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## International Freedom Conductor Award: Introduction

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**INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM CONDUCTOR AWARD:  
INTRODUCTION**

*Zack Eckles<sup>†</sup>*

The International Freedom Conductor Award ("IFCA") was created to recognize and honor contemporary individuals who exemplify the courageousness and personal strength of the historic Underground Railroad conductors. Recipients of the award continue to fight for freedom today and have all made an enormous positive impact on contemporary freedom issues. After awarding the first IFCA to Rosa Parks in 1998, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center has honored such freedom heroes as Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu, His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, Dr. Dorothy Height, Lech Walesa, Nelson Mandela, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, and Nicholas Kristoff. Past and future recipients of the award represent a continuum of leaders who fight for the human dignity and human rights of all people. The following stories capture just a few of the accomplishments of these courageous leaders.

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