



MELINDA GARCIA, Ph.D.
2022 CHRISTINE BLASEY FORD WOMAN OF COURAGE
ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY

[The Association for Women in Psychology](#) is pleased to announce that Melinda Garcia, Ph.D., has been selected as the 2022 Christine Blasey Ford Woman of Courage. This award celebrates “feminist leaders who have demonstrated courage by standing up and speaking truth to power, in order to take action against injustice, discrimination, or harm.”

Melinda, a clinical and community psychologist based in Albuquerque, NM, has served BIPOC clients since the 1970s, including starting essential programs and providing clinical supervision and consultation to schools and community health centers on both coasts, tribal reservations and pueblos. Her funded research and projects, and her extensive publications and presentations, have addressed cultural factors and social disparities in suicide, substance abuse, health and nutrition, and mental health issues among American Indian and Latinx youth and adults.

Melinda is also the immediate Past President of Section 6, Native American, Alaska Native & Indigenous Women, of the Society for the Psychology of Women (SPW). She has been recognized by APA Divisions 18, 35, and 45 for her distinguished service, including SPW’s Sweetgrass Award for women Elders. She was the lead author of the *Society of Indian Psychologists Commentary on the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, a report that led APA to revise the current Code of Ethics (in process) and give a Presidential Citation to the Society for Indian Psychologists, naming her specifically for significant work in ethics.

In nominating her, Leilani Crane stated: “Melinda forced a reckoning with APA Board of Directors and Council when she stood up for BIPOC in NAMING the systemic racism in APA, [pointing to] inaccuracies and racist tropes in the ‘ethnography of APA Council,’ [written] by a

white male ethnographer. She provided a platform for many of us BIPOC reps to give voice to the ways in which APA and Council have marginalized, bulldozed, and dismissed our concerns and the concerns of those we serve. As one Black council member stated, ‘All of us in this room have doctorates. We should know better. We DO know better.’ I know that Melinda has been recognized for many things, but for this act of courage, she is my hero.”

This act led to a year-long analysis of systematic racism within APA, led by the Ethnic Psychology Associations with participation of every Council member who wanted to help. This was the first and only grass-roots task force that Council has ever had. The report led directly to APA finally hiring a Chief Diversity Officer and later to the APA Apology for Systemic Racism.

In accepting the award, Melinda shared her wisdom: “I am overwhelmed and deeply honored by even being considered for this award! At the same time, I hope that my sister psychologists embrace the concept of courage and courageous action. There is a great deal of professional and societal pressure for us to be well behaved at the same time that our training equips us to recognize hypocrisy in the systems around us. Combining our perceptions with strategic action (not just small steps) can allow us to speak truth to power as well as to subvert practices that we may think we do not have the power to change. As women, we naturally “tend and befriend” in critical times. I would not have done what I did without women supporting me. I had to ask first. But they said yes with no hesitation.”

Melinda Garcia is our hero too. And if you think her achievements couldn’t get sweeter, she has won multiple blue ribbons at the New Mexico State Fair for baking such delights as her Rosemary Piñon Ice Box Cookies!