



**Princess Ulele  
returns in Tampa**  
COMMUNITY ♦ 5A



**Tribe a big hit with  
students in Rome**  
EDUCATION ♦ 1B



**Ozzy Osceola leaves  
OHS with good memories**  
SPORTS ♦ 5B

# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

www.seminoletribune.org • Free

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## Casinos begin to reopen

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Emerson, Lake & Palmer wasn't there to greet customers, but their lyrics would have been appropriate for the reopening of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. "Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends. We're so glad you could attend; come inside, come inside."

The Tampa venue, like all in the Hard Rock/Seminole Gaming family, closed March 20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tampa's doors remained closed until the evening of May 21 when the casino and hotel reopened with a bevy of new precautions aimed at keeping customers and staff safe.

"Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming have made a tremendous commitment to sanitary protocols and a safety-first mentality for both guests and team members," Jim Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming and Chairman of Hard Rock International, said in a statement prior to the reopening. "We are making sure our resorts are safe and sound so our guests and team members have peace of mind when they return."

♦ See CASINOS on page 4A

## Chief DiPetrillo remembered for nearly 50 years of service to Broward, Tribe

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Donald DiPetrillo, who served the Seminole Tribe of Florida as its fire chief since 2008 and had worked for fire departments in Broward County for nearly 50 years, died April 30 at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood. He was 70.

William Latchford, executive director of public safety for the Seminole Tribe, fondly remembered Chief DiPetrillo for his



A Seminole Tribe ambulance carrying the casket of Seminole Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo is saluted by the department during the chief's funeral procession at Lauderdale Memorial Park in Fort Lauderdale. Chief DiPetrillo died April 30. He had served STOF as chief since 2008.

dedication and demeanor. "Don played a major role in bringing

Tribune file photo

Seminole Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo.

a new level of professionalism to the Fire Department operations of Seminole Fire Rescue," Latchford said in a statement from the Tribe. "Chief DiPetrillo understood that success in life was about just being nice. If you care for people, the rest takes care of itself. His care, commitment, and leadership

for over 50 years of service, helped shape the future of the fire service, not only within the Seminole Tribe, but also in the State of Florida."

♦ See CHIEF on page 7A

## From home, Battiest brothers provide inspiration to Indian Country

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — Nine years ago endurance and perseverance — both firmly imbedded in the fiber of the unconquered Seminole Tribe — were core traits that Spencer Battiest and "Doc Native" Battiest incorporated in their award-winning song "The Storm." The brothers from the Hollywood Reservation have performed it several times since its debut, but their virtual rendition in May amid the COVID-19 pandemic served as a timely and well-needed reminder of survival during difficult times.

"We can overcome. We can get through this together. I dedicate this to all my Native people. Stay strong and we will weather the storm," Doc states at the start of "The Storm: Live From Home" video.

Inspired by other Native American artists who have been sharing their talents in online performances during the quarantine, Spencer and Doc decided they also wanted to be a source of inspiration and assurance in Indian Country; what better way to spread a positive message than through "The Storm," which honors the Seminole Tribe's history of triumph over tragedy.

"There is healing in music so we wanted to give our people some good medicine through our music and show our support with this performance. We are stronger together and we will get through this," Doc

said.

On May 12, their performance of "The Storm" — with the brothers providing vocals at their separate homes in Hollywood, Kazumi Shimokawa (piano) in Culver City, California, Joshua Daubin (percussion) in Seal Beach, California, and Matt Beach (guitar) in Canton, Ohio — debuted on the Native American Music Awards YouTube channel. The five-minute video attracted more than 1,000 views within 48 hours.

"Both Doc and I have been inspired the past few weeks by all artists who have not let this virus stop their creativity or keep them down," Spencer said. "We wanted to perform for our community and show that even in quarantine we are all in this together. I pray this song and message of our Tribe's history inspires hope and reminds us that although we are going through a difficult time right now, we will all be together again soon. Our hearts are with those who have lost loved ones and with the first responders who are fighting to keep us all safe."

"The Storm" is an incredibly passionate and powerful vocal and visual delivery that inspires and empowers," said Ellen Bello, president of the Native American Music Awards.

With the band members isolated in three different parts of the country, putting together a video virtually was a challenge that the band was happy to tackle.

"One of the challenges getting this project together was just getting it done in a



Clockwise from left, "Doc Native" Battiest (vocals), Spencer Battiest (vocals), both in Hollywood; Joshua Daubin (percussion) in Seal Beach, California; Matt Beach (guitar) in Canton, Ohio; and Kazumi Shimokawa (piano) in Culver City, California, perform "The Storm." The virtual performance debuted May 12 on the Native American Music Awards' YouTube channel.

timely fashion because we all have different schedules and different time zones," Doc said. "Even in quarantine we're all working musicians, so to film, record, mix and video edit within the time frame we needed presented some pretty daunting hours trying to get this completed in the best quality that we could produce. Thankfully our team was up to the task."

The Native American Music Awards, Canada's National Arts Centre, Facebook, YouTube and other outlets have served as avenues to highlight virtual performances

Kevin Johnson

At left, "Doc Native" Battiest and Spencer Battiest perform at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood's new Hard Rock Live on Oct. 16, 2019.

from Native artists. Certainly, the quarantine has separated artists physically, but it's also brought them closer together online and provided additional exposure to the vast amount of talent in Indian Country.

"I've noticed that there has been an uptick in artists reaching out to one another and supporting each other's new projects," Doc said. "This situation has put us all in a bind and kind of tied us down to working in the studio because we can't go out and perform like we want to, so the next best thing is reaching out to collaborate with our peers and it's brought forth some beautiful music and some interesting collaborations that might have never happened if we were all still touring."

Spencer was supposed to perform this

spring in the musical "Distant Thunder" at Lyric Theatre in Oklahoma City, but the pandemic has pushed it back to March 31 to April 18, 2021. Meanwhile, Doc has enjoyed success with his new single "Instagram," which reached No. 1 for two weeks in a row on the Indigenous Angels Radio Deadly 10 countdown.

"[It] has quickly become one of my most streamed songs as a solo artist to date," Doc said.

Spencer and Doc aren't just performers; they're also big fans of the talent they've seen during the quarantine, including beyond the borders of music.

♦ See MUSIC on page 7A



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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org)

# Editorial

## An Irish filmmaker's firsthand experience with the goodness of the Navajo people

• Kevin McCann

*Editor's note: Kevin McCann, who runs the Irish film production company Maccana Teoranta, reached out to IrishCentral this month after news of Irish donations to Native American communities amidst the coronavirus crisis began to go viral. This is his story of his firsthand experience with the goodness of Native Americans.*

This month, tens of thousands of Irish people are donating to a \$5 million fund-raising campaign to help the Navajo and Hopi tribes battling the Coronavirus. Irish donors see this as the time for a long-overdue payback for the gift of \$170 sent by the Choctaw Tribe to Ireland during the Famine. As I have seen with my own eyes the goodness of the Navajo people, I have a personal reason for donating.

As an Irish writer and filmmaker interested in telling a story about Native America, I was aware of their similar history to Ireland in terms of colonization and cultural oppression but knew very little about who they are today. And so to find out more, I went on a camping adventure last October to Navajo Nation, a land reservation the same size as the Irish Republic - just east

of the Grand Canyon.

Before our trip, my partner Máiní and I met with a Navajo filmmaker in Los Angeles named Pamela Peters. She kindly suggested people we could interview and spoke of Native America's struggle for recognition. Pamela warned us about the apprehension towards 'white people' making films about them because of misrepresentations and skewed narratives - similar to objectionable Irish stereotypes and revisionism.

Our trip would coincide with the Western Navajo Fair, the last tribal festival of the year. We packed our rented car with camping gear and enough snacks for a week. We left LA at daybreak and drove east for 10 hours. At Flagstaff, Arizona (on Route 66), we filled up with gas before heading northeast. The sun set behind us as we crossed the border into the reservation at a dusty plain called Wolf Crossing. We pitched our tent at the remote Hopi Cultural Center under October's harvest moon.

The next day, after visiting a Hopi Tribal museum and nearby crumbling villages, I discovered that I had lost our wallet. We were in a very remote area with poor phone coverage and \$20 in cash. Rather than return to LA, we had faith and decided to 'plough on.' The full tank of gas took us to Tuba City - population 8,611.

Our eyes lit up when we saw 'Hogan'

in majestic bright letters over the door of a hotel. As Irish people, we thought we were home and dry with that name. However, in the Navajo language, 'hogan' means 'house'. But all was not lost. The Western Navajo Fair hadn't started yet and they had a couple of tent spaces to rent - and we had enough to pay for a night.

The lobby computer at 'Hogan's Hotel' became a part-time office as we figured out a solution. Pamela, the Navajo filmmaker back in LA, was now our only point of contact and helped to arrange interviews. Hearing our predicament, she paid for a meal for us along with a second night at the campsite. That evening, the Hogan Restaurant served a beautiful meal with traditional blue corn bread (highly recommended) before the arrival of the Navajo Council Delegate and medicine man. Mention of the name Otto Tso was greeted with smiles and nods of respect. Soon after our meal, Otto came in and sat down opposite us in the booth. He wore a tribal necklace and traditional turquoise beads around his neck. We ordered some tea.

Half-way through our interview, the hotel porter came over and handed the key of Room 207 to Otto. He passed it over to us. He had kindly arranged for Máiní and me to stay that night in the hotel. We were happy camping and were initially reluctant to accept, but October nights in Arizona

are chilly enough. We didn't take much convincing. As the interview went on, I glanced at the key and was struck by this act of kindness. This man didn't know us. He was just helping strangers in trouble.

Otto told us that he lost his mother when he was 7 years old. A month before she died, she sat her only child down and instructed the young Otto to follow a meaningful path in life. As an adult, he joined the tribal council to serve his people.

"There are 572 Native American tribes recognised by the Federal Government and Navajo is the largest", he told us, "In my first term, we built a \$19 million sewerage scheme on the reservation. This year, it's infrastructure - building roads and fixing potholes."

Otto's eyes welled with tears when telling the Navajo story. We had seen those same tears when speaking with Pamela. In their eyes was the hurt of the native people. A hurt from an unhealed wound. A hurt that still allowed for compassion to strangers.

"The sun is our father and the earth is our mother." Otto told us, and with a smile added: "I like to tell people that our backyard is the Grand Canyon."

Before leaving, I took a photo of Otto and Máiní beneath a picture of a Navajo herdsman. The next day, Otto did us a final favour. I used the computer in the hotel

lobby to transfer money to his bank account and he met me at the hotel to give me cash. After our comfortable night in the hotel, we had enough money to enjoy our trip and get home. We were saved.

Over the next few days, we enjoyed the Western Navajo Fair - rodeos and rollercoasters mixed with pre-dawn ritual dances and tribal gatherings. Otto invited us to his home to meet the tribal council after the parade through Tuba City. We saw no other white people while we were there.

The Choctaw tribe whose ancestors gave Ireland the gift during the famine live in Oklahoma, another 1000 miles to the east. The love of community and wisdom in generosity seen in 1847 lives on to this day. Right now, Navajo Nation has one of the highest rates of Covid-19 infection and I am proud to join the tens of thousands of Irish donating to their fund-raising campaign.

*To donate to the Navajo and Hopi communities, who are struggling greatly through the coronavirus pandemic, visit the Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund or the Official Navajo Nation COVID-19 Relief Fund.*

*This article appeared in the Irish Times.*

## Long-term solutions will be needed for Navajo Nation

• Ronson Chee

The disproportionate high rates of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation (Nation) has recently made headlines at the world stage and has brought to light the lack of in-home sanitation facilities and lack of potable water infrastructure coverage.

This lack of this critical water infrastructure has been attributed as one of the primary reasons for the disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 cases on the Nation as many residents do not readily have access to the clean water needed for handwashing and other sanitary uses.

The lack of potable water infrastructure coverage on the Nation has been a long-standing issue prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and is also one of the primary underlying causes for the multitude of issues that plague the Nation such as high-poverty levels, low socio-economic status, lack of jobs, and other non-COVID-19 health disparities.

The influx of outside resources,

donations and support has been good for the Nation during this calamitous time, but unfortunately a lot of the aid is only satisfying the immediate needs and is a temporary "band-aid" fix that is not addressing the root of the problem.

After the COVID-19 cases reduce and headlines subside, the overall underlying problem still will not have been addressed.

The Nation will be able to put out this fire, but what about a potential second wave of COVID-19? A different pandemic? Drought? Climate change? Economic recessions? These potential disruptions will also be exacerbated if the root of the problem is not addressed.

A significant effort must be spent on long-term solutions. Left unaddressed, the Nation will leave itself vulnerable to the next social disruption. Fixing the underlying issues requires a call to action from the Nation's leaders and government departments to enact change.

The root cause for the lack of water infrastructure deficiencies on the Nation is the absence of a stable sustainable economy. As a sustainable economy is dependent

on a reliable potable water infrastructure to support it, so is a sustainable water infrastructure is dependent on a sustainable economy.

Water infrastructure and economic development must be planned together. You cannot have one without the other.

What is needed is an integrated planning framework for water infrastructure implementation that can balance economic development and health objectives. A Nation-wide global master planned approach driven by a common vision is needed to plan, design, and integrate all stakeholders and agencies.

The master planning must be led by the Nation and not an outside agency. This integrated planning framework must also involve input from the Navajo Nation Council as to which water infrastructure projects should be funded.

With project capital cost needs greatly exceeding available funding, not all projects can be constructed simultaneously. Thus, the Nation's leaders must decide which projects should be funded first and in a systematic manner, which is not an easy feat.

Eventually, the Nation needs to stop looking to outside resources to solve our problems.

We know what needs to be fixed, we know the issues better than anyone else. We live it, we know what it takes to haul water so why do we rely on outside people who have never hauled water a day in their life to solve our problems? Only the Navajo Nation can solve its own problems.

The Nation has the technical persons to address this problem. We have Navajo medical doctors, epidemiologist, water engineers and planners, accountants, lawyers, and experts in almost every field that can help solve these problems. The Nation must call on them, ask for help and put them to work.

A short paper is available summarizing some of key issues regarding the lack of water infrastructure on the Nation. It also provides some potential short- and long-term solutions. The paper can be found at <https://riley-eng.com/publications>. Feel free to contact me with questions and feedback at [ronson@riley-eng.com](mailto:ronson@riley-eng.com).



Ronson Chee

*Ronson Chee, Ph.D., P.E., is a water resources engineer and owner of Riley Engineering. He is on the board of directors for the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority.*

## New study shows decrease in diabetes prevalence for American Indian/Alaska Native adults

• Rear Adm. Michael Weahkee

The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Native adults decreased significantly from 2013 to 2017, according to a new study published in *BMJ Open Diabetes Research and Care*, a journal published by BMJ in partnership with the American Diabetes Association.

After years of increasing, the percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native adults with diabetes consistently decreased from 15.4% in 2013 to 14.6% in 2017. This represents a 5.2% decrease in prevalence, which is the percentage of people with a condition.

This study documents the first known decrease in diabetes prevalence for American Indian and Alaska Native people. The study was led by Ann Bullock, director of the IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, and included researchers from

the CDC Division of Diabetes Translation and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Imperial College London.

This substantial decrease in diabetes prevalence is great news for American Indian and Alaska Native people and communities. It means that fewer American Indian and Alaska Native people have to live with diabetes and its complications, such as heart disease and kidney failure, and may also result in reduced health care costs. In addition, as diabetes is a risk factor for severe COVID-19 disease, this improvement in the health status of Native people is especially welcome.

Other key findings from this peer-reviewed article based on data from IHS and tribal health facilities include:

Diabetes prevalence decreased for both men and women from 2013 to 2017 and for all

age groups studied starting in 2013 or 2014 through 2017.



Rear Adm. Michael Weahkee

Although results varied by geographic region, diabetes prevalence either decreased or leveled off in all regions.

Diabetes prevalence for American Indian and Alaska Native adults remained higher in 2017 than that seen in other studies of the general US adult population and other racial/ethnic groups.

Although it is not possible to determine specific reasons for these decreases, there are many potential contributors, including improvements in type 2 diabetes prevention services by IHS, tribal, and urban Indian health facilities. Key to these efforts is the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, commonly referred to as SDPI, which provides funding for type 2 diabetes prevention and diabetes treatment services to 301 programs in Native communities throughout the United States.

Diabetes prevalence in a population is primarily affected by diabetes diagnoses in a given time period and diabetes-related mortality. The decrease in prevalence seen in this study is especially noteworthy because it occurred at the same time that diabetes-related mortality in Native patients was also decreasing, suggesting the decrease was driven by fewer new cases of diabetes.

While we are encouraged by these positive outcomes, we know that there is still work to be done. The IHS will continue to include type 2 diabetes prevention and diabetes treatment among our highest priorities.

*Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee, an enrolled member of the Zuni Tribe, is director of the Indian Health Service. He administers a nationwide health care delivery program that is responsible for providing preventive, curative and community health care for approximately 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.*

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# Community



## Las Vegas rights purchase paves way for potential Hard Rock enhancement

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — Hard Rock International, known globally for its hotel, gaming, entertainment and restaurant venues, has struck a deal that could increase its presence in Las Vegas.

HRI announced May 13 that it has purchased all rights to the Hard Rock brand and related trademarks in Las Vegas from Juniper Capital. Juniper, a private equity firm, and other partners, including Virgin Hotels, purchased the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas in 2018 from Brookfield

Asset Management. The venue closed in February for renovations and is scheduled to open this fall as Virgin Hotels Las Vegas with Connecticut-based Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment managing the gaming side.

Thanks to the deal, HRI has additional growth opportunity in Las Vegas, which is home to a Hard Rock Cafe. HRI and its affiliates are no longer restricted from developing, owning, licensing, managing or operating any Hard Rock-branded casino and integrated resort within Clark County, Nevada, which includes Las Vegas. Additionally, HRI now has exclusive full rights to memorabilia, merchandise and

signage as well as intellectual property rights for affiliated restaurant and entertainment trademarks and website domain names.

"This agreement marks an exciting chapter for Hard Rock, in Las Vegas and beyond," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International, said in a statement. "We look forward to the opportunity of enhancing our presence in Las Vegas, which will always be one of the most iconic entertainment markets in the world."

Through ownership, licensing and/or management, Hard Rock has 262 locations — including casinos, hotels, Rock Shops and Cafes — in 76 countries.

## Vietnam War veteran Don Osceola, 77, remembered for teaching by example

*Believed to be first Native American in Florida to succumb to COVID-19*

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Vietnam War veteran Don Osceola, who grew up on the Big Cypress Reservation, passed away April 29 at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood from complications related to the coronavirus, according to a press release from the Seminole Tribe.

The Tribe said Osceola, hospitalized since April 17, is believed to be the first Native American in Florida to succumb to the disease. He had initially tested negative for COVID-19, then tested positive.

Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. President and U.S. Army veteran Mitchell Cypress said Osceola earned many medals and was often described as a "Little Audie Murphy" in reference to the World War II hero from Texas who was awarded 28 medals.

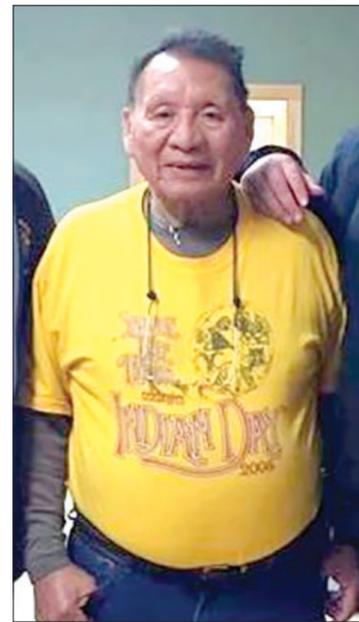
Osceola was born a Seminole and later became a member of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians when he married his first wife, Dorothy Billie, who was a Miccosukee. They had one child, Deanna.

Osceola graduated from Clewiston High School. He served in the U.S. Marines and was on active duty during the Vietnam War, where he earned the Purple Heart, one of many medals he received for meritorious service during the war.

Deanna said her dad told her his first few months in Vietnam were "really scary." His platoon came under fire more than once, she said, including one time when bullets were flying inches away from him. He earned a Purple Heart when a bullet hit the tip of his nose.

"He taught me by example that no matter how bad things are, as long as you're connected to the Creator, things will work out for the best," she said. "Under any stress or pressure, I always saw him calm. He also liked to learn a lot."

Osceola pursued theological studies



Don Osceola

STOF

in Gainesville and studied architecture at Florida International University in Miami. He worked for the National Park Service at Shark Valley in Everglades National Park. He was a police officer for the Miccosukee Tribe and also worked in the Tribe's housing department.

Following the death of his first wife, Dorothy, he married Mary Osceola, a member of the Seminole Tribe. They raised one son, Christian Osceola. Both survive him.

Funeral services were with the Akin-Davis Funeral Home of Clewiston.

## Seminole Commercial Cleaning provides vital services

BY AARON TOMMIE  
STOF Executive Management Trainee

Since the coronavirus pandemic has reached the United States, many companies and people have been negatively affected. As a result, heightened safety procedures are becoming the new normal throughout the country, especially within the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Seminole Commercial Cleaning and Maintenance Services of Florida, LLC (SCCMSF) was established as a business of Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. (STOFI) in 2012. Under the cleaning service company Jani-King International, it is a franchise that provides commercial cleaning services for facilities throughout the Seminole Tribe of Florida's reservations and some of their surroundings properties. Seminole Commercial Cleaning is a joint-partnership between STOFI and Premier Properties Cleaning (PPC), the latter which is responsible for conducting the operational aspects of the franchise.

"Over the years, Seminole Commercial Cleaning has grown to become a premier Native American-owned commercial facilities cleaning company," said Golden

Johansson, the Executive Director of Operations for STOFI.

Seminole Commercial Cleaning has over 100 employees who work in places that include Seminole Hard Rock Support Services, the Seminole Tribe of Florida's headquarters, various casinos, schools, water plants, and others places to provide janitorial services.

Its operational procedures have increased due to guidelines initiated by the CDC and trainings its employees have received from Jani-King's executives. These adjustments have allowed Seminole Commercial Cleaning to ensure that the properties it operates in meet standards that adequately combat the coronavirus. It also has EPA-approved disinfectants and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used to help the employees provide increased attention to commonly traversed and handled areas such as doorknobs and keyboards to help out.

"As businesses work towards reopening, we continue to receive requests for the electrostatic sprayer," said Johansson. "As more and more people try to go back to work and begin to try to get back to normal living, SCCMSF will continue to provide every tool available to ensure the safest possible facilities to return to."

Seminole Commercial Cleaning offers three options for disinfection:

### Electrostatic Spray Application

Electrostatic spray cleaning is the process of spraying an electrostatically charged mist onto surfaces and objects. As the chemical exits the electrostatic sprayer, it is given a positive electrical charge. The droplets then become attracted to all negative surfaces, completely covering the visible area, underside and backside, with the disinfectant. Proper PPE will be used when disinfecting.

### Non-electrostatic Spray Application

Equipment includes battery operated and pump sprayers that do NOT produce a positive charge. In this case, when the disinfectant chemical is sprayed on a surface and the dwell time is reached, the chemical must then be wiped from the surface. Proper PPE will be used when disinfecting.

### Manual Disinfection Application

Standard cleaners and water will be used to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product's label. Proper PPE will be used when disinfecting.

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# Hard Rock, Seminole Gaming provide grocery store gift cards to thousands of employees during pandemic

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — Putting food on the table during the COVID-19 pandemic became a little easier for furloughed Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming employees.

Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming distributed \$4.4 million in grocery store gift cards to about 22,000 team members in the U.S. and Canada who earn less than \$50,000 per year. The first round of distributions for the \$100 cards was May 1; round two came two weeks later.

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino



Seminole Hard Rock employee Bebe De Azevedo shows a Publix gift card and 16th anniversary pin that were given to team members in Hollywood on May 15.

Hollywood — whose massive expansion was open for only five months before being shut down in mid-March with all the other Seminole and Hard Rock properties due to the pandemic — handed out about 3,800 cards in round one. A similar number was expected for the second round.

Seminole Hard Rock made the process as festive as possible. During the May 15 distribution, a disc jockey — aka Hard Rock employee Will Otis — blasted rock music. Tribal member Jo-Lin Osceola, also a Hard Rock employee, held up signs of encouragement as a steady stream of vehicles rolled through three lanes in the valet area.

Employees remained in their vehicles and were greeted by Hard Rock personnel — all wearing protective face coverings. They handed out Publix gift cards and anniversary pins that commemorate the 16th anniversary of Hollywood's Hard Rock grand opening that occurred May 11, 2004. More than 600 vehicles came through in the first hour.

"It's been phenomenal," said Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood President Bo Guidry, who was in the middle of it all as he helped with the distributions. "Thank God we have Jim Allen as our CEO and the Tribal Council; they're so supportive of this. We're feeding so many of our families. Our employees have been out of work for over a month and a-half and this is a way for us to give back."

Although faces were covered, it was evident plenty of smiles were present on the giving and receiving ends.

"They're giving us signs like 'God Bless You,' and 'Can't Wait to Come Back to Work.' So everybody is excited," Guidry said.

A passenger in an SUV flashed a yellow sign with the words "Thank You Seminole Hard Rock. All is One."

Although no announcement had come yet as of press time on the reopening of the Hard Rock in Hollywood, its sister property in Tampa reopened its doors May 21.

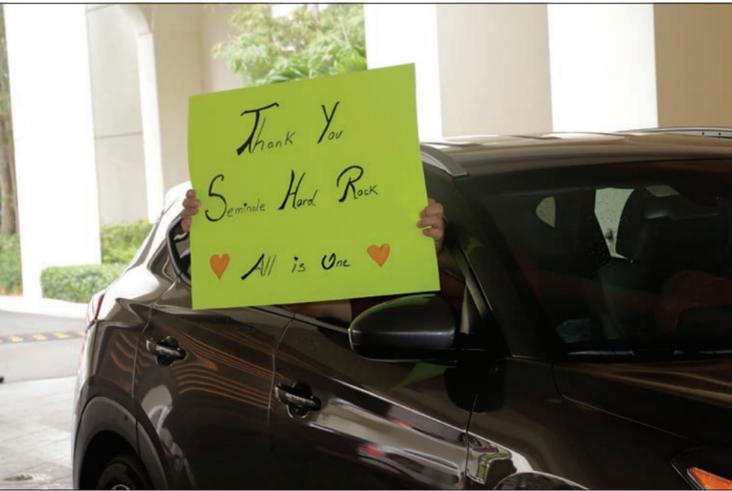
In addition to the gift cards, HRI and Seminole Gaming have provided more than \$27 million in payroll relief to employees during the COVID-19 crisis, including



Seminole Hard Rock employee and Tribal member Jo-Lin Osceola shows support for team members as they receive grocery store gift cards May 15 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.



Pablo Astarjian, director of food and beverage for Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, gives a friendly wave to a team member during the grocery store gift card distribution.



A passenger in a vehicle shows support for Seminole Hard Rock during its grocery store gift card giveaway to team employees.

continued health benefits to all team members.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida — the

parent entity of HRI and Seminole Gaming — has also provided a boost to furloughed employees on the tribal side through Publix

gift cards and continued health coverage.

## ♦ CASINOS From page 1A

The guidelines in Tampa under Hard Rock's "Safe and Sound" program include:

- Temperature checks for all guests and team members prior to entry. Any guest or team member with a temperature above CDC guidelines will not be allowed entry.
- A requirement that all guests wear masks or cloth face coverings that meet CDC guidelines, without exception. Masks will be provided to guests, as needed.

Thousands of alternating slot machines will be turned off, to help ensure social distancing on the casino floor.

New Plexiglas barriers will divide players at table games, poker games and customer service areas.

850 signs will be posted throughout the complex to encourage social distancing and help ensure adherence to "Safe and Sound" program guidelines.

More than 100 team members will be part of a new "Safe and Sound Clean Team" to focus on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces throughout the complex, with

special emphasis on high-touch surfaces and common areas.

Hand-sanitizing stations will be available on the casino floor, at the entrances and throughout the resort.

Constant purification and disinfecting of the air flowing into the complex through the AtmosAir bipolar ionization system designed to destroy virus particles in the air and on surfaces.

An overall 50 percent reduction in guest capacity throughout the resort.

Indeed, the resort did not reopen at 100% of operations. Many restaurants did

not reopen May 21, but Hard Rock Cafe and Rise Kitchen & Deli were among the eateries available. Hard Rock Event Center and spa services, for example, were not open and not all rooms in the hotel had reopened yet.

The return to full business will likely be gradual.

"So as business volumes hopefully continue to grow and we can be effective at creating a safe environment, then we'll slowly look at opening that valve. Our goal is to get as many people back to work as soon as possible," Allen said in an interview with the Tampa Bay Times after the reopening.

The Tampa facility is the first of six Seminole Gaming casinos in Florida to reopen. Opening dates for Seminole Gaming's other Florida casinos in Brighton, Coconut Creek, Hollywood and Immokalee had not been announced as of press time.

According to the American Gaming Association, all 989 commercial and tribal casinos in the U.S. closed due to the pandemic. As of May 23, AGA's casino tracker showed 164 casinos had reopened.



Plexiglass dividers are in place at the gaming tables at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa.



Signs describing sanitation efforts are on the casino floor in Tampa.

# Native American princess sculpture returns to Tampa's Ulele restaurant

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Ulele restaurant in Tampa is back, and so is its giant Native American princess. To coincide with the reopening of the popular restaurant just north of downtown, owner Richard Gonzmart celebrated the return of business and the reappearance of the Princess Ulele (pronounced you-lay-lee) sculpture as he met the media May 20.

The 11-foot tall, 1800-pound bronze bust is now located on an outdoor lawn at the restaurant near the Riverwalk that winds its

way alongside the Hillsborough River. The story and legend behind Princess Ulele is that she belonged to the Tocobaga Tribe, which lived in the Tampa area dating back more than 1,000 years. In the 1500s, as Europeans began to appear, the princess helped save the life of a captured Spanish explorer who was slated to be burned to death by her own tribe.

The area's past is something Gonzmart wants to emphasize.

"I want this story to be shared with children about the people that called this home long before we were ever here," Gonzmart said.

Two years ago, the sculpture was in the news when the city of Tampa said it was



The Princess Ulele bronze bust has returned to the Ulele restaurant in Tampa. Two years ago, the sculpture was removed amid per order of the city.



on city property and ordered it removed. It was hauled away to a warehouse. Now, with everything in order with the city, the legacy of the princess can live on in full view of customers and others along the Riverwalk.

"Respect history; respect those who sometimes weren't respected," said Gonzmart, who was accompanied at the

press conference by Seminole Tribal member Herbert Jim, of Tampa. The Ulele restaurant had been closed since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# COVID-19 deaths surpass 100 for Navajo Nation

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Navajo Nation reported that the number of its citizens who have died from COVID-19 reached 100 as of May 10. Just two weeks later, the number had climbed to 153.

Those grim figures come as the Navajo Nation, whose sprawling 17 million acres includes parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, endures some of the highest rates of infection per capita in the country. More than 3,000 confirmed cases represent nearly 18 cases per 1,000 people.

Navajo's population is 175,000; more than 18,000 have been tested.

The rate in which the virus has hit Native Americans in Arizona and New Mexico is drastically disproportionate compared to their population in those states.

Natives account for about five percent of Arizona's overall population, but, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services, they have 18% of the state's deaths from COVID-19. The numbers are jaw-dropping in New Mexico, too, where Natives account for 11 percent of the population, however, they comprise 57 percent of the infections, according to the New Mexico Department of Health.

Navajo Nation president Jonathan Nez

told CNN on May 11 that infrastructure hasn't helped in the ordeal and suggested the federal government reevaluate the needs of tribal communities.

"We've been aggressively testing our citizens here on the Navajo Nation, but the virus just spreads like wildfire," he told John King in a live interview. "We have 30-plus percent of our Navajo citizens here on Navajo don't have running water. We have multiple generations of family members living under one roof as well."

May, President Trump announced to tribal leaders that the Navajo Nation would receive \$600 million through the CARES Act to battle COVID-19.

Also, according to the White House, the Trump administration has provided 50 ventilators to the Navajo Nation and the federal government has deployed two disaster medical assistance teams and built three 50-bed federal medical stations.

Help is also coming from celebrities. Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres and her wife Portia De Rossi donated about 240 protective medical face shields to the Navajo Nation and other tribes through De Rossi's art company.

Also on the relief front, Go Fund Me pages have been sprouting up. Navajo Nation started a COVID-19 relief fund that has raised more than \$230,000 as of mid-May.

Another relief fund has raised more than \$3.5 million for Navajo and Hopi families. The roots to this one date to the 1800s when the Choctaw donated money to the Irish to help during Ireland's

Potato Famine. As a way to say thanks in a modern-era fashion, the Irish fund organizers reciprocated the gesture by setting up a Go Fund Me page that has far surpassed its initial goal of \$2 million.



Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez talks to CNN's John King on May 11.

Nez also said the health system in the country needs improvement.

"I think this pandemic has shed light on the inadequacy of our public health system throughout this country, but more so here on the tribal communities," he said.

During a meeting in Phoenix earlier in

# Seminole Fire Rescue helps in the battle against Moon Fish wildfire

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Seminole Fire Rescue as well as personnel from federal, state and local agencies were involved with the battle against the so-called Moon Fish wildfire on a border of Monroe and Miami-Dade counties.

A Big Cypress National Preserve media representative said May 26 that the fire is now 100% contained. The fire's size was approximately 25,834 acres, according to the preserve.

The fire was located in a region of the

U.S. 41 corridor that is home to the preserve, Everglades National Park, the Seminole Tribe's Trail community and the Miccosukee Indian Reservation.

Seminole Emergency Management issued a smoke advisory May 9 to the Trail community, explaining that the fire was moving in a direction away from the community, but air quality could be impacted from smoke. People with breathing, respiratory or other serious health issues were advised to remain indoors or leave the area.

Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park reported the

was discovered May 7 just south of Loop Road in the southeast corner of the preserve and close to the national park boundary. The parks said the source of the fire was an individual who was cited.

In addition to Seminole Fire Rescue, additional personnel assisting Big Cypress and Everglades Fire and Aviation were from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Collier County, Florida Highway Patrol and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue.

A tropical system that moved through the area also helped the containment.



Big Cypress National Preserve

The Moon Fish wildfire encompassed almost 26,000 acres in the Tamiami Trail region of the Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

# Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger participates in Oregon virtual powwow

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic has halted and altered events around the world, but the duties and responsibilities of being Miss Indian World continue for Cheyenne Kippenberger.

In early May, the Seminole Tribe's first-ever MIW was part of the University of Oregon's 52nd annual Mother's Day Powwow hosted by the school's Native American Student Union. The pandemic forced the event to be a virtual gathering only as it moved to Facebook from May 8-9.

Kippenberger delivered a Mother's Day greeting to the attendees.

"I am constantly reminded of the many contributions of guidance, support and tough love that I am blessed with from all the women that surround me in my own life," Kippenberger said in her message. "And although we are unable to come together in person to sing and dance in celebration of all these incredible women, may we still honor our mothers, aunts and grandmothers no matter where we are in the world. Sing your loudest, dance your hardest for the women who surround you."

Kippenberger's remarks were appreciated by the Powwow attendees.

"We are so honored to have Miss Indian World a part of this experience. She is a phenomenal person as her leadership and advocacy work includes uplifting and healing tribal communities," student union member and 2020-21 Miss Indian University of Oregon Angela Noah posted on social media.

Even though it was a virtual experience, the powwow still featured dance, music,



OU Native American Student Union/Facebook

Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger addresses the University of Oregon's 52nd annual Mother's Day Powwow, a virtual event that was held in May.

regalia and ceremonial observances.

Also in May, Kippenberger and her reign as MIW were the focus of a story in Indian Country Today. She also hosted an Instagram discussion about mental health in Native American communities.

Kippenberger is in the second year of her reign. She agreed to remain MIW when this year's pageant was cancelled.

# Hard Rock Hotel Maldives up for two awards

STAFF REPORT

The Hard Rock Hotel Maldives, located on the island nation of Maldives in the Indian Ocean, has been nominated for two awards. The hotel is a candidate for the Conde Nast Travelers Readers' Choice Award 2020 and the fourth annual Stella Awards. The latter recognizes airlines, conference centers, convention centers, convention and visitor

bureaus and hotels. The hotel is nominated in the best hotel resort regional category.

Hard Rock Maldives is located on a lagoon and features 178 guestrooms, including beach villas, family suites and one and two-bedroom overwater villas. The property also has an infinity pool, a tuk-tuk bar on a terrace, panoramic ocean views and a private boat jetty.



Hard Rock

Hard Rock Maldives villas stretch over a lagoon.

BY CHARLES FOX  
Philadelphia Inquirer

## An act of remembering Native American children who died so long ago

**CARLISLE, Penn.** — Maj. Steven Brewer sat by the graves like a teacher reading a children's story. The students were arranged in straight lines as if still seated at the school desks they occupied more than a century ago on the same grounds.

The site on May 23 was the cemetery of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School on the campus of the Army War College, where a group of Native Americans have come every Memorial Day weekend since 1973 for a vigil of sorts. They come to honor the students who died while attending school there and to decorate their graves.

The practice was started by the American Indian Society of Washington, D.C. and continued in recent years by the Circle Legacy Center of Lancaster.

Because of the coronavirus and a lock down on the military base, this year was different. Attendees were limited to those who had a military ID. A group that in past years normally numbered about 50 was reduced to eight this year because of restrictions intended to help stop the spread of the deadly virus.

