Connections

Native American Heritage Month

November 2020

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PMB Administrative Services
Office of Civil Rights
Dear DOI Colleagues,

The Department of the Interior has the greatest diversity of responsibility in federal government. Indian Affairs is the agency that represents all facets of social and economic programs reflected in communities throughout the country. Just as living in Baltimore, Maryland may be much different than living in Palm Beach, Florida, so is living in a tribal community located on an Indian reservation different from any other town in the United States. Working within the Department of the Interior over the past 22 years has brought many challenges but also many triumphs, advances and celebrations. I wouldn’t trade these years and experiences for any other career. The satisfaction of serving the entire country as a public servant and observing the positive changes that have occurred to a larger community far outweigh the pursuit of wealth or fame. The pursuit of happiness is the path I chose.

Although the federal government has created large agencies to address distinct versions of social needs in the country such as Labor, Housing, Justice, Education and Health, the BIA has all of these functions rolled into one agency to service almost 3 million Native Americans. Within the Department of the Interior all other agencies rely on the BIA for technical advice and assistance to perform their work. As a practical matter, every BIA employee becomes a subject matter expert on issues regarding policy, communication and cultural appropriateness when asked by other agencies for assistance in developing energy policy, creating a new irrigation project or harvesting timber from areas that were historically used by American Indian tribes. That is because the first Americans inhabited this country and had thriving communities long before the original 13 colonies were even a concept.

Throughout my career I have fielded questions from other agencies and welcomed their questions. We have created work groups and training sessions around consultation, cultural sensitivity and appropriate communications. All of these efforts have provided opportunities for education of our federal colleagues and to strengthen the relationship the entire Department must have with Indian tribes and communities. This work also aids in forming the trust Native American leaders and communities must have in order to create and experience real economic opportunities in their communities. This has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my federal career. I believe it is important to teach when you can and to remind others that the history of this country has always included Native Americans. The history, culture and values are everywhere if we stop and think about it. Minnesota, Mississippi, Omaha and Iowa are only a few places with Indian names or that celebrate tribes that are still with us today. These places were so impressive to early explorers that the names became permanent. What we have forgotten is where those names came from and what they mean.

When employees from BIA are asked about a road, right of way, well pad or endangered species associated with a project of BLM, BOR, OSM, USGS or any other federal agency, it provides an opportunity for teaching and learning at the same time. Historical context and cultural considerations become important because we have a statutory responsibility to review, analyze and comply with these laws.

Indian Affairs employees should welcome these opportunities to educate their colleagues. Other Departmental employees who don’t know or aren’t comfortable with approaching a tribal leader or representative should feel comfortable asking a colleague from Indian Affairs about their strategies. This is how we build a stronger and more responsive Interior powered by public servants who love what they do and are proud of their chosen careers.

I am proud of the work I have done and look forward to the ongoing work of all Department of the Interior employees who chose public service as a career and are making Interior a fulfilling and rewarding place to work.

- Jim James

Deputy Bureau Director of Field Operations, Indian Affairs
Welcome to the Native American Heritage Month 2020 issue of *Connections*. This November and every month, we celebrate the culture and heritage of remarkable Americans who deeply enrich the quality and character of our Nation.

Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) is a time to celebrate the rich and diverse ancestry, cultures, traditions, and histories of America’s indigenous people. The National Congress of American Indians reminds us that NAHM is also “an opportunity to educate our workforce, raise awareness about the uniqueness of Native people, and the myriad of ways in which tribal citizens have conquered challenges to maintain voice and dignity and to remain an influencing presence in a rapidly evolving nation.”

This year’s theme, “Resilient and Enduring: We Are Native People,” reflects the determination and courage that Native American Communities continue to exhibit, sustaining the vibrant diversity, cultures, traditions, and accomplishments of America’s first people. We hope you enjoy the profiles and stories collected in this issue. As always, we welcome your feedback on this and every issue of *Connections* magazine. Thank you!

Steve Carlisle, Journeys/Connections Editor

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In the News: Native American Veterans

National Native American Veterans Memorial: A Place for Honoring and Healing

Twenty-five years in the making, a new monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., opened on Veterans Day — the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

"It's an article of faith in Indian country that Native Americans serve at a greater rate than basically any other group," said Kevin Gover, the director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and a citizen of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. He said the steel ring sculpture over a carved stone drum, in a wooded area near the museum's entrance, will become hallowed ground. "When people bring their memories and bring their prayers to a place, they make it sacred," he said. "We wish for this to be a sacred place, not just for Native Americans, but for all Americans."

A distinguished group of Native and non-Native jurors unanimously selected the design concept “Warriors’ Circle of Honor” by Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma) from among more than 120 submissions. Pratt [pictured, right] is a self-taught artist whose works include themes of Native American history and tradition and the Cheyenne people. Born in El Reno, Oklahoma, Pratt credits his parents and teachers for encouraging his artistic pursuits and respect for veterans. A veteran himself, Pratt served in Vietnam from 1962 to 1965 as a U.S. Marine in Air Rescue and Security stationed at Da Nang Air Base. He is recognized by the Cheyenne People as an outstanding Southern Cheyenne, and was inducted as a traditional Peace Chief—the Cheyenne Nation’s highest honor.

The U.S. Department of Defense estimates more than 24,000 American Indian and Alaska Native men and women are on active duty, and more than 150,000 veterans self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.
The Honorable Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

Debra Anne Haaland (born December 2, 1960) is an American politician serving as the U.S. Representative from New Mexico's 1st congressional district since 2019. The district includes most of Albuquerque, along with most of its suburbs. Haaland is a former chairwoman of the Democratic Party of New Mexico. Along with Sharice Davids, she is one of the first two Native American women elected to the U.S. Congress. Haaland is a member of the Laguna Pueblo people and a 35th-generation New Mexican.

Haaland was born in Winslow, Arizona. She is an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo people. The Pueblo people have lived on the land that is now the state of New Mexico since the 1200s and Haaland identifies herself as a 35th-generation New Mexican. Her mother, Mary Toya, a Native American woman, served in the United States Navy. Her father, Major J. D. "Dutch" Haaland, a Norwegian American, was an officer in the United States Marine Corps and recipient of the Silver Star for his actions in Vietnam; he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in 2005. As a child in a military family, Haaland moved frequently. She attended 13 public schools across the United States before the family settled in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to be close to family who also belong to the Laguna Pueblo. Haaland graduated from Highland High School in Albuquerque. She has three sisters and a brother.

After graduating from Highland High School, Haaland worked at a local bakery. At 28, she enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in English in 1994. Four days after graduating, she gave birth to her daughter. As a single mother, Haaland started a salsa company to support herself and her daughter. At times during this period, she did not earn enough money to afford housing and had to rely on friends for shelter.

