the Native American Literature Symposium

OUR LAND AND WATER

Mystic Lake Hotel & Casino
Prior Lake, Minnesota

March 2-4, 2017
Studies in American Indian Literatures

Edited by Chadwick Allen

A journal of American Indian literatures, defined broadly to include all written, spoken, and visual texts created by Native peoples.

SAIL is the official journal of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literature. Members receive the journal as a benefit of membership.

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The Native American Literature Symposium is organized by an independent group of Indigenous scholars committed to making a place where Native voices can be heard. Since 2001, we have brought together some of the most influential voices in Native America to share our stories—in art, prose, poetry, film, religion, history, politics, music, philosophy, and science—from our worldview.

Gwen N. Westerman, Director  
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*President Emeritus, Leech Lake Tribal College*

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Margaret Noodin, Awards  
*University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Maazinaate Book Blitz  
*University of Manitoba*

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*Trent University*
Wopida, Miigwech, Mvto, Wado, Ahe’ee, Yakoke

We thank the sponsors of the 2017 Symposium for their generous funding and continued support that made everything possible.

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC)
Charlie Vig, Tribal Chairman
Deborah Peterson, Donation Coordinator

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Institutional Diversity
Henry Morris, Dean
College of Arts and Humanities
Matthew Cecil, Dean

We also extend our gratitude to the people who work behind the scenes at Minnesota State University, Mankato to keep everything functioning and who provide invaluable encouragement for our cause.

Department of English
Matthew Sewell, Chair
Liz Olmanson, Administrative Assistant

And we appreciate the kindness of the following people who contributed support for our elder and student participants:
Becca Gercken
Martha Viehmann
Amelia Katanski
Nancy J. Peterson
Robin Riley Fast

Cover Art
Taliesin Gilkes-Bower (realmsmanifest.com)
2 March 2017

Haŋ mitakuyapi / Hello my relatives,

Welcome back to Dakota homeland. We return to a landscape where prairie grasslands, woodlands, and boreal forests are woven together by interconnected waterways. It is Mni Sota Makoce—the land where the water is so clear it reflects the sky. We thank our host, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, for welcoming us back to their conference facilities, and for their continuing support since our first official meeting here in the spring of 2002. We are truly grateful for their sponsorship of our Saturday evening feast.

Our regular schedule will begin in a good way on Thursday morning with a continental breakfast and a preview of Heid Erdrich’s new work that literally brings poetry to life. We are excited about this year’s program which features stories of every kind and shape, from poetry to visual art to history, and film to theory to graphic novels. Our film session showcases the moving documentary on the work of our hero Elouise Cobell, created by Melanie Janko. On Friday, Payton Guthrie will give us an inside look at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s social media programs as well as his own creative work. Saturday morning we will have a special staged reading of a Jim Northup play to honor his memory and work. In the exhibit hall is Experiencing Native North America, a collaborative installation that coordinates academic disciplines of History, English, and Anthropology. Our Saturday evening speaker Bernard Perley will tell us more about it in his presentation. And the variety of topics in our panel sessions demonstrates the breadth and depth of what it means to be involved in Native Studies today.

NALS has been a place where Native worldviews can be expressed and considered in all their variations. It is time to take stock of where we have been and where we want to go. Toward that effort we will take time on Thursday and Friday for some guided lunch-time discussions about what we need to do as scholars to support each other, especially in light of recent events that affect us all. Come prepared to listen and share so we can develop some action steps for change.

We remember the voices of those who have made our paths easier—we stand on the shoulders of incredibly strong indigenous people who sacrificed in ways we may never know. We honor our warrior legacy in those family members and friends who are in war-torn and desperate places, from Standing Rock to Syria. We remember that walls not only shut others out, but also shut us off from others. And we continue to travel on routes that were laid out generations ago as we share our stories.

Wopida ota. Many thanks.

