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ESJOA

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Special Issue; Indigenous Voices

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ON THE COVER

Photos courtesy of CSUDH Rohemah Muhamed & Jeff Farsai.

Photographs taken at the CSUDH Pow wow spring 2016.

Held the third weekend in April, the pow wow, Honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, is tied to the service learning anthropology class North American Indians*, and is led by the students themselves.*

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Introduction

Janine Gasco
Professor of Anthropology

This special issue of the Electronic Student Journal of Anthropology (ESJOA) consists of ten essays, written by students in my Spring 2021 North American Indians Class and based on interviews with members of the Native American community. The North American Indians class, an Anthropology course, is a designated Service-Learning course. For the past seven years, students in this class helped to organize the CSU Dominguez Hills Pow Wow, "Honoring of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" for the Service-Learning portion of the course. With the 2021 Pow Wow cancelled, due to COVID-19, Cheryl McKnight, Director of the Center for Service-Learning, Internships, and Civic Engagement (SLICE) and a principal organizer of the Pow Wow; SLICE Coordinator Miami Gelvezon-Gatpandan, Steve Rosales, a former DH student from the Pascua Yaqui tribe and a key organizer of the Pow Wow, and I began to consider alternative service-learning projects for the class. We eventually approached several members of the Native American community to ask if they would be willing to speak with students in the class, with the interviews serving as the basis for essays the students would write and publish. We also spoke to the student editorial staff of the ESJOA to see if these essays could be published as a special issue of the journal. As an open access journal, students would be providing a service to the Native American community with the publication of the journal, and they would have a chance to learn about the life stories of people in the community.

Students did not use a structured questionnaire, but they typically began the interviews with some basic questions: What would you like to tell us about your experiences growing up and your family or community? What would you like to tell us about your experiences in your career? What would you like to tell us about your experiences working with or advocating for the Native American community? Are there other things you'd like to share with us?

In general terms, however, those being interviewed were encouraged to talk about topics that were of greatest interest and importance to them. Drafts of the essays

were sent to the person being interviewed so they could suggest revisions and confirm accuracy. Working together, we then revised the essays until they were fully approved. The feedback I have received from both those interviewed and the students indicates that this was an enjoyable and rewarding experience for everyone.

Ten individuals agreed to be interviewed and are the focus of the essays in this volume. Nine have Indigenous heritage (Burns, Castillo, Cid, de la Rosa, McKnight, Mitchell, Mojarro, Reed, Studi), and several of these have mixed heritage (Cid, McKnight, Mitchell, Studi). The tenth individual (Marmolejo) credits interaction with Native peoples with transforming her life.

These ten individuals have very different backgrounds, and they have taken very different life paths. Yet, despite these differences, several themes emerged from these stories, regardless of background and life paths.

A common theme is historical and current injustices and inequities, leading to poverty, lack of access to health care and education, and, in some cases, personal experiences with racism and sexism (Burns, Castillo. Cid, McKnight, Mojarro, Reed, Studi). Issues of identity are described in several essays (Burns, Castillo, McKnight, Mojarro), as are issues related to mixed heritage (Cid, Mitchell, Studi). Several individuals experienced difficult childhoods (Burns, Marmolejo, Reed). Others comment on the contrasts between urban life and life on the reservations or in Native communities (de la Rosa, Mitchell, Mojarro), and one individual discusses the complexities of Native groups who are now separated by an international border (Cid). Issues such as language loss—and in some cases language revitalization movements—are discussed in several essays (Burns, Mitchell, Mojarro, Reed), as is the importance of education, and particularly culturally relevant educational programs (Burns, Cid, McKnight, Mitchell, Mojarro). Several of those interviewed now work in health care and rehabilitation facilities, and an underlying theme is not only the difficulties of access to quality health care but, in some cases, the problem of substance abuse (Burns, McKnight, Marmolejo, Reed). As with education, the importance of culturally relevant healing practices is noted in several essays (Marmolejo, McKnight, Reed). A number of the individuals interviewed work in community service, as health care workers and as educators. Virtually everyone interviewed works in some capacity in service to their communities, and several comment on their commitment to activism. The issues of sovereignty, federal

recognition, and land rights are mentioned in some essays. These are common struggles for Native Americans and are particularly acute problems for the Tongva (Castillo, McKnight), and this also affects some Native communities in New Mexico (Mojarro).

Several of those interviewed discuss the importance of Sweat Lodge or other ceremonies, as well as spirituality more generally (Burns, Castillo, Cid, de la Rosa, Marmolejo, McKnight, Mojarro, Reed). The importance and positive impact of pow wows are other common threads (Burns, Castillo, de la Rosa, McKnight). Throughout many of the essays, important historical and cultural information is shared (Burns, Castillo, Cid, de la Rosa, McKnight, Mitchell, Mojarro, Reed, Studi). A final issue mentioned in several interviews was, of course, COVID-19, as well as the death of Elders (Burns, McKnight, Mojarro, Studi). Native American communities have been especially hard hit by COVID-19. Mojarro articulates a particularly tragic consequence in that the death of Elders often also means the disappearance of language and knowledge. We all hope that these Indigenous voices will help to broaden an understanding of Native American lives and be a source of inspiration.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Jim, Jimi, Ximena, Roy, Rita, Cheryl, Suzette, Anthony, Phillip, and DeLanna for sharing their life stories with us, especially at this difficult time when they all had many demands on their time and a number of other obligations and sources of stress. I also want to thank the student authors of these essays, most of whom also are experiencing extraordinary stresses in their lives. Thanks, too, to Cheryl McKnight and Miami Gelvezon-Gatpandan, from the SLICE office, and Steve Rosales for their assistance and support in the planning for this project. I also want to acknowledge that six of the individuals featured in this volume (Burns, Castillo, McKnight, Mitchell, Marmolejo, Reed) are affiliated with Changing Spirits, a non-profit residential facility designed to serve Native American men and women who suffer from substance abuse using culturally appropriate treatments. Changing Spirits provides critically important service to the community.

Stephanie Isidoro, Anthropology student, served as Production Editor for the volume, and she deserves special thanks for turning the essays into this lovely publication. Stephanie was assisted by Madison Medhat, who is also an

Anthropology student. Thanks, too, to Yesenia Rubi Landa, the current ESJOA editor, who kindly showed Stephanie the ropes. I also want to thank Patricia Kalayjian who assisted with copy editing. Last but not least, thanks to Jean Pickard who designed the beautiful cover using photos taken during the DH Pow Wow from 2016 (photographs courtesy of SLICE office, photographed by Rohemah Muhamed and Jeff Farsai).

For the CSUDH 2020 Virtual Pow Wow see https://sites.google.com/view/cusdh-virtual-pow-wow/home

The Life and Service of a Northern Cheyenne Educator: An Interview with Jim Burns

Interviewed by Prisila Solares and Juan Xuconoxtle

Jim Burns is an active member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, located in southeastern Montana. Jim worked at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, where he spent sixteen years helping students and serving the community. Subsequently he served as the Executive Assistant/Innovation Manager at the Southern California Indian Center's corporate office in Fountain Valley, California. During our interview, we learned about his background and the many aspects of being a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe.

Important elements of the Northern Cheyenne tribe are its language and cultural practices. The exact number of Cheyenne speakers is not precise, but Jim estimates that about thirty percent of the population speaks the Cheyenne language with different levels of fluency, Elders being the most fluent and many youth becoming more fluent. The Cheyenne language is now a major part of the school curriculum and is taught early in preschool and kindergarten. Children absorb the language with more ease, allowing the level of fluency to increase in the years to

come. Currently summer programs are charged with language retention, and they include games and other traditional activities that develop cultural skills.

Jim noted that he has been inspired through his involvement with the local Orange County community. Currently, he is employed with an API non-profit health organization, and he has been serving with a team of community members that have successfully vaccinated over 10,000 community members, focusing on the most vulnerable groups. These groups include the API community, Latinos, Elders, refugees, and immigrants. He also has been involved with delivering food to Elders; providing emotional support and making referrals and linkages are equally rewarding.

Jim discussed the importance of focusing on traditional values and sharing these with the younger generation. Elders are important for this job, but other family members, like aunts and uncles, are also responsible for passing on these important values. He noted that humor is used as a unique resource; humor is used to eradicate bad behavior and guide the younger generation to straighten their path.

Native American heritage and the importance of maintaining one's identity were brought up during our interview, and Jim told us that going back and engaging with his community helped him heal all the wounds opened during his early youth. He was able to learn the cultural mores of the community, which improved his identity as a Cheyenne, and he told us that that we should never forget where we originated. As a Northern Cheyenne, it is crucial to recognize who you are and never forget what the previous generations sacrificed in order to perpetuate tribal values and belief ways.

Jim spent many years working at the Montana State University as the director of American Indian Student Success Services. He was motivated to help students, and he was able to build connections and relationships with most of his students. He has always been a very caring and patient individual who would give the students second and even third chances to succeed in life. He also provided resolutions and support to everyone that needed it; he made sure to do as much as possible, including spending time and effort to keep the students in school so they would not have to stop with their academic studies and dropout. Providing concrete support and emotional support had always been a significant part of Jim's life's work at Montana State University.

Jim explained that he had participated in community events such as the sweat lodges and pow wows at Montana State University, filled with individuals from different backgrounds. He has not participated in the Sun Dance, due to the enormous amount of time and the physical, emotional, and spiritual toll that it would take to prepare.