Congressperson Haaland earned her Juris Doctor in Indian law from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 2006, and became the first Chairwoman elected to the Laguna Development Corporation Board of Directors, a Laguna-owned business created to strengthen the Laguna Community and its economy. As chair, she oversaw business operations for the second largest tribal gaming enterprise in New Mexico and successfully advocated for the corporation to create policies and commitments to earth-friendly business practices. She served as the tribal administrator for the San Felipe Pueblo from January 2013 to November 2015.

After serving a term as state party chair, Haaland announced her intention to run for the United States House of Representatives in New Mexico's 1st congressional district in the 2018 elections, to succeed Michelle Lujan Grisham, who was running for governor. In the November 6 general election Haaland defeated former New Mexico State Representative Janice Arnold-Jones, receiving 59.1% of the vote and winning three of the district's five counties. She was reelected in November 2020.
Joy Harjo Appointed to Third Term
As U.S. Poet Laureate, Launches
Signature Project: Living Nations,
Living Words

Joy Harjo (born May 9, 1951) is a poet, musician, playwright, and author. She is the incumbent United States Poet Laureate, the first Native American to hold that honor. She is also only the second Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to serve three terms. Harjo is a member of the Muscogee Nation (Este Mvskokvlke) and belongs to Oce Vpofv (Hickory Ground). She is an important figure in the second wave of the literary Native American Renaissance of the late 20th century. She studied at the Institute of American Indian Arts, completed her undergraduate degree at University of New Mexico in 1976, and earned an MFA at the University of Iowa in its creative writing program.

For her third term as Poet Laureate, Harjo will focus on her signature project, "Living Nations, Living Words," which gathers works by contemporary Native poets from across the United States. This digital project features Joy Harjo, Louise Erdrich, Natalie Diaz, Ray Young Bear, Craig Santos Perez, Sherwin Bitsui and Layli Long Soldier. An interactive Story Map connects all 47 contemporary Native American poets to a new online audio collection developed by Harjo, featuring the participating poets reading and discussing an original poem.

In Joy Harjo’s words:
As the first Native U.S. Poet Laureate, I decided that my signature project should introduce the country to the many Native poets who live in these lands. Our communities innately shared and share poetry from before the founding of the United States to the present.

We understand poetry to be a living language—whether it is in our tribal languages, or in English, or another language. We use poetry to mark transformations, as in love letters, elegies, or epithalamium. Poetry can be useful for praise and even to help deter a storm. Or poetry is a tool to uncover the miraculous in the ordinary.

We are intimately involved in our communities, which may be on our reservations or in the cities and often both. We are like everyone else. Some of us stay rooted. Others travel and even live internationally. This holds true for our individual approaches to the art of poetry.

The “Living Nations, Living Words” project features a sampling of work by 47 Native Nations poets through an interactive Story Map and a newly developed Library of Congress audio collection.

Keep in mind that each of the featured poets has many poetry ancestors as well as young poets who have or will follow in their footsteps. There are connections between all of the poets in “Living Nations, Living Words”—and connecting influences between these poets and many, many other Native poets who do not appear here, and many, many American and world poets from the present and generations before.

Maybe we are at the place where many roads come together under the dimming sun. We must make a new map, together where poetry is sung.

Living Nations, Living Words
• Explore the Story Map
• Explore the Collection
Hon. Diane Humetewa
United States District Judge

Diane Joyce Humetewa (born December 5, 1964) is a United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Arizona and was the United States Attorney for the District of Arizona, serving in that position from December 2007 to August 2009. Confirmed in 2014 as the first Native American woman and enrolled tribal member to serve as a federal judge, Judge Humetewa is one of three Native Americans in history to serve in this position. Judge Humetewa is also a Professor of Practice at Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. Judge Humetewa has served as counsel to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and to the Deputy Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice, as a member of the United States Sentencing Guideline Commission, Native American Advisory Committee, and as an Appellate Court Judge for the Hopi Tribe, of which she is an enrolled member.

Prior to her ascending to the bench, Judge Humetewa’s volunteer work included serving as a board member for organizations such as the Udall Foundation, the ASU Indian Legal Advisory Council, the Hopi Education Endowment Foundation, and the Phoenix Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. She also volunteered her time to teach at countless law symposiums and conferences in Arizona and throughout the nation.

The Flag of the Hopi Nation

The flag is a vertical tricolor of turquoise, white, and yellow, with the Hopi symbol in the middle. The flag is accompanied by a red fringe. In 2002, Leigh Kuwanwisiwma proposed a tribal flag. Talks about the adoption of a flag had arisen in 1993, however the current flag was only adopted in the spring of 2002. The design was printed in the tribal newspaper and comments about the flag were encouraged. The flag represents the Hopi way of life and is called the Naatoyla in Hopi.
Assistant Secretary Sweeney is the first Alaska Native and the second woman to be confirmed for the position of Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs (AS-IA). She came to the Department of the Interior after serving as executive vice president of external affairs for the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC).

AS-IA Sweeney, from Utqiaġvik, grew up in rural Alaska. She has spent her professional career working to empower Native organizations and communities through advocacy at all levels of government, with a strong focus on the federal process. Ms. Sweeney also has served in leadership positions on numerous business and nonprofit boards at the state, national and international levels, including (until recently) chair of the Arctic Economic Council, a trustee of the Ted Stevens Foundation, and co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

In 2008 the Alaska Journal of Commerce named her a “Top Forty Under 40” business leader. In 2014 and 2017 her team won two Emmy® Awards from the Northwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for its IAM Iñupiaq commercial campaign 2014 and its 2017 long-format documentary titled, “True North, the Story of ASRC.” In 2017 she was inducted into the Anchorage ATHENA Society, a program of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce that encourages the potential of women as valued members and leaders of the business community.

She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Ms. Sweeney is married with two children. Ms. Sweeney is a tribal member of the Native Village of Barrow Traditional Iñupiat Government and the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, both federally recognized tribes in Alaska. She is also a shareholder in the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the Alaska Native regional corporation established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

The Assistant Secretary is responsible for carrying out the Department of the Interior’s trust responsibilities regarding the management of tribal and individual Indian trust lands and assets and promoting the self-determination and economic self-sufficiency of the nation’s 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and their approximately two million enrolled members.
Jerry Gidner, Director, Bureau of Trust Funds Administration

Jerry Gidner, a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe, is the Director of the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration.