It was up to Brewer, a non-Native American, Karen Collins, an Eastern Shawnee elder who helped originate the memorial practice, and Shawndae Sharp's family to carry on the tradition.

Before the pandemic, Brewer's family had intended to participate in the larger ceremony. His wife, Chelle McIntyre-Brewer, is of Arkansas Cherokee descent. Their children, Lorelei, 14, and Killian, 7, had started growing sage last June to dry and bundle for the event. But they could not be present to see their work used to decorate the 189 graves, 170 of them for Native American students.

Lorelei was born with a serious heart condition. To diminish possible exposure to COVID-19, the family, with the exception of Steven Brewer, who works in the Army health clinic at the Carlisle barracks, has quarantined inside their Duncannon home since March 3. McIntyre-Brewer says the lesson for their children is something they emphasize in the family: "It's not always about you. Focus on someone else. It's a lesson in humility."

Brewer wanted to continue a tradition that Lorelei had started a year earlier of reading to the graves. The book that was chosen was "We are Grateful: Otsaliheliga" by Cherokee author Traci Sorell. The book teaches resilience and gratitude for the experiences of ancestors. "Last year, Lorelei sat in her wheelchair and read three stories and even took the time to hold the book out and show the pictures around," Brewer recalled. "I wanted to make sure we did this. I know it was really important to her and it touched me seeing it."

The cemetery has become a lasting symbol of the assimilation effort initiated by the United States government at Carlisle and later at other boarding schools.

Opened in 1879, it was the nation's first federal off-reservation boarding school, created to solve "the Indian problem" by cleansing children of their "savage nature." Thousands of Indian children were shorn of their names, languages, religions, and family ties.

About 8,000 students attended the Carlisle school during its 39-year history. Since 2017, 11 students have been disinterred and returned to their native lands. There will be no homecomings this year. Like many things, the pandemic has caused a postponement until next year.

"Even with those repatriated, it doesn't mean we forget," said McIntyre-Brewer. "There is still a memory of what happened and a memory that still needs to be reconciled with. We are still understanding a significant amount of loss."



Charles Fox/Philadelphia Inquirer

Maj. Steven Brewer sat by the graves on May 23 like a teacher reading a children's story. The students were arranged in straight lines as if still seated at the school desks they occupied over a century ago on the same grounds, now a cemetery of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School at the Army War College.



Charles Fox/Philadelphia Inquirer

Karen Collins, left, an elder from the American Indian Society, leads the group in prayer on May 23. They usually number about 50, but because of the coronavirus had to keep the tradition alive with a smaller group. A group of Native Americans have come every Memorial Day weekend since 1973 to the cemetery of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School at the Carlisle Barracks to honor the students who died while attending school there and to decorate their graves.

### ♦ MUSIC From page 1A

"The best part of this whole experience has been discovering new artists," Spencer said. "Every day it seems people are being more open to sharing their gifts and talents, not just in music but in art, fashion, cook-

ing, dancing. Native people are talented in all types of ways. It seems that all of us are eager to share what's inside of us creatively."

The Social Distance Powwow group on Facebook is among Spencer's new favorites. From singing contests and dancing to celebrations of graduations and sobriety to seeking prayers for loved ones who are ill, the page emphasizes positivity.

"Every day different artists of all fields

share their talents as they would if they were at a live powwow," he said. "And even more so, some who may be afraid to, this has given them the opportunity to come out of their shell and post dances and songs they may have in other instances not shared. It really is a beautiful thing."

As for music, several artists have caught the attention of Doc, including Snotty Nose Rez Kids, RezCoast Grizz, Antoine Edwards

Jr. and RedCloud, Crystal Lightning and Artson.

"And of course our Mag7 family," Doc said. "Supaman and his son H.a.n.z.o had an amazing father son collaboration that really inspired me. I could go on and on with all the new music/performances that I've really enjoyed as well as PJ Vegas killing it with his new single and we can't forget the big homie Taboo and the Black Eyed Peas with

their new hit 'Mamacita.'"

Although the pandemic has hurt the music industry in many ways, including throwing production schedules off track and cancelling concerts and award shows, the opportunities for Native artists to be heard and seen online — and grow as a community — perhaps have never been greater.

"It's been a great time for Indigenous music in this unfortunate time," Doc said.

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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement. Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice since 1996. In 1995, he was voted the Trial Attorney of the year. He graduated from Capital University in 1989 and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990, Federal Bar in 1992, and the Federal Trial Bar in 1994.

**RICHARD CASTILLO**  
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY  
[WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM](http://WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM)

◆ **CHIEF**  
From page 1A

The Tribe said Chief DiPetrillo died from COVID-19 and that he is believed to have contracted the coronavirus while on duty attending the "EMS Today" emergency medical services conference in Tampa. The conference was held in early March at the Tampa Convention Center. He had been hospitalized since mid-March.

Chief DiPetrillo's brother David had been posting updates on Facebook during the hospitalization.

On April 30 he posted: "My brother Donald DiPetrillo has fought a long, hard, courageous fight for his earthly life. His fight is over. Donald is at peace with his savior Jesus Christ, who welcomes him into God's loving arms."

Chief DiPetrillo's tenure as the Tribe's fire chief lasted 11 years. A few months after

being named chief, he participated in the grand opening ceremony for the Big Cypress Reservation's Jimmie Cypress Public Safety Complex on Oct. 17, 2008. The facility is home to the reservation's fire, police and other emergency personnel.

Chief DiPetrillo oversaw several firefighter/EMS graduation ceremonies in Tribal headquarters auditorium. In his addresses, he often stressed to new graduates the importance of family – both within the Tribe and at home.

"Once you join the Tribe, you are part of one big family," DiPetrillo told graduates in May 2016. "The Tribal members count on us as a family and as co-workers to support them as much as we count on them to help us."

Chief DiPetrillo's firefighting career stretched back to the early 1970s. He worked for the City of Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Department from 1973-2001 and served as assistant fire chief. After retiring from Fort

Lauderdale, he served as Davie's fire chief and emergency management director from 2001-07.

An outpouring of sympathy and respect for the Davie resident came from those he served and worked with throughout his career.

"The men and women of the Broward Sheriff's Office mourn the loss of Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo, who sadly lost his battle with COVID-19. A true public safety icon in the South Florida fire community for nearly half century, Chief DiPetrillo served with pride, dignity and dedication," Broward County Sheriff's Office posted on Facebook.

"He will be missed by all. Thank you for your years of service. RIP Chief," the Davie Fire Rescue Department posted on Facebook.

"Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts. Rest in Peace Chief DiPetrillo," the Town of Davie posted on Facebook.

"The @FCABC is saddened to hear of the passing of #SeminoleTribeFireDepartment Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo. Chief DiPetrillo was a staple in the South Florida fire service. We are a safer Broward because of his leadership. Rest in Peace, Chief!," the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County posted on Twitter.

After the chief's passing, Miami TV stations showed a tribute from emergency personnel who gathered at the hospital and a procession with emergency vehicles, led by Seminole Fire Rescue, that accompanied the casket to the funeral home in Plantation.

On May 6, first responders from throughout Broward and well beyond honored Chief DiPetrillo by lining up along stretches of the casket's journey from T.M. Ralph Plantation Funeral Home in Plantation to Lauderdale Memorial Park in Fort Lauderdale.

A Seminole ambulance, adorned with dark drapes, carried the casket from the

funeral home to the cemetery, where dozens of emergency personnel from the Tribe and other agencies and departments lined the street and entrance to the cemetery. A large U.S. flag was strewn high above the procession attached to Seminole fire engines.

Chief DiPetrillo graduated from McArthur High School in Hollywood in 1967. He earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from Barry University in Miami Shores. He also held an associate's degree in fire science from Broward College.

Chief DiPetrillo joined the U.S. Navy in 1971 as a Yeoman 2nd Class and served on board the U.S.S. Wasp. He was honorably discharged into the United States Reserves in 1972.

He is survived by his mother, Joan, and son, Tyson, of Davie, two brothers, David and John, and Lindy Maracic, his girlfriend.



Seminole Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo enjoys a lighter moment during a graduation ceremony in 2016.

Tribune file photo



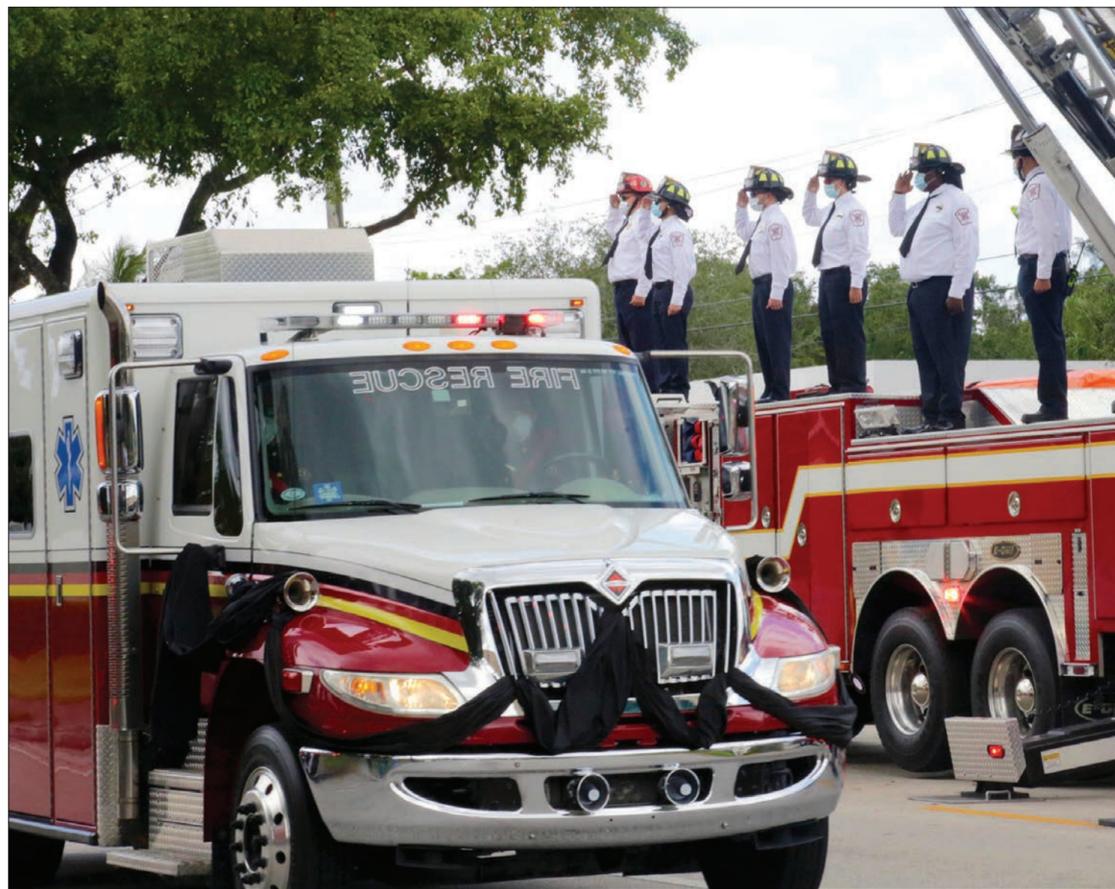
Firefighters line up to honor Chief Donald DiPetrillo at Lauderdale Memorial Park on May 6.

Martin Ebenhack



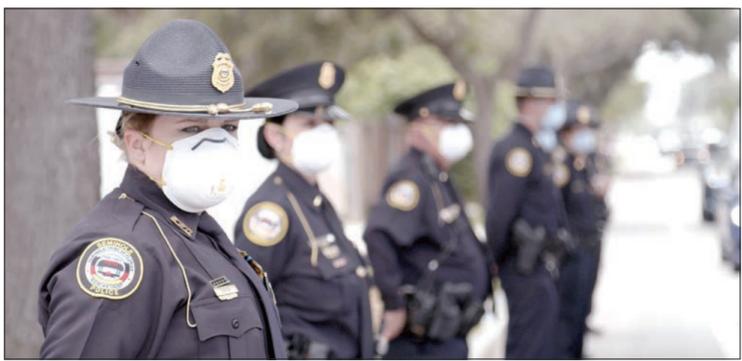
Chief DiPetrillo shakes hands with a new Seminole Fire Rescue graduate in 2016.

Tribune file photo



Fire departments from throughout Broward County, including Plantation, above, and Pompano Beach, below, lined the funeral procession route to salute Chief DiPetrillo.

Kevin Johnson (2)



Seminole Police officers pay tribute to Chief DiPetrillo at the funeral procession.

Martin Ebenhack



A U.S. flag flies above at the cemetery.

Martin Ebenhack



# SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## What do you think about your environment? The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum wants to know

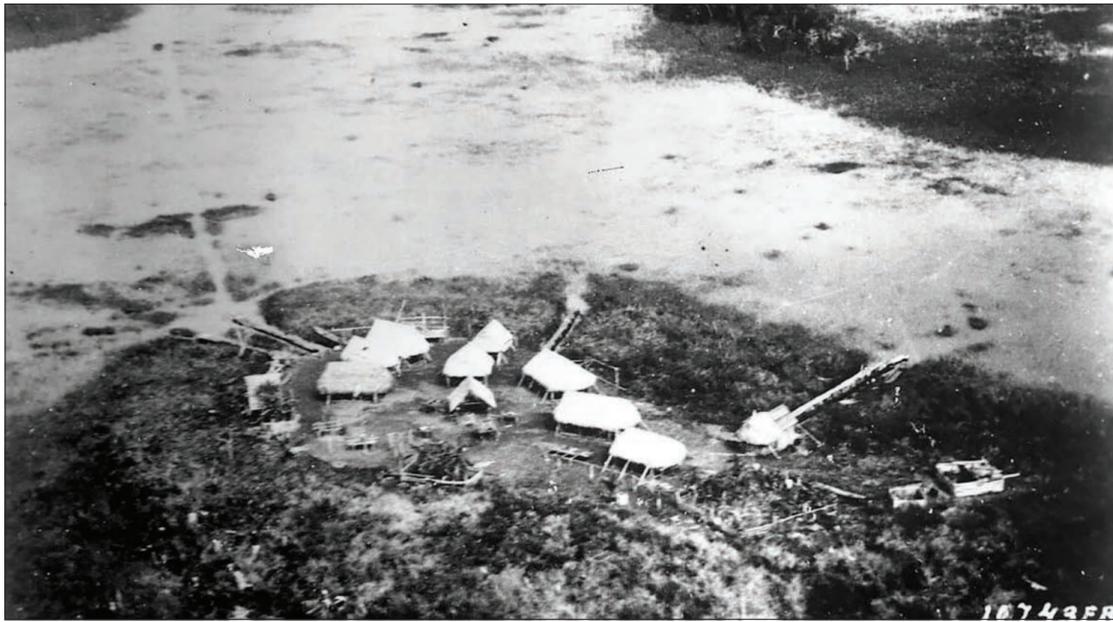
BY TARA BACKHOUSE  
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Collections Manager

History is not only about people, it is also about the environment. The two are intertwined in many ways. We often don't

even notice or think about them at the time. Think back to when you were younger. Do you remember different animals, like birds, fish, or even insects? Do you remember different trees? Were there more of them, were they bigger? What about water? We see it every day. But has the quality or availability changed for you? Is it warmer,

colder, wetter or drier than it used to be? These kinds of changes affect us, they become a part of history.

The museum's collection includes information about the environment in a variety of surprising ways. Nineteenth century newspapers that reported news of the Seminole Wars boldly cite Florida's



Early 20th century aerial photograph of a Seminole camp on the Tamiami Trail where Bill Osceola grew up. This photograph appears to have been taken before many of the current water management projects were in place.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Early 20th century photograph of a man poling a canoe along a canoe trail leading from Tommy Osceola's second camp. This photograph was taken before Everglades drainage was completed and before roads were constructed in the area.

environment as a military problem, as the ever-present water and dense vegetation kept Seminoles hidden and hindered the movement of U.S. troops (to view the information about this newspaper in our online collections, search for 1995.8.8). Handwritten letters from the 1800s also show that the U.S. Army saw the Everglades environment as a hostile enemy.

Seminole people used their environment to their advantage. Luckily for Seminoles, the U.S. Army did not!

Photographs show a different side to the landscape of South Florida. Some of the museum's earliest photographs show historic water levels around camps. Canoes could move freely in the beautiful watery environment. However this became less and less possible as the 20th century moved forward. As land was drained and roads were constructed, cars replaced canoes and the Seminole way of life changed. For example, roadside tourist camps sprung up where Seminole families could make money off travelers passing by.

Today, the Florida environment is threatened by forces such as climate change and large scale water management practices. Let's not forget what the environment means to us. The museum, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and the Environmental Resources Management Department are working on several projects to protect the environment and to honor its history. Whether it's an educational program with local schools, a plan for dealing with climate change, re-designing the galleries in the museum, or making sure the Seminole voice is heard on federal consultation levels, they all have one goal: to tell the Seminole story and to make the environment a big part of that story. Your knowledge and experience with the environment are essential.

If you'd like to work with us on any of these projects, let us know. If you want to record an oral history for future generations, we're here to help. For more information on our projects and our collection, contact tarabackhouse@semtribe.com.

## National Native American Veterans Memorial designer discusses concepts behind his work

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Ceremony and spirituality will be two key components of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

Harvey Pratt, the memorial's designer, explained the concepts behind his work during a teleconference in May hosted by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. The memorial is under construction and scheduled to be dedicated later this year on the NMAI grounds. The 18-minute video is available on YouTube.

The memorial honors American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian veterans.

"The Native American people have defended this land this country from the very beginning. We're still here; we're still defending this land for this country," Pratt said during the discussion.

"...we are excited to be building the National Native American Veterans Memorial on the grounds of the museum to honor Native veterans and bring awareness to the extraordinary service of Native men and women in the United States Armed Forces," said Mandy Van Heuvelen (Cheyenne River Sioux), NMAI's cultural interpreter manager, who hosted the interview with Pratt.

