

Heather McTeer Toney



Heather McTeer Toney is the Executive Director of the [Beyond Petrochemicals Campaign](#), where she leads the fight to stop petrochemical expansion and protect communities across the United States. A lifelong public servant and advocate for justice, she was elected Mayor of Greenville, Mississippi at just 27 years old and later appointed Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under President Barack Obama.

She is the author of [Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Call to Climate Action](#) (Broadleaf Books, 2023), which calls for climate solutions rooted in justice and equity. Before leading Beyond Petrochemicals, Heather served as Vice President of Community Engagement at the Environmental Defense Fund and Senior Director at Moms Clean Air Force.

The daughter of a civil rights attorney and a public school teacher, Heather was born and raised in Greenville, Mississippi. As mayor, she helped the city emerge from significant debt and prioritized sustainable infrastructure, laying the foundation for her career in environmental and climate justice. At EPA, she managed a \$500 million budget, oversaw operations across eight southeastern states and six federally recognized tribes, and spearheaded local environmental justice initiatives and clean energy programs while supporting more than 1,000 employees.

Heather's leadership extends nationally and internationally. She has served as National Spokeswoman for She Should Run, Past President of the National Conference of Black Mayors, and Past Chair of the EPA Local Government Advisory Committee. She is a former fellow of the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics, the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, and Elemental Excelerator. She serves on several foundation boards and has shared her expertise with audiences around the world.

Her thought leadership has been featured on The Problem with Jon Stewart, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, Fox News, The Weather Channel, and Democracy Now! She has written for and been profiled in the New York Times, Washington Post, and Netflix's Tudum, and contributed to the breakout climate book All We Can Save in 2020. In 2025, Forbes Magazine recognized her as one of the Top Sustainability Leaders. She was also named by Essence as one of the "50 Most Remarkable Women in the World" and has received numerous honors, including the Marie Claire Women on Top Award and the inaugural Rachel's Network Catalyst Award celebrating women of color leading on climate.

Heather earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Spelman College and her law degree from Tulane University School of Law. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Jack & Jill Inc., and the Mississippi Bar Association, and attends First United Missionary Baptist Church with her husband Dexter and son Devin.

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She is the author of *Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Call to Climate Action* (Broadleaf Books, 2023) and a nationally recognized voice on climate and environmental justice. Her leadership has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, PBS, The Weather Channel, and *The Problem with Jon Stewart*, and she has written for the New York Times and Washington Post. In 2025, Forbes Magazine named her one of the Top Sustainability Leaders, adding to a list of honors that includes recognition from Essence, Marie Claire, and Rachel's Network.

A proud graduate of Spelman College and Tulane University School of Law, Heather is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and lives in Oxford, Mississippi with her husband, Dexter Toney, and son Devin.