In our discussion of socioeconomic factors, Jim noted that progress has been made, but much more work needs to be accomplished in order to make meaningful change.

While there has been much improvement, unfortunately generational poverty and substance abuse issues continue to impede healthy change. The pandemic is also affecting everyone's lives, yet many families continue to struggle to put food on the table, and they do not have sufficient money to buy food for themselves. People were not able to work while COVID-19 cases were growing and were stuck in their homes, losing interest in things they were once passionate about. All of these factors have contributed to an inability to bring a measurable change within the communities where they live.

When Jim began engaging with other Natives, he found his calling in educating young adults about how to succeed in life. Building a solid foundation of cultural identity and educational achievement and finding a path in life that is both meaningful and rewarding helps create passion and a desire to make a lasting impact.

He needed to build mutual relationships by connecting with others professionally, giving advice about their problems, and being able to contact them through email, text message, or a phone call if any situation arose. Considering that Jim had to face various challenges throughout his life, he still manages to help those in need, American Indians and others, to ensure they get the support and resources they need in order to follow a healthy path.

Jim also shared with us books and films he recommended that came from Native authors and are based on history and the lives of Native Americans, films on greatness and hope, and American Indian history. Jim recommended Native authors such as Winona LaDuke, Nicholas Black Elk, Vine Deloria, and Dr. Marjorie Thomas, authors who are able to educate future generations and even students from different grade levels about the truth of their history and living.

Jim explained that he was able to develop a closer relationship with adolescents by being involved in a program in his community, where he was able to be a role model. He also volunteered at different churches to aid adolescents who are struggling with their academics, faith, mental illnesses, and misbehaviors. Jim has been a positive influence for teenagers by giving them guidance, communicating positively, providing a safe environment, and leading them to a successful life.

From our interview, we have learned who Jim is as an active member from the Northern Cheyenne tribe and who he is as an individual. Jim's significant contributions, as both a tribal member and as an individual, are his activities that support the community. He has done excellent work, providing food to the Elders, supplying resources, vaccinating the most vulnerable community members, and assisting students in need. He has a passion for helping those in need to ensure they are able to live a purposeful life with passion and commitment. It is very important to educate the future generations about language/culture in order to keep the various tribal groups not only

surviving but flourishing. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to interview Jim and be able to learn more about what he does as a Northern Cheyenne member and what type of work he does for the community and those in need.

The Voice of a Tongva Spiritual Leader: An Interview with Jimi Castillo

Interviewed by Efrain Arroyo and Grecia Gonzalez

Jimi Castillo, or Uncle Jimi (an informal title or honorific used for tribal leaders), is a Spiritual Leader of the Tongva community. He shared with us some of his experiences growing up, background information about the Tongva, and his path to becoming a Spiritual Leader of the Tongva. He began our meeting with a prayer.

Growing Up and Issues of Identity

Jimi, who has both Tongva and Acjachemen ancestry, was raised in Whittier, California, at a time when his family was not welcomed everywhere. He remembers his family being told in some restaurants that "your people are not welcome here." He explained that through his genealogical research, he traced his family to 1747. His family name was Telesaegwa (in Tongva), which means the place where the "queen bee lives," and he thinks that his Spanish surname, Castillo, might be loosely based on the idea that the "castle" (Castillo in Spanish) is where the queen bee lived. He noted that it was not uncommon for Native names to be translated into a similar word in Spanish. For example, a Native person named "Eagle" might become

"Aguilar" in Spanish, a common surname today. In Whittier, Jimi grew up in a largely Mexican community, where his family was accepted, but he remembers being teased by other children saying things like, "well, you're Indian, can you make this noise, like an animal or something, like an eagle or a hawk?" As a child, Castillo had difficulty comprehending this situation. Even as a child, however, he viewed himself as Native American, and he grew up hearing the Tongva and Ajchemen languages spoken. Jimi remembers saying to himself, "I'm Native American and that will never change" As he grew up, he began to get more involved in the Native American community in Los Angeles.

The Tongva

We learned from Jimi that Tongva lands once extended from Malibu to the San Fernando Valley to Laguna Beach to the San Bernardino Mountains, and there were dozens of Tongva communities, each with their own political and Spiritual Leaders without a single leader of the entire Tongva population. Many place names across the Los Angeles Basin retain their Tongva names, for example, Cahuenga, Topanga, Cucamonga, Azusa, Pacoima.

One of Jimi's greatest concerns is the fact that the Tongva nation is not recognized by the federal government; even though they have petitioned for federal recognition, they have been denied. The state of California does recognize the Tongva. The inability to gain federal recognition is due, in part, to the fact that the Tongva have never been unified under a single political leadership. Moreover, they do not have a land base or a reservation, so there is a great deal of factionalism.

Jimi related that when people question him, "you're Native American?" I say, "yes, I am." And they say, "well, where are you from?" I say, "right here." They say, "yeah, I know that but where are you from?" I say, "right here, right here where we stand." And their response is, "well, I didn't know there were Native Americans here." And they say, "well, California was Mexico before it was the United States of America, so you're Mexican Indian." And I say, "No, I'm not. Do you know this was Mexico for only 19 years?" They say "so, what was it before?" And I say, "it was Tongva land, and we never once gave up our land; it was all taken from us. So, we don't have a reservation. We are recognized by the state, but we're not recognized by the federal government."

The struggle for federal recognition is an important one because once you gain recognition you become a sovereign nation with certain rights, for example, purchasing land in the name of the tribe/nation. To illustrate this, Jimi told us about the case with the San Manuel Band (Serrano). "If you're on the San Manuel Indian reservation, you're no longer in California, and you're no longer in the United States; you're in the jurisdiction of the San Manuel band of Indians. So if a crime was ever committed on that land, you don't go to a United States court to deal with your crime, you go through the San Manuel judicial

system. And on the topic of the San Manuel reservation, Jimi told us that San Manuel was named after Santos Manuel, who was a very inspirational person on the land. With a name like Santos Manuel, you would think that he knew Spanish or something like that; he didn't know Spanish or English, all he knew was Serrano. Jimi pointed out that many Native people ended up with Spanish last names, much like African-Americans ended up with English last names, because of colonial domination or outright slavery.

The Path to Spiritual Leadership

As a young adult, Jimi began to get more and more involved in the Native American community. At one point Jimi was told by a Northern Cheyenne medicine woman, Phyllis Big Left Hand, that he needed to go and sweat in the sweat lodge ceremonies (in Mexico they call them temazcal). And she told him that he needed to surround himself with Elders. And at that point, it was kind of confusing, so, he asked himself, "what am I going to do, hanging around a bunch of old people? Well, I didn't understand the question at the time, so I made it a point to learn from my Elders, only to find out that there's a difference between Elders and old people. The Elders are the ones that carried the tradition, carried the ceremonies." So, as he involved himself with the Elders, he realized that they saw that he was interested to the point where they started asking him to do certain parts of the ceremony until one day one of the Elders said, "okay Jimi, you're in the driver's seat today," meaning that he was going to run the ceremony for that day. Jimi felt like he suddenly forgot everything he was taught, but he did run the ceremony. The Elder went into the ceremony with him, sat on the other side, and had this perpetual grin. It was hard for Jimi to understand whether he was upset or whether he was happy or pleased. There were four rounds in the ceremony, and after the second round, the Elder got up and left, and Jimi kept thinking, "oh man, I must've done something wrong." So, after he completed the ceremony, the Elder and his wife were sitting right outside. Jimi walked by and the Elder shook his hand and smiled and said, "you did a good job." He said, "you only forgot one thing." He said, "you should have told a joke in the beginning."

So, gradually Jimi started learning more and more of the spirituality and ceremonies. "So, we don't like titles, not just Spiritual Leaders, but chiefs and things like that. The federal government chose the word chief because they want one person to deal with rather than a group of people. So, for lack of better terminology, we were called Spiritual Leaders or ceremonial leaders or things like that."

To become a Spiritual Leader, "it's necessary to go up in the mountains for four days, and this is a solid fast, and I mean no water or food. And the Elders come in and check on you and ask you certain questions, and if they're satisfied with your answers, then they teach you the ceremonies, and the ceremonies that are given to you, you actually have to fast for them….You learn spiritual

discipline….When you go on to become a person, like for instance, a Sun Dancer, [which Jimi is] you gain the right to carry the Ceremonial Pipe or the Medicine Pipe. It's not called a peace pipe, it's called a Medicine Pipe." Jimi noted that the peace pipe was a federal government analogy because Native Americans prayed with the Pipe at the time that they were signing the treaties. Here, Jimi noted that all treaties were broken by the federal government, and there wasn't one treaty that was ever broken by the Native American communities.

Jimi expressed how he and other members of the community continue to hope that the younger generations will be inspired to learn and share Tongva culture and traditions. He has seen that some younger people nowadays are wanting to know more about their Native American heritage, culture, and spirituality. Yet, Jimi states that he has not seen many people inclined to become specialists in the area of spirituality. Not a lot of people follow the path to becoming a Spiritual Leader for the Native American community, something that is of great concern.

Over the years, Jimi also became heavily involved in pow wows. As he was recognized as a Spiritual Leader for the Tongva, pow wow organizers chose him to be the on-hand spiritual advisor for the pow wows. He opens a pow wow with a blessing of the grounds, a prayer and invocation. There is a land acknowledgement, and the people who have come the farthest are recognized. He closes the pow wow with a prayer. He also was there in case anybody had any spiritual needs or concerns about their spirituality. So, Jimi observed that it wasn't so much that he got involved in pow wows, but rather that powwow organizers involved him.