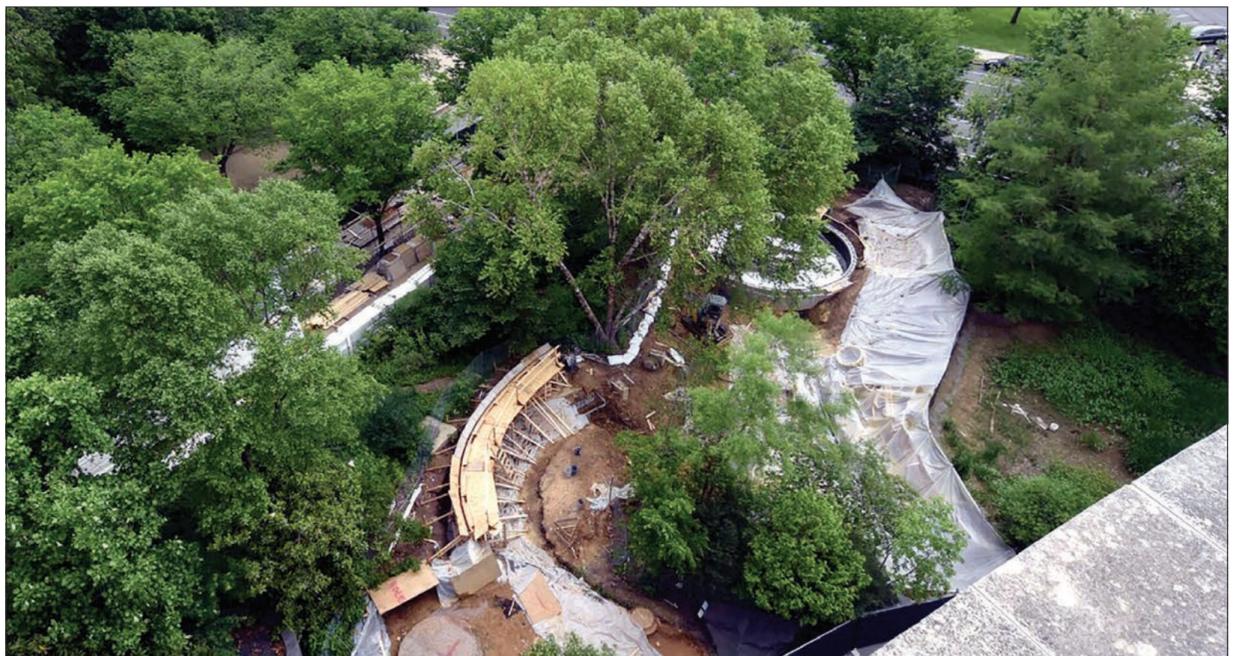
Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho) is a self-

taught artist from Oklahoma. He's a Vietnam War veteran who served in the U.S. Marines Corps' Air Rescue and Security and was stationed at Da Nang Air Base. He also has a 50-year career in law enforcement as a forensic artist.

He brings a wealth of experience to the memorial, having sculpted works for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and the state of Colorado, to name a few.

Elements such as wind, fire, water and the earth are incorporated in the NMAI memorial. Pratt described the "path of life" that leads to the memorial.

"As you walk this path of life there is an audio system and you can hear the drum beat, the rolling thunder of the drum beat as it crescendos up into the thunder of the drums as you are walking to the memorial," he said. "Then, when you get closer, you can hear softly the Indians sing a flag song or a veterans song or a memorial song."



Earthcam.com

An aerial view of the construction scene at the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Memorial Day May 25.



An illustration of Harvey Pratt's design for the National Native American Veterans Memorial at the National Museum of the American Indian.

The Warriors Circle of Honor, which can be entered clockwise or counterclockwise, will be a focal point for ceremonies, healing, prayers and reflections. A circular seating area within the circle will allow people to become in harmony with nature, spirits and the earth, Pratt said.

Directional points, or cardinal points, will each carry significance. Southeast, for example, is white. Pratt says it's where the sun comes up and can be prayerful.

"You can start your day every day with a prayer to the Creator and try to be a better person today than you were yesterday," Pratt said.

Southwest is red and it is in recognition of the Creator; northwest is yellow to honor Mother Earth and northeast is black to remember ancestors.

The area will have four lances with eagle feathers in tribute to awards that Native veterans earned. Pratt said people can tie a prayer cloth to a lance and say a prayer.

"Every time the wind blows, that prayer goes out again," he said. Fire will be part of a 12-foot

high steel circle. A large drum will feature flowing water.

"This design was specifically for Native Americans, for them to understand and see where they can sit in there and be comfortable and do their ceremony in private or to be observed," Pratt said.

Pratt also wants the memorial to serve as an educational and emotional place for non-Natives, hoping they will absorb the energy from the ceremonies.

The memorial is scheduled to be dedicated on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2020, although the pandemic has altered plans. A message on NMAI's website (as of late May) said the Native Veterans Procession, which was scheduled to be part of the dedication events, has been postponed. The message also states: "As of right now, we do not yet know how our plans for the memorial's dedication will be affected. We are exploring all options available to us as we develop these plans."

# Health

## Why COVID-19 is decimating some Native American communities

BY TIMOTHY M. SMITH  
American Medical Association

Native American populations face many of the same challenges as the larger U.S. population during the COVID-19 pandemic, including lack of ready access to testing and shortages of personal protective equipment. But the added burdens of chronic disease and persistent underfunding of American Indian health systems have put the nation's indigenous population at higher risk of poor outcomes from the disease.

An episode of the "AMA COVID-19 Update" explores these challenges and notes ways to improve quality of care and outcomes. The April 30 episode, "The pandemic's impact on the Native American population," features a discussion with an Alaska Native physician and an American Indian physician, who discuss how COVID-19 is affecting their communities.

The AMA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more at the AMA COVID-19 resource center and the AMA's physician guide to COVID-19.

### Large families, long histories

To appreciate the challenges facing Native American populations during the pandemic, one must first note the difference in social units. Unlike some U.S. populations, American Indians and Alaska Natives often don't live in nuclear families.

"The old joke is, 'For the Navajo family, it's parents, children, grandparents and their anthropologist,'" said Siobhan M. Wescott, MD, MPH, assistant director of the Indians Into Medicine (INMED) Program at the University of North Dakota and a member of Alaska's Athabascan tribe. There is "quite a bit of closeness and even sometimes living in the same quarters, which may or may not have running water. So washing your hands all the time, distancing from elders, from square one that can be very difficult."

But the challenges transcend social structure, Dr. Wescott noted.

"There's higher disparities in chronic diseases, which can make people more vulnerable to COVID and have a worse outcome with it," she said, noting that "these are long-standing problems."

### Special status, but little funding

"One thing that's not very well understood is that American Indians are the only [U.S.] population that's actually born with a legal right to health services, and



Navajo Nation

The Navajo Nation has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its per capita cases surpassed New York and New Jersey in May.

that's based on treaties in which our tribes exchanged land and natural resources for various social services, including housing, education and health care," said Donald Warne, MD, MPH, associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion and director of the INMED and Public Health Programs at the University of North Dakota. "So that's why there's a Bureau of Indian Affairs. That's why there's an Indian Health Service."

Unfortunately, what little money flows into the Indian Health Service (IHS) is spent on medical care, not public health programs, putting Native American populations at particular risk in a pandemic, said Dr. Warne, who is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe in South Dakota.

One example is the Navajo nation, which has "really been decimated by COVID-19," Dr. Warne said, although government data demonstrating this is limited. As of late April, the Indian Health Service had administered only 27,000 tests for the novel coronavirus; about 3,000 had come back positive.

"The challenge is that IHS collects all of the federal Indian Health Service data, but many tribes actually operate their own health systems," Dr. Warne said. "And we also have urban American Indian health facilities, and their reporting to that database is voluntary. So I would say that we're really underestimating the prevalence of COVID-19 based on some of the data

challenges of the multiple data sets that we have to work with."

Learn more about why racial and ethnic data on COVID-19's impact is badly needed.

### Where there's opportunity

One thing Native American communities have in common with the larger U.S. population is that telemedicine could dramatically improve their access to care. Most tribal communities don't even have a hospital, Dr. Warne noted.

The recently passed CARES Act sets aside \$1 billion for Indian health programming, much of which supports telehealth activities. It also extends the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

Meanwhile, the AMA has urged the Trump administration to collect and make available COVID-19 mortality data by race and ethnicity. It also recently worked with members of Congress to draft a bill on COVID-19 race and ethnicity data collection, which would expand the health care system's ability to quell misinformation, improve access to testing and treatment and ensure equitable distribution of resources.

Timothy M. Smith is senior news writer for the American Medical Association. This article is on AMA's website at [www.ama-assn.org/](http://www.ama-assn.org/).



Courtesy photo

Wes Studi appears in an announcement seeking donations for the Partnership With Native Americans organization.

## Wes Studi urges donations for Indian Country amid COVID-19

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

When Wes Studi speaks, Indian Country listens, and the hope is that others will, too.

The Oscar-winning actor has earned a well-respected aura through his legendary Hollywood career that has spanned five decades with roles in "Dances with Wolves," "The Last of the Mohicans," "Heat," "Avatar," "Hostiles" and several others. He's also a Vietnam War veteran.

The message Studi (Cherokee) delivers through a public service announcement that was released this week is for people to help Native American communities in the COVID-19 battle.

"It is serious and requires immediate attention," Studi said in the PSA video. "Housing on reservations is overcrowded and there is a lack of clean water. Our Elders are at greater risk. I thank all the health care workers who have left their homes to assist on the reservations, but more help is needed."

The announcement is for Partnership With Native Americans, a Native-led nonprofit which helps serve under-resourced reservations. Studi requests donations be

made to the organization to help get needed resources to these communities.

"PWNA is delivering food, water and other vital supplies every day, but their warehouses are running low," he said.

COVID-19 has walloped some Native American communities. This week the Navajo Nation's number of cases per capita became the highest in the U.S., surpassing New York and New Jersey. In addition to housing and clean water issues, other contributing factors to high numbers are health issues such as diabetes, a disease which Native Americans have the highest prevalence rates of all racial and ethnic groups in the country.

According to PWNA, federal aid has been slow to arrive.

"Every day, remote reservation communities face shortages of food, water and health care, and COVID-19 has magnified that reality," Joshua Arce, PWNA president and CEO, said in a statement. "Donations are critical now as we bring relief to under-resourced communities."

To donate to PWNA, go to [nativepartnership.org](http://nativepartnership.org) or call 800-416-8102.

## NIHB releases budget request for fiscal year 2022

### PRESS RELEASE

On May 3, NIHB submitted testimony to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) detailing the Tribal health budget priorities for fiscal year (FY) 2022. The testimony urges the Administration to follow the National Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup (TBFWG) recommendations that includes funding the IHS at \$12.7 billion, strengthening Tribal access to Medicare and Medicaid programs, and expanding grants for Tribal behavioral health.

"Every year, Tribal Leaders put forward a national budget request that proposes to phase in funding increases and bring the federal government closer to fulfilling the treaty and trust obligations for health services," said NIHB Chairperson Victoria Kitcheyan. "This year, with many of our Tribal communities suffering from coronavirus, Tribes urge the Administration to fulfill the historic agreements by putting forth a budget that will finally eradicate the persistent health disparities that have impacted Tribal communities for generations, and are now exacerbated by COVID-19."

The Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup and NIHB proposed to increase the President's Budget Request to a total of \$12.759 billion for the IHS in FY 2022 by adding at a minimum:

- +\$337 million for full funding of current services
- +474.5 million for binding fiscal obligations
- +\$2.7 billion for program increases for the most critical health issues (~30% above FY 2021 enacted)

Access the full FY 2022 Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup Recommendations for the IHS budget on the NIHB website at [nihb.org](http://nihb.org).

Earlier this year, the Administration released the President's Budget Request for FY 2021, and though it has increases to the IHS budget for needed areas like Electronic Health Records, the budget request also proposes significant cuts to 13 IHS line items with the largest cut to the Health Care Facilities Construction at roughly \$134 million below the fiscal year 2020 amount. Overall, the President's FY 2021 Budget Request for IHS fell short of the Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup Recommendations across every IHS line item except for Direct

Operations. NIHB is unequivocally opposed all proposed IHS cuts.

"Tribal Nations continue to call on the Administration to prioritize department resources to make American Indian and Alaska Native health equal with the rest of the country. Tribal citizens experience tremendous health disparities, and this can be directly linked to the persistent, chronic underfunding of the Indian Health Service and other Tribal health programs across the agency," said Chairperson Kitcheyan. "We are seeing the devastating impacts of that underfunding as our Tribal people suffer from COVID-19 in old hospitals with limited supplies and outdated equipment. America is seeing it too, and Tribes are looking to the Administration to make it right with a budget that gives our people a chance to be healthier and live longer."

NIHB also included budget recommendations for other HHS agencies that have Tribal-specific programs, like Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); National Institutes of Health (NIH); Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); and the Office of Minority Health (OMH).

The President's Budget Request for FY 2021 encourages substantive changes to Medicaid that could greatly harm access to healthcare for American Indians and Alaska Natives and deplete third-party billing revenue collected by IHS, Tribes and urban Indian health centers (ITU). In response, NIHB urged CMS to protect these vital funds and strengthen them in Tribal communities by ensuring that all eligible users can enroll in CMS programs. NIHB also reiterated the request to provide exemption to Tribes and American Indian and Alaska Native people from block grants and mandatory work requirements, and to protect Medicaid expansion for all IHS beneficiaries.

"CMS programs, like Medicaid, Medicare and the Children's Health Insurance Program, play a critical role in the Indian health care delivery system as its third-party revenue brings in crucial supplemental funding for Tribal health programs and it also supports the federal government's trust responsibility," Chairperson Kitcheyan said.

## HHS announces \$500M distribution to tribal hospitals, clinics, urban health centers

### PRESS RELEASE

On May 22, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced \$500 million in payments from the Provider Relief Fund to the Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribal hospitals, clinics, and urban health centers to support the tribal response to COVID-19.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted IHS providers and programs. Many such providers have experienced significantly increased need for personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as

increased labor costs due to employees that have been exposed to COVID-19. At least 233 facilities across the Indian health system serve as the only health care provider for both IHS and non-IHS beneficiaries, making them critical to stopping the spread of COVID-19 and reopening America. This funding provides support to these healthcare facilities, which in some cases may be the only healthcare facility within a day's traveling distance for those served. Combined with previous funding, this distribution brings the total amount of new resources to the Indian health system to \$2.4

billion dollars.

The distribution methodology is:

- IHS and tribal hospitals will receive a \$2.81 million base payment plus three percent of their total operating expenses

- IHS and tribal clinics and programs will receive a \$187,000 base payment plus five percent of the estimated service population multiplied by the average cost per user

- IHS urban programs will receive a \$181,000 base payment plus six percent of the estimated service population multiplied by the average cost per user

HHS has allocated approximately 4% of available funding for Urban Indian Health Programs, consistent with the percent of patients served by Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) in relation to the total IHS active user population, as well as prior allocations of IHS COVID-19 funding. The remaining funding will be divided equally between hospitals and clinics.

Visit [gov/providerr relief](http://gov/providerr relief) for information on the Provider Relief Fund.

**In challenging times, we are careful to protect our physical health.**

**Don't forget to take care of your mental and emotional health, too.**

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov), or call 1-800-318-2596.

# SEMINOLE SCENES



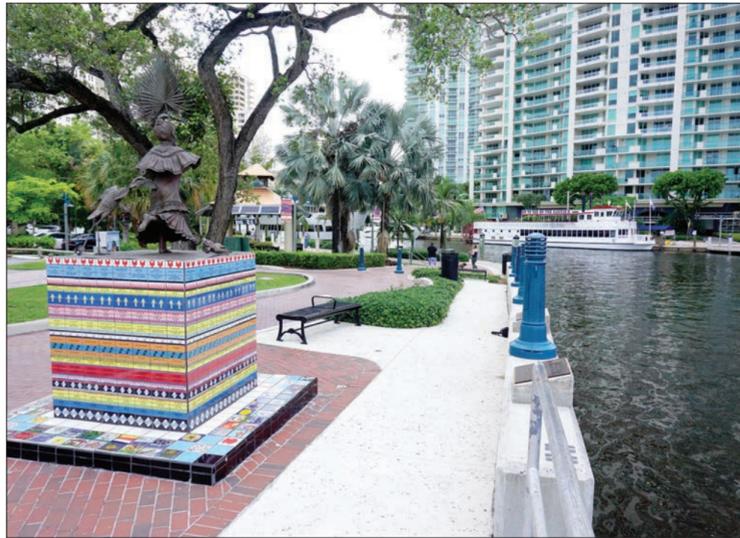
Miami Dolphins

**COACHING LEGEND:** The giant screen outside Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens features a tribute to Don Shula. The winningest coach in NFL history, who led the 1972 Dolphins to a Super Bowl victory and a perfect season, died May 4 at age 93.



Hard Rock/Facebook

**LITTLE RICHARD, BIG VOICE:** Richard Wayne Penniman, more commonly known as early rock 'n' roll star Little Richard, died May 9 at age 87. He was known for energetic music and a flamboyant wardrobe. He wore this outfit on stage in 1970 and it became part of the memorabilia collection at Hard Rock Cafe in New Orleans.



During COVID-19 restrictions in Fort Lauderdale, an increasing number of residents walked and biked along the city's Riverwalk in downtown. The Riverwalk has longtime connections to the Seminole Tribe. At the start of its north side path along the New River is a monument that marks the start of the Second Seminole War – Cooley's Landing. At the end of its path on the south side is a sculpture and monument honoring the Seminole Tribe of Florida titled "Florida: A Seminole Girl."

### 'Seminole Girl'/Stranahan Landing

In 2015, a 12-foot sculpture of a 5-year-old Native American girl playing under palmetto fronds she is holding over her head (as a parasol) was unveiled by the city.

The bronze "Florida: A Seminole Girl" artwork also shows a crane dancing alongside her and a baby alligator at her feet.

The \$100,000 sculpture was designed by Nilda Comas. It also includes 500 tiles in Seminole patchwork style with the names of donors, many who are Tribal members.

The Tribe paid for half of the cost of the entire project.

Elementary school students from the Big Cypress Reservation created ceramic tiles that depict Florida's flora and fauna. Those are located at the bottom of the statue's 4-foot-tall base.

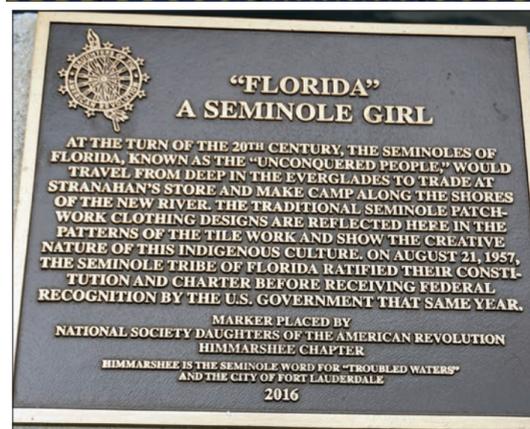
The artwork's location is across from the Stranahan House, home of the pioneer couple Ivy and Frank Stranahan in the early 1900s.

Frank Stranahan set up a trading post on the river to do business with the Seminoles and others, who bartered alligator hides and teeth for calico, beads, pots and pans and sewing machines.

The statue is located at the city's Stranahan Landing Park.

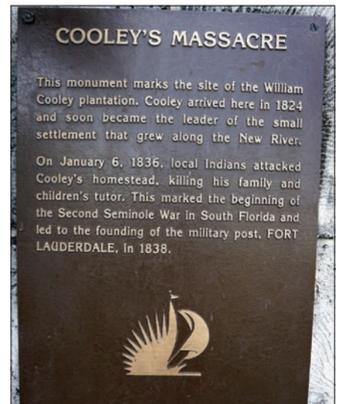
### Cooley's Massacre

This plaque and monument was erected at Cooley's Landing, located at 450 Cooley Avenue in Fort Lauderdale. As the plaque explains, the site is where William Cooley had a plantation in the early 1800s. In 1836, "local Indians attacked Cooley's homestead," thus sparking the Second Seminole War.