Director Gidner has served throughout the Department in a variety of capacities: Director of BIA, Deputy Bureau Director for Indian Services, Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, Deputy Associate Bureau Director for Post-Secondary Education at the Bureau of Indian Education, Deputy Chief Learning Officer for the Department of the Interior, and Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Natural Resources Revenue. His most recent assignment was with the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians as the Principal Deputy Special Trustee and Acting Special Trustee.

Director Gidner holds a law degree and a Master’s degree in Natural Resources Policy and Management from the University of Michigan and an MBA from American University. He received his Bachelor’s degree in Zoology from Michigan State University.

Mr. Gidner is a published writer.

The Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe’s flag

A crane represents to the native people eloquence of leadership and direction. When the Crane speaks, all listen. An eagle represents courage and knowledge. A rabbit represents Wanabozho, a messenger, an intermediary on earth, and an advocate for the Anishinabek, to whom he gave the gift of knowledge. A deer symbolizes love and the gift of grace. A bear is the gift of courage and strength. The color yellow from the East to the West is a path, this is the path of life, the path of a great warrior. Red represents the Southern direction and Earth and Fire. Black represents the Western direction and also is the doorway to the Spirit World. White represents the Northern direction and symbolizes spirituality and the knowledge of Elders. Aqua-green symbolizes plant life and all things growing. Rainbow is the beautiful bridge to the spirit world and the colors of the universe. Blue is symbolic of sky and water.

(from the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians Interpretive Center)
Fawn R. Sharp  
President, National Congress of American Indians

Fawn R. Sharp serves as the 23rd President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native tribal government organization in the country. President Sharp was elected on October 24, 2019 at NCAI’s 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace. Sharp is the third woman to hold the position of NCAI President.

President Sharp is the current President of the Quinault Indian Nation in Taholah, Washington. Her past positions included managing attorney and lead counsel, staff attorney for the Quinault Indian Nation, administrative law judge for the Washington state Department of Revenue – Tax Appeals Division, Quinault Tribal Court Associate Judge, and Counsel for Phillips, Krause & Brown.

Ms. Sharp has held numerous leadership positions, including an appointment by Governor Gary Locke to serve as Trustee for Grays Harbor College,

Ms. Sharp graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington at the age of 19. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Washington in 1995 and has subsequently received certificates from the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada, and from the International Human Rights Law program at Oxford University.

“Mother Salmon”
by Si Lou Leetsa
Comanche Code Talkers

Nʉmʉrekwa’etʉʉ — “Comanche Speakers”

During World Wars I and II, the United States military used select Native American service men to relay secret battle messages based on words from their traditional tribal languages. “Code Talkers,” as they came to be known, are twentieth century heroes.

Although the Nʉmʉnʉʉ (Comanche) language was utilized in battle during WWI, it wasn’t until WWII that an organized code was developed. Twenty-one Comanche men were hand-picked by the U.S. Government to participate in the WWII Code Talker program. Seventeen of those men went on to enlist in the U.S. Army and received training as radio operators and line repairmen with the 4th Infantry Division. During this time, the Army gave them free rein to develop secret Comanche code words that no one outside the group would be able to understand, including other Comanches. The move proved successful. It took a military machine up to four hours to transmit and decode a message, but a Comanche Code Talker could decode the same message in less than three minutes. Their codes were never broken.

Fourteen of the Comanche Code Talkers were sent overseas during WWII to fight in the European Theater. Thirteen of those men hit the beaches of Normandy with Allied troops on D-Day. When the 4th Infantry Division landed on Utah Beach, they were five miles off their designated target.

Several Comanche Code Talkers were wounded in battle but all survived the war. These valiant soldiers are credited with saving the lives of thousands of American and Allied service men. All the Comanche Code Talkers have now passed away but their heroic actions will forever be remembered by a grateful Nation.

Comanche Code Talkers of World War II:

Cpl. Charles Chibitty
T/4 Haddon Codynah
T/5 Robert Holder
Cpl. Forrest Kassanavoid
T/5 Wellington Mihecoby
Pvt. Perry Noyabad
T/5 Clifford Ottivo
T/5 Simmons Parker
Pvt. Melvin Permansu
Pvt. Elgin Red Elk
Pfc. Roderick Red Elk
Pfc. Larry Saupitty
Anthony Tabbytite
Morris Tabbyetchy
Pfc. Ralph Wahnee
T/5 Willis Yackeschi
Pvt. Albert (Edward) Nahquaddy, Jr.

The last Comanche Code Talker to pass was Cpl. Charles Chibitty [pictured, above], 83, on July 20, 2005. In 2008, Comanche Code Talkers of World War I and II posthumously received the Congressional Gold Medal.
From the Catawba Nation Site

The ancestral lands of the Catawba Nation extend through the Piedmont region of North and South Carolina and into southern Virginia. We have lived on these lands along the Catawba River for thousands of years.

The tribal people called themselves yeh is-WAH h’reh, meaning “people of the river.” The colonists who came to trade began calling all the tribes along the Catawba River Valley by the name Catawba.

Catawba lands were eventually reduced dramatically from the 144,000 acres granted by the King of England to the 700-acre reservation now held in trust for the Nation. The Catawba still live on their beautiful ancestral lands along the banks of the Catawba river today.

Early Catawbas lived in villages which were surrounded by a wooden palisade or wall. There was a large council house in the village as well as a sweat lodge, homes, and an open plaza for meetings, games, and dances. The homes were rounded on top and made of bark. The dwellings were small with extended families living in a single structure. Catawbas were farmers. They also fished and hunted. The Catawbas were a large and powerful group and waged war with neighboring tribes, especially the Cherokee.

Catawba warriors were known as the fiercest in the land. The Nation claimed at least eleven other tribes as enemies. Leaders of the state of South Carolina knew this and kept relations with the Nation friendly. King Hagler [upper right] was chief from 1750 to 1763. He is remembered as a friend to the English but also a firm defender of the rights of his people.
Catawba are well known for their pottery and it is considered one of their greatest cultural legacies. The Catawba have specific, unique, time-honored methods that they use to create their pottery.

The Catawba pottery tradition has survived for over 4,000 years, long before the craft made its debut in the Southwest. The tradition has been passed down within the Nation and has survived contact with Europeans, wars, centuries of economic and cultural stresses, and the introduction of modern technology such as the potter’s wheel. In spite of these outside influences, the Catawba pottery tradition has remained one of the oldest and purest art forms of its kind.

When settlers came through to trade with the Catawbas they would buy crafts such as leather moccasins and baskets, but pottery was by far the most popular item. Some settlers became so fond of the pottery that they would only cook certain dishes in a Catawba pot.

There were several famous Catawba potters who were known for their art. Many of their pieces can be found in museums and in art collections. Currently, about 50 Catawbas make and sell pottery on a regular basis.

