



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
UNIBETSEDĀT GUÅHAN
Board of Regents

Resolution No. 25-32

RELATIVE TO AWARDING THE HONORARY DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF LAWS TO JULIAN AGUON, ESQ.

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents (BOR) is authorized to confer degrees;

WHEREAS, the University of Guam recognizes individuals who have made outstanding achievements in the field of law or who have rendered exceptional service to the University or the community at large;

WHEREAS, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D. (h.c.)), is conferred upon individuals whose significant and enduring contributions reflect excellence in legal scholarship, leadership, or impactful service over time or over a lifetime;

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., is a distinguished son of Guam whose career spans over two decades of legal expertise, vision, and advocacy in human rights, Indigenous rights, and environmental justice, work that has profoundly impacted Guam, Micronesia, the Pacific region, and the global community;

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., founded Blue Ocean Law, the Pacific region's first human rights law firm, and has pioneered groundbreaking and effective legal strategies to defend, protect, and advance the rights of native peoples and regional communities, with particular dedication to the peoples of the Pacific;

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., played a pivotal role as legal counsel in securing the 2025 International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change, issued on 23 July 2025—a landmark ruling that began with his representation of the Republic of Vanuatu, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States in 2019, which later expanded into legal support for a unified climate litigation bloc representing more than 79 countries;

WHEREAS, the International Court of Justice's unanimous ruling—only the fifth such decision in nearly 80 years—unequivocally recognizes the binding legal duties of states to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, protect human rights in a changing climate, and uphold obligations under international law, thereby setting a historic precedent for climate accountability worldwide and reinforcing the commitments of states under the Paris Agreement;

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., was internationally recognized on October 1, 2025 with the 2025 Right Livelihood Award, also known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize," for his exceptional legal work transforming climate survival into enforceable rights and turning climate action into legal obligation;

WHEREAS, as an accomplished author, Julian Aguon, Esq., has written award-winning books and influential essays that address climate justice and Indigenous rights, including *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, winner of the 2022 Independent Publisher Book Award for Best Regional Non-Fiction, and "To Hell with Drowning," an essay published in the November 2021 edition of *The Atlantic* that became a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2022, as well as other works—such as *Just Left of the Setting Sun* (2006), *The Fire This Time: Essays on Life Under US Occupation* (2006), *What We Bury At Night: Disposable Humanity* (2008), and *No Country for Eight-Spot*

Butterflies (2022)—that have shaped public discourse and legal thought on pressing environmental and social issues;

WHEREAS, as an educator, Julian Aguon, Esq., served as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Guam from 2010 to 2020, teaching international law and its application to U.S. territories, where he inspired students to connect global legal principles to local realities, and in 2024 held the distinguished Dan and Maggie Inouye Chair in Democratic Ideals at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, mentoring future advocates for justice;

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Julian Aguon, Esq., has remained humbly committed to the people of Guam, Micronesia, and Oceania, advocating for justice and sustainability with the spirit of a CHamoru warrior;

WHEREAS, through his outstanding legal and literary accomplishments, Julian Aguon, Esq., has elevated both himself and the Pacific region onto the global stage;

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., has made significant and lasting contributions to Guam, Micronesia, the Pacific region, and the global community by championing critical cases and causes that safeguard physical and environmental health;

WHEREAS, his visionary advocacy extends beyond the immediate challenges of today to encompass a deep commitment to protecting and sustaining Pacific islands for the benefit of future generations, ensuring their well-being for centuries to come; and

WHEREAS, Julian Aguon, Esq., recommendation package has been reviewed by the Honorary Degree Committee; Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Faculty Excellence and the Faculty Senate; Deans' Council; Senior Vice President & Provost; President of the University of Guam; and the Student Affairs, Scholarship, Alumni Relations, and Honorary Degree Committee, all of whom recommend approval of the Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D. (h.c.)), to the BOR;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Regents of the University of Guam hereby approves the conferral of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D. (h.c.)), upon Julian Aguon, Esq., in recognition of his outstanding scholarly achievement in law and his exceptional service to the University of Guam and the global community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Regents, along with the President of the University of Guam, shall confer said Honorary Degree at the Fanuchånan 2025 Commencement Ceremony.

Adopted this 25th day of November, 2025.