Jimi has served as the Spiritual Leader for the CSUDH Pow Wow since its inception in 2010. He wrote the Tongva land acknowledgment that we use.

We acknowledge that the land on which we are gathered here today is the home and traditional land belonging to the Tongva Nation. Today we come with respect and gratitude for the Tongva people who still consider themselves the caretakers of this land. It is through their examples that we are reminded of our greater responsibility to take care of Mother Earth and to take care of each other.

Jimi has served our campus on numerous occasions in the blessing of the Peace Pole, the Ocean Friendly Garden, and the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Science and Innovation Building. As a Spiritual Leader, Jimi also worked as a mentor for young men in the Heman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility that is a part of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Final Thoughts

Jimi's hard work and dedication and his service to community was recognized when he received the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, awarded in 2014 by President Barack

Obama. Jimi's wife, Jeanette Castillo (Diné), who is also a dedicated and highly valued member of the Native American community, also received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

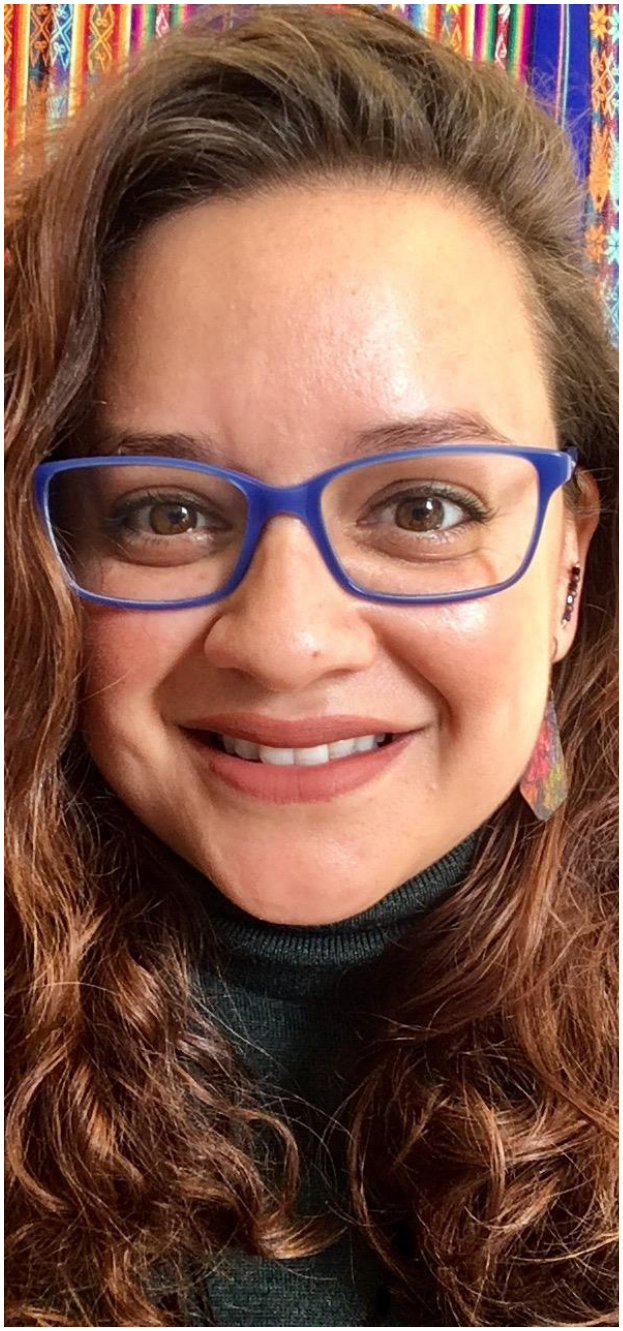
Jimi shared two examples that illustrate traditional views of the world. First, the Spirits of the Four Directions, the red, black (or blue), yellow, and white (Figures 1, 2) show the unity of all humans, no matter what their origins. Second, he talked about the comparison between humans—the two-legged, five-fingered ones, and trees—the tall standing green ones. Like trees, humans come in all different sizes, shapes, and colors, and like trees, humans have different functions; no tree or human should be judged by another, and, like trees, humans should live in harmony with each other.

From being a child confused about his identity to acknowledging his Native roots in his adolescence, helping and making a difference in the community as a Spiritual Leader, and continuing the sharing of the cultural traditions and heritage to the younger generations, Uncle Jimi has had a beautiful appreciation and recognition for his Tongva community. Jimi is a clear example of why cultural traditions need to be maintained so they can survive for many generations to come. It is important to learn about our ancestral roots and continue to preserve them; that is how our history will continue to survive.

Jimi and Jeanette Castillo

Reaching for the Stars: An Interview with Dr. Ximena Cid

Interviewed by Jean Pickard and Ana Vargas



Dr. Ximena Cid sits cozily on her couch after a long day of teaching and chairing the Physics Department at Cal State University Dominguez Hills. Comfort is key tonight as we all settle into our conversation about her life as a Chicana-Yaqui woman in the field of Physics. Ximena's Zoom background flickers in and out as she moves within the screen, yet one cannot miss the powerful words written boldly over each shoulder: "Black Lives Matter" and "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls." Recognizing the power of social media -- and Zoom backgrounds -- Ximena doesn't miss the opportunity to educate others or speak out about social justice.

"It occurred to me how little people want to actually talk about all the violence that's been happening," she says. "I think the power of social media actually forces people to see it. Just having that visibility, without having to say anything...I make it a part of who I am." Ximena started with "Black Lives Matter" in the upper left corner, "It was just a way of acknowledging it. Violence against the black community is not new, it's been happening forever." She continues: "If we're talking about violence

committed against my own community. I think the rates in which Indigenous women and girls have been subjected to violence is higher than most other populations in our country. And yet, people still don't know that Native people exist today. [This] was something that was on my mind and weighing on my heart as well."

Upbringing and Identity

Ximena was born and raised in urban Sacramento, California. Her dad's family, the Chicano side, lived nearby and her mom's Yaqui family lived in San Diego, California. "Both sides of my family have been very involved with social justice movements," she explains, "the Chicano civil rights movement, working with Dolores Huerta, the United Farm Workers. A big part of my childhood was being very aware of farmworkers and boycotting and marching and not eating fruits like strawberries."

Although she didn't grow up on a Yaqui Reservation, Ximena was raised in a space where she and her siblings were made aware of their Indigenous heritage. During her K-12 education in Sacramento, she and her siblings participated in programs designed specifically for Native students. Once or twice a year they were pulled out of school for a week to learn about different tribes, cultural practices, foods, art forms, and languages. Ximena recalls that "it wasn't until I got older that I realized how not many urban Native folks have those experiences through formal education."

At home, her parents shared knowledge of the contributions of Indigenous peoples within the Americas. They talked about the Maya, Aztec, and Inca -- "about these large civilizations that the Spaniards were trying to erase during colonization." Ximena was taught about the American Indian Civil Rights Movement by being made aware of spaces like Alcatraz. In addition, she came from a family of artists who expressed themselves politically through visual and performing art. Her father and uncle taught art at Sacramento State, and they were both founding members of the Royal Chicano Air Force, a political art collective founded through the university. This creative influence became a very important part of her thought process; "I think the process that goes into creating art is very aligned with the creative process that goes into the sciences." So, growing up, Ximena had a different world view than many of her peers. "It was a great way to be raised," she says with a smile.

Her parents also made sure that she and her siblings experienced the traditions and ceremonies of both the Chicano and Yaqui cultures. When Ximena and her sister turned fifteen, their quinceañeras included an indigenous coming-of-age ceremony. "There really was no separation between the two [cultures]" she explains, "When my nieces and nephews were baptized, a Native ceremony was interwoven as well."

Ximena grew up in what she describes as an "intertribal" space. "It wasn't just one community," she explains, "it was lots of communities that were connected in the ways in which we would do ceremonies or in the

way in which we acknowledge our connections to the earth, or connections to land, to different lifestyles." Ximena grew up learning Aztec dancing and with different ceremonies, different cultural practices. When discussing her Chicano heritage, Ximena shares that she "didn't realize until I was an adult that [my] ideology of what it means to be Chicano is very different from what I hear people in the L.A. area describe. When [my family] talks about being Chicano, we already have a foundation that there's an indigenous connection through that term." But Ximena admits that she doesn't think that's true for all Chicanos. Community organizing comes from both sides of Ximena's family. Located under the San Diego-Coronado Bridge in southern California is Chicano Park, the largest concentration of outdoor murals in the country. Ximena's mother is a co-founder of the park and the primary writer to have it designated as a National Historic Landmark.

When asked specifically about the Yaqui tribe and its culture, Ximena shares that she draws strength from her Yaqui heritage. A strength, she tells us with pride in her eyes, which comes from the fact that the Yaqui were never conquered by the Aztecs. She explains that Yaqui now live on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border: "We have a reservation in Arizona, but there are also Yaqui people south of the border. When I think about other Indigenous groups, that becomes a strange thought process for me as a person of Mexican descent. Those are still my people, and that is not a common thing for other tribes. Unless you're a border tribe, you don't have that knowledge." For border tribes, there are not only cultural practices and sacred lands on both sides of the border, but there are extended families. Ximena explains that in California "there's a chant, 'We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!' That's real for the Yaqui. We're split by the border, literally the border." This has only added to the strength and resilience of the Yaqui people.