Gwen Westerman
Book Exhibits and Vendors

Visit the vendors and book exhibits in Grand Ballroom 2
Thursday, Friday, Saturday  9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Thank you to the following presses and vendors for their contributions

**Presses**
Michigan State University Press
University of Arizona Press
University of Nebraska Press
University of New Mexico Press

**Vendors**
Birchbark Books
BIRCHBERRY Native Arts and Food
FryBreadLove.org and Earth Circles
Debra Myers

Conference Rooms

All meals held in Grand Ballroom 1

**Breakout Session Rooms**
A - Wabasha 1
B - Wabasha 2
C - Shakopee

**Vendors, Exhibits, Breaks**
Grand Ballroom II
Thursday, March 2

8 am - 4 pm  |  Registration
9 am - 5 pm  |  Vendors and Exhibits

8:00 - 9:00am  |  Continental Breakfast: Grand Ballroom I
8:30 - 8:45am  |  Welcome and Traditional Blessing: Grand Ballroom I

Session 1

Heid Erdrich presents Curator of Ephemera and accompanying films

Heid E. Erdrich will read from her new book of poems Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media (Michigan State University Press, 2017). These poems center on how communications technology, ancient through contemporary, fails to help people understand one another better.

Erdrich will also screen poem-films based on her work and that of Louise Erdrich. Heid will present images from Anishinaabe visual artists and performers who have influenced her work and with whom she has collaborated.

Session 2

A  Reflections on Standing Rock

The Art of Resistance: From Alcatraz to Standing Rock
Jen McClung, Iowa State University

“You Are A Guest”: The Oceti Sakowin Camp and the Politics of Native American Hospitality
Lewis Gleich, University of Maryland

Vampires Are Real & Oil Is S(l)icker than Water: A Meditation upon Karl Marx, Voltaire, Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, and the Dakota Access Pipeline
Jungmin Kim, Cornell University

B  Indigenous Issues in TV & Comics

From Firefly to Longmire: The Problem of Race in Popular Culture and the Work of Social Justice
Martha Viehmann, Sinclair Community College

A Wide Re-Envisioning of Indigenous Land/Waters: The Case of Indigenous Comics
Jeremy Carnes, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Teaching With and Through Graphic Narratives in the Native Lit Classroom
Carrie Louise Sheffield, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

C  Native American Literature in a Global Context

Rebecca Macklin, University of Leeds

Eman Ghanayem
University of Illinois

Diane Glancy
Macalester College

Prior Lake, Minnesota
## Thursday, March 2

### Session 3: Lunch (Grand Ballroom I)

**Preparation for Change, Gathering Support**

*Lunch Discussion 1*

### Session 4

#### A
Aspects of Identity

From Awareness to Action: Using Indigenous Literature to Bridge the Indian-White Racial Divide

- Kristie Russette, *Montana State University*

Behind the Mask: The Pathological Appropriation of Historical Trauma in False Native American Memoir

- Chris Muniz, *University of Southern California*

Land, History & DNA in Linda Hogan’s *The Woman Who Watches Over the World*

- Joanna Ziarkowska, *University of Warsaw*

#### B
Contemporary Indigenous Art in an Age of Protest

- Becca Gercken - *Univ. of Minnesota*
  “Parody, Pastiche, and Genre: Contemporary Ledger Narratives and Their Stories of Tradition, Resistance, and Reimagining”

- Channette Romero - *Univ. of Georgia*
  “Claiming Urban Space through Text and Image”

- Laura M. Furlan, - *Univ. of Mass.
  “The State of the Field: Thoughts from an Indigenous MFA Studio Art Candidate”

- Nina O’Leary - *University of Minnesota*
  “Images of Indigenous Resistance from #NoDAPL”

#### C
Land, Water, Nations I

- Joseph Bauerkemper - *U. of Minnesota*
  Chair

- Katrina Phillips - *Macalester College*
  “Termination through Tourism: The Battle over the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore”

- Amber Annis - *U. of Minnesota*
  “Indian Atlantis: Lake Oahe and South Dakota Tourism”

- Eric Redux - *U. of Minnesota*
  “Deluge at Bakweyawaa: Water and Community at Lac Courte Oreilles”

### Session 5: Break (3:00 - 3:30)

### Session 6

#### A
Louis Owens’ *Other Destinies: 25 Years Later*

- Scott Andrews
  *Cal State, Northridge*

- David Carlson
  *Cal State, San Bernardino*

- Denise Low
  *Mammoth Publications*

- Billy J. Stratton
  *University of Denver*

- Steve Sexton
  *University of Oklahoma*

#### B
Beyond Literary Art

Seeing Double in Native Women’s Visual Culture

- Molly McGlennen
  *Vassar College*

Where Specters Refuse to Vanish: Representations of Indigenous Peoples, Cultures, and Belonging in *The Revenant*

- Akikwe Cornell
  *University of Minnesota*

Book Arts & Indigenous Language Revitalization

- Barbara K. Robins
  *University of Nebraska*

#### C
Land, Water, Nations II

- Eric Redux - *U. of Minnesota*
  Chair

- John Little - *U. of Minnesota*
  “#NoDAPL: Indigenous Solidarity Beyond the Standing Rock Reservation”

