



2013 Guardians of Culture and Lifeways International Award Winners

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Established in 2007, the Guardians of Culture and Lifeways International Awards Program identifies and recognizes organizations and individuals who serve as outstanding examples of how indigenous archives, libraries, and museums contribute to the vitality and cultural sovereignty of Native nations. The Guardian Award takes its name from the sculpture that stands atop the Oklahoma State Capitol -- the work of Chief Kelly Haney, a renowned Master Artist, retired Seminole Chief, and distinguished State Senator.

The 12-member Awards Council, representing tribal cultural institutions from across the nation, wishes to thank those who submitted nominations and congratulates the 2013 recipients.

Lifetime Achievement Award: Benjamin T. Wakashige

The Lifetime Achievement Award honors an individual whose work has significantly contributed to the preservation and understanding of indigenous cultural heritage. The 2013 Award is presented to Mr. Benjamin T. Wakashige, an extraordinary individual who is beloved for his remarkable kindness, persistence, and dedication to libraries everywhere. Over a forty year career, he has been the director of a state library, director of seven academic libraries, School Library Media Specialist at two school libraries including Zuni Pueblo Public Schools, but is most appreciated for his work with American Indian libraries especially the tribal libraries in New Mexico. As the State Librarian of New Mexico, Ben demonstrated his commitment to preserving indigenous cultural heritage by helping to develop libraries in tribal communities in New Mexico and served on library boards in Zuni Pueblo (NM), Rio Rancho (NM), Forest Grove (OR), and Silver City (NM). Since the 1970s, he has been heavily involved in the New Mexico Native American Libraries Special Interest Group and much of his professional interests revolve around minorities in libraries. Mr. Wakashige combines highly regarded professional skills with a human element that makes him both loved and admired by all who have ever worked with him. We are all richer for it.



Past recipients are **Dr. Lotsee Patterson**, Professor Emeriti, School of Library and Information Services, University of Oklahoma, **Irving Nelson**, director of the Navajo Nation Library System, and **Richard West**, former director of the National Museum of the American Indian.

Leadership Award: Amalia M. Reyes



The Leadership Award honors an indigenous individual with exceptional abilities to lead and inspire. The 2013 award is presented to Amalia M. Reyes (Pascua Yaqui), Supervisor of the Dr. Fernando Escalante Community Library and Resource Center in Guadalupe, Arizona. She has worked for many years to support the preservation and revitalization of Yaqui history and culture, with a goal of developing a Yaqui-centered understanding of the world of books and papers. Towards this goal, Mrs. Reyes, along with Education Director Aleena Hernandez, acquired tribal sponsorship and funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

With this support, they created the tribal library and began supporting other tribal initiatives that focused on supporting Yaqui history and early childhood cultural literacy education. Mrs. Reyes helped promote cultural music on the tribe's first radio station and produced and hosted a bi-weekly radio program, *Tribal Legacies*, where she interviewed elders about Yaqui history, stories, and traditional knowledge. With the development of the Library and Resource Center, tribal members now deposit copies of their own writings, archival materials, books, and expressions that others have made about Yaqui people. In addition to her work in developing the Library and Resource Center, Mrs. Reyes works with tribal elders, community members and many boards and councils to assist with curricular needs. She served as the tribe's first NAGPRA Tribal Representative, organizer/coordinator of international language symposiums for language instruction development, assisted in the development of the Yaqui Head Start's Yaqui Curriculum, and trained staff of the Language and Culture Department. These accomplishments, and Mrs. Reyes' unwavering dedication to preserving the Yaqui way of life, are why the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums unanimously awarded her the Leadership Award.

The past recipient of the Leadership Award is **Dr. Sven Haakanson**, Executive Director, Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak, Alaska

Honored One: Faith Damon Davison

Faith Damon Davison, Mohegan, who served as the Archivist/Librarian of the Mohegan Tribe for over 14 years before retiring in 2010, has made a significant contribution to ensuring the cultural sovereignty of the Mohegan Tribe. Ms. Davison was responsible for the establishment of the Mohegan Tribal Archives and maintained the Tribe's initial governmental library. She has published and/or contributed to a variety of scholarly publications concerning Mohegan history and assisted in the development of curricula concerning the Mohegan Tribe for use by public school systems in Connecticut. Ms. Davison has served, and continues to serve, on various boards, including four years on the Board for the Connecticut State Library Advisory Council for Planning and Development representing Special Libraries, current service on the Advisory Committee to the Yale Indian Papers Project, the Advisory Board to the H-AmIndian Project of the Arizona State University School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, the Norwich (Connecticut) Historical Society, and the Stanton-Davis Museum in Pawcatuck, Connecticut. She also serves on the Collection Committee of Slater Museum in Norwich. Ms. Davison played a major role in the creation and development of the Mohegan Tribal Archives. Using her talents for research and her knowledge of history, both Tribal and colonial, Ms. Davison was instrumental in the acquisition and repatriation of Mohegan cultural properties. Through Ms. Davison's leadership, the Mohegan Tribe developed a Tribal library containing almost 7,000 volumes. In addition, she curated the Tribe's collection of Mohegan baskets, historic maps, and rare documents.



Past recipients are attorney, author and Native-rights activist **Walter Echo-Hawk** and Oklahoma State Librarian **Susan McVey**.



