

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

COLETTE PINCHON BATTLE

lawyer, executive director

"You've got to reconcile and heal before you can work, and only then can the work that you do together stand. Otherwise, the work that you do together will fall."

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COURTESY OF VANESSA LENZ PHOTOGRAPHY

Background Information

Battle was born and raised in Bayou Liberty, Louisiana, surrounded by many bayous and swamps.ⁱ Her intimate interactions with nature influenced her activism. She once rode on a flat-bottom boat during the most dangerous part of a raging hurricane to check on people in her community.ⁱⁱ Battle noticed the difference in the intensity and severity of the spring hurricane season when she was growing up compared to the impact of 2005's Hurricane Katrina.ⁱⁱⁱ After graduating from law school, she worked in Washington, D.C. as an attorney.

Battle's Resistance

After hearing about the immense destruction to the Creole community during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Battle left her career as a lawyer in D.C. and returned to Louisiana.^{iv} She changed careers and vowed to stay in her hometown to educate community members about the devastating impacts of climate change. Battle understood that most environmental and climate groups were predominately white and focused on environmental factors while excluding environmental racism. This realization pushed her to create climate movement coalitions that centered on healing historically marginalized Black, Indigenous low-income communities.^v She established The Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy, which provides legal services and training for local leaders to advance climate justice in marginalized communities. Battle's work highlights how climate change is a problem that requires everyone's cooperation. However, this cooperation can only happen by acknowledging the history of harm inflicted upon Black and Native communities by racism. The center promotes healing from the trauma.^{vi}

Achievements

Battle received the U.S. Civilian Medal of Honor^{vii} and Pro Bono Guardian Award.^{viii} Battle's vision for environmental justice by building climate-resilient communities is materialized by creating transformative community-led infrastructure systems rooted in political education that prepares the city to overcome the impacts of climate change.^{ix}

Essential Questions

1. Collete Pinchon Battle observed the impact of global warming in the environment through the severity of hurricanes and other climate-related issues. She now engages and supports impacted community members by explaining the science behind climate change and offering legal services. Page | 2
 - a. What changes in the environment have you seen?
 - b. What actions can you take to communicate to members of your community about the impacts of climate change?

2. Collete Pinchon Battle’s activism includes facilitating retreats focused on repairing tense community relationships and racialized trauma experienced by Black and Indigenous community members.
 - a. Why is it important to focus on repairing broken community relationships to create a collaborative plan that addresses climate change?

3. **“We must transform from a disposable, individual society into one that sees our collective long-term humanity, or else we will not make it. “**
 - a. What do you envision for the future, and how will we get there?

ⁱ “Colette Pichon Battle: How Can We Prepare For The Next Hurricane Katrina?” <https://www.wbur.org/npr/899834337/colette-pichon-battle-how-can-we-prepare-for-the-next-hurricane-katrina>

ⁱⁱ “Colette Pichon Battle: How Can We Prepare For The Next Hurricane Katrina?”

ⁱⁱⁱ “Colette Pichon Battle: How Can We Prepare For The Next Hurricane Katrina?”

iv “Colette Pichon Battle: How Can We Prepare For The Next Hurricane Katrina?”
v “Colette Pichon Battle Biography | Booking Info for Speaking Engagements.”
<https://www.allamericanspeakers.com/celebritytalentbios/Colette+Pichon+Battle/440985>.
vi August 24, and 2020 Karen L. Smith-Janssen. “Connector of the Gulf South, 15 Years and Counting.” NRDC.
<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/connector-gulf-south-15-years-and-counting>.
vii “Colette Pichon Battle: How Can We Prepare For The Next Hurricane Katrina?”
viii “Colette Pichon Battle Biography | Booking Info for Speaking Engagements”
ix “Connector of the Gulf South, 15 Years and Counting”