- Joseph Bauerkemper - *U. of Minnesota*
  “Treaty Rights, Neglected Obligations, and Neoliberal Remedy”

- Patrizia Zanella - *U. of Minnesota*
  “Transnational Advocacy, Violence Against Indigenous Women, and the Role of Writers”
Thursday, March 2

5:00 - 6:00  
Session 7: Dinner on your own

Session 8

Film Screening
Hosted by Denise K. Cummings, Rollins College & Theo Van Alst, University of Montana

100 Years: One Woman’s Fight for Justice

Question and Answer with filmmaker Melinda Janko to follow

When Elouise Cobell, a Blackfeet warrior from Montana, started asking questions about missing money from government managed Indian Trust accounts, she never imagined that one day she would be taking on the world’s most powerful government. But what she discovered as the Treasurer of her tribe was a trail of fraud and corruption leading all the way from Montana to Washington DC. 100 Years: One Woman’s Fight for Justice is the story of her 30-year fight for justice for 300,000 Native Americans whose mineral rich lands were grossly mismanaged by the United States Government. In 1996, Cobell filed the largest class action lawsuit ever filed against the federal government. For fifteen long years, and through three Presidential administrations, Cobell’s unrelenting spirit never quit. This is the compelling story of how she prevailed and made history.

Melinda Janko
(Producer, Director, and Writer)

Melinda Janko created Fire in the Belly Productions after reading an article about the broken Indian Trust and Elouise Cobell’s fight for justice. For two years, Melinda traveled the country creating relationships of trust with the lead plaintiff Elouise Cobell, Native leaders, Indian Trust beneficiaries, Senators, Congressmen, Federal Judge Royce C. Lamberth, and officials of the Dept. of the Interior. She was granted exclusive access to both sides of the story and filmed in eight states, Washington, DC, and on many Tribal Lands. Melinda has been interviewed by BBC Radio, NPR, and Indian Country Today and wrote a special feature article honoring Cobell for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian Magazine.
Friday, March 3

**Session 9**

**The Language of Land, the Ways of Water**  
Imag(in)ing Tribal Topographies in American Indian Story, Song, Fiction, and Poetry

Gordon Henry, *Michigan State University*  
Margaret Noodin, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*  
Gwen Westerman, *Minnesota State University, Mankato*  
Jesse Peters, *University of North Carolina, Pembroke*

**Session 10**

**A**  
The Power of Books  
The Need for Diversity and Cultural Competency in the Library  
Courtney Spence

Applying Culture-Based Storytelling to Create STEM Children's Novels  
Ryan Winn, *College of Menominee Nation*

The Future of North American Lands and People in Joseph Bruchac's *Killer of Enemies* Series  
Zara Rix, *University of Connecticut*

**B**  
Representations of Land and Water  
Land and Water: Simon J. Ortiz's "Our Homeland, a National Sacrifice Area" as a Multi-Genre Sovereignty Claim  
Robin Riley Fast, *University of Nebraska, Omaha*

Merging Art and Politics: Literary Representations of Mni Sosa (or the Missouri River)  
Sarah Hernandez, *South Dakota State University*

**C**  
Native American Studies in a University First-Year Writing Program  
Barbara K. Robins, *University of Nebraska, Omaha*

Maggie Christensen  
University of Nebraska, Omaha

Joan Latchaw, *University of Nebraska, Omaha*

Alec McMullen  
*University of Nebraska, Omaha*

Ben Divis  
*University of Nebraska, Omaha*
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| 11:15 - 12:30 | A Land Roots and Water Routes: Community, Cyber, and Educational Activism and Art  
Stephanie J. Fitzgerald  
*University of Kansas*  
Rain Prud’homme-Cranford  
*University of Calgary*  
Johnie Jae | B Students Say #NoDAPL: Water & Land Protection at Standing Rock  
Becca Gercken  
*University of Minnesota, Morris*  
Brian Twenter  
*University of Minnesota, Morris*  
Eric DuMarce  
*Sisseton Wahpeton College*  
Liv Klemek  
*University of Minnesota, Morris* |
| 12:30 - 1:30 |  | Preparing for Change, Taking Action:  
*Lunch Discussion 2* |

**Statement on Ethnic Fraud**

“We the Indigenous Professors Association hereby establish and present our position on ethnic fraud and offer recommendations to ensure the accuracy of American Indian/Alaska Native identification in American colleges and universities. This statement is developed over concern about the racial exploitation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in American colleges and universities. We think it is necessary to establish our position on ethnic fraud because of documented incidents of abuse.