It wasn't until Ximena got to college that she understood the terms Urban Indian and Res Indian. "This became a little bit of a tension point [for me]," asking herself, "How native are you? Who gets to be native? What does it mean to be federally enrolled in a tribe? What does it mean when your tribe is not federally acknowledged? I didn't know a lot of that, because for me it very much wasn't a part of our culture. I didn't know a lot of that terminology. I knew it existed, but I didn't actually hear people distinguishing others that way…so that was a little bit of a culture shock. When I got to Berkeley, … there were Native folks at Cal as well, but it was just a very different way of engaging. So that was something that I had to learn."

While working on her post-doc in Physics Education at the University of Washington in Seattle, Ximena connected with the Native population there. She and her new friends talked at length about sovereignty and Indigenous identity. "How do you acknowledge border land when it is a sovereign nation but also on both sides of an international

l border?" Ximena asks, "[Think] about the differences between our two borders, the Canadian border and the Mexican border…how that influences identity…and how do we process that from an Indigenous perspective?"

Early Educatioin

Growing up in a household with scholarly parents, academics came easily to Ximena. She worked hard in her AP classes at school and, although she didn't know exactly what career path she wanted to follow, she knew she wanted to learn more about space science. As a child, Ximena's father would often take her and her siblings outside to look at the moon and stars with binoculars. These family moments led to her love of the night sky and her dream of becoming an astronaut like Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina in space and the first Latina director of NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

However, Ximena's academic path would be a long and challenging road. Since high school career counselors design class schedules to reflect different academic or vocational paths, if set on the wrong path, a student could have difficulty entering college after graduation. Luckily for Ximena and her siblings, she had help from the inside -- their aunt was an administrative assistant in the counseling office on campus, "She would change a lot of our classes to be at least college prep," she confides, "She did that for a lot of [black and brown] kids to make sure that, even if they didn't want to go to college, they would have the opportunity." The student body at Ximena's high school was primarily black and brown, but within the advanced courses, it was very much white. Racial bias was obvious, so having help from the inside was essential for her success.

Not Alone

Having been accepted into UC Berkley, Ximena participated in Summer Bridge immediately after high school. It was here she met many of her life long friends, During her freshman year she met Franklin Dollar, a fellow undergrad, and Pomo Indian. "He was one of the few native folks that I knew in STEM fields," she recalls. This would be the beginning of a great friendship that endures today.

Having had years of experience as a violin player in a professional Mariachi band, Ximena first entered UC Berkley as a music major but after just a few classes, she realized that she wanted to learn more about astronomy. However, this was not a simple task, "In order to take the astronomy courses, I had to take physics courses. In order to take the physics courses, I had to take math courses." This landed her in the middle of Cal's notoriously competitive STEM programs, for which, she confides, she was totally unprepared.

With her financial aid in limbo and wondering how she was going to pay her tuition and rent, and pass her classes, Ximena got help unexpectedly from her new friend

Franklin. Franklin recognized Ximena's dilemma and figured out a way to get her a scholarship through his Pomo tribe. "He became kind of like a savior for me at that time and years later when we became faculty, we reconnected. Now we're mentoring students at Dominguez together on a research project. I tell my students a lot, 'You don't know who's going to come into your life at what point and who might come back into your life at another point. You just don't know what people will leave an impact on you, or how."

While working two jobs, Ximena immersed herself in the world of astrophysics at Berkley and attended her first SACNAS meeting, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. Being Chicana and Native, she relished being able to meet with other scientists like her, "Celebrating [my] culture, along with other Native scientists was very powerful. It was a way of seeing people actually integrate who they were with their science, as opposed to keeping them separate." It was through SACNAS that Ximena met her eventual graduate advisor, Dr. Ramone Lopez, and received opportunities that she otherwise wouldn't have been offered.

Grad School

Ximena recalls how her undergraduate advisor sent her to a space science summer school designed specifically for first-year and second-year grad students, and at first she was insecure and unsure if she should be there. However, soon she realized that "I had no problem content-wise because I had been doing space physics research for about a year and a half at that point. And I knew more than some of the grad students. And so that really was a way to give myself confidence that 'Oh, okay, I can be in this space. I know more than I think I do.'"

It was at this time that Ximena decided to pursue graduate school. After graduating, she took an internship with Dr. Lopez. She told us about the projects she was working on. Looking at how people think about abstract concepts in physics and science became incredibly interesting for her.

At the end of that summer, Dr. Lopez excitedly told her that because she already had all the requirements, "you can start grad school, paid for, in two weeks!" She humbly and frankly told us, "That was so intimidating, and I wasn't ready for it. So, I ended up taking a year off." She didn't want to repeat the mistake of diving in the deep-end at Berkeley, so ended up "[working] random jobs like office assistants and temping. I worked in a biotech company and spent a lot of time with patent lawyers…there, and that was really interesting."

In time, Ximena decided to take up Dr. Lopez's offer and headed to Florida for grad school, where she further developed her interest in cognitive science. She mentions how "Florida wasn't really my vibe, I didn't like it," and when her advisor offered to move the program to Texas, she jumped onboard with the idea. It was in Texas that she met head-on the sexism and racism of post-

graduate institutions. With hints of anger, she remembers how right in the middle of her father's death, her department board denied her an extension for her qualifying exams. She recounts, "I had experienced racism, I had experienced sexism, but it was kind of easy for me to brush it off. But, to have your faculty demand that you still have to perform in these extreme circumstances, that was a whole different level...."

This slap in the face was accentuated when that same year, the school granted additional attempts to two other students, both male. She explains to us how that caused her to "lose a lot of respect" for these people that expected students to act like robots, and that "[she] almost walked away, and didn't finish." Here she again found help in her advisor, who was Latino and Puerto Rican. For the rest of the semester, he didn't ask her to do anything except "just be here." "That gave me enough time to…find my balance again and I really appreciated him for that, for just being a human being, for letting me breathe and process things the way I needed to. I'll forever be grateful for him for that."

Ximena tells us how she finished graduate school and found jobs that further cemented her vision for education in higher-level physics and science classes, and how after taking a job in Seattle, she reconnected with the indigenous population. She tells us how as a Native doctorate graduate, "you have to balance being tokenized and getting yourself known," which did lead to some tension within herself.

Dr. Cid Having been faculty at Dominguez Hills for about six years, Ximena, now Dr. Cid, is the first self-identified Indigenous Chair of the Physics Department. She clarifies, "I know I'm not the first Native person though, that's why I say self-identified."

"When we talk about who's Native and who's not Native that's a very political thing, right? It's complicated. Who gets to decide? There are other faculty members that do identify as indigenous people. It's a very complicated history, especially when we talk about south of the border. That's also a strange conversation when we talk about who's indigenous and not. It's very easy to acknowledge people from Canada, for instance, as First Nations being indigenous. But if you go south of the border into Mexico, Central America, or South America that's a whole different question whether they identify as indigenous or not. When we talk about Native American politics and Native identity it gets very, very complicated in a lot of different ways than other groups. These are the things you navigate as professionals. Because that comes up a lot, opposed to just being a person. You're asked to think about how you identify, why you identify, and those labels follow you even if you are evolving with your own identity."

Dr. Cid reveals that there is a weight that comes with being a person of color and a prominent person of science. "We don't always get to choose to be the scientist first…. Our appearance sometimes becomes more

prominent than our knowledge and our content," she says. She details how sometimes there's an unspoken assumption that people of color in science represent their whole community.

"When you have to represent all of [Latinx, Natives, indigenous cultures] or all women it's like, 'We're not all the same.' So, that becomes like a juggling act. Some days you can handle that and some days you can't. Some days you can gracefully answer and represent everybody and somedays you just want to be your own person. On days that I am really centered in myself, I can do that very easily, I have no problem with that. I was kind of raised that way. But there are other days when …I don't want that pressure, that weight of all Native people, or all Chicano people. Especially Native people, there are so many different cultures!"

Dr. Cid shares how she combats the Euro-centrism of STEM History and STEM itself and her excitement for a new professional society, the Society of Indigenous Physicists. Recognizing the need for non-Euro Indigenous perspectives in Physics, the society is focusing on the astronomical knowledge that comes from Indigenous people of the Americas. "There are a couple of folks from different tribes who are collecting star stories and forming that within the Physics and Astronomy community, within our Physics language as well. It's a way to think about our identities as Indigenous people, the knowledge that we have, or the histories that we have." Dr. Cid also incorporates Indigenous knowledge into her curriculum including Mayan mathematics, medicine wheels, mounds, and different tribal equinoxes which mainstream Western history tends to ignore. "I just gave a talk about how the oldest book in the Americas is an astronomy book from the Mayan civilization, and yet that's not in any of our academic history."

Dr. Cid acknowledges that being part of this society has been life-changing for many of its members. "We've got physicists within our society…who are connecting with themselves and finding themselves for the first time." Ximena recalls how their first meeting was an emotional experience for everyone, "Every single one of us was like, 'Oh my God, I'm so glad I'm not the only one!'" One of her fellow society members, the President Elect for the National Society of Hispanic Physicists, who is reconnecting with his Mapuche heritage, became very overwhelmed with emotion.

Dr. Cid shares that "there are a lot of questions of 'Do I belong? Do I fit? Can I identify as indigenous?'" She believes that this is something her community sometimes shares in common with black people in our country, "…there are a lot of our people who have lost their connection to their cultural history because we were removed, right? We had the boarding schools. I was talking to an Elder at Chicano Park about a year ago, and he shared that his grandmother would not ever talk about their Apache history. He only thinks it's Apache because she would never talk about it.

