

## **Biographies**

### ***Aguinda v. ChevronTexaco***

#### ***Pablo Fajardo***

Raised in poverty with 11 brothers and sisters, Pablo Fajardo worked as a manual laborer in the oil industry as a teenager to help support his family. When he was 17, he began working in an office dedicated to protecting human rights in Shushufindi—a town in Ecuador’s Amazon known for its high rates of violence, prostitution, and health and environmental problems. Mr. Fajardo obtained his high school diploma at night. He later won a scholarship from a local church to attend law school via a correspondence program for the Technological University of Loja, while teaching adult literacy to Amazon residents at night. In 2003, the Amazon Defense Coalition hired Mr. Fajardo as a legal advisor on the landmark environmental lawsuit against Chevron. In June 2005, he became the lead lawyer for the plaintiffs in the case. In 2007, Mr. Fajardo was honored in a global telecast with a CNN Heroes Award in the “fighting for justice” category. In April 2008, Mr. Fajardo and Luis Yanza, won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in San Francisco. Mr. Fajardo’s story has attracted the attention of *Vanity Fair* and several newspapers and magazines throughout the world.

#### ***Luis Yanza***

Luis Yanza has dedicated his life to achieving environmental justice and defending human rights in Ecuador’s Amazon region. His family followed the oil boom to the region in the late 1970s, when Luis was 16. After witnessing the environmental destruction in the rainforest, Mr. Yanza became active in various social organizations in the region. Because of a lack of funds, he could not attend a university. Instead, in 1994, he founded the Amazon Defense Coalition, which represents the dozens of farming communities and five indigenous groups that inhabit the region. The mission of the Coalition is to protect the environment and secure social justice through grass roots organizing, political advocacy, and litigation; in practical terms, the Coalition oversees the lawsuit on behalf of the affected indigenous groups and communities. Mr. Yanza has won national and global acclaim for his tireless advocacy at a grass roots level, and courageous leadership. Mr. Yanza was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2008 and is now the coordinator of the *Aguinda* case.