This statement is intended to assist universities in their efforts to develop culturally diverse campus communities. The implications of this statement are threefold: 1) to assist in the selection process that encourages diversity among students, staff, faculty, and administration; 2) to uphold the integrity of institutions and enhance their credibility with American Indian/Alaska Nations/Tribes; and 3) to recognize the importance of American Indian/Alaska Native Nations/Tribes in upholding their sovereign and legal right as nations to determine membership.

The following prioritized recommendations are intended to affirm and ensure American Indian/Alaska Native identity in the hiring process. We are asking that colleges and universities 1) Require documentation of enrollment in a state or federally recognized nation/tribe with preference given to those who meet this criterion; 2) Establish a case-by-case review process for those unable to meet the first criterion; 3) Include American Indian/Alaska Native faculty in the selection process; 4) Require a statement from the applicant that demonstrates past and future commitment to American Indian/Alaska Native concerns; 5) Require higher education administrators to attend workshops on tribal sovereignty and meetings with local tribal officials; and 6) Advertise vacancies at all levels and on a broad scale and in tribal publications.”

Prior Lake, Minnesota
Friday, March 3

### Session 13

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|   | Siobhan Senier  
|   | University of New Hampshire |
|   | Carol Dana  
|   | Penobscot Nation Cultural & Historic Preservation Office |

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|   | Theresa Warburton  
|   | Western Washington University |
|   | Physical and Environmental Disability and Destruction in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead*  
|   | Kimberly Allen  
|   | Oklahoma State University |
|   | “Jake Nashoba went home”: Tribal Citizenship, Belonging, and Naturalization in Louis Owens’ *Dark River*  
|   | John Gamber  
|   | Columbia University |

### Session 14: Break and Book Signing

### Session 15

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|   | Erica Melko  
|   | University of Illinois |
|   | Decolonization: Using Native Languages to Make a Political Statement  
|   | Monica Jackson  
|   | Alliant International University |
|   | Land and Vertigo as a Decolonizing Device in James Welch’s Early Works  
|   | Alexander Newby  
|   | Montana State University |

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|   | “As It Was in the Beginning: The (Eco) gothic in Early Indigenous Literature”  
|   | Siobhan Seiner - *U of New Hampshire*  
|   | “Re-Enchanting the Forest: Climate Change and Interspecies Cooperation in Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel’s *Wabanaki Blues*”  
|   | Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez  
|   | *Bradley University*  
|   | “The Gothic Underbelly of the American Empire State: Leslie Marmon Silko’s Exposé of ‘The Lie’” |

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|   | Ignatia Thunder’s Last Story in Louise Erdrich’s *LaRose*  
|   | John D. Kalb  
|   | Salisbury University |
|   | Youth, Child Welfare and Survivance in Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*  
|   | Heyang Julie Kae  
|   | Metropolitan State University |
|   | “Let this dress save you:” Material Assemblage and the Remaking of Fleur Pillager in Louise Erdrich’s *Four Souls*  
|   | Samantha Majhor  
|   | University of Minnesota |
Session 17: Dinner & Keynote with Payton Guthrie

Payton Guthrie, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Video Production Director, creates films and develops social media at the Choctaw Nation. Payton attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma, majoring in Acting/Directing with a minor in Dance (Modern & Tap). While attending SOSU, he worked during the summer months with the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival in a variety of roles from acting to technical director. Shortly after graduation, Payton was hired by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to add a multimedia presence to the Human Resources training division. There he helped develop Choctaw U and other corporate learning programs for the Choctaw Nation employees. Recently, he transferred to the Communications Division as Social Media Coordinator to oversee the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s social media platforms.

Session 18: After-dinner Reading

NALS on the Mic: an Evening of Poetry and Song

Host: Angela Semple

Saturday, March 4

Registration 9 am - 5 pm Vendors and Exhibits
Continental Breakfast

Session 19: Grand Ballroom I
Shinob Jep: A Staged Reading
A presentation of Jim Northrup’s one act play, Shinob Jep, in honor of the late, great Fond du Lac Chippewa author and playwright.