During that time [when she was young], if you said you were Mexican you might only get beaten, but if you said you were Native, you'dbe killed. So, there was a lot of history and cultural connections that were severed."

As our conversation winds down, Dr. Cid thinks back on her formative years; the nights out under the stars with her father, the star stories she learned from him, and the myths and histories of the constellations that so enamored her. We thank Dr. Cid, and she reiterates how grateful she is for the way she was raised, "very rooted in our culture, and not just Native culture or Chicano culture," and that's something we can see throughout her story. She never saw her identity as a roadblock, but rather as a tool to not only open new doors and opportunities, but also to create them.

A Proud Veteran Who Has Served His Community and His Country: An Interview with Roy Two Bears de la Rosa

Interviewed by William Evans and Nile Rogers

During our interview with Roy Two Bears de la Rosa, he told us about his life experiences and his points of view about what being a Native American has been like for him. Roy is a descendent of both the Yaqui and Apache Nations and an individual who has described himself as an Urban Indian. Roy explained that a distinction between Natives who live on and off the reservation has sometimes resulted in cultural differences and difficult interactions. If there was a single phrase that could be used to describe his outlook towards the Native American community, it would be that he is proud of the legacy that he holds, and he made it clear just how deep that feeling was during the course of our interview.

Roy Two Bears de la Rosa told us that his name on his birth certificate was Estevan de la Rosa. His mother could not give him the name she wished due to discriminatory practices regarding naming of children that existed at the time. It was not until her passing that he finally

changed his name to Roy Two Bears de la Rosa.

Born in 1949, Roy Two Bears de la Rosa comes from a lineage of warriors who have fought in the Apache Wars right here on American soil in the 19th century and in the Pacific Theater in World War II. Roy has followed in the footsteps of those before him and served in the United States Marine Corps from 1971 up until 1979 when he was honorably discharged. Roy knows full well the pride that comes with serving his country, and he shared his views regarding the Native American struggles over the years.

Roy Two Bears de la Rosa was forthright in his disdain towards the term genocide. He stated that using the term genocide to describe the actions against the Native Americans would only serve to discredit the fact that there were many who rose to take up arms against their oppressors. He dislikes the notion that the American Indians, particularly the Eastern Tribes, were tricked by a few hundred colonists who arrived on their lands because he believes that the ingenuity of these peoples was greatly underestimated. He further elaborated by presenting the notion that the Eastern Tribes knew that these European settlers might potentially be useful in the future. Roy spoke very highly of the resourcefulness of American Indians all throughout the course of the United States' history and told us how they not only developed their enemies' tactics with quick understanding, but they also participated in just about every war that has taken place in North America. Roy is proud that his ancestors fought back against their aggressors, citing Comanche Chief Quanah Parker as one of the greatest chiefs, and spoke of his family's fight against the Buffalo Soldiers during the Apache Wars. Roy Two Bears de la Rosa is proud that they fought and won because they survived.

Roy also spoke to us about his contributions to the community apart from his service with the United States Marine Corps. After his service, he joined the Native American Veterans Association and is also part of California Veterans Affairs for Minorities where he not only aids veterans as a veteran himself, but he also acts as a voice for others. Roy also is part of the Honor Guard and a member of the Golden Gate Gourd Society. Roy can also be described as a man of faith who serves as an experienced soul, aiding those who are in need of spiritual involvement with United American Indian Involvement. Roy also studied medicine and worked at UCLA hospital as a specialist on the trauma team. Roy Two Bears de la Rosa is a member of our society as a whole who has had a positive impact on the lives of others.

During our interview, Roy shared an Apache sacred song that was wonderful to hear. After the song, he explained that there are many sacred singers across the sovereign nations who are singing to bring a swift end to the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected our lives on every level.

As we concluded the interview, Roy gave us some personal advice: "go home and create

your timeline, find out who you are." This piece of advice prompted Nile to begin to explore his own Native American heritage, something he had only been vaguely aware of before, and he began to have conversations with his grandfather about family history.

To say that we walked away with something from this interview would be a gross understatement. We hope that we will one day be able to speak to Roy Two Bears de la Rosa again once this pandemic is over and it becomes safe to hold the Pow Wows on campus.

Healer and Therapist: An Interview with Rita Marmolejo

Interviewed by Alexis Rodriguez and Angelica Tan

Rita Marmolejo has a rich cultural heritage that includes Filipino, Italian, and Mexican ancestors, but a defining influence on her life was her experience with the Lakota Sweat Lodge, an experience that changed her life and helped her to heal after a turbulent childhood and early adulthood. Rita was the youngest of seven children, and she grew up with family members who had mental health issues and problems with addiction and delinquency. Pregnant and married at 16, Rita's marriage was difficult with her husband, a Vietnam veteran, in and out of prison.

After a divorce and several years of job training and college education at CSUDH, Rita was still looking for something more meaningful. She even started exploring different religions to seek as much information as possible. Up to that point, she had been driven to survive. She had to work, she had children, and she needed to earn a living -- but she always felt rootless. She felt lost, she didn't seem to fit in anywhere, and she wasn't understood by anyone. She felt alone and empty.

Through a Sweat Lodge ceremony, Rita experienced a sense of belonging and connection

and this began a period of healing that eventually led to her desire to help others to heal. Rita went on to serve as a facilitator during Sweat Lodge ceremonies, and these ceremonies have become part of her practice working with troubled women who also find the ceremony to be healing. Her experience with the Sweat Lodge, as well as her life story, led her to her life today that focuses on supporting others on their healing journeys.

Rita Marmolejo's experience as a teenage mother and everything else combined is what shaped who she is today and what she does. Rita has spent the past thirty years serving the non-profit community. She has a Master's degree in Organizational Behavior that she completed in 2001-2003. She has long held an interest in Clinical Psychology and exploring the philosophy and theory that guides clinicians' work. She currently serves as a cultural advisor for women with addictions at the American Indian Changing Spirits Recovery Program in Long Beach. The Sweat Lodge still is part of her healing practice. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she enrolled in a Marriage and Family Therapy program and soon will be doing the work that she has wanted to do for so long. She is now starting a practicum and will be working with mothers and children who are victims of domestic violence. She is also currently working with incarcerated women.

For more about Rita Marmolejo, see "Even the tears are a form of healing: Women find solace in indigenous rehab program," by Crystal Niebla Long Beach Post August 27, 2020.

Advocating for Social Justice For Native Americans: An Interview with Cheryl McKnight

Interviewed by Kasandra Jimenez and Lesley Mendez

In our interview with Cheryl McKnight, she began by pointing out that Native Americans have the greatest disparities in health, education, and economics of any ethnicity, yet they receive the least amount of support. Two reports from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, *A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country, and Broken Promises: Continuing Federal. Funding Shortfall for Native Americans*, state that the United States is out of compliance with the civil rights of Native Americans. The pandemic has exacerbated the problems as the underfunding of the Indian Health Service has led to many avoidable deaths. It is because of the need for social justice for Native Americans that Chery McKnight has become a strong advocate, both on the CSUDH campus and in the larger community.

Cheryl explained that up until the 1990s there was relatively strong support in the community, including two American Indian Free Clinics, the Main Artery Recovery Center, Eagle Lodge Recovery Center, United American Indian Involvement (UAII), and several social

organizations. Because of the decrease in government funding, only two organizations exist in the Los Angeles County today, UAII and American Indian Changing Spirits Residential Recovery.

This lack of support and representation is partially a result of in the undercounting of Native People. According to the U.S. Census, Los Angeles County has the second largest Native American and Alaskan Native population of any county in the country, yet it is often an invisible population. For example, due to federal mandates regarding the application process for universities, Native students are vastly undercounted. Whereas the demographic data may show only a few Native students, in reality, there are often hundreds that are not counted.

Cheryl explained that this problem of undercounting exposes other issues related to identity and rooted in history. In California, many Native people lost their heritage as the genocide became so egregious that many people hid in the Mexican community and did not tell their children they were Native. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the government forced Native children across the country into boarding schools as an attempt to "civilize" them. The resulting loss of their language and culture meant they became strangers to their families. Later, in the 1950s, the Termination and Relocation policies were intended to disband Indian tribes and relocate Native peoples to urban centers with the idea that assimilation was the way "solve the Indian problem."

Today, Native nations have varying degrees of blood quantum required for enrollment. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has their own definition. Many Native nations are recognized by individual states but not recognized by the federal government, such as the Tongva of Los Angeles County. It is felt by some that, if you were not reared in your own culture, regardless of blood quantum, you cannot truly identify as Native. We asked Cheryl about her heritage, and she told us that Native identification is contextual—it depends on who is doing the asking. She then explained that it is simpler for her to just say she has Native heritage.

The issue of undercounting and lack of representation of Indigenous people further takes away Native identity, resulting in added traumatization and often creating identity confusion. The robbing of a person's basic identity leads many to ask "who am I?" This creates horrible damage, and Cheryl states it is our responsibility for reasons of social justice and basic morality to advocate for Indian people. We need to work to ensure that Native Americans have a seat at the table when it comes to legislative or community decisions.