Eva Wolfe (1922-2004), a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, was a master basket weaver who specialized in making baskets from rivercane. A biography of Wolfe is included in both the book and website as part of the *From the Hands of Our Elders* project. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

Outstanding Project Award: From the Hands of Our Elders

The Outstanding Project Award recognizes projects that significantly benefit indigenous peoples. The 2013 award is presented to Western Carolina University's Hunter Library, Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual in North Carolina. "From the Hands of Our Elders" is a multi-faceted, multi-year, collaborative project focused on documenting and preserving the rich material culture and archival holdings of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The project began in 2007 with support from Western Carolina University, the State Library of North Carolina, and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Led by Hunter Library, the project documented, interpreted, preserved, and presented Cherokee culture. Through library initiatives, three books and a website were produced. In 2009, "Cherokee Basketry: From the Hands of Our Elders" was published by The History Press, followed by "Cherokee Pottery" in 2011 and "Cherokee Carving" in 2013. Each book provides an overview of the craft, its history, and processes. Together, the books in the "From the Hands of Our Elders" series detail the biographies of thirty-one artisans whose stories are told through historic documents, records, and recollections found in archives of collected indigenous materials. Without the publication of these personal histories, the

stories of these important elders would be lost.

Past recipients include **The Dragonfly Project**, a partnership between the Haines Borough Public Library of Alaska and the Chilkoot Indian Association, the **Tribal College Librarians Professional Development Institute at Montana State University, Bozeman**, and the **Plateau Peoples' Web Portal** at Washington State University.

Archives Institutional Excellence Award: Citizen Potawatomi Cultural Heritage Center, Shawnee, OK

The Archives Institutional Excellence Award recognizes indigenous archival organizations that demonstrate a significant commitment to the preservation and use of documentary heritage. The 2013 award is presented to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal Archive and Research Division and its archivist, R. Blake Norton. Located within the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center and serving as the repository for the Nation's archive and research collections, the Tribal Archive and Research Division retains the tangible keys to the spiritual, historical and cultural aspects of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and its Neshnabek brethren. The collections, most of which are one-of-a-kind, include historical and cultural documents, manuscripts, maps, photographic and genealogical material, and various forms of multimedia. Under the administration of the Tribal Archive and Research Division is the Mezodan [Family] Research Center and Library. It was created to unite the Nation's diverse collections with the tribal population and facilitate the education and edification of culture, history and heritage. With over 7,000



mixed-media resources, the Mezodan Library houses and makes accessible one of the most diverse collections of Eastern Woodland ethnology, language and history in both the region and among tribal libraries nationwide. The Tribal Archive and Research Division is presented the Archives Institutional Award in recognition of its exemplary programs that are sparking a renewed cultural awareness, perpetuating historical ties and cultural traditions for future generations and strengthening the heritage of Potawatomi people.

Past recipients of the Archives Institutional Excellence Award are the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Seneca Tribal Archives and the Colorado River Indian Tribes Library.

Library Institutional Excellence Award: Ak-Chin Tribal Library, Maricopa, AZ

The 2013 Library Institutional Excellence Award is presented to the Ak-Chin Indian Community Library, its director Melanie Toledo, and staff members Jeff Stoffer, Matt Cross, Jeannette Peters, Karen Gardner and Cecily Peters. The Ak-Chin Tribal Library staff members are recognized for the outstanding and visionary work they have provided, not only to the Ak-Chin Indian Community, but all tribal libraries in Arizona. Since opening on May 30, 1999, the library has achieved significant successes. Staff members have implemented numerous projects such as the "Making Movies" project that grew into recognition by the community of the library's importance in being a resource for creating digital works. What started as a small project to engage youth in creating digital media grew into a service that created public service announcements and documentaries. Another project that was a first for tribal libraries in Arizona was the implementation of circulating e-readers for library patrons and community engagement activities like iPad parties. The Ak-Chin Library staff members have provided leadership to other tribal libraries in Arizona through their willingness to share ideas, projects and contribute back to the library community. Staff members are involved in the grassroots organization "Gathering of Arizona Tribal Libraries" and have been active in the Arizona Library Association (AzLA) by providing programs at the annual AzLA conferences. One of the new initiatives Ak-Chin Library staff members are developing is a "Paws to Read" program for their library that will benefit the Ak-Chin Indian Community through "Buddy" the reading dog. Another innovative program in development is an e-book subscription service supported with IMLS grant funds.



Photo by LUZ Architectural Photography

Past recipients of the Library Institutional Excellence Award are the Colorado River Indian Tribe, the Pueblo of Jemez Community Library, and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.

Museum Institutional Excellence Award: The Makah Cultural and Research Center

The 2013 Museum Institutional Excellence Award is presented to The Makah Cultural and Research Center, its director Janine Bovechop, cultural center staff, and the Makah people. The Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) opened in 1979 and is located in the village of Neah Bay, WA, on the Makah Indian Reservation. The MCRC came about from the Tribe's desire to curate and interpret 55,000 artifacts that were excavated from Ozette, a village to which many contemporary Makahs trace their ancestry. The MCRC was created to be not only a museum and a repository, but a learning center where information pertaining to Makah culture and language could be collected and distributed to perpetuate traditional culture and knowledge. The center was an outgrowth of grassroots desires to protect the Makah right of ownership of traditional cultural resources. Currently the MCRC is made up of a world-class museum, a Language Program, a Library and Archive, an Education Department, Collections Department and a Tribal Historic Preservation Office. The Language Program is made up of 6 certified language instructors who teach Makah language in the public school on the reservation. The Archive and Library program has done extensive genealogy research, and shares the information with the Makah community. The MCRC also partners with a federal agency to provide interpreters at Cape Flattery, the most northwestern tip of the United States. The Tribal Historic Preservation Office monitors cultural sites on and off reservation. A favorite program the MCRC operates annually is the summer dance and culture program, preparing nearly 200 youth for the Makah Days Celebration. The Makah Cultural and Research Center is recognized for its significant commitment to the care, preservation, interpretation, and presentation of material cultural heritage.



Past recipients are the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways, and the Cherokee Heritage Center.