Presented by: Ryan Winn, College of Menominee Nation
Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, University of Manitoba
Kimberly Blaeser, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Amber Wardzala

9:00-10:15

Session 20
A
Poetry as Creative Force
Singing Us into Existence: The Entwinement of Dule Poetry and Governance in “Tinaja”and “Civiliza mi corazón, mamá”
Sue Haglund
University of Hawaii-Manoa

Landscapes Our Shares
Preserved: The Poetics of ANCSA in dg nanouk okpik’s Corpse Whale
Adam Spry
Florida Atlantic University

Colonized Knowledge and Imagination in Two Joy Harjo Poems
Kasey Jones
Salisbury University

B
Adenvteha: Thinking about/with Cherokee Stories
Scott Andrews
Cal State Northridge
“Our World, Our Hearts: Selu, Kanati, and Their Sons”

Brian Burkhart
Cal State Northridge
“Tsalagi gagoga elohi: Cherokee storytelling of the land”

Miriam Brown Spiers
University of California, Merced
“‘before the big colonization:' Traditional Cherokee Narratives in Contemporary Genre Fiction”

C
Roots of Decolonization
Pref/ìxing Solidarity: Tracing Co-National Indigenous Networks through the Writings of Gertrude and Raymond Bonnin
Michael Taylor
Brigham Young University

Tribal-Forest Service Collaborative Practices for the Sustainability of Bear Root
Natasha Myhal
University of Kansas

8:30 - 12

8 - 9 pm
Saturday, March 4

12:00 - 1:15  Lunch on your own

Session 21

ASAIL Business Meeting in Wabasha I

Anyone is welcome to attend!

Session 22

A  Continuing the Story: Reading Louise Erdrich's LaRose Together
   Nancy J Peterson  Purdue University
   Debra Barker  University of Wisconsin
   Stephanie Fitzgerald  University of Kansas
   Margaret Noodin  University of Wisconsin

B  Teaching Indigenous Literatures as Activism (ASAIL Pedagogy Panel)
   Mandy Suhr-Sytsma  Emory University
   Dawn Quigley  St. Catherine University
   Rachel Luckenbill  Southeastern University

C  Red Reading Rides Again!
   Scott Andrews  Cal State Northridge
   Brian Twenter  University of Minnesota Morris
   Carol Warrior  Cornell University
   Shawaano Chad Uran  Cornell University

3:00 - 3:30  Session 23: Break

The Institute of American Indian Arts' Low Residency MFA in Creative Writing

The Low Residency MFA in Creative Writing, now in its fourth year, has graduated 40 students with their MFAs. Sixty-four students are currently enrolled in the program in four tracks—poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting. The program is directed by poet Jon Davis, who has taught at IAIA for 27 years, with the assistance of Program Coordinator Rudolfo Serna.

For more information, visit: https://iaia.edu/mfa
Saturday, March 4

Session 24

A

Water Traditions

Reading Canoe: Resituating Wiigwaasi-Jiimaan within Anishinaabe Symbolic Culture
Joanne DiNova (Animikii Binesiik)
Ryerson University

Water Traditions in Menominee Foods
Thomas Weso
Kansas City Kansas Community College

Building Canoes, Building Poetry: Storytelling and Survival in Craig Santos Perez’s from unincorporated territory: [saina] and the Worldwide Voyage of Hōkūle‘a
Karen M. Poremski
Ohio Wesleyan University

B

It’s all About the Land: Indigenous Literatures and Aesthetics Written in Earth and Ink

Niigaan Sinclair
University of Manitoba

Naithan Lagace
University of Manitoba

Shauna Mulligan
University of Manitoba

Melanie Braith
University of Manitoba

Melanie Belmore
University of Manitoba

Session 25: Break

Session 26: Dinner Conversation with Bernard Perley: Repatriating Native American Literatures

Experiencing Native North America is a collaborative installation that coordinates academic disciplines of History, English, and Anthropology. Margaret Noodin, Cary Miller, and Bernard Perley share their Native American perspectives to represent Indigenous sovereignty as an unbroken and holistic experience that will ensure the vitality of Native American literature, history, landscapes, and religion into the future. The immersive installation invites viewers to experience and participate in Native American knowledge sharing and production as a continuous tradition. The installation is designed to challenge and overcome western disciplinary constraints so that Native Americans can practice self-determination through Native American experiential learning.