Due to the importance of pottery in the Catawba culture the Nation is committed to making sure that there are always Catawba potters to teach this skill to others so that this 4,000 year old tradition can continue to be passed on to future generations.

The Unique Process of Creating Catawba Pottery

Clay for traditional Catawba pottery is dug from clay holes along the banks of the Catawba river (and ONLY this clay). Many of the same clay holes that were used hundreds of years ago are still used today. After the clay is hand processed it is then ready for creating pottery. Catawba pottery is formed completely by hand using several different methods depending on the size of the piece. After the piece is finished, it is left to dry for several days. After it is dry then the potter will begin the detail work by rubbing and scraping the piece by hand. They use many different tools to do this work from sea shells, smooth rocks from the river, and old snuff cans. Many potters pass their pottery creating tools down to their children and grandchildren. Burnishing or "rubbing" the pots can be a long and tedious process. After the potter is happy with the piece, then it will be fired in an open fire. The potter warms the piece by leaving it outside the fire and then slowly moves it closer and closer until it is put into the fire. The process of firing gives the pottery its distinctive look. The colors come from the clay along with the variety of wood used and the intensity of the fire.

Video: “Catawba Pottery Tradition Withstands the Test of Time” by Catawba Potter Keith “Little Bear” Brown.
Pueblo tradition says that their people have always been there. The Spanish name, Laguna, translates to lagoon and is derived from a lake that was once located on the pueblo lands. The people refer to themselves as Ka-Waikah or Ka-waik, meaning “lake people,” though the lake has long since transitioned into meadowlands. Historians believe the ancestors of the pueblo have occupied the Laguna homelands since at least A.D. 1300.

The Pueblo of Laguna is the largest of the Keresan-speaking pueblos and is located 40 miles west of Albuquerque, along what was once historic Route 66. The entire pueblo stretches across four counties and includes the six villages of Laguna, Encinal, Mesita, Paguate, Paraje, and Seama. In acknowledgement of its long history and rich cultural heritage, part of Laguna was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The Pueblo of Laguna Historic District consists of approximately 108 acres including a southeastern section of the pueblo that dates from the 1400s. Laguna’s most prominent landmark, the old San José de Laguna mission church, has been a signpost for travelers in the past as it is today. Constructed between 1699 and 1701 and dedicated to St. Joseph, this one-story adobe church is a well-preserved example of a Spanish colonial mission and is still an active Catholic parish church.

All the villages celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph on September 19th, which features dances after a Mass at the San José Mission Church and hundreds of booths offering various native arts and crafts.

The San José de la Laguna Mission is perched on top of a hill, surrounded by weathered adobe homes. The church’s white exterior provides a sharp contrast to the earth tones surrounding it. Villagers built the mission in 1699, after the Pueblo Revolt. It was the last mission built in the early mission period and remains one of the best preserved. The interior is 105 feet by 22 feet. The only openings are the doorway and a small window below the twin bells.

The interior ambience plays a central role in the allure of the church. Laguna art and rare early Spanish paintings line the walls and surround the altar. Red, green, yellow and black murals adorn the earthen walls. Tribal members painted the ceiling above the sanctuary with the Laguna symbols for the sun, the moon, the stars, and a rainbow. Talented artisans intricately carved all of the woodwork, including the vigas and the latticed ceiling. A portrait of Saint Joseph visually dominates the center of the reredos, flanked by Saint Barbara, protector against thunder, lightning, and sudden death, and Saint John Nepocene.
For over 1,000 years the remote village of Supai, Arizona, located eight miles hike below the rim of the Grand Canyon, has been home to the Havasu Baaja, “People of the Blue Green Waters,” or as they are known today, the Havasupai Tribe. They get their name from the famous blue-green waterfalls (there are 5 waterfalls) that cascade down Havasu Creek. The Creek and the falls have given the look of a Caribbean oasis in the Grand Canyon.

Just above the village, a hidden limestone aquifer gushes forth the life sustaining blue green waters that have nourished the fields of corn, squash and beans which have allowed the Havasu Baaja to thrive living in the harsh desert landscape deep in the Grand Canyon for centuries. This remoteness creates many obstacles for residents and visitors alike. The United States Postal Service office in Supai transports all mail in and out of the canyon by mule train. Everything must make the 8 mile trek in and out of the village either by foot, on horseback.

The Havasupai tribe’s reservation is at the end of Route 18 off historic Route 66. It consists of 188,077 acres of canyon land and broken plateaus abutting the western edge of the Grand Canyons South Rim. The tribe is known for its location, traditional cultural life, beautiful arts and crafts, and peach orchards.

Of all the tribal nations affiliated with the Grand Canyon, the Havasupai are the only ones who continue to live deep within the canyon. The Havasupai consider themselves the keepers and guardians of the Grand Canyon. The Supai were nomads who farmed alongside perennial streams in the summer, and hunted and gathered in the winter. During the summer they built wickiups, brush and mud-covered shelters, at the bottom of Havasu Canyon. Here they irrigated crops of squash, corn, beans, calabashes, sunflower seeds, melons, peaches, and apricots. They also gathered wild native plants such as agave, grass seeds and pinon nuts.

In the winter they moved up to the plateau and found shelter in wickiups and caves, where they subsisted on wild plants and hunted deer and small game, and on occasion, mountain sheep and black bear. Official Havasupai Tribe site

Left: Havasupai basket maker; below: unique blue green water near Supai (photos courtesy Grand Canyon Trust)
The Lenape Nation, also called the Leni Lenape, Lenni Lenape and Delaware people, are from the Northeastern Woodlands of the United States and Canada. Their historical territory included present day New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania along the Delaware River watershed, New York City, western Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley. Today, Lenape people belong to the Delaware Nation and Delaware Tribe of Indians in Oklahoma; the Stockbridge-Munsee Community in Wisconsin; and the Munsee-Delaware Nation, Moravian of the Thames First Nation, and Delaware of Six Nations in Ontario.

The Lenape were skilled in beadwork and ribbonwork. The eighteenth century Lenape developed new decorative techniques using beads which were trade items. These often replaced quillwork and other ornamentation. The beadwork found on skirts and leggings of the Lenape is considered typical of the Woodlands as a whole although each tribe developed their own patterns. Another special clothing item was turkey feather capes worn by both men and women.