Agapito "Pete" A. Diaz, Chairperson

ATTESTED:



Anita Borja Enriquez, D.B.A., Executive Secretary

Honorary Degree Recommendation Packet

Honorary Degree Candidate and Recommender's Information Form

Directions: Fill out this form and return it signed along with the recommendation letter in the format below. An up-to-date CV of the person being recommended is required for the submission package to be complete. In complete packages will be returned without action.

Name of Candidate: Julian Aguon

Title: Esquire Organization: Blue Ocean Law

Mailing address: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED] Contact number(s): [REDACTED]

Honorary Degree Sought for Candidate (only one (1)):

- ☐ Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding scholarly achievement in law or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- ☒ Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa* (D.H.L. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding achievement in the humanities, social sciences, or in the performing arts, of a scholarly or creative nature. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- ☐ Doctor of Business Management, *honoris causa* (D.BM. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding achievement in business or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- ☐ Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge
Awarded to an indigenous expert in a field of traditional knowledge. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
Note: Honorary Degree of Master[s] of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge will be made during Fañomnâkan Commencement exercises effective Fañomnâkan 2010. No more than one (1) such award may be made per year (BOR Resolution 10-16).
- ☐ Bachelor of Community Services, *honoris causa* (B.CS (h.c.))
Awarded for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.

Recommender's Information

Per policy, a recommender must be from at least one of the categories below:

- Member of: ☒ Current or former UOG Employee
☐ Current UOG Student or Graduate (alumni) of UOG
☐ Current or former Board of Regents

Name of Recommender: Anne Perez Hattori, Ph.D., Professor, UOG

Email address: hattoria@triton.uog.edu Contact number(s): 671-735-2808, [REDACTED]

Relationship to the Candidate: mentor, colleague, friend

7 October 2025

To: UOG Board of Regents' Honorary Degree Committee

From: Anne Perez Hattori, Ph.D., Professor 
History Program, Micronesian Studies Program, & CHamoru Studies Program

Re: Honorary Degree Recommendation for **Julian Aguon, Esquire**

This letter nominates JULIAN AGUON, ESQ., for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*. Attorney Aguon is a son of Guam whose legal and literary accomplishments over the past two decades have catapulted him and the Pacific region onto the world stage. Founding Blue Ocean Law in 2014 as the Pacific region's first human rights law firm, Attorney Aguon is an international lawyer specializing in Indigenous rights and environmental justice. He is also a recognized author whose compassionate, award-winning storytelling has similarly established him as a leading voice of Pacific resistance.

His achievements are many, but most prominently:

- **Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize):** On 1 October 2025, Attorney Aguon was announced as one of this year's recipients of the Right Livelihood Award. This award specifically acknowledged his groundbreaking legal work to secure a historic International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on climate obligations. The Right Livelihood Award, often called the "Alternative Nobel Prize," is awarded annually from a Sweden-based organization to individuals and organizations working for a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. In their award to Attorney Aguon, Right Livelihood commends him "For carrying the call for climate justice to the world's highest court, turning survival into a matter of rights and climate action into a legal responsibility."
- **International Court of Justice landmark decision:** On 23 July 2025, Attorney Aguon and his firm, Blue Ocean Law, received word that The Hague's International Court of Justice unanimously delivered its landmark decision, *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change*. This ruling, a court decision made unanimously for only the fifth time in nearly 80 years, declares, for example, that countries have an obligation to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and that a breach of these obligations constitutes an

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internationally wrongful act requiring full reparation to injured nations. Attorney Aguon had actively worked on this case since 2019 as Legal Counsel for the Republic of Vanuatu, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States, and his work supported the development of unified climate litigation across a bloc of more than 79 countries. Working in collaboration with Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change, a youth-led organization formed in 2019 by law students attending the University of the South Pacific, Attorney Aguon provided the legal strategy that carried their demands for climate justice into the courtroom of the world's highest tribunal.

- **Award Winning Authorship** – In addition to his landmark legal triumphs, Attorney Aguon has been a prodigious author of books and essays, including several that have gained national acclaim. His Nov 2021 essay published in *The Atlantic*, “To Hell With Drowning,” was named a finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Commentary. Aguon’s 2021 book, *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, received in 2022 the Independent Publisher Book Awards prize for Best Regional Non-Fiction. Other book-length publications include *Just Left of the Setting Sun* (2006), *The Fire This Time: Essays on Life Under US Occupation* (2006), *What We Bury At Night: Disposable Humanity* (2008), *No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies* (2022).
- **Impactful Teaching and Mentorship**: In 2024, Attorney Aguon was selected as the Dan and Maggie Inouye Distinguished Chair in Democratic Ideals at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for Fall 2024, during which he mentored law students, co-taught Pacific Island Legal Systems, and inspired future generations of advocates for justice. His mentorship and legal expertise have likewise been shared with our University of Guam students. From 2010-2020, Attorney Aguon served as Adjunct Professor of Law, teaching undergraduate courses on international law and its application to U.S. territories and helping students connect global legal principles to local realities.