McKnight began to get more deeply involved in the Indian community in the 1990s when she was asked to help organize the Hawaiian Gardens Friendship Pow Wow. At this time she first met Jimi Castillo, a Tongva Spiritual Leader and Pipe Carrier. They have now been working together for decades to uplift the voice of indigenous people and give a

helping hand to the community. Jimi and Cheryl work with American Indian Changing Spirits, a recovery center in Long Beach. Cheryl co-wrote the program in the late 1990s after so many Native organizations closed and helps guide its direction today. Jimi fills the position as Native Chaplain and leads the Sweat Lodge Ceremony. American Indian Changing Spirits combines evidence-based treatment with Native American healing traditions such as the Sweat Lodge, talking circle, and community ceremonies. When the county cut back funding for the program, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians stepped in with a yearly grant to help the program survive. In 2018 San Manuel presented Changing Spirits with the Yawa' Award. Yawa' means "acting on one's beliefs," and celebrates those who give hope to the community. The pandemic has been hard on this program, as it has been for many, so the community is praying for its survival.

Cheryl, Jimi, and students from Dr. Janine's Gasco's North American Indians class help to organize the CSUDH Pow Wow honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, now in its 11th year, to help represent Native Americans at the university. Jimi, Cheryl, and Dr. Gasco are also codirectors of the CSUDH American Indian Institute, which has the mission of creating a culture for Native education. Dr. Gasco and Cheryl and other faculty also developed the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas minor to help represent and understand Native culture. Despite these centers and the annual Pow Wow that brings indigenous people together, there is still much to be done to really represent and bring a voice to Native Americans. It took twelve years to start the Pow Wow at CSUDH and only recently has a minor in Indigenous Peoples been available to CSUDH students.

As the Director of the Center for Service Learning, Internship, and Civic Engagement, Cheryl is deeply concerned about engaging with our local and global communities and playing our part in promoting social justice for all people. She feels it is our responsibility to help with racial reconciliation for the Tongva especially, as CSUDH is located on Tongva land. Before the colonists decimated the Tongva Nation, it was the largest, most prosperous, and most influential tribal nation in Southern California. The Tongva now only count as a few thousand, and several of the Tongva Elders who carried the tribal knowledge and traditions have passed this year. Barbara Drake carried much of the knowledge of the identification, use, and care of traditional Tongva plants. Julia Bogany carried much of the history and culture of the Tongva. As Dominguez Hills has always been known for its diversity and inclusion, it is up to us to lead the way to lift up knowledge, representation, and respect for the Tongva people.

Cheryl agreed to be interviewed for this journal because she feels that this collection of essays will give voice to Native Americans, allowing them to tell their own stories. She feels our work with students, helping to

amplify the voices of Native American Indians in our community, is one large step in helping create social justice for a misunderstood and underrepresented people.

Bridging Two Worlds in Support of Social Justice: An Interview with Suzette Mitchell

Interviewed by Alexys Delgado and Oscar Talavera

Suzette Mitchell, is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation located in Ibapah, Utah. In our interview, she shared her past and current experiences with her Goshute community and as a biracial woman of African American descent.

As the daughter of a strong civil rights activist who was assertive in her life, Suzette had other amazing and strong women in her life, including her Goshute grandmother, great aunt, and great grandmother. As such, she was able to assert herself as well and be a powerful woman. In the city, life was fairly normal (for the 60s), and, while there were hardships on the Goshute Reservation, she still enjoyed her visits with her great aunt and relatives. She loved staying in a log cabin lit by kerosene lamps and eating traditional foods like dried deer meat. Her great aunt played a significant role in making her feel welcome along with a few of the children who were her relatives.

Suzette embraced Goshute cultural traditions that included disciplinary child-rearing practices that were not strict. Although, when Suzette was

a child, her family did not insist on teaching her the Goshute language, as an adult she is interested in learning the language and sustaining the resilience and cultural traditions of her tribe. She is proud of her Indigenous heritage as it is portrayed in the PBS documentary, "We Shall Remain: the Goshutes," which highlights the history of both the struggles and resilience of her tribe as described by her grandmother and other relatives.

Suzette has walked a path of self-discovery. She sees herself as a Black and Indigenous American and has made efforts to help these communities by addressing the disparities and struggles they face. As an alumna of California State University, Dominguez Hills, she has played a role in community service programs on campus like the American Indian Institute. Suzette also founded the Native American Indian Association (NAIA) under the mentorship of Cheryl McKnight, Director of the American Indian Institute and Director of the Center for Service Learning, Internship, and Civic Engagement (SLICE). Suzette served as its President until she graduated with her Master's degree in Social Work. Suzette was an organizer, together with the NAIA, the Rose Black Resource Center, and the CSUDH Multicultural Center, of a 2017 event on the CSUDH campus, "Commentary on Indivisible, An Exhibit by the Smithsonian on Native and African American Relations."

Suzette has immersed herself in her community to help her fellow Indigenous Americans. She is a social justice advocate who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Psychology, Learning, and Technology to promote holistic solutions to chronic public health issues such as Substance Use Disorder (SUD), which is experienced disproportionately among Indigenous populations. Suzette currently sits on the board of directors for Changing Spirits. Changing Spirits is a substance abuse recovery program for Indigenous persons and others experiencing SUD. Among her many aspirations, she hopes to reestablish the mission of a nonprofit she founded years ago to incorporate culturally relevant rehabilitation practices to address underlying factors like SUD that contribute to homelessness among society's most vulnerable populations. She has become an ally and an advocate for her community by creating and participating in programs for people facing disparities and struggles.

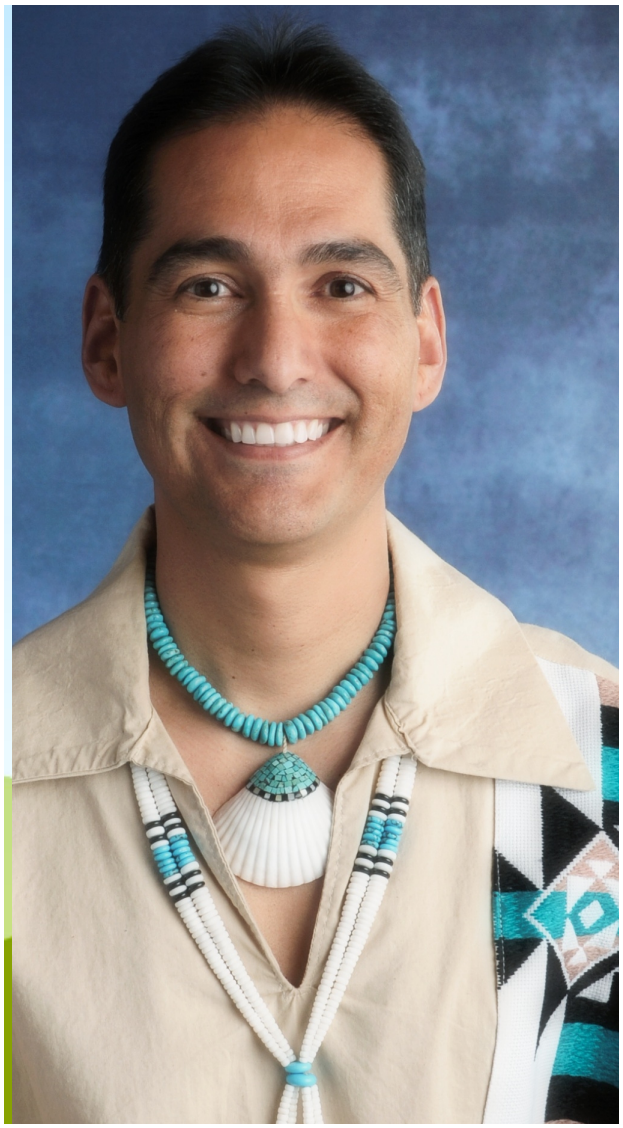
Suzette's story is inspirational because of her advocacy and resilience and her desire to be a leader in this changing world. Suzette was able to rise and adapt to serve as a bridge that unites Black Americans and Indigenous Americans.

Suzette speaking to the CSUDH Pow Wow

Suzette with her mother, Rena Morgan, and her cousin, Richard Williams

Promoting Education Based on Native Core Values and Traditions: An Interview with Anthony Rey Mojarro

Interviewed by Emanuel Enciso and Travis Gray



Anthony Rey Mojarro is a secondary Math (from 2009-2018) and Social Studies (2008, 2018 to present) teacher from the Santa Fe Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. During our interview, he discussed his life growing up Native American in Los Angeles and his journey to becoming an educator. Born in California, Mojarro went back and forth from Los Angeles to New Mexico due to his family being from New Mexico. His mother's family is from Santa Clara Pueblo, a Tewa Pueblo tribe, and his father's family is from Guadalupe Pueblo, commonly called Tortugas (Piro-Manso-Tiwa) and Isleta Pueblo (Tiwa). Mojarro still remembers why he missed being part of the Pueblo life in New Mexico, "I would remember the smell of wet earth when the rain falls, it's not like in the city, where all you smell is oil and concrete." He also talked about his great-grandmother's wood stove, something he did not experience in the concrete city of Los Angeles. Mojarro eventually moved to New Mexico to

join his family and help his Native community.

Becoming an Educator

Being a teacher was not what Mojarro planned to do at a young age. He joined the Air Force during the '80s, "I was good in math and wanted to get into engineering. At that time, the Space Shuttle mission was fairly new, and I wanted to work with that. I was fortunate and did get to work with the Space Shuttle program" he commented. After working in the Air Force, he struggled to get a new job and decided to study Psychology and pursue a career in the that field.