Courtesy photos (4)

Above and at left, "Florida: A Seminole Girl" sculpture and plaque. At right, Cooley's Massacre plaque. Both are located along the Riverwalk in Fort Lauderdale.



## Seminole Scenes Rewind: Tribune photos from the past - Seminole Color Guard



# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Gibson, Terre Haute get casino license

**TERRE HAUTE, Ind.** — The Indiana Gaming Commission on May 15 unanimously awarded a casino operator's license to Terre Haute-based Spectacle Jack LLC.

Spectacle Jack is now owned by Terre Haute businessman Greg Gibson and is no longer a subsidiary of Spectacle Entertainment of Indianapolis.

Gibson and company, for more than an hour Friday, outlined their plan to build a 100,000-square-foot, \$120 million enterprise to be operated under the Hard Rock International brand and called the Rocksino.

Groundbreaking is expected in September of this year and the casino is scheduled to open in September 2021, according to Spectacle Jack executives.

Gibson told the gaming commission that previously he had little interest in owning a casino, but saw the opportunity to bring a major development to his home town.

"This process has been a long journey for us, and today marks an important step down a path toward a successful opportunity for many Hoosiers," Gibson said. "... Seeing an opportunity to bring a transformational project to Terre Haute and Vigo County is what excited, and ultimately sold me on being involved in this project."

Spectacle executives told the commission the project, from start of ground work to grand opening, should take roughly 16 months.

In that time Spectacle Jack looks to build a 1,200-game casino complete with four restaurants, four bars, and an enclosed, temperature-controlled walkway to the adjacent Home2Suites hotel. Site plans also include a provision for a future on-site hotel.

The application spells out how the Rocksino at Terre Haute would be built on about 20 acres on the southwest side of the intersection of Bill Farr Drive and Joe Fox Street, immediately south of the Walmart super center along U.S. 40/Indiana 46.

The plan calls for the casino to be built in the middle of the property with more than 1,500 parking spaces surrounding the building.

Upon entering the casino, the plan calls for guests to be greeted by a bifurcated gaming area, separated by the "yellow brick road" walkway running between the main entrance and the center bar.

The pair of gaming areas on either side of the walkway will have a mix of slot machines and table games. The plan, as submitted to the state, features 1,150 slot machines and 50 table games.

Around the perimeter of the gaming floor a number of amenities are planned, including:

- A Hard Rock Cafe, the centerpiece of the Hard Rock brand. The cafe is planned to have seating for 125 guests.
- A steakhouse, described as the casino's fine dining option, with seating for 60.
- A buffet with seating for 175 guests.
- Hard Rock branded center bar and sportsbook. The "energetic space" will seat 75 guests and is to be considered the center of activity for the casino floor, according to the application.
- A Hard Rock branded coffee shop, the Constant Grind, that serves up to 25 guests 24-hours a day.
- A 300-seat entertainment venue, Velvet Sessions, capable of hosting live music, comedy events and other events. The application says the space can be transformed to host any type of event from a poker tournament to business events and meetings to a cocktail reception or a wedding.
- A high limit lounge complete with a private bar and light snack service.
- A Rock Shop, Hard Rock's gift shop, that will sell branded merchandise alongside snacks and sundries.

Overall, the building has an estimated maximum occupancy of 5,900 to serve the projected 1.2 million guests per year.

"This is a huge thing for the community, and as I said during my presentation, this is something that almost a year ago, I don't think people could have imagined this could be possible," Gibson said.

- *Tribune-Star (Terre Haute, Indiana)*

## Ancient Native American rock art vandalized in Utah County

**WEST MOUNTAIN, Utah** — Outrage is growing in Utah County over the vandalism of ancient Native American rock art.

A member of the Navaho tribe, Eileen Quintana visits West Mountain with her family to pray and give offerings to indigenous ancestors.

"If you think about it, the voices are speaking to us 10,000 years back," Quintana said.

Ancient Indigenous rock art is carved into dozens of boulders on the mountain on the east side of Utah Lake.

"This place holds a lot of history," Quintana said.

Many rock art pieces are being damaged by recreational target shooters on federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Other rock art was spray-painted over with swastikas and other damaging graffiti.

"To tell you the truth, it does really hurt," Quintana said.

Desperate, Eileen reached out to state archeologists in April.

"It's absolutely heartbreaking," said Elizabeth Hora, Utah State Historic Preservation Office public archaeologist.

The rock art shows how groups of people were organized, what they wore and what they ate, said Hora.

"We can see throughout time, people loved hunting big horned sheep. We see a lot of big-horned sheep on those rocks," Hora added.

Hora believes most of the damage is unintentional. She thinks the recreational shooters don't know the art is there, despite several warning signs which have been shot out.

Quintana said she's also disturbed by the trash and illegal fires left behind, despite vandalism being a class A misdemeanor.

She hopes something can be done to preserve the sacred indigenous art.

"We should stop the shooting because this is very important to Utah," Quintana said.

BLM Public Affairs Specialist Rachel Wootton tells FOX13 the bureau is reviewing the archaeological vandalism and recreational target shooting in the area.

- *Fox13 (Salt Lake City, Utah)*

## South Dakota governor asks Trump to intervene in checkpoint dispute with Native American tribes

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem appealed to the Trump administration for help May 20 in resolving a dispute over roadside checkpoints set up by two Native American tribes trying to curb the spread of the coronavirus, the latest move in a clash over which government entity has the ultimate legal authority.

Noem, a Republican who assumed office last year, wrote in a letter to President Donald Trump that the issue is "not a matter of tribal sovereignty" because South Dakota has rights allowing residents and travelers to access the roadways, and that the federal government has "an interest in interstate commerce." She also argued that the checkpoints do little to stop the coronavirus from spreading, and if anything, they increase the risk of transmission because people are exposing themselves when they're forced to stop.

"The time has come for formal federal action," Noem wrote, sending copies to the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and South Dakota's congressional members.

What form the federal involvement could look like is unclear. The White House, the Justice Department and others now involved did not immediately comment May 21 about the letter.

Noem, who has previously threatened legal action against the Cheyenne River Sioux and the Oglala Sioux tribes, wrote that as an alternative to litigation, she'd like for federal assistance in shutting down the "unlawful" checkpoints and requiring the Cheyenne River Sioux, specifically, to comply with a Bureau of Indian Affairs memo on the matter.

Noem told reporters May 20 that affidavits and video recordings collected by the state attorney general's office were provided to federal authorities to pursue.

"This isn't about taking sides. This is just about upholding the law," Noem said, adding, "We are asking for the help, and hope the partnership of the White House can be used to encourage" the tribes to comply.

The checkpoints have been up since April and involve two of South Dakota's largest reservations. Noem had warned the tribes to take down the checkpoints on state and federal highways within 48 hours or face court action.

Harold Frazier, the chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, said on MSNBC last week in response to Noem's ultimatum that "we have every legal right to do what we're doing" and that such a precautionary measure is warranted because the tribe has insufficient medical resources to combat COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. Those operating the checkpoints are deputized under the tribal government, which says they are determining if the vehicle is on essential business — those coming from a coronavirus "hot spot" and not having essential travel have been turned away.

COVID-19 has inundated Native American communities more than others. The Navajo Nation, for instance, now has the highest infection rate per capita in the country, according to Johns Hopkins University data, surpassing New York and New Jersey.

"We feel like monitoring our borders and tracking everybody that's going through or attempting to go through will help us if this virus ever comes here," Frazier said.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, which has about 8,000 members on its reservation, is located within two counties. Those counties have seen a single positive case of COVID-19 between them.

Meanwhile, the Oglala Sioux, which has more than 19,000 members living on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation, has seen 14 positive cases of COVID-19 in Oglala Lakota County. A lockdown was ordered on the reservation over three days last week after a positive case was confirmed there.

A third tribe in South Dakota, the Rosebud Sioux, said in a Facebook post Monday that it has also set up driver checkpoints, although "commercial traffic will be allowed to proceed through the checkpoints on to their destinations without issue." Noem has not mentioned the tribe in her public comments.

The governor has said her office has fielded complaints from drivers who say they were on emergency or essential business and were rerouted. She had sought to come up with a compromise with tribes allowing for checkpoints on tribal roads, but not state and federal ones.

In a letter to Noem last week, Frazier said the tribe would consider her request — but now her bid for White House involvement has thrown the tribes for a loop.

"We were working on that, and we told her that we would," Remi Bald Eagle, a Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe spokesman, told Indian Country Today. "Next thing you know, she runs off and does something like this, so it's a little confusing."

The Oglala Sioux, which had said it was also considering Noem's earlier plan, responded in a statement to her White House letter that "the governor is missing an opportunity to set a positive example of executive leadership."

"Governor Noem's decision to escalate the tension right now over checkpoints doesn't make sense from a public health perspective," Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesman for Oglala Sioux President Julian Bear Runner and lead counsel for the Lakota People's Law Project, said.

"We're permitting people to pass through our reservations — we're screening people, according to the best advice from medical experts, not preventing travel," Iron Eyes said, adding that "99.9 percent of drivers are allowed to pass through after answering a few questions."

A bipartisan group of 17 state legislators has cautioned Noem against waging a legal battle with the tribes, writing that "the State of South Dakota [does not] have the authority to enforce State law within boundaries of a Reservation," pointing to the Fort Laramie Treaties of 1851 and 1868 that gave tribes jurisdictional powers and a 1990 appeals court ruling that says the state doesn't have control over roadways that cut through Native lands without tribal consent.

"It is obvious that Gov. Noem knows little about the limited authority she and the state government have in Indian country," Gary Pitchlynn, an attorney and law professor at the University of Oklahoma, told NBC News. "Any action that might come from the federal government would probably be tied up in litigation well beyond the immediate COVID threat, and there is a good chance that further damage will be done to tribal/state relations regardless of the ultimate outcome."

- *NBC News*

## Burt Lake Band prevails in federal court; can appeal BIA denial

**BURT LAKE in Michigan** — A Washington, D.C., judge ruled in favor of the Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, clearing the way for their century-long pursuit of tribal recognition.

"Overall, I'm optimistic," said Bruce Hamlin, Burt Lake Band Tribal Chairman. "We're spotlighted nationally in this case. Our argument has been used by others who've gone after, and received, recognition."

In January a federal judge ruled the Chinoook Indian Nation of Washington state, could not be banned from re-applying for federal recognition.

U.S. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson made a similar ruling in March regarding the Burt Lake Band. The Department of the Interior's ban on re-petitioning, which had halted the band's cause in 2015, was "arbitrary and capricious," she said.

"This is one light at the end of a very, very long tunnel," Hamlin said.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, which previously denied to recognize the band, has 60 days to respond.

"A re-petition is comparable to an appeal," said attorney and former congressman Bart Stupak. "And an appeal is a basic right that everybody has."

Stupak, of Venable LLC., a Washington D.C. law firm, has represented the band since 2015, though has long understood the details of their case, he said.

"I was running for office when they first approached me," Stupak said Saturday. "And truly back then, I knew nothing about this case. I told them, 'After I'm elected, I'll be happy to take a look at it.'"

That was in 1992.

Congressional efforts succeeded in securing federal recognition for the Little Traverse Bay Band in 1994, and the Grand Traverse Band in 1980.

Leaders of both bands have submitted letters of support for Burt Lake, but Congress left them out.

Compared to other bands of Michigan's American Indians — many leaders prefer the word "band" to "tribe" because they say it more accurately conveys their communities — the Burt Lake Band is small.

At last count, there are 323 enrolled members, many of whom live downstate at least part of the year for higher paying jobs.

But like those larger bands, Burt Lake descends from signers of the 1836 Treaty of Washington, in which Michigan's Ottawa, or Odawa, and Chippewa ceded 7 million acres for white settlement, in exchange for reservation land and annual payments of cash.

The Burt Lake Band — then called the Cheboiganning Band — was given 1,000 acres along the western shore of Burt Lake in Cheboygan County.

Documents in tribal archives show band members did not trust President Andrew Jackson to make good on his side of the deal, however.

They used allotment money to buy large tracts of their own treaty land outright. Then they put it in trust "in perpetuity" with the Governor of Michigan, historical documents show.

The trust held for more than 50 years.

But on Oct. 15, 1900, Cheboygan County Sheriff Fred Ming, and land speculator John McGinn, assembled a posse, rode into the Band's village, forced or carried people out of their homes, doused the houses with kerosene, and burned the village to the ground.

Twenty-five families were left homeless, with little food for the winter, no shelter for their animals, and nowhere to go.

It's an event the band refers to today as "the burn-out."

In 1914, the band sued the State of

Michigan to get their land back. They lost.

It was the start of their 106-year quest within the justice system for acknowledgment of their sovereignty.

The next step took two decades. Congress enacted the Indian Recognition Act in 1934, and the DIA's Bureau of Indian Affairs soon began receiving recognition petitions.

One of those was from Burt Lake, whose leadership first applied in 1935.

More than 85 years later, the band is still waiting for an answer, Stupak said.

"They essentially stiff-armed us," Hamlin said, of the unconstitutional treatment the band received.

In 1978, the DIA formalized the process, with another layer of bureaucracy called the "Part 83 process."

Part 83 required tribes and bands to show they'd been functioning as an autonomous unit "throughout history until the present."

The Band assembled thousands of pages of paperwork and applied under the Part 83 process.

It took 20 years, a delay Stupak calls "unconscionable," but they did hear back.

In 2006, the BIA rejected their petition. Band members had married into other bands and there were gaps in their paperwork, BIA investigators said.

Then in 2014, after decades of criticism, the BIA acknowledged its tribal recognition process was broken, and announced reforms.

"Specifically, the process has been criticized as too slow (a petition can take decades to be decided), expensive, burdensome, inefficient, intrusive, less than transparent and unpredictable," the BIA said of its own rules.

The new rules would be more objective, the agency promised. Groups like the Burt Lake Band would have a new, if limited, chance to petition again.

The band re-grouped and hired Stupak.

When the BIA changed its mind and nixed re-petition opportunities in 2015, Stupak sued on behalf of Burt Lake. They should have the chance to appeal, he argued.

Judge Jackson of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia, agreed. The no-appeal rule wasn't fair, she said.

"One cannot reconcile the agency's repetition of the word 'reform' with the agency's breezy assurance in the pleadings in this case that nothing has changed," she wrote in her 24-page opinion.

- *Traverse City (Michigan) Record Eagle*

## Sovereignty under threat, Mashpee Tribe says

**MASHPEE, Mass.** — More than 100 people signed on for an internet videoconference with the chairman and vice chairwoman of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, Cedric Cromwell and Jessie Little Doe Baird, May 4.

The listening session was organized by the First Congregational Church of West Tisbury to learn about the recent federal decision to revoke reservation status for the 321 acres of land the government holds in trust for the Mashpee.

Taking the land would end the tribe's right to govern itself, both leaders said.

"Sovereignty cannot exist without trust land," Ms. Baird told the internet audience. "The trust lands are the boundary within which sovereignty is exercised."

"They would disestablish our tribe, against American policy, against Native American law ... and basically destroy us," Mr. Cromwell said.

The tribe is fighting the decision by Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt in the courts and also appealing to the public for support.

"This issue that we're facing really is an existential crisis for us," Ms. Baird said. "The United States of America recognizes that the tribes, indigenous people of this land, have paid for our right to continue to govern ourselves. We've paid with our blood and we've paid with our lands."

There is no precedent or procedure for the federal government to take tribal lands out of trust, the tribal leaders said.

"I think that the administration, in a large sense, has anti-Indian policies across the board and I think one of the attempts of the administration is to diminish trust lands so that people outside of tribes can access tribes' resources," Ms. Baird said.

President Donald Trump's casino interests are another likely reason for the federal decision announced in March, the Mashpee leaders said.

"It's clear there's a big force associated with the Trump administration (and) it's related to gaming," Mr. Cromwell said.

Responding to a text from an audience member, Ms. Baird said it was about whether the tribe might be more successful in the land fight if it agreed not to enter the gaming business on its reservation. It's a query she's heard before, she said, with a trace of weariness.

"Asking that question is like saying, do you think you would have an easier time with the Equal Rights Amendment if you would just stop asking for the equal pay part of it," she said.

"If people have a right, they have a right."

The current crisis is not limited to Native American tribal members alone, Mr. Cromwell said.

"If they're denouncing the tribe, they're denouncing equal opportunity and your rights as a citizen," he said.

Mr. Cromwell also reminded listeners that the Mashpee Wampanoag provided food and other assistance to the Mayflower settlers and took part in the first Thanksgiving in 1621.

"This is the thanks my tribe gets," he said. "We're being attacked by our own country. Who would ever think this would happen?"

- *Vineyard Gazette (Martha's Vineyard, Mass.)*

## Report: Measures to stop spread of COVID-19 in First Nations limited by lack of infrastructure

Suggested measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 won't be effective in remote Manitoba First Nations unless housing conditions and access to clean water are improved, says a new report.

"Asking people to wash their hands and isolate in overcrowded homes without running water is like asking people unable to afford bread to eat cake," reads the report, released May 20 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The research examines housing, water infrastructure and access to emergency services in northern Manitoba First Nations including Wasagamack and Garden Hill First Nations. There are no known cases of COVID-19 in the area.

Drawing on water infrastructure studies from 2003 to 2018, the report outlines the history of limited access to clean water on reserves across Canada, and highlights the frequency of water shortages in Wasagamack, including a shutdown of the community's water treatment system earlier this month.

In 2018, just over half of the homes on the Garden Hill reserve had piped water delivery, with 27 per cent using cisterns or holding tanks, and 21 per cent using bottled or pails of water in their homes, according to data in the report.

"It's been really hard. I don't have water in my cistern right now," said Nora Whiteway of Wasagamack First Nation.

Whiteway lives with seven family members in a three-bedroom home. Their cistern, which sits next to an unreliable septic tank, she said, frequently runs dry because of how many people use the water for showers and to rinse the toilet bowl.

"It's hard to teach the youth about this, too," she said.

"You can't tell them not to take a shower or clean themselves because there's no water. Some of them aren't [physical] distancing, because they don't think it's serious. It's really hard."

Problems with housing conditions that limit personal hygiene and physical distancing because of overcrowding are another major issue, the report says.

In 2016, Statistics Canada found that 37 per cent of First Nations people on reserve were living in housing that did not have enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household, and in Wasagamack and Garden Hill First Nations, the person-per-room rates were respectively 24 and 22 times higher than the national average.

Whiteway said she's also worried Wasagamack doesn't have the health care facilities to treat people if they become ill.

"We get scared here ... we don't have a hospital nearby," she said.

"The problem we have here is that the nurses rotate [from other parts of the province], and they are still rotating. We're worried they might bring that virus to us."