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- **Humble, Ethical, Passionate Commitment to Guam, Micronesia, and Oceania:** Attorney Aguon, amidst all his accolades, remains respectfully and modestly grounded in the people of our island and region. After being notified of the Right Livelihood honor, he commented, “I proudly accept this award on behalf of my people, the Chamorro people, and indeed all of us in Micronesia, who continue to resist the militarization of our homelands, who continue to insist upon our right to live in the world on our own terms and our children’s right to do the same.” This statement captures Julian’s personality – as does his unpretentious 3-page CV. He is not an egocentric person who proclaims his victories boastfully. Rather, he constantly acknowledges others around him who have contributed to his success. At his core, he is a Chamorro warrior who fights some of our hardest and harshest battles in courtrooms and classrooms alike.

Mr. Julian Aguon, Esq. has made a significant contribution to our island, our region, and our planet, championing cases and causes that affect our physical and environmental health. His vision and advocacy do not merely focus on the present-day but rather stretch to the near and far future as he works arduously to protect our island(s) for the centuries to come.

Curriculum Vitae

Julian Aguon, Esq.

Founder, Blue Ocean Law, P.C.

Website: www.blueoceanlaw.com

Summary

Julian Aguon is an international human rights lawyer and public intellectual whose work sits at the intersection of climate justice, decolonization, and Indigenous rights. As founder of Blue Ocean Law, he has shaped international legal precedent, including advisory opinion proceedings before the International Court of Justice on climate change. A Pulitzer Prize finalist and Right Livelihood Award laureate, Julian is also an educator, essayist, and mentor dedicated to training the next generation of advocates from the Pacific and beyond.

Professional Experience

Founder and President, Blue Ocean Law, P.C.

2014 – Present

- Established and leads a progressive law firm specializing in climate justice and human and indigenous rights advocacy.
- Developed innovative legal strategies for Pacific Island nations to advance environmental accountability through international courts and tribunals.
- Spearheaded global coalitions advocating for climate justice and human rights.

Legal Counsel, Republic of Vanuatu; Melanesian Spearhead Group; Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States.

2019 – 2025

- Advised the above-named countries and international organizations in the advisory opinion proceedings on climate change pending before the International Court of Justice.
- Supported the development of unified climate litigation strategies across a bloc of 79+ countries.

Lecturer in Law, William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

2014 – 2024

- Taught upper-division course on Pacific Islands legal systems, mentoring law students in human rights and environmental justice advocacy.

Legal Counsel, Guam Legislature

2011 – 2015

- Represented the Legislature in landmark cases involving separation of powers, legislative authority, and direct democracy, contributing to enduring constitutional precedent.

Adjunct Professor, International Law, University of Guam

2010 – 2020

- Taught undergraduate course on international law and its application to U.S. territories, helping students connect global legal principles to local realities.

Selected Achievements

- **Strategic Climate Advocacy:**
 - Played a pivotal role in securing historic advisory opinion on climate change from the International Court of Justice.
 - Authored law articles and policy papers influencing international environmental legal frameworks, emphasizing equitable solutions for vulnerable communities.
- **Mentorship Excellence:**
 - Designed and led training programs for young legal professionals on strategic litigation and international human rights and environmental law.
 - Developed mentorship frameworks tailored to empower early-career advocates in the human rights and environmental justice fields.
- **Publications and Thought Leadership:**
 - Authored and co-authored several influential law articles, including: *The Role of Advocates in the Conception of Advisory Opinion Requests* (2023); *Bringing Climate Change before the International Court of Justice: Prospects for Contentious Cases and Advisory Opinions* (2021); *Second Wave Due Diligence: The Case for Incorporating Free, Prior and Informed Consent into the Deep Sea Mining Regulatory Regime* (2018); *Broadening*

Common Heritage: Addressing Gaps in the Deep Sea Mining Regulatory Regime (2018).

