly on behalf of orphans around the world and children in foster care in the United States. For the past 15 years it has been my privilege to work alongside her in various ways and see firsthand her commitment to the right of every child to have a permanent, loving family. She is one of the most passionate, articulate, and effective advocates for children's rights and solid adoption policies that I know." – Chuck Johnson, NCFA President & CEO

## **About Senator Roger Wicker (MS)**

### *Friend of Adoption Award*

National Council For Adoption's Friend of Adoption Award is given annually to recognize those who have made significant contributions to the field of adoption. NCFA is pleased to announce that United States Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi is one of three recipients of the Friend of Adoption Award this year.

Senator Wicker has advocated fiercely for the adoption community with a special focus on intercountry adoption. In September 2020, Senator Wicker made a powerful speech on the Senate floor about the importance of intercountry adoption and called for his colleagues to join him in addressing the current threats and obstacles that have led to its decline. His active leadership on this issue is reflected in the many Congressional letters, department meetings, media appearances and published op-eds he has conducted on behalf of the adoption community.

"Throughout his many years in Congress, Senator Wicker has been a consistently courageous voice in calling for accountability from policy and decision makers to address the significant decline in intercountry adoption which has left thousands of children around the world waiting for a family. Always willing to hear from concerned constituents and the larger adoption community, Senator Wicker has demonstrated strong leadership as an adoption advocate, and we are honored to recognize his impact with the Friend of Adoption award this year."

– Kristen Hamilton, NCFA Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communications

## **About Representative Adam Smith (WA)**

### *Friend of Adoption Award*

United States Representative Adam Smith, who serves Washington's 9<sup>th</sup> congressional district, is also among those to be honored with the Friend of Adoption Award. Representative Smith is deserving of this award due to his dedication, engagement, and advocacy in the cause of adoption. As an adopted individual himself, Representative Smith has paid particular attention to issues faced by adopted individuals and has been an outspoken defender for the rights of adoptees.

This year, Representative Smith introduced H.R.1593 - The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2021. If passed, this bill would amend the Child Citizenship Act of 2000 in order to give citizenship to individuals who were brought to live in the U.S. through intercountry adoption but who were excluded by the CCA, and it would ensure automatic citizenship for every full and final adoption by a U.S. citizen.

"Representative Adam Smith has a long history of supporting adoption and child welfare issues, including introduction of the Adoptee Citizenship Act. Congressman Smith is the co-chair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, helping provide leadership and focus to adopted-related policy and legislation on Capitol Hill. He and his staff team have demonstrated a willingness to work in a bi-



partisan, bi-cameral manner with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure all those impacted by adoption have their voices heard.”

– Ryan Hanlon, NCFA Vice President

### **About Sidley Austin LLP**

#### *Friend of Adoption Award*

NCFA also looks forward to recognizing the international law firm Sidley Austin LLP with the Friend of Adoption Award for their commitment to and defense of intercountry adoption.

In 2018, intercountry adoption suffered a significant blow when a regulation was illegally implemented outside of the proper rulemaking process which prevented agencies from providing information about waiting children and issued a ban on “soft referrals” (seeking pre-approval for a match of prospective adoptive families with a child) until after the completion of a home study. As a result, agencies struggled to recruit families and intercountry adoptions declined even further.

With the expertise and commitment of Sidley Austin LLP, NCFA sued the Department of State and won the case on a successful appeal with the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, effectively ending the ban on soft referrals and clearing the way for agencies to once again advocate more effectively for waiting children.

“Sidley provided a high caliber team of attorneys to serve as pro bono representation to NCFA’s legal challenge to guidance issued by the Department of State. Led by Dan Hay, they put in long hours and significant devotion to ensuring that they heard from the adoption community, understood the relevant legal issues, and represented NCFA and the wider community well. The Sidley team was professional, committed, and very enjoyable to work with. Their legitimate concern for adoption-related policy and their dedication to providing high quality legal services was evident in every interaction.”

– Ryan Hanlon, Vice President

### **About Kathryn Jean Lopez**

#### *Excellence in Adoption Media Award*

This year, NCFA is pleased to honor Kathryn Jean Lopez with the Excellence in Adoption Media Award. Lopez is a senior fellow with the National Review Institute, the editor-at-large for the National Review magazine, and a syndicated columnist for Andrews McMeel Universal.

Lopez has become an important voice for adoption throughout the media not only in her writing, but through television and radio features, as well as being a notable guest speaker at many events on the topics of adoption and unintended pregnancies.



In addition to the Excellence in Adoption Media Award, in 2016, Lopez also won the Washington Women in Journalism Award for Outstanding Journalist in Periodicals. Her work has been widely published in outlets throughout the nation.

“Kathryn Jean Lopez has faithfully used her platform to emphasize the importance of access to reliable adoption information for women experiencing an unintended pregnancy. She has been a champion for adoptive families, and a thoughtful, articulate voice to policymakers.”

– Chuck Johnson, NCFA President & CEO

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### **ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION**

Founded in 1980, NCFA is a leading authoritative voice for adoption and is passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing permanent family. NCFA’s nonprofit work promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, advocacy, and collaboration that aims to serve children, expectant and birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. [adoptioncouncil.org](http://adoptioncouncil.org)

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