The Lenape were often called the “Grandfathers” because they were respected by other tribes as peacemakers and often served to settle disputes between rivaling tribes. They were also known for being fierce and tenacious warriors when they had to fight, however, they preferred to be peaceful.
Lenape/Delaware Ribbonwork and Beadwork

Read more about Lenape/Delaware ribbonwork and beadwork here.
The Menominee, an Algonkian-speaking people, are the only present-day tribe in Wisconsin whose origin story indicates they have always lived in Wisconsin. The Menominee refer to themselves as Mamaceqtaw (pronounced ma-ma-chay-tau), meaning “the people.” Other Indian people called them Menominee (also spelled Menomini), derived from menomin -- an Algonkian word for wild rice -- because it is a major food source for the tribe. The Menominee lived around Green Bay when the French explorer Jean Nicolet arrived there in 1634. Prior to the coming of the French, the Menominee settled in village sites at the mouth of the Menominee River. Their main village, called Menekaunee, was located near present-day Marinette, Wisconsin.

Botanically, wild rice differs from common rice, and is actually a cereal grass that grows in shallow lakes and streams, ripening in late summer. While the range of wild rice stretches from Manitoba to Florida, the most prolific stands are located in the upper Great Lakes of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Today Wisconsin has seventy major rice fields in thirteen counties. The grain usually begins to ripen in sections of the Wolf and Wisconsin rivers before lakeside areas are ready to be harvested. Menominee women harvested wild rice from their canoes.

Wild rice was a valuable item for barter during the fur trade era. Carrying only limited supplies, traders, explorers, and missionaries depended on Indians for food. The virtual imperishability of wild rice helped to stave off famine and made it an invaluable source of food during the long winters.

Menominee men hunted deer and fished intensively, especially for sturgeon [pictured, above], a very large fish found in the Great Lakes. Menominee Indians tapped trees for maple syrup like Wisconsinites do today. [Official Menominee Tribe site](#).
The Zuni people have lived in the American Southwest for thousands of years. Their cultural and religious traditions are rooted, in large part, in the people’s deep and close ties to the mountains, river ways, forests, and deserts of this ancient Zuni homeland. Primarily being farmers, the Zuni people raise maize and wheat and engage in jewelry making. It has become an important additional source of income for the people. Traditional Zuni life is oriented around a matrilineal clan system and a complex ceremonial system based on a belief in the ancestors (ancient ones). There are six specialized esoteric groups, each with restricted membership and its own priesthood, devoted to the worship of a particular group of super-naturals. During the well-known Shalako Festival, held in early winter, dancers representing the couriers of the rain deities come to bless new homes. One way the Zuni people express these cultural traditions is through their art: in painting, pottery, jewelry, and fetish carving, for example. These things have significant meaning, and, to the Zuni, serve to help unite the past with the present. In this way, Zuni art is a material record of the past.

Eldred Lesansee, Associate Deputy Director of AVSO, is a member of the Pueblo of Zuni. The Zuni Pueblo is an area in New Mexico on the Zuni River and encompasses approximately 700 square miles with a population of over 10,000 people. The Zuni were expert farmers, raising corn, beans, and squash, as well as cotton and tobacco. Zuni men hunted deer, antelope, and small game, while women gathered nuts, fruits, and herbs. Favorite Zuni recipes included hominy, corn balls, baked beans, soups, and different types of cornbread. Eldred recalls his favorite recipe, Pueblo posole stew, with red hot chili.

The Shalako ceremony, which is performed in December, is one of the most important events in the Zuni religious calendar. Six men wear wooden frames ten feet tall covered with dance kilts and topped with masks of the face of Shalako, a deity or diving being. They dance throughout the night, embodying the spirits and visiting specific houses in the Zuni Pueblo. The next day a ritual race is performed during which offering sticks are planted in the ground to bring general health and fertility to the village, its crops, and livestock. Along with religion, the Zuni’s unique language is a powerfully unifying force among tribal members.

In addition to their unique language, the Zuni are famous for the unmatched beauty and craftsmanship of their silver and turquoise jewelry, characterized by stone inlays, animal shapes, and bold use of color. The Zuni are also known for their intricately painted pottery, kachina dolls (representations of spiritual beings), baskets, rugs, and small animal carvings known as fetishes. Fetishes are hand-carved out of stone or other natural materials and can take several hours to complete. Zuni children learn traditional artistry from their elders, and in this way, the skills are handed down to each generation. In fact, today the Zuni tribal council estimates that up to 80% of all Zuni families earn at least part of their income through the arts, an indication of how important it is to the Zuni to keep their culture intact.

Pueblo of Zuni Official Site
Tlingit “People of the Tides”

Pronounced TLIN-git” or “KLIN-kit” in English, the Tlingit Indians are the northernmost of the Northwest coast Indians in North America and comprise about 10,000 people in 16 communities inhabiting the green, mountainous islands and coastal lands of southeast Alaska from Yakutat Bay in the north to Ketchikan in the south. As a maritime climate, this region is known for its rainy climate and vast system of waterways. Indeed, the waters were the highways for the Tlingit people and other native tribes, like the Haida. Anyone who has ever spent time in Southeast Alaska knows how unrelenting and harsh the rain can be—but in equal measure—how stunningly beautiful the region is, especially when the sun comes out.

Well-suited to their watery environment, the Tlingit traversed their lands in large canoes of red cedar, masterpieces of efficiency and ingenuity, averaging sixty feet in length. As seafaring people, the Tlingit were also expert fishermen, catching halibut, salmon, herring and cod with harpoons, nets, and bone fishhooks. Seal, clams, shellfish, fish eggs, berries, and venison were also dietary staples.

The clothing of the Tlingit people was well adapted to their climate. Raincoats made of cedar bark and spruce roots were common, and many of their distinct clothing styles are considered an art form. The Chilkat robe is considered a symbol of Tlingit culture. These robes received their name from the Chilkat clan, a group of people noted for their incredible talent in weaving. Crafted from mountain goat wool and cedar bark strips, these pieces often feature the emblem of a person’s clan.

Tlingit society is divided into two groups called moieties. Each Tlingit person is either a Raven or an Eagle (in the northeastern area the moieties are called Crow and Wolf). Under each of the moieties are numerous clans, and within each village are numerous houses. Each house consists of an extended family under one animal name. These people, amounting to a population of forty to fifty, often lived together in a large, cedar-planked house. A Tlingit person always inherits the moiety, clan, and house membership of his or her mother.

The distinctive art of the Tlingit is reflective of their culture, ancestry, and collective histories. Carving is by far the largest example of Tlingit artwork seen, with totem poles being the most recognized art form seen. The figures featured on totem poles are comparable to family crests, featuring animals such as bears, killer whales, and eagles.