Addressing the infrastructure problems is a matter of life and death, said Shirley Thompson, co-author of the report and associate professor at the University of Manitoba's Natural Resources Institute.

Thompson said the communities are in "triple jeopardy," because of water problems, housing problems and the fact that Canadian service providers and resource extraction workers are still being allowed to travel to the area, without respecting the First Nations' travel restrictions and lockdowns.

"They are sitting ducks," she said.

"We've had deaths from pandemics in the past. This has to be the one that makes the change."

In 2009 H1N1 influenza killed 11 people in the province, three of whom were from Garden Hill First Nation. Hundreds of people from the Island Lake area became ill and some were admitted to a Winnipeg hospital in critical condition.

After the H1N1 outbreak, the federal government paid for water and sewage cisterns and indoor plumbing for some of the home in the communities, but she said irregular service and maintenance problems have been common for the last decade.

"The H1N1 crisis [was] more than a warning. People died, hundreds of people were ill ... and an inadequate, low cost solution was given," said Thompson.

Indigenous Services Canada has said its approach to COVID-19 is different than for H1N1 in 2009.

The report's recommendations include:

- Policies to ensure decisions by First Nations leaders to lock down or restrict travel to and from their communities are respected and supported by federal departments.
- Collaborations between Canadian service providers, like health care workers and law enforcement, that continue services while respecting the restrictions to community access.
- Classifying resource extraction workers as non-essential, which would prohibit their entry to communities.
- Special funding to deal with the lack of infrastructure, through Indigenous-led organizations.
- Sustained programs to ensure food security, access to hunting and fishing gear, delivery of clean water and extra fuel for water deliveries.

The recommendations should be carried out by or done in partnership with First Nations organizations to "build capacity, social enterprise and support self-determination," the report reads.

- *CBC*

# HARMONY HAS TAKEN SHAPE.



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# Education



## Students in Rome learn about the Seminole Tribe

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Kids in Rome, Italy, have more than ample opportunities to learn about history right in their own backyard with the Colosseum, Vatican City and the Pantheon, to name a few.

But a world history course for a class of 10- and 11-year-old students at the New School calls for lessons that stretch beyond Europe's borders. So on April 29, thanks to the interactive virtual world, the students learned first-hand about the Seminole Tribe of Florida from two knowledgeable resources.

The class's teacher inquired with the Tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum for his students to learn about Native Americans. Tribal member Quenton Cypress, who is the community engagement manager for the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and Carrie Dilley, the visitor services and development manager at the museum, were happy to oblige.

They discussed aspects of the Tribe's history and culture with the students on a video call that left a lasting impression on both sides of the Atlantic.

Some areas Cypress touched on were the importance of languages in Seminole culture and the impact European's colonization had on Native Americans.

His talk made news – literally – in the New School community. Student Anna Sofia wrote an article for the school's newspaper about the online learning experience. In it, she mentioned how students learned about "...the dreadful European colonization of American Indian tribes."

Indeed, the topic was an eye-opening learning experience. Another student in the article mentioned how Europeans learn about discrimination related to skin color and religion, but not in regard to Native Americans.

The students also learned about stickball's Native American roots. Cypress showed them a stickball stick.

"Having a real Native American talking to me was simply mind-blowing. I felt so lucky," student Maria Sole said in the article.



Quenton Cypress and Carrie Dilley, first column, upper two photos, spoke about the Seminole Tribe to a class at the New School in Rome, Italy, on April 29.

Courtesy photo

Dilley talked about the museum's role in the Tribe and what it offers, and she showed the students a sweetgrass basket.

The learning didn't stop at the end of the class. Students brought home all the history and culture they digested about the Tribe and shared it.

"One of the most touching parts of the experience was that the students actually went home and told someone about the Seminole Tribe," Dilley said. "So for Quenton to make such an impact on the students I think is remarkable. It wasn't some meaningless

boring lecture for the students—he reached them on a deeper level. He stuck in their minds. The Seminole story stuck in their minds."

Dilley said it's gratifying when the Seminole story resonates – whether it's with visitors within the walls of the museum in Big Cypress or with eager, young minds thousands of miles away on another continent.

"I think at the museum that's what we always hope for, that our visitors actually internalize the stories and the voices that

are shared in the museum, and that people will actually feel something," Dilley said. "It was wonderful for me to be able to see that happen with an audience that didn't actually get to visit us in person but was still so moved."

A few days after the presentation, Dilley received an email from the teacher that included a video of the students individually expressing their gratitude to Cypress and Dilley. These weren't just typical thanks you's; they came in French, German, Hungarian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish,

and, of course, Italian.

"I actually cried when I watched their video," Dilley said. "It really meant so much to me that the students wanted to make the video for us, that they remembered little details about us and what we said, and wanted to share a little bit about themselves. Language is what makes cultures unique, but it also brings us together."

## Okeechobee High seniors receive \$1.3M in scholarships

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Okeechobee High School's stage normally would be a busy location for the school's scholarship night ceremony with seniors coming up to receive accolades. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the students from the class of 2020 did appear on stage, but only in photos that were shown on a large screen. Still, the virtual ceremony, which was streamed live May 14 on Facebook, didn't diminish their accomplishments.

Principal Lauren Myers proudly told viewers that the 354 scholarships awarded to 120 students represented \$1.275 million. That figure includes \$720,000 for students entering the military and \$177,750 from national and state scholarships. The remainder came from the Okeechobee community, including businesses, organizations, memorials and other segments.

"Seniors, in the midst of an economic shutdown, our Okeechobee community pulled together and invested \$377,635 in you and your future," Myers said. "You – 120 students awarded tonight – stood out among the class of more than 400. You did the work to provide personal statements and spend the time gathering transcripts and letters of recommendation all to earn this recognition and honor."

The 75-minute ceremony hosted by Myers and other OHS personnel drew more than 4,000 views as of May 19.

### Scholarships from Seminole Casino Brighton, STOF

Seminole Casino Brighton and the Seminole Tribe of Florida each provided scholarship awards. The casino awarded \$5,000 total in scholarships to 10 students. Receiving \$500 each were: Dayton Buxton, Tyekia Byrd, Julie Garcia-Arias, Kendall Harrison, Ta'makia Jones, Emily Land, Brandon Mitchell, Aubrey Pearce, Jennifer Salas Garcia and Ashley Snyder.

STOF awarded \$2,500 scholarships to Cera Elliott and Simone Washington.

Seminole students who earned scholarships included Kaleb Thomas and Kamani Smith. Thomas earned two scholarships. He was named a recipient of the Florida Bright Futures Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (\$2,000) and the Devon Venables Memorial Scholarship (\$500). Smith won the Black Bull Media Films "I Matter" Scholarship (\$250).

Thomas and Smith are among OHS seniors who are also Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School graduates. That group includes Aubrey Pearce, who earned several scholarships. She received the following: Okeechobee County Cattlewomen's Association (\$500), Elks Most Valuable Student (\$400), Kent Price Memorial (\$1,000), Hammock Scholarship (\$600), Vietnam Veterans of America Okeechobee Chapter 1086 (\$500), Bright Futures Academic Scholar (\$7,000), Gilbert Ford "Built Ford Tough National FFA" (\$1,000), Glades Electric (\$4,000), Eli's Western Wear (\$500), Okeechobee County Farm Bureau "Young Farmer & Rancher" (\$1,000), Okeechobee Youth Livestock Show and South Florida Fair.

Seniors entering the military, including PECS graduate Jenna Brown, were recognized by OHS's JROTC instructor Maj. Donavan Locklear.

"These young men and women have put country before self by contracting to go into the Armed Forces of the United States," Locklear said. "In doing so, they have sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States... Parents you should feel extremely proud of this moment for your part in your son or daughter's commitment to serve their country."

Brown will be joining the U.S. Navy. The other students headed into the military are: U.S. Army – Jordan Bradley, Dallas Delgado, Danielle Harper, Issac Herron, Gloria Leviano, Juliett Navarro Nieto, Deborah Sales; and U.S. Marines – Demetri Smith.

In her concluding remarks, Principal Myers urged the recipients to set goals and go after them.

"You certainly will be a senior class that we will never forget," she said.



The Seminole Tribe's Kamani Smith, left, and Kaleb Thomas were among the Okeechobee High School class of 2020 scholarship recipients.

Kevin Johnson (2)



Simone Washington was one of two recipients of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Scholarships for Okeechobee High School seniors.



Juliet Garcia-Arias was among 10 Okeechobee High seniors awarded Seminole Casino Brighton Scholarships.



Ta'makia Jones was among the Seminole Casino Brighton Scholarship recipients.



Okeechobee High School senior Aubrey Pearce, a former Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School student, earned several scholarships.

Courtesy South Florida Fair

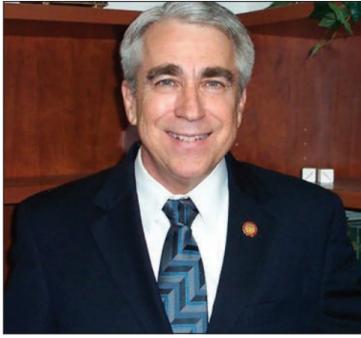
## New president named at Haskell Indian Nations University

### STAFF REPORT

Haskell Indian Nations University has a new president. The Lawrence, Kansas, college will be led by Dr. Ronald Graham, who has an extensive history in education and law enforcement. Tony Dearman, director of the Bureau of Indian Education, made the announcement May 15.

“Dr. Graham comes with tremendous skills and abilities not only in educational programs, but also in focusing on diversity and inclusion in education,” Dearman said in a statement. “Dr. Graham is passionate about soliciting and using input from stakeholders and fostering a team environment to create success. His leadership style will provide the platform necessary for Haskell’s current dedicated staff to be part of team decisions that will move Haskell forward.”

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has a long history with Haskell. Some of the Tribe’s all-time top athletes – such as Moses Jumper Jr., Peter Hahn and Duelle Gore – attended Haskell. In recent years, Haskell coaches have held youth clinics for young Seminole athletes and have been guest speakers at tribal functions on Seminole reservations.



Courtesy photo  
**Haskell Indian Nations University recently named Dr. Ronald Graham its president.**

Graham is a member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. He started work at Haskell on May 11.

“To work with a university, such as this flagship institution, that educates tribal youth and future tribal leadership is extremely exciting,” Graham said. “In the past, I have worked on five-year strategic

plans, marketing ideas, improving student retention and growth, as well as enhancing university IT software and much more. I plan to use this experience to drive projects to improve the student and staff experience at Haskell. This will be a total university team effort to move Haskell forward into the next phase of the college’s already phenomenal legacy.”

According to his LinkedIn profile, Graham previously served for five years as the dean of instruction in health sciences, public safety and industrial technology at Victor Valley College in Victorville, California. Graham was a criminology professor at Fresno City College for 13 years and he also worked at Northwest Christian University in Oregon and the University of Nevada Las Vegas. His background also includes employment in law enforcement as a deputy sheriff and police academy instructor in California. He also served as a law enforcement professional in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Haskell students represent more than 140 federally recognized tribes, including the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Its enrollment averages about 1,000 per semester.

## Native American Congressional interns selected

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Morris K. Udall & Stewart L. Udall Foundation (Udall Foundation) and the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona (NNI) announced April 23 the selection of the 2020 Native American Congressional Interns.

The program’s newest class of Udall Interns comprises 12 students representing 12 Tribes and eight universities from around the country. The Udall Interns were selected by an independent review committee on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to careers in Tribal public policy.

The Udall Foundation’s Native American Congressional Internship Program, funded and managed by NNI, provides Native American and Alaska Native undergraduate, graduate, and law students with the opportunity to gain practical experience with the Federal legislative process in order to understand firsthand the government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the Federal Government. Udall Interns are placed in Senate, House, and Federal agency offices in Washington, D.C., for an intensive nine-week summer program. Additional professional development and enrichment activities are hosted throughout the internship program and provide opportunities for the Udall Interns to meet and network with key decision makers. From 1996 through 2019, 278 Native American and Alaska Native students from 124 Tribes have participated in the Native American Congressional Internship program.

However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Udall Foundation and NNI have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Udall Internship program. As a result, all of the 2020 Udall Interns have been offered spots in the 2021 program.

“While we are obviously disappointed by the need to cancel the Udall Internship this summer, it’s important that we take the time to recognize the 2020 Udall Interns for their achievements and to celebrate their impressive work in, and commitment to, Indian Country,” said Dr. David Brown, the Udall Foundation’s Executive Director. “We welcome them to our growing community of program alumni and look forward to engaging all of our 2020 Udall Interns in the program next summer.”

In the interim, staff from the Udall Foundation and NNI are working together to provide the 2020 Udall Interns with online professional development and networking opportunities to keep the class connected and supported.

“The Native Nations Institute extends its congratulations to the 2020 Udall Interns. We look forward to the opportunity to work and engage with the Udall Interns, albeit virtually, as they expand their knowledge about Indigenous governance and how that intersects with Federal policy,” said Joan Timeche, NNI Executive Director.

The 2020 Udall Interns are:

- Alayah C. Johnson-Jennings, Quapaw Tribe of Indians, Dartmouth College
- Caitlin E. Wanic, Bay Mills Indian Community, Dartmouth College
- Dustin A. Rector, White Mountain Apache Tribe of the Fort Apache Reservation, Arizona State University
- Erika A. Salinas, Comanche Nation, University of Southern California
- Garrett W. Briggs, Southern Ute Indian Tribe of the Southern Ute Reservation, Northern Arizona University
- Hilary Edwards, Swinomish Indians of the Swinomish Reservation, Arizona State University
- Imani M. Hicks, Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians of the Pechanga Reservation, Duke University
- Janae A. Harris, Arapahoe Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Dartmouth College
- Kenadi R. Mayo, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Stephanie M. Lefthand, Pueblo of Taos, Baylor University
- Tyra M. West, Navajo Nation, Ohio Valley University
- Womsikuk James, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) of Massachusetts, Dartmouth College

Learn more about the Congressional Internship Program and meet the 2020 Udall Interns.

The Udall Internship honors the legacies of Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall, whose careers had a significant impact on Native American self-governance and health care, as well as the stewardship of public lands and natural resources.

For additional information about the Native Nations Institute and the Udall Internship program, contact Bret Muter at muter@udall.gov



Udall Foundation  
**Caitlin E. Wanic, Bay Mills Indian Community, Dartmouth College**



Udall Foundation  
**Dustin A. Rector, White Mountain Apache Tribe of the Fort Apache Reservation, Arizona State University**



Udall Foundation  
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Udall Foundation  
**Imani M. Hicks, Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians of the Pechanga Reservation, Duke University**



Udall Foundation  
**Janae A. Harris, Arapahoe Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Dartmouth College**

## Unity names ‘25 under 25’

### STAFF REPORT

**MESA, Ariz.** — Some of Indian Country’s top young talent has been recognized thanks to the United National Indian Tribal Youth Inc.

Unity announced on social media during the week of April 27 the fourth class of its “25 under 25 Native Youth Leaders,” a national recognition program that honors Native American and Alaskan Native youth. The program, launched in 2014, celebrates the achievements of 25 outstanding Native youth leaders under the age 25 every other year.

Miss Indian World and Unity peer guide Cheyenne Kippenberger, of the Seminole Tribe, participated in the announcement of the winners.

Unity is a national network organization that promotes personal development, citizenship and leadership among Native Youth.

Unity praised the youth leaders, noting they represent the organization’s core



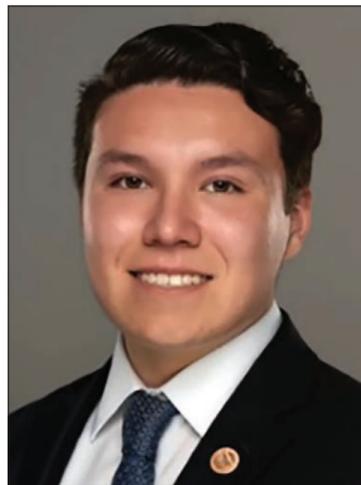
UNITY  
**Claudia McHenry, Mvskoke**



UNITY  
**Timothy Benally, Dine**



UNITY  
**Bianca Hernandez, Gila River Indian Community**



UNITY  
**Dian Baca, White Mountain Apache**



UNITY  
**Kennise McGertt, Salt River Pima – Maricopa Indian Community**

mission and exude living a balanced life developing their spiritual, mental, physical and social well-being.

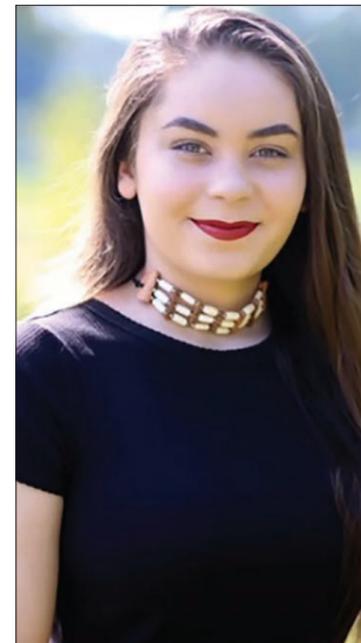
“Our Native youth are doing wonderful work in Indian Country,” Mary Kim Titla, executive director for Unity, said in a statement. “Unity’s 25 Under 25 program is just one way of recognizing these young leaders and acknowledging the passion they have to better their communities. There was an amazing response from outstanding youth applicants across the nation. A big congrats to the honorees and we wish nothing but the best to all nominees.”

Normally, the honorees are recognized at Unity’s national conference, but due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the in-person conference was cancelled. A virtual conference is being planned. During the next nine months, the 25 honorees will have an opportunity to receive training and networking in support of their work and endeavors.

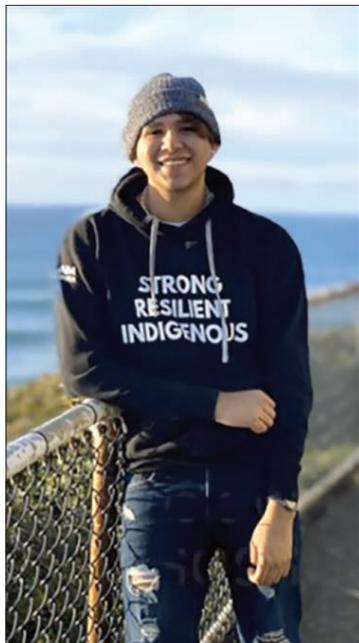
Applicants were judged by an independent committee based on the strength of the application, nomination form, resume, supplemental information and potential to impact Native America.