Mojarro eventually got a job working as a student living advisor at the Santa Fe Indian School Middle School dorm. His job had him working with students tutoring, mentoring, and teaching them life skills. After ten years of being an advisor, he wanted to do something different. He wanted to work with students as an educator, but he lacked a teaching degree. Mojarro was on the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice school committee for over five years. The 19 Pueblos own and operate the school, so we can determine how to discipline students in ways that correspond to Native core values and practices. “We needed to use restorative justice for these students who committed violations. We can do that by looking at community service, engaging family communities, and utilizing a traditional disciplinary process to help students succeed rather than dismiss them” he said.

Subsequently, Anthony was asked to substitute for six months teaching U.S. History & Economics. His experiences as a substitute pushed Mojarro to get his degree.

Mojarro was soon invited to substitute for another class. He wanted students to view their education differently. He thought about how school doesn't always feel like the "real world," and so he explained, "In my class, F stands for Fired." He also brought in technology like a SMART Board and the TI-84 Plus Graphing Calculators and saw significant improvements in his students’ grades, behavior, and motivation. At one point, he said he wanted to be the "catch-up guy," to catch students up and inspire them to do better using a growth mindset.

The Covid Crisis

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Santa Fe Indian School sent students home one day before other New Mexico schools. The remaining curriculum transitioned to Google classroom; however, some students and teachers had trouble using the software. Because of this abrupt change in the last few months of the school year, the school went to project-based assignments. There were huge hurdles and complications; students lacked the resources to obtain access to the internet or not having a laptop for class. Most students do not live in Santa Fe, most lived in their tribal communities. Ten Pueblos are 10-50 miles away. Nine of the Pueblos are located 50 to over 200 miles away. The Navajo Nation, Jicarilla Apache, and

Mezcalero reservations are farther away. The school focused on getting portable laptop computers with sim cards to the kids and paid for internet access for all students. Being the self-sufficient man he is, Mojarro taught himself to use much of the equipment he uses to teach, and that didn't change when online teaching and Google Classroom and Meet became integrated into his teaching curriculum. Though Mojarro was adapting well, not all teachers had the same experience. Some students and teachers struggled due to the sheer number of people testing positive for COVID-19 on top of the distance learning environment already not being conducive to tribal communities.

The tribal communities were hit hard by the interruption of their ceremonies. The Pueblos are very active year round. They had many traditional activities throughout the year which were interrupted due to the pandemic. Many ceremonies had to be canceled to keep the community safe, but it is a massive part of their lives and heritage and needs to be practiced, especially since their elders are being struck the hardest.

Language Maintenance and Revitalization

Due to COVID-19 jeopardizing Elders in their communities, their native languages are at the forefront of being lost and they face a battle to maintain and revitalize them. Language is the essence of culture and representation. It shapes our worldview, and it creates a sense of belonging by being the foundation of our cultures. Currently, Native Americans fear losing their language due to the Americanization of the Pueblos and other tribal communities. Now, the Santa Fe Indian School is working with students to maintain and revitalize their languages. Like many indigenous peoples of America, the 19 Pueblos have struggled with language loss in their communities. There was a time when the Natives of New Mexico spoke Spanish and their respective languages. Through assimilation programs by the U.S. Federal Government, they have let go of Spanish and were pressured to let go of their Native tongues by policies to only speak English. Today, they aim to maintain and revitalize them. The Santa Fe Indian School provides language courses for Keres for two Keres Pueblos, Tewa, and Navajo. Though some Tewa students are not receiving their particular dialect, they will understand the language, which they can take home and adapt to their own dialects. Mojarro would like to see the school expand the languages taught, such as Keres for the remaining Keres Pueblos, Tiwa, Towa, Zuni, and Mescalero Apache and Jicarilla Apache to reduce the danger of these vital languages being lost.

Sovereignty

Another significant issue is sovereignty. Indigenous peoples of America have always had to deal with the Federal Government stepping on them and marginalizing them. In 1971, the Federal Government created requirements for becoming federally recognized tribes, and unfortunately, one

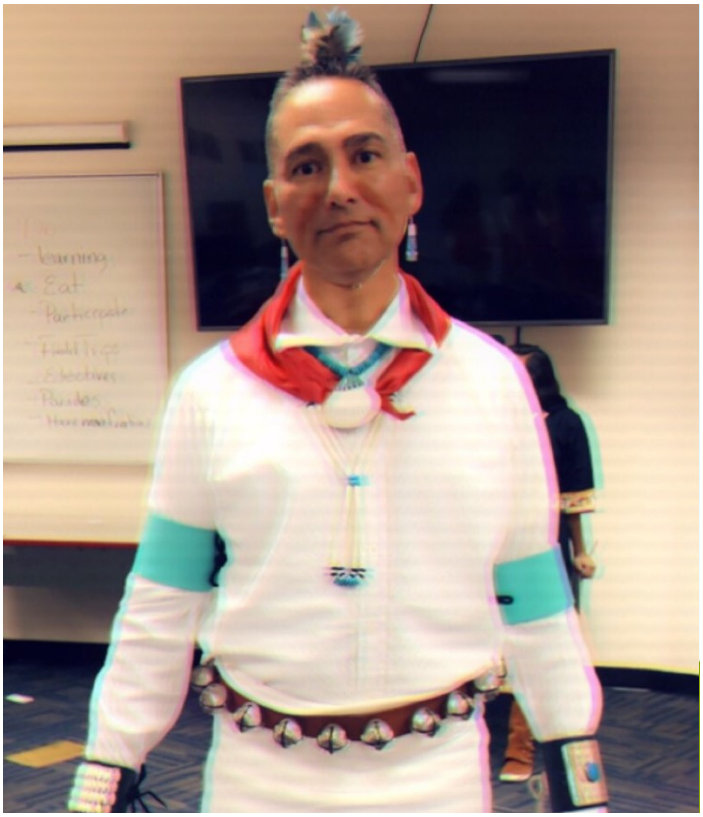
Pueblo, Guadalupe/Tortugas, had lost their status around the 1940s, have tried to regain it ever since. Even with the extensive records from baptism and death records going back to the 17th - 19th centuries from their Pueblos' churches that shows their lineage and history, they struggle to show a traditional continuity without interruption for over 100 years. There had already been interruptions, very blatant ones, caused by federal policies. The government also decides what tribes are federally recognized,

The issue of blood-quantum is also problematic; some tribes require a quarter, an eighth, or to be a descendant from their mother or their father's side, etc. However, some tribes do not require blood quantum. Some tribes use their descendants to suffice. The recognition process is challenging; many federally recognized tribes could not meet the federal criteria to be recognized, today, if they lost it. Even if the government approves a tribe for federal recognition, anyone can oppose and can prevent that tribe from being recognized. The government also opposes federally reserved land from being given to tribes. Proving a traditional heritage has been an uphill battle for the Puebloan and many other indigenous tribes. Though they have compelling arguments and evidence, anyone could oppose them from getting their recognition for any reason. Without federal recognition and support that Pueblo and other tribes have lost land, language, and rights.

Teaching to Make a Difference

Anthony Rey Mojarro is one of the many teachers who want to make a difference in their students' lives. His story, however, also has deep and complex traditions and history, and he has confronted challenges that many of us have not faced. Keeping your traditions, language, and culture alive is the essence of what makes us individually unique. Mr. Mojarro and others from Puebloan communities strive to make it better for those who come after them and hope that their traditions continue to thrive.

Air Force 1988



2019

2019

Vicente Royal c. 1949 Roybal
Great-Grand Uncle Cacique
Guadalupe (Tortugas) Pueblo

Great-great-grandmother
Francisca Avalos
Dancing for Guadalupe Feast
Dec 12 c. 1906

Grandmother Clara Royal
1st Communion
Albuquerque Indian School c. 1924

Great-grandfather Candelario Royal
kneeling left (right side of coach) at
Albuquerque Indian School c. 1988

From Rock Bottom to Teacher and Counselor: An Interview with Phillip Reed

Interviewed by Isaac Colin and Christopher Rojas

Growing up with his family on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, Phillip Reed experienced and understood the difference in the quality of many things inside and outside of the reservation. Like many in the Native American community, he knew what it meant to struggle and then find a way to come out on top. Education was one of the most important differences, according to Phillip. "There was not as much education on the reservation as there was in the city," and this is something that is still a major issue in the Native Community. Another thing that was different for Reed growing up on the reservation was the many languages that were not found in places like the metropolitan cities. Not only were there many different Indigenous languages spoken in the region, but he also experienced two different languages spoken at home, Navajo and English. Phillip told us that in his childhood home his mother would speak to him in the English language and only in English, and, when his mother's siblings or family visited, she would speak to them in the Navajo language, which he couldn't understand.

Despite not speaking the Navajo Language while growing up, Reed managed to learn his Native language, and he learned a great deal with the help and contributions of members of the Lakota tribe when he spent time at the Sweat Lodge.

Phillip is an amazing person, inside and out, a man who has experienced both rock bottom and high points in his life. He does his best to help people out of the same dark place that he was once in. During most of his childhood, Phillip told us his parents were alcoholics, and, unfortunately, like a large number of young adults in the Native community, he also fell into the trap of what is alcohol. Rock bottom was hit, and he fully realized this when he found himself sitting in a level 3 prison cell drinking prison wine or "Pruno." Reed told us, "I got a quart of pruno and shot by shot I felt my body get warmer and warmer, I started to feel good, I felt like I can be superman...," but, as soon as the effects of the prison wine started, he stated, "My whole life flashed before my eyes, my life was laid in front of my eyes that night, for I used to make fun of people for being in prison. I never believed that I would end up here. I lost everything."