The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska is a tribal government representing over 32,000 Tlingit and Haida Indians worldwide. Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska official site
“The Tlingit people were first chased from their lands by advancing ice coming down Tarr Inlet, said to have been at the pace of a running dog! They retreated into Icy Straits and settled in several different locations. The community of Huna represented one of these new Tlingit homes. When the ice retreated north during a two hundred year period of time, relieving the land of its massive weight, and enabling the ground to rebound between 19 and 22 feet, the Huna Tlingit watched and waited. In the early 1900’s when they thought of returning to their ancestral land, it had already been declared a National Park. During the last 100 years the thought of reclaiming the land and honoring the ancestors has remained constant.

“Today, this long-awaited dream is represented by the completion of Xunaa Shuká Hít, roughly translated as "Huna Ancestor’s House." Originally, the building was constructed to honor the Huna Clans’ tie to Glacier Bay as a homeland. It has developed into much more. The house now symbolizes reconciliation, an ongoing theme for indigenous peoples, and represents communication between the clans of the Huna Tlingit and the National Park Service.

“As guests we witnessed the dedication of a Big House to four clans: Wooshkeetaan (Shark Clan), Kaagwaataan (Wolf Clan), Chookaneidi (Porpoise Clan) and T’akteintaan (Kittiwake Clan). This event, happening inside the boundaries of Glacier Bay National Park, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for each of us. We are witnessing a beginning: a collaboration between Native Americans and our National Parks. Collaboration is about communicating synergistically. For Native peoples this is about the next seven generations and the future of those generations holding fast to the culture and life ways of the Tlingit people.”
Nez Perce: Nimiipuu
(“The People”)

The Nez Perce Reservation rests in north central Idaho surrounded by the Snake, Salmon and Clearwater Rivers. Historically their homeland covered roughly 16 million acres in parts of what are now Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The Treaty of 1855 reduced that to 7.5 million acres and the subsequent discovery of gold caused the government to reduce it again to 770,000 acres, Idaho’s largest Indian reservation.

They called themselves the Nimiipuu, meaning “The People.” That term is again becoming more commonly used. Nez Perce was the name given them by French Canadian fur trappers in the 18th century. Today, the Nez Perce Tribe is a federally recognized tribal nation with more than 3,500 citizens.

Horse Breeding: It’s believed the Nimiipuu were the first tribe to selectively breed horses for specific traits and these horses, the appaloosas, were highly prized and greatly cared for. Lewis and Clark compared them to “the best blooded horses of Virginia.” They are now the State Horse of Idaho. Jake Whiteplume is the Horse Coordinator for the tribe. “We’re known for breeding good horses. We want to adhere to the highly selective breeding practices we were known for, going back in time.”

As inhabitants of the high plateau region between the Rocky Mountains and the coastal mountain system, the Nez Perce are considered to be Plateau Indians. Historically, as one of the easternmost Plateau groups, they also were influenced by the Plains Indians just east of the Rockies. Like other members of this culture area, Nez Perce domestic life traditionally centered on small villages located on streams having abundant salmon, which, dried, formed their main source of food. They also sought a variety of game, berries, and roots. Their dwellings were communal lodges, A-framed and mat-covered, varying in size and sometimes housing as many as 30 families.

After they acquired horses early in the 18th century, life for the Nez Perce began to change dramatically, at least among some groups. Horse transport enabled them to mount expeditions to the eastern slope of the Rockies, where they hunted bison and traded with Plains peoples, adopting many war honors, war dances, and battle tactics common to the Plains, as well as other forms of equestrian material culture such as the tepee. The Nez Perce built up one of the largest horse herds on the continent. They were almost unique among Native Americans in conducting a selective breeding program, and they were instrumental in creating the Appaloosa breed.

Above: Nez Perce horse riders on an Appaloosa with beaded, fringed blankets. 
Left: Nez Perce Otter Fur Arrow Quiver
Grand champion traditional Nimilpuu dancer, cúulum kuckuc (Little Bull) Herschel Cellilo Williamson. (Photo Nez Perce Tourism)
Mesa Verde is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and national park located in Montezuma County, Colorado. The park protects some of the best-preserved Ancestral Puebloan archaeological sites in the United States.

Established by Congress and President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the park occupies 52,485 acres near the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. With more than 5,000 sites, including 600 cliff dwellings, it is the largest archaeological preserve in the United States. Mesa Verde (Spanish for "green table") is best known for structures such as Cliff Palace, thought to be the largest cliff dwelling in North America.  

[cont’d next page]
The Basketmaker culture of the pre-Ancestral Puebloans began about 1500 BC and continued until about AD 500 with the beginning of the Pueblo I Era. The southwestern culture was named "Basketmaker" for the large number of baskets found at archaeological sites of 3,000 to 2,000 years ago.

The cultural groups of this period include:

- **Ancestral Puebloans** - southern Utah, southern Colorado, northern Arizona and northern and central New Mexico
- **Hohokam** - southern Arizona
- **Mogollon** - southeastern Arizona, southern New Mexico and northern Mexico
- **Patayan** - western Arizona, California and Baja California

Starting c. 7500 BC Mesa Verde was seasonally inhabited by a group of nomadic Paleo-Indians known as the Foothills Mountain Complex. The variety of projectile points found in the region indicates they were influenced by surrounding areas, including the Great Basin, the San Juan Basin, and the Rio Grande Valley.

Later, Archaic people established semi-permanent rock shelters in and around the mesa. By 1000 BC, the Basketmaker culture emerged from the local Archaic population, and by 750 AD the Ancestral Puebloans had developed from the Basketmaker culture.

The Mesa Verdeans survived using a combination of hunting, gathering, and subsistence farming of crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They built the mesa’s first pueblos sometime after 650, and by the end of the 12th century, they began to construct the massive cliff dwellings for which the park is best known. By 1285, following a period of social and environmental instability driven by a series of severe and prolonged droughts, they abandoned the area and moved south to locations in Arizona and New Mexico, including Rio Chama, Pajarito Plateau, and Santa Fe.

AUDIO TOUR: “Welcome to this special place. My name is TJ Atsy. I am a Park Ranger here at Mesa Verde and I am Laguna Pueblo, a direct descendant of the people who used to live here.”
Mesa Verde

Spiritual Meaning of the Spiral

The spiral is a highly complex and powerful symbol. For many cultures, the spiral is the great creative force, representing growth and expansion. It denotes fertility and the dynamic aspect of all things. It is associated with the web of life. It symbolizes the realms of existence, the various modalities of being and the wanderings of the soul in manifestation. The spiral is connected with the center as the power of life. It represents the path from external materialism to internal awareness and authenticity. Ultimately, the spiral represents the awareness of the self and the expansion of awareness outwards. It is a highly recognized symbol of the spiritual journey.

According to a discovery archeologists made while studying Mesa Verde earlier this year, the Pueblo people created rock carvings in the Mesa Verde region of the Southwest United States about 800 years ago to mark the position of the sun on the longest and shortest days of the year.