The 2020 class of 25 under 25 Native Youth Leaders are:

- Adrienne Pochel, 18, Wuskwi Siphk First Nations Cree, Ill.
- Alayna Harkreader, 19, Cherokee Nation, Okla.
- Alysia Coriz, 23, Kewa Pueblo, N.M.
- Angela Noah, 23, White Mountain Apache, Ore.
- Anthony, 20, Wuskwi Siphk First Nations Cree & Sicangu Lakota, Ill.
- Autumn Adams, 23, Yakama Nation, Wash.
- Bianca Hernandez, 21, Gila River Indian Community, Ariz.
- Brook Thompson, 24, Yurok & Karuk, Ore.
- Caleb Dash, 17, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Ariz.
- Claudia McHenry, Mvskoke, Okla.
- Dylan Baca, 17, White Mountain Apache, Ariz.
- Frankie Pedersen, 23, Listuguj Mi.gmaq First Nations, Ill.
- Kaitlyn Pinkerton, 16, Cherokee, Okla.
- Kennise McGertt, 16, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Ariz.
- Kylie Hunts-In-Winter, 17, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Ariz.
- Logan Monroe, 17, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Minn.
- Marco Ovando, 20, Shoshone Paiute, Idaho
- Nadira Mitchell, 19, Diné, Ariz.



UNITY  
**Shayla French, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippawa Indians**



UNITY  
**Marco Avando, Shoshone Paiute**

## TCUs selected for cultivating student program

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**DENVER** — The American Indian College Fund has selected five tribal colleges and universities to participate in its new 30-month Cultivating Native College Student Success Program to increase tribal colleges and universities' (TCUs) capacity to better recruit and work with students while increasing their sustainability as higher education institutions in the process.

The five TCUs selected are:

- Oglala Lakota College, Kyle, South Dakota
- United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck, North Dakota
- Stone Child College, Box Elder, Montana
- Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Hayward, Wisconsin
- Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, Montana

The College Fund hired Kelly LaChance (a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and descendant from the Dakubetede of Southern Oregon and the Northern California and Southern Oregon Shasta Nation) to manage the program. Prior to joining the College Fund, she served as an education director and education specialist for two federally recognized tribes. She also served on the AIAN Advisory committee to the Oregon Department of Education, concurrently served as a Tribal Advisory Council member at three universities in AIAN student services and programming, and additionally worked as the assistant program director for the AIAN teacher program at the University of Oregon.

LaChance holds a bachelor's degree from Southern Oregon University and a master's degree in adult education and training from Colorado State University. She is currently completing a doctor of education degree in educational methodology, policy, and leadership from the University of Oregon.

## U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo appointed for a second term

STAFF REPORT

Joy Harjo (Muscogee (Creek) Nation) will serve a second term as the U.S. Poet Laureate. Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden announced the reappointment April 30. Harjo, who was the guest speaker of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki-Museum's lecture series in November 2019 on the Big Cypress Reservation, will launch a new Library of Congress collection and online map featuring poets and poetry.

"Joy Harjo is such an inspiring and engaging poet laureate," Hayden said in a statement. "I'm thrilled she said yes to a second term to help the library showcase Native poets from coast-to-coast. Her profound musical and literary talents are a gift to the nation."

During her upcoming term, which starts Sept. 1, Harjo will work on a digital project called "Living Nations, Living Words: A Map of First Peoples Poetry." Harjo and the library's geography and map division will use a web mapping application that is focused on storytelling and showcasing Native American poets from across the country.

The project is expected to include Native poets' biographies and recordings of them reading and discussing one of their poems. The recordings will be part of a new collection in the Library's American Folklife Center featuring the recordings of the Native poets.

"It is an honor to serve a second term as Poet Laureate, especially during these times of earth transformation and cultural change," said Harjo, who is the first Native poet to serve in the position. "Poetry reminds us that we are connected beyond words, and to communicate through poetry has the potential to expand the conversation into wordless depths, to help us move collectively into fresh cultural vision. To get there in understanding, we begin with the roots. In this country, the roots are found in the poetry of the more than 500 living Indigenous nations."

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 9, 1951, Harjo is the author of nine books of poetry. She is the editor of "When the Light of the World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry," to be published by W.W. Norton in August 2020.

## Disbursement of billions in COVID-19 begins for tribes, but frustration remains

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Nearly \$5 billion from the Coronavirus Relief Fund is being dispersed to Native American tribes.

U.S. Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin and U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced details of the distributions in a joint statement May 5, the same day the departments said the payments would start to be released to tribes.

"Our approach is based on the fair balancing of tribal needs," Mnuchin said. The Trump administration's response to tribal communities has been met with frustration from some leaders in Indian Country.

"This administration continues to drag their feet to distribute the funding and the resources that tribes need from everywhere, from every federal agency," U.S. Congresswoman and Native American Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), D-NM, said May 20 during a live Facebook forum about COVID-19's impact on Native American communities. The forum was hosted by the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center.

Kevin Allis, CEO of the National Congress of American Indians, said there's been a lack of transparency in how the methodologies for funding distribution were created.

"What we've seen so far is that they really haven't listened much to what has gone on and what has been voiced by tribal leaders in the consultation."

In the same discussion, host Liz Watson said problems associated with the pandemic for Native Americans stretch further back than the current crisis.

"While we are all affected by this global pandemic, it's clear that we're not all at equal risk," she said. "The coronavirus pandemic is exposing the deadly consequence of decades of disinvestment and discrimination for so many communities, especially for Native Americans."

The \$4.8 billion being released is based on population data through the Indian Housing Block Grant. It represents more than half of the portion of the original \$8 billion

designated for tribes in the CARES Act. The remaining portion — earmarked for tribes based on employment numbers in tribes and tribal-owned entities as well as expenditure data — is slated to be released at a date that had not been announced as of press time.

According to the Treasury and Interior departments, details of the allocation are:

- Distribute 60 percent of the \$8 billion to Tribes based on population data used in the distribution of the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), subject to a floor of \$100,000. This data is based on U.S. Census figures and is already familiar to Tribal governments.
- Distribute the remaining 40 percent of the \$8 billion based on the total number of persons employed by the Indian tribe and any tribally-owned entity, and further data to be collected related to the amount of higher expenses faced by the tribe in the fight against COVID-19.
- Payment to tribes will begin [May 5] based on the population allocation, and will take place over several banking days. Amounts calculated for Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act regional and village corporations will be held back until pending litigation relating to their eligibility is resolved.
- Payments to tribes based on employment and expenditure data will be made at a later date. Treasury will work with tribes to confirm employment numbers and seek additional information regarding higher expenses due to the public health emergency.

Haaland is pushing for the passage of an emergency broadband measure that would help provide internet connection to those tribal areas that don't have access. She said internet connection has essentially become a human right because it's needed for home-based things such as schoolwork, working from home and telemedicine.

"It's wrong not to allow tribes to access spectrum over their own tribal lands, especially when it prevents tribal members from calling 911, from getting medical help, from their kids being able to access the internet so they can do their homework," she said.

## Former Navajo pageant winner dies from COVID-19

STAFF REPORT

Valentina Blackhorse, who was Miss Western Navajo Nation in 2015-16, died from COVID-19 on April 23, according to media reports.

Blackhorse, 28, from Kayenta, Arizona, was fondly remembered for her enthusiasm to compete in pageants while representing her people.

"She had a great passion for competing in Pageants and was well known in that circle. She had (an) immense love for sharing her Navajo culture," her family posted on a GoFund page that was set up to help pay for funeral costs and as a fundraiser for Blackhorse's young daughter.

Blackhorse also held the titles of Miss Monument Valley High School and Miss Diné College.

In a statement, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez described Blackhorse as a loving person who gave so much to her Nation and her Diné people.

Blackhorse worked for the Nation's division of community development. She devoted much of her time to helping the Nation's 110 chapters. DCD executive director Dr. Pearl Yellowman remembered her as a loving person who was very compassionate about helping others.



Valentina Blackhorse

Facebook

Blackhorse is survived by her parents, Danny and Laverne Blackhorse; her one-year-old daughter, Poet; her sisters, Victoria and Vanille Blackhorse; and her companion Robby Jones.

## South Korea to provide 10,000 face masks to help Navajo veterans fight coronavirus

BY KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

**SEOUL, South Korea** — South Korea will provide 10,000 masks and hand sanitizer to help Navajo veterans of the 1950-53 Korean War fight the coronavirus, the government said Monday.

It was the latest in a series of humanitarian shipments from South Korea to foreign veterans ahead of the 70th anniversary of the June 25 start of the war that pitted the United States and the South against the communist-backed North.

The Navajo Nation has been one of the hardest-hit communities in the United States, with coronavirus infection rates rivaling those of New York City.

Health authorities have reported 3,912 positive cases and 140 deaths on the desert reservation, which covers parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, and has a population of 175,000.

South Korea's Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs said it was "sending protective items including 10,000 masks to the hidden heroes of the Korean War in the Navajo Nation for the people who are hit especially hard by COVID-19," the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

About 800 Navajo men served in the

war, many as Code Talkers who used their native language as an unbreakable code to confound opposing forces. Around 130 of the Navajo veterans are still alive, the ministry said.

The 70th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee will deliver the masks and hand sanitizers to the veterans and their loved ones as an expression of gratitude for their contribution, according to a press release.

The items were originally supposed to be delivered on Monday, but the date has been delayed. Officials said they plan to hand them over sometime this week with the assistance of the South Korean consulate in Los Angeles, the Korean community in Arizona and the Korean Missionary Association in America.

"We hope our small gifts will console the veterans in the midst of the COVID-10 crisis," said committee co-chairman Kim Eun-gi. "The government remembers those who made a noble sacrifice to defend a strange country 70 years ago, and we hope they will proudly tell their posterity about the choice they made so many years ago."

Earlier this month, the committee sent 1 million masks to benefit all foreign veterans of the war, including 500,000 to the Department of Veterans Affairs for American vets.

## Higher slot payout reporting threshold sought

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

\$5,000 — to be in line with inflation.

"The increased threshold would not only enable the IRS to focus its limited enforcement resources on those taxpayers who are most likely to have net slot winnings at the end of the taxable year, but would also significantly reduce close interactions required between gaming employees and patrons to issue tax forms," Miller said. "This policy change, supported by bipartisan members of Congress, was already long overdue prior to the pandemic, and now has additional importance as the gaming industry emerges from this crisis."

Last year Miller wrote the Treasury Department and urged the secretary "to update the reporting threshold for slot jackpots to a substantially higher level that reflects current realities."

Miller said the threshold should be adjusted to a more modern level — such as

## Colegrove named public safety director for Glades

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Glades County announced May 14 that Angie Colegrove has been named the county's public safety director.

Colegrove has been an employee of the county since 1996 and has served as its emergency management director. She had been serving as acting public safety director for the past six months.



Angie Colegrove

Glades County Public Safety/Facebook

## Program pays ranchers in SWFL to help panthers

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Ranchers in Southwest Florida may be able to get paid for helping the Florida panther.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide technical and financial assistance for conservation practices that improve its habitat through the Conservation Stewardship Program. The sign-up deadline is June 15. This is a Regional Conservation

Partnership Program project. To be eligible, a producer's operation must be in northeastern Collier County or southwestern Hendry County, areas identified as essential for the long-term viability of the panther population.

For more information contact District Conservationist Mitchell Aman at (863) 674-5700.

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# Five Native American films, shows to stream this summer

## STAFF REPORT

The streaming options for movies and TV shows have skyrocketed in recent years. When you fire up your favorite streaming device – whether it be a phone, tablet, laptop or TV – you can choose among several services like Netflix, Hulu, Apple TV+, Disney+, Amazon Prime and many more.

Streaming has increasingly become a go-to option in recent months, as many traditional theaters have been temporarily closed due to Covid-19. In addition, many film festivals were postponed or cancelled this year.

For those who stay connected to Native American filmmakers and actors, 2019 was something of a banner year. There were several projects that were featured at film festivals and also through commercial productions.

Actor Graham Greene (Oneida) had roles on the CW Network's "Riverdale" TV show and on Amazon's "Goliath." Adam Beach (Saulteaux) was featured on CW's "Nancy Drew" and Netflix's "Juanita."

Also in 2019, Wes Studi (Cherokee) received an "Academy Honorary Award," becoming the first Native American actor to receive an Oscar specifically for acting.

But mainstream recognition for Native Americans in the film and TV industries has historically been few and far between. However, streaming services have made the work of Native American and Indigenous artists more available.

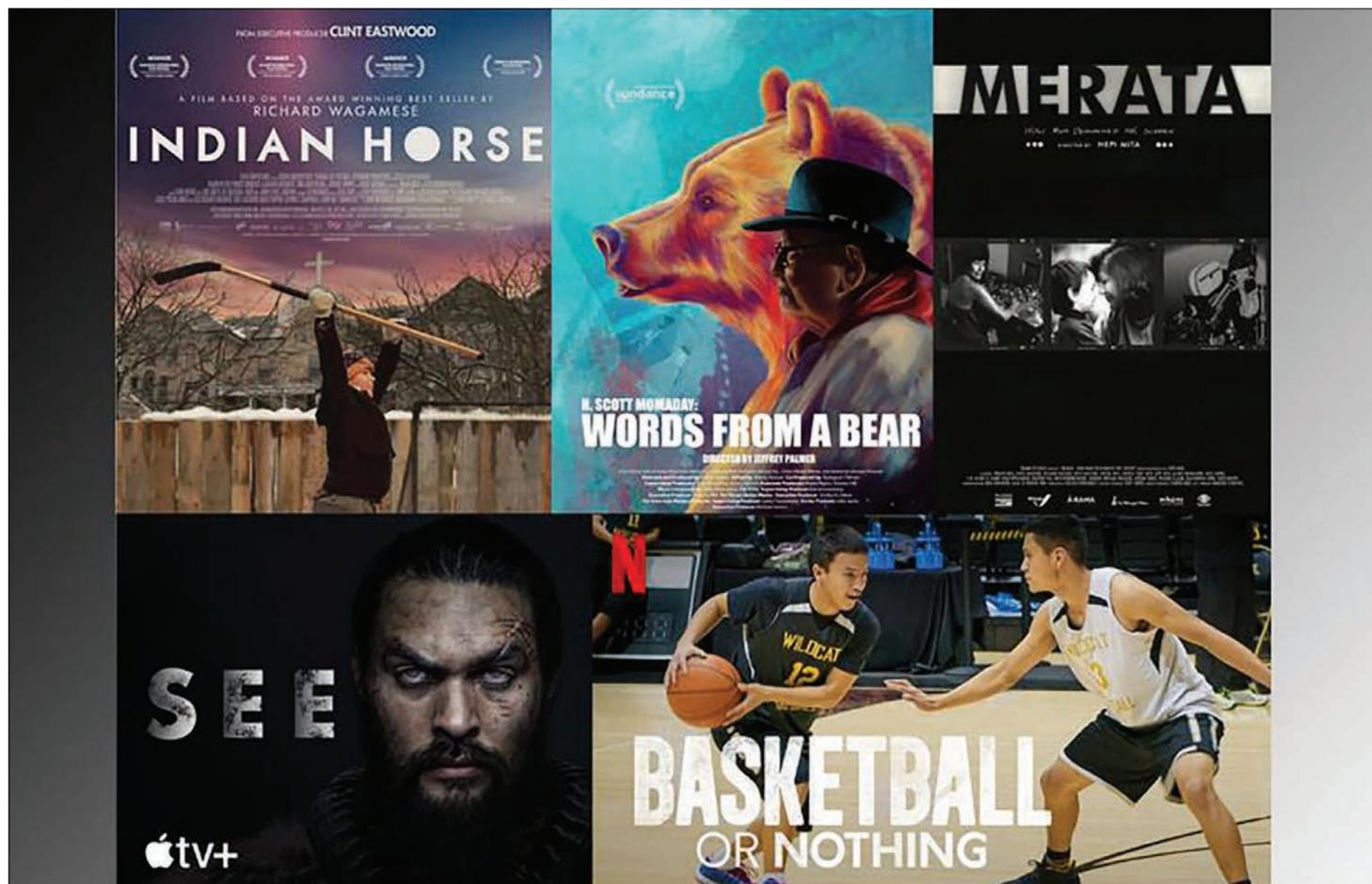
The Seminole Tribune searched the internet for a few options that might appeal to a variety of interests. We liked the list of five that Ryan Winn, a writer for the Tribal College Journal, recently wrote about. Winn also teaches in the liberal studies department at College of Menominee Nation.

### "Basketball or Nothing"

This Netflix docuseries follows the Chinle High School boys basketball team as they attempt to grab their first-ever state title. The Wildcats are led by coach Raul Mendoza as they work to develop into a cohesive team that brings pride to their Navajo community. "The gameplay is expectedly compelling, but the series' deep dives into past motivations and future aspirations of its characters solidifies why the Wildcat Den is a special place," Winn said. "It's impossible not to be caught-up in this story of hope and persistence, be it when they're launching a buzzer-beating shot or traveling to a transfer station to fill containers of water for their homes."

### "Merata: How Mum Decolonized the Screen"

Merata Mita (Maori) has said she became a filmmaker to reverse the lack of her peoples' stories in movies. Her documentaries about Indigenous causes



Check out what's playing in the movie streaming world.

Tribal College Journal

have been called controversial by some, but have also brought many accolades from her filmmaking peers. Much of her work has been featured internationally. After she died in 2010, her youngest child – Heperi – went through her mother's archives, "illuminating the cathartic layers behind her drive to shatter white patriarchy and share her peoples' perspective with the masses." "Merata did first what few have done better, a fact captured in this career-spanning, humanizing filmography," Winn said. The film is available on Netflix.

### "Indian Horse"

Indian Horse is based on Richard Wagamese's (Ojibwe) novel of the same name. The film tells the story of a First Nations' Native boarding school resident-turned-hockey phenomenon, Saul Indian

Horse. "Throughout each phase of his life, Saul is met with racism and hardship, yet he finds the means to persist," Winn said. "The journey leads him to a loving foster care family, numerous accolades, a chance to confront the demons of his upbringing, and the opportunity to grab hold of what he comes to define as most important to him." The film doesn't turn away from its depictions of 20th century racism, Winn added, and "the cast drives home the reality that the scars of trauma never lie far beneath the surface." Indian Horse is available on Amazon Prime, Netflix and other streaming services.

### "Words from a Bear"

In 1969, writer N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) made history when "A House Made of Dawn" became the first Native-

written novel to win the Pulitzer Prize. Through interviews, archival footage, and animation Words from a Bear "celebrates the storytelling powers of the man who singlehandedly launched the genre we now know as American Indian literature." "Behind his booming voice and wry smile lies generations of his ancestors, whose memory he honors through word craft, a fact made clear in his body of work," Winn said. The film is more than a token nod to Momaday's lifelong literary achievement, however. "It's a reminder of why his words continue to resonate with new generations," Winn said. The documentary can be found through pbs.org and Amazon Prime.

### "See"

See is a series starring Jason Momoa (Hawaiian) about a dystopian future where

a virus has caused the human race to lose its sight. The survivors have devolved socially, as they are forced to rely on their remaining senses – until a set of twins are born with sight. "The show is a mixture of action sequences, plot twists, and breathtaking cinematography that quickly spans decades, allowing Momoa to channel both the brooding disposition and thrilling dexterity that's made him an action star," Winn said. Note: The series is intended for mature audiences. "The first season is worth the price of admission, setting the stage for a story arc rich in minable plotlines," Winn added. The series can be found on Apple TV+.