Phillip did not give up, though, quite the opposite actually, for being in that prison resulted in his changing his ways for the better. Like people who came before him, like the blood running through his veins, the members of the Native community are tough and willing to struggle in order to see change, in order to see a better future, and that is what Phillip did.

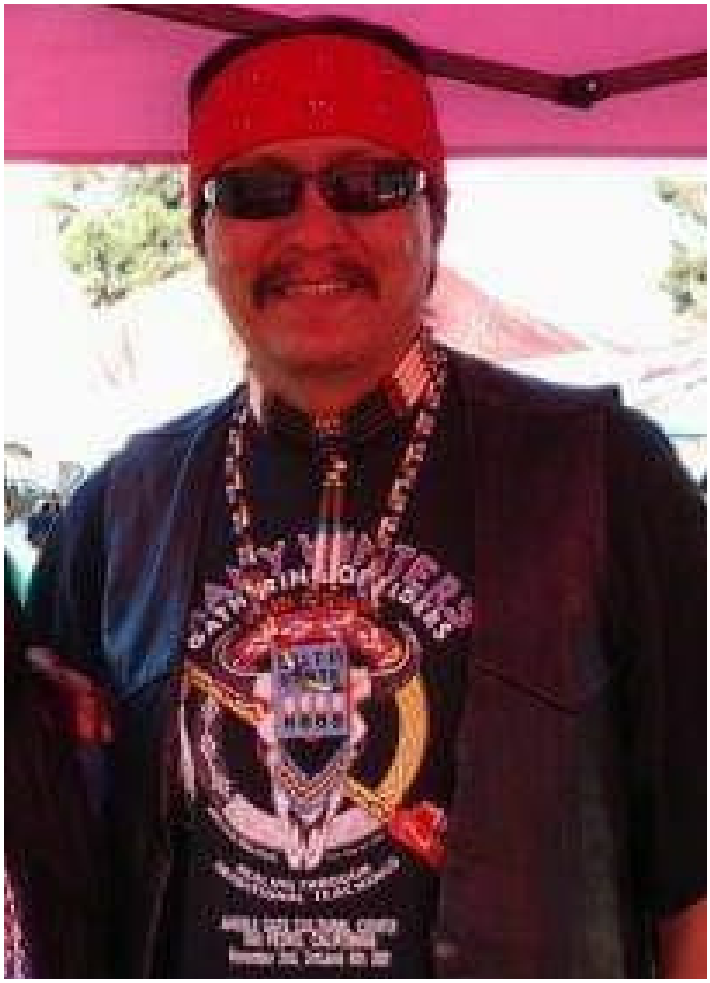
"If you go to a treatment center, it must be by your own choice; if you do not do it for yourself, by yourself, you have no will, you have no inner strength."

After receiving all the support and help he needed, Phillip broke his "glass ceiling," a concept he uses to represent "a psychological ceiling where you can't function, go to work, pursue a higher education. Instead, you end up falling downwards along with your life's functions." Once Phillip broke his glass ceiling, he is now over 10 years sober; he is now returning the favor he once received, and he helps members of the Native community and others who want to change as well.

In the process of becoming sober, Reed found himself thanking *Wakan Tanka*, the Great Creator in the Lakota language, every step of the way. He understands the struggles that young adults in the Native community can face in their lives, for he has seen both the bad and the good; he knows what is important in life, and what can be damaging to one's future. Taking great pride in being sober, Phillip, in his work with Changing Spirits, teaches and helps as a counselor those that come in to find love and respect for their true selves. When someone is under the influence of alcohol and drugs, they have lost their former self to the substance, and, while under the influence of that substance, a new different version of yourself is brought out, a version that may not be liked by others, let alone yourself. "The only way to live a long life is if you stop substance abuse. If you get angry, please don't

get angry because anger can shorten your life. Therefore, I tell people don't get angry; if you can't fix it, then don't fix it. Just go around it. There is a lot I have found from staying clean and sober. I share all my respect with a lot of people, but some people just don't know the knowledge or wisdom that they should have to understand the things going on. A change is needed and yes, it is hard, yes you are not alone, and yes there is help, there is a way, but only you can find that way and take that road. The con in life is drug abuse; the pro in life is family love… love is the main factor, a gift that we must always cherish. If you really do love yourself, quit using so you can respect your true self."

Helping people overcome their hardships and struggles is what Phillip lives for, and a very noble cause it is, for he has helped tens if not hundreds of people leave behind what they once were in order to find their true self. "Life in its own form has to do with the elements that surround us, our minds and soul in order to comprehend what needs to be acknowledged, to appreciate, to grow and to not take advantage; grow as a mortal person, share and express feelings in non-abusive ways and just simply be who we are." "Everybody has their truth. I don't want to be living a lie. That's the reason why everyone can't figure out the truth, because everyone says this and that. We have different people from all over the globe saying that 'No, this is the way that it's supposed to be.' We have to rely on ourselves to know what the truth is before we can start teaching people what the truth is all about. We have to instruct people about different formalities of life, different elements that blend in and that don't blend in. They mean the same. That is why we have to let people grow within themselves to understand a lot about life. With me, the Navajo way with my culture and traditions is my truth."



Golden Gate: An Interview with DeLanna Studi

Interviewed by Heather Giron and Madison Medhat

DeLanna Studi is a Cherokee actor, activist, and advocate whose work and achievements have helped pave the way for more opportunity and recognition for the Native Community. Studi was born to her full-blood Cherokee father and a German-Irish mother in “the middle of nowhere, Oklahoma.” Studi grew up between two worlds as her parents' religious practices and experiences differed from one another. As an example, her Cherokee father would go to ceremonies, whereas her German-Irish mother would go to a Catholic Church. Living between these two worlds, as Studi stated, allowed for an appreciation for both of those religious practices, as well as the importance of acknowledging and respecting another person's religious beliefs. DeLanna reveals that her full name in Cherokee is translated to Golden Gate. Her father named her this because she was the bridge that connected the two worlds of her parents. While Studi was able to learn the importance of other people's beliefs and traditions, she was also forced to learn about racism at a young age through these experiences. DeLanna stated that at a young age she began to see how differently her parents were treated. She learned that she

be treated differently depending on who she was with, treated like a white child when she was with her mother, treated like a Native Indian when she was with her father. If it was her father who she accompanied to the mall, they were searched to make sure they weren't shop lifting or carrying anything illegal. With her mother, employees in shops were more than helpful and went out of their way to help the two. Studi was able to catch on to these patterns quickly.

DeLanna started the interview by telling us about how different her parents were growing up. Her father grew up speaking Cherokee as his first language until the age of nine. He, like many other Native children, was forced to enter boarding schools that would push them to assimilate into "society." The boarding school he had attended was called Sequoyah School; these boarding schools were one of many ways in which the U.S. government attempted to force assimilation onto Native communities. The experiences faced within these schools were never pleasant; these children were forced to learn English, go to church, and even let go of their tribal traditions. Studi stated her father never spoke much about his experience within boarding school until they made their trek down the Trail of Tears. To this day the building is still up, but it is no longer a boarding school; rather it is used as a cultural school. Another moment in her childhood that showed the racism of her town and the education system was when her kindergarten teacher was telling the story of Thanksgiving. Studi's teacher said the same sugar-coated version of history we still hear today, but the teacher then said that now all the Indians are extinct. Not knowing what extinct meant DeLanna was happy to know a fun new word. When she asked her father what the fun new word meant, her heart broke. In kindergarten, her teacher told her that her people were dead and gone while she was sitting right there.

Trail of Tears Walk

The Trail of Tears is an event that is taught very briefly within the education system, in which they leave out a majority of the important details. This event was a devastating experience to have happened to the Native community as it was one of many events that displaced thousands of Native people, in order for the U.S. government to seize the land. DeLanna actually retraced the path of the Trail of Tears with her father, the same path her ancestors took before her. This trek covered about nine-hundred and ninety miles from North Carolina to Oklahoma; they were still able to walk parts of the trail. Unfortunately, some parts had been closed off due to being private property or being part of a freeway. Studi mentioned that her family history before arriving in Oklahoma was not known to her, and the information she had received was what she had learned from history books. When she had attempted to ask her father, he had stated it was not a topic that was spoken about due to the experience that her great grandmother had while walking the path. DeLanna worried that this trek would negatively affect her father,

triggering him to remember the days when he had to endure the punishments of the boarding school. Rather she states, “I died on that trail, but my Father came alive”; the experience her father had in the boarding school had allowed him to be more prepared for the information and sense of loss that would be experienced through this journey. She was able to unravel information on her family before arriving in Oklahoma and was even able to see a replica of the house her family used to live in.

Becoming an advocate

DeLanna told us that one of the factors that led her to becoming a vocal advocate for Native Americans and the issues that affect them is that our education system does not teach accurate history. She added that when speaking out, her ancestors are behind her, giving her the power to continue, and her father is in front of her, encouraging her.

How COVID affected her and the tribe

For many this past year has been extremely trying as communities suffer the losses of their members due to COVID-19. The pandemic took a large toll on the Native community as many of their Elders have unfortunately passed due to the virus. This is crucial to the Native community; the loss of Elders has a huge impact on the communities as it means the loss of language, history, and knowledge within the community. This puts the future generations at risk, as history, traditions, and teachings in general are passed down through speaking within these Native communities.