Panels of ancient petroglyphs on canyon walls in the region show complex interactions of sunlight and shadows. These interactions can be seen in the days around the winter and summer solstices, when the sun reaches its southernmost and northernmost points, respectively, and, to a lesser extent, around the equinoxes — the "equal nights" — in spring and fall, the researchers said.

The spiral is one of the oldest symbols used by humans. It appeared thousands of years ago in southwestern Native American tribal areas on cave walls and on ancient pottery.

Spirals to the Zunis and Pueblos represent water, wind and creatures associated with water such as snails and serpents.

INDIGENOUS WISDOM CURRICULUM PROJECT

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has created a learning experience for Pueblo children K-12. The Indigenous Wisdom curriculum project provides teachers with educational plans for K–12 students (download curriculum here) to learn about Pueblo culture and history. This Pueblo-based curriculum aims to strengthen the identity of Native American children in New Mexico by providing comprehensive K–12 unit plans on the complex political, social, cultural, and economic history of the Pueblo nations of New Mexico between 1912 and 2012.
On June 29, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt established Mesa Verde National Park to "preserve the works of man," the first national park of its kind. Today, the continued preservation of both cultural and natural resources is the focus of the park’s research and resource management staff.

- **People**: Learn about the Ancestral Pueblo people who lived at Mesa Verde over 700 years ago.
- **Places**: Cultural information on Mesa Verde’s cliff dwellings and mesa top sites.
- **Stories**: A Mesa Verde National Park Timeline.
- **Collections**: Information on the park’s artifact and archival collections.
- **Preservation**: Mesa Verde preserves nearly 5,000 archeological sites. Learn about some of the ways the park’s archeological program manages and protects these sites for current and future generations.
- **Preserving Cliff Palace**: Cliff Palace, the largest cliff dwelling in the park, inspires visitors to imagine what life was like over seven hundred years ago. But the task of preserving this nearly eight century old site has its challenges as well as its rewards. Learn about the current conservation and stabilization project of this magnificent ancient structure.

### About the photographer

**Daniel Boits** is on a mission to explore the Rocky Mountains and spends most weekends hiking throughout Colorado. His recent journey to Mesa Verde back in September is captured in the photos used for this article.

**Q: Why do you enjoy hiking so much?**

A: It gives me a true sense of peace and serenity. It makes me feel less confrontational with the world and it’s like a Zen experience. For me, it gives me the feeling that regardless of our daily stresses, the world is okay, everything’s going to be all right. I can step away from the anxiety of life for awhile. It’s like getting a good night’s sleep and feeling refreshed physically and spiritually. When I return from a day of hiking, I feel ready to tackle life’s daily challenges. I truly believe everybody needs a way to do this, whether it’s reading a book in a park or taking a stroll along a river. We all need to find ways to experience the healing power of nature.”
Opportunities for Connection with Mesa Verde

**Mesa Verde Museum Association**: MVMA is a nonprofit partner that inspires life-long learning and supports the interpretive, educational, and research activities of Mesa Verde National Park. Books, maps, videos, park guides, trail guides, and other materials can be found in their retail stores and on their website. Proceeds support the park.

**Mesa Verde Foundation**: MVF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Mesa Verde National Park. Their website contains information on the foundation and their current projects and events.

**Volunteer in the Park**: Interested in volunteering? Volunteer opportunities at Mesa Verde vary according to the season and the individual’s skills and interests.
Words into Action

By Teresa Stella, J.D.

November is a time of powerful words. The value of the spoken word is immeasurable. Spoken words are motivators and teachers, offering different perspectives to consider, creating new thoughts and ideas. Earlier this month, we heard thought provoking words from Interior department leaders across the nation during the presentation for Native American Heritage Month (view recording here). The words were powerful and engaging — speaking of healing the past, engaging the federal community with Native American and Alaska Native communities in a cooperative and supportive way, moving forward in ways that build trust, while understanding and respecting the path that led us to where we are today.

It is good for all of us to hear these words each November -- to feel motivated to continue to learn and to re-commit ourselves to being open to different viewpoints.

The New Year is upon us and it brings a new opportunity to take these powerful November words and put them into action. The opportunities we as federal employees have to do this are limitless throughout the year — when we see a grant opportunity arise, is there a way for it to support the Native American or Alaska Native communities we work with? Do we know where to find matching funds for those grants so tribes receive all of the benefit of the grant opportunity without any of the financial burden? As leaders and heads of agencies, when we see educational opportunities for our employees to learn what our federal trust responsibility is to Native American and Alaska Natives, can we send an email out to all of our staff members, encouraging the federal family to learn about and engage with tribal communities?

Is there an opportunity to engage tribal youth in a federal internship program where the learning that comes from that internship will support a tribal community and lend itself to building trust and understanding in the future? The opportunities are there for us all year long, we only need to be open to seeing the possibilities.

Each November is a time for us to reflect and to learn from the past. Each new year is a time to create change for the better. Let’s take the powerful words of November and look for ways to put them into powerful, positive action in the new year.

About the author:

Teresa Stella has been living and working in Indian Country since 2004 and in federal service as a public servant since 2007. She holds an undergraduate degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (emphasizing American Indian Studies, Environment and Ecology, and Media Production) and a J.D. with an emphasis in Federal Indian Law and Environmental Law.
Interconnectedness

By Tahirih Varner, MSCM
Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioner, CADR

When I was eleven my family moved from Atlanta, Georgia to Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. There were lots of new things I had to adapt to, like people leaving their butter out on the counter rather than in the refrigerator safe from definite melting; ketchup chips; and trick-or-treating in the snow. There was also an incredible new culture that I had the privilege of experiencing in the indigenous community there that welcomed me so warmly.

Growing up in the south, all I knew of Native Americans were the questionable tales I learned in school about the inception of Thanksgiving. I was probably seven or eight years old before I met a Native American person and realized they weren’t extinct along with the pilgrims. There were not many indigenous people in Georgia at the time, which I sadly learned later was due largely to the Trail of Tears. In British Columbia, however, I lived on or near First Nations reservations for about seven years and hold some of the most cherished relationships and memories of my life from that time.

I observed a culture that provided a sense of purpose far more meaningful than the superficial, material pursuits that seemed to dominate most others’ lives. I met people my age with so much respect for their elders, dignity, pride and somehow simultaneous humility. I witnessed a culture that was rich and alive in its ancient traditions; and a community that despite all of the hardship, harassment and discrimination it continued to endure could welcome outsiders into their folds with a profound sense of connection and spiritual understanding that indeed there are no outsiders.