- Published award-winning books and essays addressing topics such as climate justice and indigenous rights, including *To Hell with Drowning* (Finalist, 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary), and *The Properties of Perpetual Light* (2021) (Best Regional Non-Fiction, 2022 Independent Publisher Book Awards).

Education

- **Juris Doctor (J.D.)**, William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
2009
- **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)**, Gonzaga University
2004

Recognition

- Right Livelihood Award (2025)
- Dan and Maggie Inouye Distinguished Chair in Democratic Ideals (2024)
- Grist 50 Fixer, Climate Leaders to Watch (2023)
- Finalist, Pulitzer Prize for Commentary (2022)
- Petra Fellow (2011)
- Project Censored Award (2010)
- Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law Post-Juris Doctor Fellow (2010)
- East-West Center Graduate Degree Fellow (2007)
- Sam L. Cohen International Human Rights Fellow (2007).

Affiliations

- Active Member, Guam Bar Association
 - Inactive Member, Bars of Palau and Marshall Islands
-

Fw: Amend Julian Aguon nomination for honorary degree

From MONIQUE CARRIVEAU STORIE <mstorie@triton.uog.edu>

Date Fri 11/14/2025 8:35 AM

To Kalyne Roberto <robertok@triton.uog.edu>; Sean Verroya <verroyas@triton.uog.edu>; Sharleen Santos-Bamba <sbamba@triton.uog.edu>

Monique

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Monique C. Storie, Ph.D.
Dean

University Libraries

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mstorie@triton.uog.edu

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From: ANNE PEREZ HATTORI <hattoria@triton.uog.edu>

Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:19 PM

To: MONIQUE CARRIVEAU STORIE <mstorie@triton.uog.edu>

Cc: DOREEN T CRISOSTOMO <doreentc@triton.uog.edu>; Mary Therese F. Cruz <mtfcruz@triton.uog.edu>; Keana Ardiente <sgapresident@triton.uog.edu>

Subject: Amend Julian Aguon nomination for honorary degree

Håfa Adai Dr Storie, I am writing to request that my nomination for Attorney Julian Aguon be amended to the honorary Doctor of Law (not the doctor of humane letters).

Si Yu'us Ma'åse, Dr. Hattori




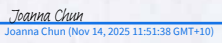
**OFFICE OF THE SENIOR
VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST**
Academic & Student Affairs


November 10, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: Regent Agapito "Pete" A. Diaz
Chairperson, UOG Board of Regents

VIA: Anita Borja Enriquez, D.B.A., President 

VIA: Regent Joanna Chun, Student Affairs, Scholarship, Alumni Relations, and
Honorary Degree Committee 
Joanna Chun (Nov 14, 2025 11:51:38 GMT+10)

From: Sharleen Santos-Bamba, Ph.D., Senior Vice President & Provost 

Re: **Nomination of Julian Aguon for Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws**

I support the nomination of Julian Aguon, Esq. to receive an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws at the Fanuchånan (Fall) 2025 Commencement. He was nominated and recommended by Dr. Anne Perez Hattori, Professor of History, Micronesian Studies, and CHamoru Studies at the University of Guam.

Atty. Aguon is a human rights lawyer and founder of the international, Guam-based firm Blue Ocean Law. He is an acclaimed writer, and his multi-genre collection *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, which won an Independent Publisher Book Award and an American Book Fest's Best Book Award, is used in UOG's First Year Seminar classes. He also served as an adjunct professor of law at UOG for 10 years, sharing his mentorship and legal expertise with our students.

This year alone, Atty. Aguon was recognized for his work with the Right Livelihood Award, known as the Alternative Nobel Prize; the Maga'håga Award, Guam's top honor; and most recently, the Alnoba Indigenous Leadership Award.

As a proud son of Guam with a multitude of qualifications, Atty. Aguon exemplifies many of UOG's values and principles, including *Inadahi yan Inagofli'e*, which is most apparent in his dedication and advocacy for Indigenous rights, social justice, and environmental stewardship. By honoring Atty. Aguon, we acknowledge his accomplishments and celebrate a model of integrity and purpose that may inspire our community, here at the institution and beyond.

I am therefore forwarding the nomination to you, inclusive of supporting documentation and with my full endorsement, for consideration and recommendation by the committee for approval by the Board of Regents.

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