New York, NY — Donors of Color Network (DOCN) today celebrates the life and legacy left by longtime activist and co-founder, Urvashi Vaid. Vaid is survived by her wife and partner, Kate Clinton, and everyone who loved her.

Vaid was an author and civil and LGBTQ+ rights activist and lawyer — but above all else, she was a believer. Through her historic career as executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, executive director of the Arcus Foundation, and co-founder of DOCN, Vaid profoundly believed in a world where love and action served as a new power source for people of color to fuel racial and gender justice movements and defeat white nationalism.

“As Urvashi transitions into a beloved ancestor in our community, we want to collectively remember her impact,” said Isabelle Leighton, interim executive director of DOCN. “In this moment, Urvashi would remind us to seek joy in the spaces we share together and to strengthen our commitment to a more just and equitable future.”

Prior to co-founding DOCN, Vaid recognized an invisibilization of BIPOC voices and understood the importance of pioneering curiosity as a core value in philanthropy. She helped produce DOCN’s Apparitional Donor report, one of the first deep dives to provide space and clarity for donors of color. With DOCN co-founders Ashindi Maxton and Hali Lee, Vaid helped to establish DOCN as the first-ever cross-racial community of donors and movement leaders committed to building the collective power of people of color to achieve racial equity. DOCN’s latest report, “Philanthropy Always Sounds Like Someone Else: A Portrait of High Net Wealth Donors of Color,” is Vaid’s last work she co-authored for the organization.

“Urvashi was FIRE—incandescent with brilliance and passion and rage and eternal action,” said Jeannie Park, board director of DOCN. “But, most importantly, with love. Her spirit and embrace will always be at the heart of the Donors of Color Network. Each of us was inspired and changed by her and will miss her terribly. We best honor her by carrying her vision of justice forward.”

Vaid’s contributions to social and racial justice movements remain unparalleled. She fought to advance LGBTQ+ issues in the public eye, organized millions of dollars for political candidates who championed civil and equal rights for all, and transformed societal institutions to be more equitable and just for communities of color.

As president of the Vaid Group, she collaborated with global and domestic organizations to advance equity and justice. She co-founded the National LGBTQ Anti-Poverty Action Network, the National LGBT/IV Criminal Justice Working Group, the Equality Federation, and the National Religious Leadership Roundtable. She previously served as senior fellow and director of the Engaging Tradition Project at Columbia Law School’s Center for Gender and Sexuality Law. Vaid also leaves a written legacy with award-winning books including, Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Lesbian and Gay Liberation (1996) and Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics (2012).

DOCN invites you to share your remembrances in any form using this link. The organization will deliver this virtual community remembrance to Vaid’s loved ones at the appropriate time. DOCN members are welcome to join the group for a virtual remembrance space in honor of Vaid this Thursday, May 19, at 6:00 pm ET. Registration is not necessary, please join via Zoom here.

Share a Rememberance