You see, in addition to all I grew to learn and love about the Northwest Coast Indigenous cultures, I also had the fortune of meeting and later being ceremonially adopted by a Lakota family that moved to the area the same time that my family did. They taught me the significance of the Lakota phrase, Mitákuye Oyás’íŋ, which means “all my relations” or “all are related.” This is a world view and deep understanding shared by many indigenous cultures of the interconnectedness of all human beings, living creatures, and really of all existence. This wasn’t just something they said, it was truly how they lived.

From left to right: My adopted sister Jelana Bighorn, myself, and my adopted cousin Kimimila Locke. We performed fancy shawl powwow dancing in a local Bighouse after our friends shared some of their Coast Salish songs and dances with us.
Spotlight on Embracing Others (Continued)

The Bighorns (my adopted family) taught me that in the Lakota culture the way you determine your wealth is not by the material possessions you amass in your lifetime, but by the number of people you can call family. The level of care, consideration, love and respect afforded in familial relationships is the greatest attainment of this life, so the goal is to reach that kind of connection with as many people as possible. One practice that grew from this is the ceremonial adoption of people that you reach that level of connection with, or of their children. This is not done lightly though, because it is sort of like a marriage in that it brings the entirety of the families together and makes both of them twice as large and wealthy.

I think my family back home in Georgia understood this concept too, which is why I, and many African Americans, call far more people Auntie, Uncle, and play cousin than is biologically probable. I imagine this is true of many cultures. Nonetheless, I am infinitely grateful for my adopted family and all I continue to learn from them, and I truly believe that if more people approached life with the understanding of Mitákuye Oyás’íŋ, we would all be a lot better off.

Lakota Prayer of Mitákuye Oyás’íŋ

To the Creator, for the ultimate gift of life, I thank you.

To the mineral nation that has built and maintained my bones and all foundations of life experience, I thank you.

To the plant nation that sustains my organs and body and gives me healing herbs for sickness, I thank you.

To the animal nation that feeds me from your own flesh and offers your loyal companionship in this walk of life, I thank you.

To the human nation that shares my path as a soul upon the sacred wheel of Earthly life, I thank you.

To the Spirit nation that guides me invisibly through the ups and downs of life and for carrying the torch of light through the Ages, I thank you.

To the Four Winds of Change and Growth, I thank you.

You are all my relations, my relatives, without whom I would not live. We are in the circle of life together, co-existing, co-dependent, co-creating our destiny. One, not more important than the other. One nation evolving from the other and yet each dependent upon the one above and the one below. All of us a part of the Great Mystery.

Thank you for this Life.
Four Lakota Values

From Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center

Wacantognaka, the Lakota word for generosity, means to contribute to the well-being of one's people and all life by sharing and giving freely. This sharing is not just of objects and possessions, but of emotions like sympathy, compassion, kindness. It also means to be generous with one's personal time. The act of giving and not looking for anything in return can make you a better person and make you happy.

No matter what race or nationality or tribe, people have found when you reach out to help others in your community, you become less focused on yourself and more in harmony with the world.

Wotitakuye, or kinship, is one of the important values coming from the tiyospaye, the extended family. It includes the ideas of living in harmony, belonging, relations as the true wealth and the importance of trusting in others. It is one of the values that made the tiyospaye work.

Family is the measure of your wealth. They will support you in good times and in bad times. For a Lakota, you belong to a tiyospaye through birth, marriage or adoption. Your family even extends out to your band and the whole Lakota nation. Whenever you travel somewhere, you can expect to be welcomed and supported as if you were in your own immediate family.

Wacintaka, or fortitude, means facing danger or challenges with courage, strength and confidence. Believing in oneself allows a person to face challenges. Fortitude includes the ability to come to terms with problems, to accept them and to find a solution that is good for everyone.

One of the first lessons a Lakota child learned in the old days was self-control and self-restraint in the presence of parents or adults. Mastery and abilities came from games and creative play. Someone more skilled than oneself was viewed as a role model, not as a competitor. Striving was for achieving a personal goal, not for being superior to one's opponent. Success was a possession of the many, not of the few.

Fortitude may require patience, perseverance and strength of mind in the face of challenges. It involves having confidence in oneself and the courage to continue even when all odds are against you. Fear still exists, but you proceed in spite of fear.

Woksape - Wisdom: The knowledge and wisdom of old people is very important for the well-being of the Lakota people. This is understood to be something sought and gained over the course of one's entire life, but not just by adding years to one's life.

Wisdom has to do with understanding the meaning within natural processes and patterns. It means knowing the design and purpose of life.

It also has to do with understanding and living the spiritual values and beliefs upon which one's culture is founded and being able to share these with others. Wisdom means being able to incorporate the sacred way of life into one's own life and to respect and honor all life. It means being open to the dreams of the day and the night when spiritual direction may come to a receptive child or adult seeking wisdom.

Above: Warrior Spirit by Robert Freeman, Luiseno/Santee
A completely self-taught artist, Robert Freeman’s creative talent is vastly diversified. His work encompasses realism, abstractionism, cubism, impressionism, portraiture, cartoons and murals.
Hi! If you’re interested in participating in this year’s Combined Federal Campaign but are having difficulty selecting a charity, take a look at CFC’s search function—it allows searches by words and geographic areas. For example, we did a few searches on “Native American” and other similar words and were delighted to see there are many organizations out there that are providing much-needed services to communities in Indian Country.

Please try it yourself! Thank you!

- Your CFC Keyworkers

Ready to give? It’s so easy to show you care: Just click on the link!

givecfc.org

CFC Campaign ends January 15, 2021
About the Special Emphasis Program

Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) are implemented and observed throughout the Department of the Interior primarily to ensure that all are provided an equal opportunity in all aspects of employment. These programs encourage employees to appreciate, value, understand, and celebrate social and cultural similarities and differences.

The Administrative Services Special Emphasis Program Team publishes *Connections* magazine to coincide with each monthly commemoration.

We would be delighted to have you be a part of our efforts by:

- Shaping subject matter for each magazine
- Creating and submitting content
- Participating in and hosting virtual observances and informal discussions
- Celebrating diversity with family, friends and co-workers

*To get started, please send an email here and a team member will contact you. Thank you sincerely for your interest!*

Connections Magazine
Native American Heritage Month
November 2020

*On the cover: Deb Haaland, Member of Congress*

*The Special Emphasis Program Magazine is a collaborative initiative of the DOI Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Administrative Services, and the DOI Office of Civil Rights. Your input is essential to making this a valuable resource for all employees. Please feel free to share your ideas, suggestions and articles/pictures with editor Steve Carlisle by emailing Stephen_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov.*

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