# Documentary on Native American artists to air at OK film festival

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

"Love and Fury," a film by Native American filmmaker Sterlin Harjo, will be among the menu options for the deadCenter Film Festival.

Described as Oklahoma's largest film festival, the event is in its 20th year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be held online only, but the 11-day festival still has an array of gatherings that should appeal to any film buff.

In addition to award-winning films, there will be filmmaker panels, celebrity discussions, screenplay readings and film classes. There's also a "pop-up drive-in" movie experience for passholders.

Harjo's "Love and Fury" is a fast-paced documentary that follows Native American artists in their careers in the U.S. and abroad.

"The film is a conversation that I've wanted to have for a long time," Harjo said. "Native art has been shackled to history by a false vision of what Native people are through the settler gaze of our current reality. I wanted to make something bold and in your face, directly putting up a finger to the shackles of the art world and historic representation of our people. We are diverse, we are dark, we are beautiful and so is our artwork."

The cast includes Micah P. Hinson, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Haley Greenfeather English, Nicholas Galanin, Demian Dine Yazhi, Emily Johnson, Laura Ortman, Penny Pitchlynn, Bobby "Dues" Wilson, Julia Keefe, Aku Matu, Yatika Fields, Nani Chacon, Ginger Dunnill, Tommy Orange, Joy Harjo, Jeffrey Gibson, Sam English, Raven Chacon, Tick Suck, Spirit Plate and Nathan Young.

The 93-minute film will be played June 12 at 6 p.m. (EST). Visit [dcff2020.eventive.org](http://dcff2020.eventive.org) for more information about the festival, which runs June 11-21.



Scenes from Sterlin Harjo's "Love and Fury," which will be available in the deadCenter Film Festival in June.

"Love and Fury" (3)



# Sports



## Fond memories of OHS baseball for 4-year varsity letterman Ozzy Osceola

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Coming off a big win against Martin County in mid-March, the Okeechobee High School baseball team was feeling pretty good at practice before its next game.

With a 4-4 overall record and having won two of their past three games, the Brahms were right in the thick of a competitive season.

But that next game never came.

"In the middle of practice the coach got a text saying that we couldn't practice," said right-fielder Ozzy Osceola.

The COVID-19 pandemic halted everything. For seniors such as Osceola — one of only two four-year varsity lettermen on the team (Brady Markham is the other) — the cancellation was especially tough to digest.

No more at-bats in the purple and gold for the class of 2020; no more bus trips for road games; no senior night game; no chance to battle for a district championship or perhaps make a run in the state tournament like the squad did when Osceola was a sophomore in 2018.

"The worst part was not finishing it and seeing how far we could have gone," said Osceola, who, along with senior Kaleb Thomas, comprised the Tribe's representation on the team.

In a district with Port St. Lucie, South Fork, Suncoast and Westwood, the Brahms figured they had a decent shot at capturing a district title.

"We could have won it all," Osceola said.

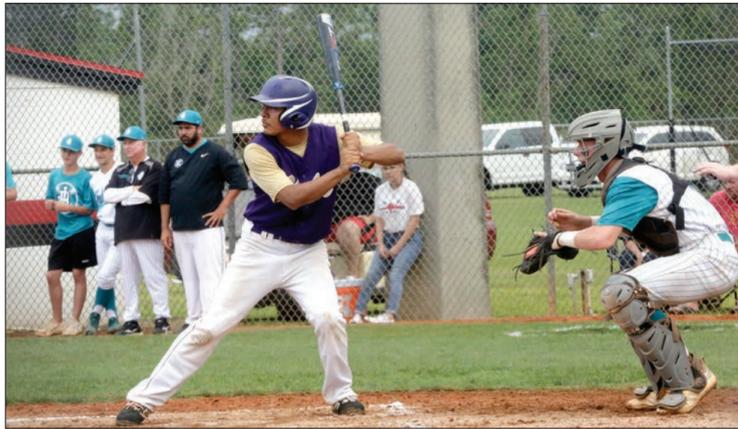
They already had a win against South Fork and an impressive non-district triumph against a strong Lakeland squad. Osceola said the team was playing better than people expected.

But that 5-2 win at Martin County High School in Stuart on March 10 turned out to be the final game. Osceola, who bats lefty and throws righty, started in right field and went 1-for-3 with a single and RBI. He also smacked a shot to deep right field that he said would have been out of the park but died in the wind for an out.

As a key player for four years, Osceola experienced some highs and lows in his career. In his freshman season he had already earned plenty of playing time, which included some as a starter, but his year ended abruptly when he flipped over while driving a 4-wheeler and injured his pelvis. He said he tries to stay off 4-wheelers as much as possible now. Okeechobee finished as district runner-up and lost in the regional quarterfinals.

Osceola made quite an impression in his first season.

"The guy has a lot of grit," then-Okeechobee coach Eric Kindell told The Seminole Tribune in a 2017 interview. "Great kid and very respectful to the coaches and to his teammates. He gives you everything he's got. He's a true



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School baseball player Ozzy Osceola is at the plate in a 2019 district playoff game. Osceola, a senior this season, played four years of varsity.

bulldog. He's got a little something you can't teach. It's been nice having him."

As for highs, there were plenty along the way, but none more memorable than the shocker Okeechobee pulled against Jensen Beach in the 2018 district semifinals in what was no doubt one of the greatest moments in Okeechobee High sports history.

The semifinals of district tournaments tend to be packed with more pressure than the district championship game because seasons are on the line in the semifinals. In the district finals, both teams are already qualified for the regionals, so they know there will be at least one more game regardless of the outcome.

On the night of April 30, 2018, the odds were stacked against Okeechobee. The team's mediocre .500 regular season showed no indication that the Brahms were poised to do damage in the playoffs, especially against No. 1 seed Jensen Beach. Not only did Jensen Beach crush Okeechobee twice in the regular season (10-3 and 13-1), but the Falcons had ace Lyon Richardson — one of the top prospects in Florida and the country — on the hill when the teams met in the Class 5A-District 14 semifinals. One month later, Richardson was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in the second round.

"He was very difficult [to face], but we managed to beat them," Osceola said.

Behind the arm of Osceola's cousin Sean Osceola, Okeechobee emerged with a 2-0 win in an intense 8-inning battle that was scoreless until another Osceola — Lucas — scored as a pinch runner in the extra inning.

Okeechobee lost to Martin County in the district championship, but the underdog Brahms weren't through with their postseason magic. They beat Dwyer in a regional quarterfinal and then stunned Martin County in a rematch in the regional semifinals.

The surprising postseason journey ended with a 2-0 loss at Doral Academy, but the memories won't fade anytime soon.

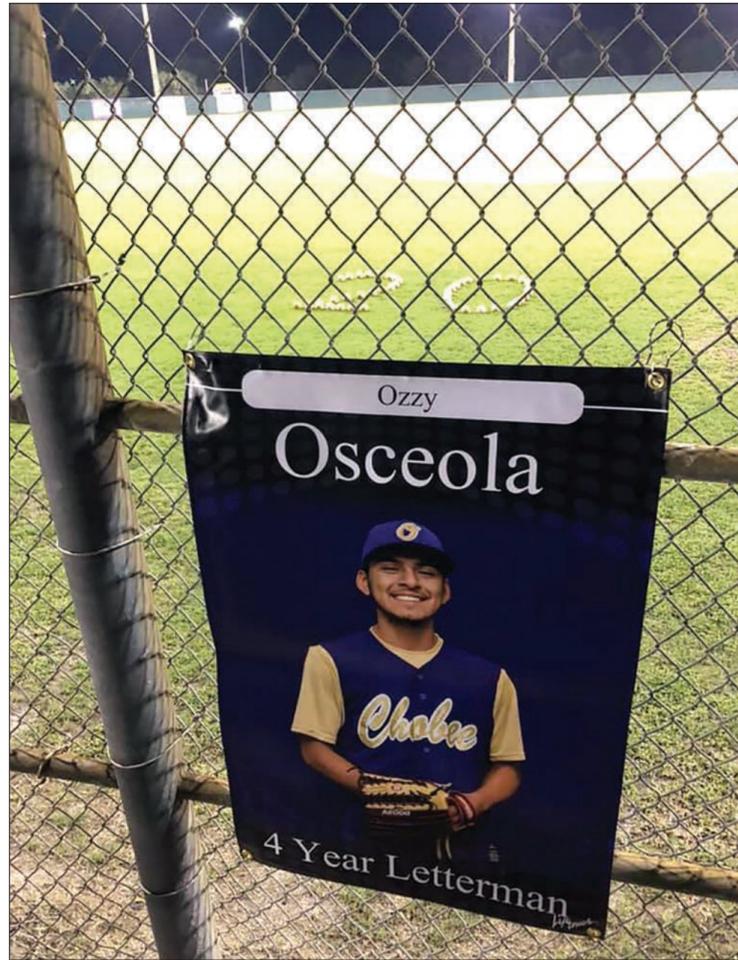
"That was the most memorable season. The most memorable game was versus Jensen Beach," Ozzy Osceola said.

Osceola and the rest of the 2020 class are scheduled to graduate May 30 at the Agri-Civic Center. Due to the pandemic, as of press time the plan was to allow only students and staff at graduation. COVID-19 not only prevented senior student-athletes from enjoying a proper ending to their prep athletic careers, but it also spoiled graduation — one of the biggest nights for any family.

"It's not the way I envisioned it. I wanted my mom to be there and cheer for me. Everybody feels the same way; they wanted their parents there," Osceola said.

With his OHS career done, Osceola is shifting his focus to college. He will attend South Florida State College in Avon Park. He'll major in business marketing at the two-year school and wants to join the baseball team as a walk-on.

Although COVID-19 robbed Osceola and his teammates in many ways, he'll still leave OHS with plenty of memories. "I'll never forget any of those moments," he said.



OHS/Facebook

A banner for Okeechobee High School senior Ozzy Osceola hangs on a fence at the baseball field.



Kevin Johnson

Ozzy Osceola is greeted by his teammates during player introductions.



Kevin Johnson

Ozzy Osceola chats with teammates and coaches in a 2019 game.

## Crisis highlights Indian Country collaboration, experts tell Arizona State University panel

BY MARY BETH FALLER  
Reporter, ASU Now

The suspension of sports has taken away a happy part of Native American culture as the world deals with the COVID-19 pandemic, according to several experts on an Arizona State University panel on May 15.

But the public health crisis also has shown the resilience of Native American people, the panelists said during the "COVID-19 and Native American Sport" Zoom discussion sponsored by the Global Sport Institute at ASU.

"If anyone knows Native Americans, we love our sports, and having to pause sports activity now is difficult," said Patty Talahongva, the moderator and executive producer at Indian Country Today, the event's co-sponsor. She is a member of the Hopi tribe and an alumna of ASU.

"Togetherness is another part of Indian culture, that idea of caring for one another and our clanships," she said.

"When we talk about social distancing, it goes against the fabric of our culture."

Young Native American basketball players are losing the opportunity to pursue scholarships because the Native American Basketball Invitational tournament, held in Phoenix every summer, is canceled, the panelists said.

Natalie Welch, who is Cherokee, is an assistant professor at Linfield College and formerly participated in Nike's N7 initiative.

"Hundreds of teams come to Arizona to play 'rez ball' and there's scholarship money attached to that," she said.

"There's so much beyond just the games being played. It's also the kinship and connecting with natives from Alaska to the Florida Seminoles. It's an eye-opener for a lot of native youth."

Brent Cahwee, a Pawnee/Euclidean and co-founder of the news site NDNSports, said the NABI tournament is one of the top 10 events in Indian Country.

"One of the things I like is the parade of teams, with hundreds of teams holding their tribal flags," he said.

"The kids save up their money to travel and it might be their only

exposure to playing in front of a college coach."

The tournament also includes educational seminars.

"These have grown exponentially and are mandatory events for the players. Now the kids will be missing out on how to apply for scholarships and how to apply for financial aid," he said.

The panelists agreed that even though some states are easing stay-at-home orders, sports is not ready to resume.

"When you watch them play rez basketball, they're on top of each other," Talahongva said.

"Any sport has the potential for impact. Softball is huge on my reservation in the summertime."

Cahwee said that the public health concerns go far beyond the players. He was covering the Big-12 tournament in March when the decision was made to cancel.

"What a lot of people don't see in college and professional sports is that, behind the scenes, it takes a small army to run that tournament, with concessions, security, ushers," he said.

♦ See SPORTS on page 6B

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◆ **SPORTS**  
From page 5B

“The NBA commissioner brought up the fact that a lot of head coaches fall into the high-risk category. There’s a lot to making sure the environment is safe to compete.”

Jordan Marie Daniel, a member of the Sioux tribe, is a marathon runner who uses her sport to raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women.

“All of my races have been canceled for this entire year,” she said. “But until there’s a vaccine I don’t see it feeling safe at all.”

Daniel, who lives in Los Angeles, rented a treadmill because she sees too many people not following social-distancing guidelines outside.

“Even though things look weird in our sports world, there are still ways to stay fit and there’s probably even more opportunity to raise awareness and keep talking about these issues,” she said.

“On May 5, I ran from sunrise to sunset in prayer.

We as indigenous people are struggling for visibility all the time, and I see that changing as we are showing up and speaking out.”

The panelists said they’ve seen their tribes stepping up to help their communities and collaborate with each other, and they praised the Oglala Sioux Tribe, which closed the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to visitors despite the demands of the South Dakota governor to reopen.

One of the hardest hit communities is the Navajo nation, which has seen more than 3,600 cases and 127 deaths.

Michelle Tom, who is Navajo, is a physician at the Winslow Indian Health Care Center and the Little Colorado Medical Center, both in Winslow, Arizona, dealing on the front lines of the crisis.

Tom also was captain of the Sun Devil women’s basketball team when she was at ASU. She said the communication skills she learned on the team have been important in working with patients.

“When you’re on a team,

it’s knowing your role. You’re not going to succeed by yourself,” she said.

“If I go to an outpatient clinic, I’m the only doctor there but the support staff is amazing. I look to security to get patients in and out safely. The nurses and medical assistants are my eyes and ears.”

Tom sees COVID-19 patients every day, but is alarmed by the spread of the virus. She treated a very sick man who was dropped off by his wife and son, who then left.

“I was frantic. They were on their way to Walmart,” she said. “I tested the son and wife. They had no symptoms but they tested positive.”

But she’s seen the silver lining as well.

“You can see the beauty,” Tom said. “I’ve had so many emails. ‘How can I help?’ It’s not just Navajos. It’s all Indian Country.”

*ASU Now is a multimedia news and information website. It is the storytelling center of Arizona State University.*

# FGCU athletics establishes hall of fame

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**FORT MYERS** — The Florida Gulf Coast University’s athletics program has created a hall of fame.

Its first inductees were a slam dunk.

The school’s legendary “Dunk City” men’s basketball team, which reached the Sweet 16 of the 2013 NCAA tournament, will be inducted in the first class in February 2021. The team is also scheduled to be honored when the University of Southern California visits FGCU in November. USC coach Andy Enfield was the coach of the “Dunk City” team.

“We are extremely excited to finally be commencing our Athletics Hall of Fame. Countless individuals have combined to produce so much collective success over our first two decades, which will create a much appreciated and recognized challenge for our HOF Committee to handle now and into the future,” Ken Kavanagh, director of athletics, said in a statement announcing the new hall of fame on April 30. “In turn, the transformational University-wide legacy generated by our 2012-13 men’s basketball team more than lent itself to be treated in a special manner, relative to waiting the minimum post-20-year tenure required in our bylaws.”

The Seminole Tribe has a history with FGCU athletics. The Tribe is a



Linwood Ferguson/FGCU Athletics

Florida Gulf Coast University fans get revved up for a game at Alico Arena.

major sponsor of the annual “Night at the Nest” fundraising event at Alico Arena which raises thousands of dollars for the athletics program. FGCU’s basketball, softball and volleyball teams have held clinics for Tribal youth on Seminole reservations and at Alico Arena. Tribal member Ahnie Jumper, from the Big Cypress Reservation, is a catcher on FGCU’s softball team.

The Hall of Fame Committee consists of Dana Caldwell, Mike Estes, Susan Evans, J Webb Horton, Ken Kavanagh, David Moulton, Kathy Peterson, Butch Perchan, Dr. Tom Roberts, Dr. Bob Ryan, John Sinnett, and Donna Sublett.

An open call for nominations of worthy candidates for induction as part of the first class on an individual basis will run June 1-July 31. The committee will finalize the inaugural class in October before announcing shortly thereafter.

FGCU athletics is embarking on its 20th year of competition in 2020. The school has won 82 conference regular season and tournament titles in just 12-plus seasons at the Division I level. The Eagles competed in Division II prior to moving to D-1.

For more information visit [FGCUAthletics.com](http://FGCUAthletics.com).



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A “claim” means a right to seek payment or other compensation. You must file a Proof of Claim Form so it is **actually received** by the deadline. It can be filed by you, by a legal guardian, by survivors, or by relatives of people who have died or are disabled. **All Personal Injury Claimant Proof of Claim Forms and any supporting documentation submitted with those forms will be kept highly confidential and will not be made available to the public.** You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.

Additionally, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, trusts, governmental units, and Native American Tribes may also file a proof of claim against Purdue.

Go to [PurduePharmaClaims.com](http://PurduePharmaClaims.com) to find a complete list of instructions on how to file a claim. You will also find a list of the opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue.

You may file a Proof of Claim even if a settlement is contemplated in the Purdue bankruptcy so that your claim can be considered as part of any settlement.

### WHO DOES THIS AFFECT AND WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

If you think you’ve suffered harm from Purdue or its prescription opioids, you have the right to file a claim even if you may also have received reimbursement from insurance. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Purdue bankruptcy include death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of spousal relationship benefit for things like child-rearing, enjoyment of life, etc., or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (sometimes referred to as “NAS”), among others.

**The deadline to file a claim is June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.** If you do not file a claim by the deadline, you will lose the right to file a claim against Purdue, and you will lose any right to seek payment or compensation you may have had. Proof of Claim Forms, a list of opioids produced, marketed or sold by “Purdue,” and instructions for how to file a claim are online at [PurduePharmaClaims.com](http://PurduePharmaClaims.com). You can also request a claim form by mail, email or phone:

**Purdue Pharma Claims Processing Center**  
c/o Prime Clerk LLC  
850 Third Avenue, Ste. 412, Brooklyn, NY 11232  
Email: [purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com](mailto:purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com) - Phone: 1.844.217.0912

### THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION.

Is Purdue out of money? No. For more information concerning Purdue’s bankruptcy, Frequently Asked Questions, Proof of Claim Forms, examples of personal injury and other claims that can be filed, instructions on how to file a claim, and important documents including the Bar Date Notice, visit

[PurduePharmaClaims.com](http://PurduePharmaClaims.com), or call 1.844.217.0912.



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