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Cherokee Nation Donates \$500,000 National Museum of the American Indian *Gift Advances Youth Educational Outreach; Promotes Cultural Exchanges*



The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian announced a \$500,000 gift from the Cherokee Nation that will support the museum’s fall 2017 exhibition “Americans” and an upcoming educational initiative, Native Knowledge 360°. Both underscore the importance of American Indians’ role in shaping the nation. The gift also serves as the foundation of a five-year partnership that bolsters the museum’s research and content, presenting the contributions of Native people within the fabric of America’s story like never before.

“The museum is embarking on a vast effort to confront popular myths about Native Americans and the national origin myths that influence how most Americans are taught about history,” said Kevin Gover, museum director. “This undertaking invites visitors to make a personal connection with these myths and ask themselves how ideas of ‘Indian-ness’ affect their own lives and perceptions of the United States. The Cherokee Nation gift will be a vital part of our success in this pursuit.”

“Americans” is a 10-year exhibition that will consist of six sections within a 9,200-square-foot gallery. It will present Indian imagery spanning six centuries that opens a conversation with visitors about the omnipresence of such imagery in American life.

“Americans” uses certain points in American history as frames of reference. One section examines the Trail of Tears, taking visitors beyond the specifics of Cherokee Removal and focusing on the national consequences of the passage of the 1830 Indian Removal Act.

“It is an honor for us to be the first of what we hope are many partners to fund this much needed educational exhibit,” said Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker. “As Cherokee people, we lost our homes, land and thousands of lives, but we survived and persevered, and today our sovereign government is stronger than ever. That’s an inspiring American story, and sadly, it is getting lost incrementally in our country’s classrooms. It is our responsibility to help share the true accounts of our history with the visitors of the National Museum of the American Indian.”

The Cherokee experience will also be part of Native Knowledge 360°, a strategy to introduce to grades 4–12 contextualized and historically accurate educational materials with Native content to standard school curricula and national standards across the country. Along with this effort, the museum will host annual events centered on Cherokee culture, inviting the Nation to bring community storytellers, musicians, artists and leaders to interact with the museum’s visitors to promote mutual understanding and cultural appreciation.

About Cherokee Nation

The Cherokee Nation is the federally recognized government of the Cherokee people and has inherent sovereign status recognized by treaty and law. The seat of tribal government is the W.W. Keeler Complex near Tahlequah, Okla., the capital of the Cherokee Nation. With more than 330,000 citizens, 9,000 employees and a variety of tribal enterprises ranging from aerospace and defense contracts to entertainment venues, Cherokee Nation is one of the largest employers in northeastern Oklahoma and the largest tribal nation in the United States.

To learn more about the Cherokee Nation’s donation to the National Museum of the American Indian, please visit <http://anadisgoi.com/archive/1274-choerokee-nation-contributes-500-000-to-national-museum-of-the-american-indian> and view the video announcement at <https://vimeo.com/170078296>. Follow the Cherokee Days festival events using the hashtag

#CherokeeDays.

About the National Museum of the American Indian

The National Museum of the American Indian is committed to advancing knowledge and understanding of the Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere—past, present and future—through partnership with Native people and others. For more information, visit AmericanIndian.si.edu and follow the museum via social media on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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