



**AMERICAN  
PRAIRIE**

Celebrating  
the Indomitable  
American Spirit

## **Jimmy Chin awarded 2022 Ken Burns American Heritage Prize**

*Presented by American Prairie to celebrate the indomitable American spirit*

**NEW YORK, NY** — Professional mountain sports athlete, National Geographic photographer, Academy® Award-winning film director, and New York Times Best Selling author **Jimmy Chin** accepted the **2022 Ken Burns American Heritage Prize** at an event held on May 4 at the American Museum of Natural History.

Named in honor of America’s most revered visual historian and documentary filmmaker, the [Ken Burns American Heritage Prize](#) recognizes an individual whose body of work has advanced our collective understanding of the indomitable American spirit.

Film actor Peter Coyote set the stage for Ken Burns by underscoring the relationship between the famed filmmaker and the Montana-based conservation organization: “As citizens, as parents, as friends, a key responsibility is to provide an environment where lives can flourish and be healthy. What better way to show respect for one another than to show respect for the land that nurtured us? This is American Prairie.” Mr. Coyote went on say, “Ken understands the sacred trust in telling the American story, as does American Prairie, which has so rightfully named their award for him.”

Jimmy Chin is known for his ability to capture extraordinary imagery and stories while climbing and skiing in extremely high-risk environments and expeditions. Mr. Burns welcomed him by noting that, “At the core of his record- and precedent-setting accomplishments is an unwavering commitment to explore the diverse, awe-inspiring, and extreme landscapes of this planet and to share them with the world.” The filmmaker went on to say, “And keep in mind, that when you’re seeing these climbers and skiers accomplishing these astonishing feats, Jimmy is right there with them filming. Jimmy is interested in making films about people who embody the indomitable American spirit – people who act with boldness, audacity, and perseverance.”

After receiving the bison bronze, Mr. Chin said, “It is truly, truly an honor to be here with all of you,” and thanked Mr. Burns by saying, “It is just incredible to receive this award from you, Ken. Your work has long been an inspiration and motivation for me.” He also thanked his best friend, mentor, and fellow mountaineer Conrad Anker for attending by saying, “I am, in large part, here today due to you and that is not an overstatement.”

Mr. Chin thanked his family and said his two young children are his motivation for fighting to preserve the environment and the world’s last wild places. “My work takes me to uncommon places, and all of them are imbued with a spirit of adventure. American Prairie is exactly that: in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a huge, open grassland in the Great Plains is uncommon. And the dedicated work to create such a preserve is an adventure in the greatest sense.”



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Mr. Chin grew up in Minnesota and said his parents were responsible for introducing him to the great outdoors, and a childhood trip to Glacier National Park ignited his desire for climbing and exploration. He joked, “They probably regretted that. My father would say, the Chinese language is thousands of years old, and there is no word in Chinese for what you do.”



Mr. Chin received the honor from Mr. Burns and American Prairie’s National Board of Directors Chair George Matelich. The evening’s festivities included remarks by American Prairie’s CEO Alison Fox and Mr. Matelich.



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Jimmy Chin receives an American bison bronze as the recipient of the 2022 Ken Burns American Heritage Prize.

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### **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](https://americanprairie.org).

### **About Ken Burns**

[Ken Burns](https://kenburns.com) has been making documentary films for over forty years. Since the Academy® Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Ken 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*.



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Future film projects include *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, *The American Buffalo*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, *The American Revolution*, *Emancipation to Exodus*, and *LBJ & the Great Society*, among others.

Ken's 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, Ken was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

## **About Jimmy Chin**

Jimmy Chin is a professional mountain sports athlete, National Geographic photographer, Academy® Award-winning film director, and New York Times Best Selling author. In his multiple careers as an athlete, storyteller, and artist, he is equally respected for his groundbreaking climbing, mountaineering, and skiing achievements as he is for his photography and filmmaking.

Jimmy co-produces and co-directs with his wife, Chai Vasarhelyi. Their film *Meru* won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival and was on the Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Feature. Their documentary *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.

Jimmy and Chai split their time between New York City and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, with their daughter, Marina, and son, James.