The installation provides a critical model for promoting greater awareness and the integration of Native American literature, history, languages, landscape, and religion into assertions of self-determination. Noodin, Miller, and Perley hope the installation serves as a catalyst for other creative repatriation projects that ensure the vitality of Native American knowledge and experience as acts of self-determination.

This event sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Native American Literature Symposium 2017
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Westerman, Gwen: 9, 22a
Winn, Ryan: 10a, 19
Zanella, Patrizia: 6c
Ziarkowska, Joanna: 4a
A vocal champion of Winnipeg’s Indigenous community, and co-founder of the North End watch group Bear Clan Patrol, died September 19th, 2016. Larry Morrissette passed away at 59.

Jo-Ann Episkewenw passed away on February 18th, 2016 after a brief illness. Episkewenw touched many people's lives as an educator, author and advocate for improving the lives of Indigenous people.

Daphne Odjig died on October 15th, 2016. Odjig blended the influences of Pablo Picasso and Vincent Van Gogh with the shapes of Ojibwa pictographs, & played a prominent role in leading First Nations painters into the mainstream of Canadian art.

Tootoosis, 58, died February 12th, 2017 at his ranch near Duck Lake, Saskatoon. Tyrone Tootoosis preferred to organize powwows, not star in them. He could often be found in a quiet spot offstage, smiling as the drummers, singers and dancers took to the floor.

Inuit artist Annie Pootoogook died this past fall. “Inuit everywhere in Inuit Nunangat (the four Inuit regions of Canada) mourn her passing, even as we celebrate her life and accomplishments. Pootoogook was a hugely influential artist who forever changed the face of Inuit art.

Cree author and residential school survivor Larry Loyie died on April 18th, 2016. He was 82. He is best known for his 1994 play Ora Pro Nobis (Pray for Us), 2006’s When the Spirits Dance, 2014’s Residential Schools: With the Words and Images of Survivors, and the number of titles he published with B.C. indigenous press Theytus Books

A widely respected Indigenous leader and activist from the Secwepemc Nation died in January 2017. Arthur Manuel entered the world of Indigenous politics in the 1970s, as president of the Native Youth Association. Recently, he was a spokesman for Defenders of the Land, an organization dedicated to environmental justice.

Connie Fife, Cree Canadian poet and editor, died early this year. She published three books of poetry, and edited several anthologies of First Nations women’s writing. In 2000, she was one of four writers, alongside Dan David, Walter Nanawin and Anna Marie Sewell, awarded the special one-time Prince & Princess Edward Prize in Aboriginal Literature from the Canada Council for the Arts.

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It is with great sadness that the Quinault Indian Nation announces the passing of tribal elder Marjorie Doreen (Basa) Valdillez. Ms. Valdillez, 72, passed away January 28 at St. Peters Hospital in Olympia, Washington.

Jim Boyd, Tribal Chairman for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, loved and respected, was being laid to rest. He walked on, unexpectedly and of natural causes, at the all too early age of 60.

This April 20, 2016 photo shows Jim Northrup outside his home in Sawyer, Minnesota. Ojibwe author, poet and playwright Jim Northrup walked on August 1 of complications from kidney cancer. He was 73.

The family of worldwide indigenous languages lost another fluent speaker in the death of Doris Jean Lamar McLemore. Considered the last fluent speaker of the Wichita language, she walked on August 30, 2016. Forty years of her life were dedicated to the Wichita language, including language education and archival work. Gary McAdams, a past president of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, assisted McLemore in Wichita language education. According to McAdams, many people in the tribe called his mentor “Aunt Doe.”

The beloved elder Maurice Kenny is being mourned by Indian Country and the Native Writers’ Circle of the Americas. Kenny, a gifted and award-winning poet, essayist, fiction writer, and publisher of Strawberry Press of Mohawk and Seneca descent, walked-on April 16, 2016 at his home in Saranac Lake, NY. As a founding member of the Native Writers Circle, he brought many Native writers to the attention of the American and international literary communities. As the author of twenty-three books of poetry, and six books of prose; his work was published in more than one hundred journals, and translated into nine languages.

Joe Hosteen Kellwood, an elite member of the Navajo Nation Code Talkers and the U.S. Marine Corps who helped the U.S. and Allied Forces defeat Japan during World War II with an unbreakable code by using their traditional language, walked on September 5 in Phoenix. He was 95. Kellwood, who was part of the second wave of Code Talkers sent overseas, told the Veterans History Project that he helped create new letters and words for the code to keep the Japanese from breaking it, using Navajo animal names, such as black bird or jackrabbit.
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