



Patterns of Native Health and Wellbeing: An Intercultural Symposium

Friday, April 11, 2014

12:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Rasmuson Theater, National Museum of the American Indian

Live webcast at <http://nmai.si.edu/multimedia/webcasts>

Health issues among American Indians, such as diabetes and substance abuse, are reaching epidemic levels. The majority of governmental and externally driven responses to these health issues have focused on the physical aspects of disease. Much less research has been done on the relationships between culture and health within Native communities. This symposium reports on active collaborations among Native communities and between Native communities and other institutions that focus on the distinct cultural values about wellbeing held by Native communities in solving serious health issues.

The symposium features four topics: Networking for Health: Adapting Large Institutions to Community Objectives; The Medicine of Food: The Primary Relation; Environmental Degradation and Mental Health: Healing in Eco-connection; and Cycles of Life: Orientations in the Values of Traditional Rituality.

Welcome and Remarks

José Barreiro (Taino/Mohawk) and Gwyneira Isaac

Thanksgiving Address

Louise McDonald (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

Prayer and the Spiritual in Health Ways

Tom Belt (Cherokee)

Introduction

Katsi Cook (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

Keynote—Native Health and Tribal Wellbeing

Beverly Cook (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

Ohero:kon: Orientations in the Values of Traditional Ritual Cycles of Life

Louise McDonald (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

The Impact of the Environment and Culture on Health of Native Peoples

Jennie R. Joe (Diné)

Medicine of Food: The Primary Relation

Renee Dufault

Environmental Degradation and Mental Health

Rosemary Ahtuanguak (Inupiaq)

Health Disparities among Native Males: Cultural Approaches to

Restoring Resilience

Mose Herne (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

Closing songs: The songs are healing songs from the Native American Tipi Society

Katsi Cook and Beverly Cook (Haudenosaunee-Mohawk)

Cosponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian and National Museum of Natural History, this symposium was supported with internal Smithsonian funds from the Consortium for World Cultures.



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Biographies and Pictures



Rosemary Ahtuanguak is an Inupiaq activist and Tribal Liaison for the Alaska Wilderness League in Barrow, Alaska. A graduate of the University of Washington Medex Northwest Physician Assistant Program, she has fought tirelessly for the health and protection of her people and of the Arctic's unparalleled wilderness that has sustained her culture for thousands of years. She is a former mayor of Nuiqsut and served on the regional tribal council for 15 years, as well as serving on the tribal and city council in Nuiqsut for many years. She is an advisor for the executive council and staff for the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council. Ahtuanguak currently participates with the National Tribal Environmental Health Think Tank with the Office of Tribal Affairs of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. She is co-chair for the North Slope Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and a founding board member of REDOIL (Resisting Environmental Destruction on Indigenous Lands).



José Barreiro is assistant director for research and director of the Office for Latin America within the Museum Scholarship Group at the National Museum of the American Indian. His research interests focus on Caribbean studies, indigenous social movements, oral narratives, and indigenous community development. Barreiro helped establish the American Indian Program at Cornell University, serving as associate director and editor-in-chief of *Akwe:kon* Press and the journal *Native Americas* throughout the 1980s and '90s. In 2000, he joined the staff of *Indian Country Today* as senior editor. He continues to serve as a member of the editorial board of *Kacike: The Journal of Caribbean Amerindian History and Anthropology*. He is the author most recently of *Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader* (2010) and the novel, *Taino: The Indian Chronicles* (2012).



Tom Belt is coordinator of the Western Carolina University Cherokee Language Program. He is working to create a state-of-the-art Cherokee language program at the university level. Belt teaches the first four semesters of Cherokee language and teaches courses on Cherokee grammar and Cherokee language literature. A citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, he is a fluent Cherokee speaker and works closely with speakers from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to produce culturally based Cherokee language learning material. Before joining the Cherokee Language Program, he worked as a counselor's aide in a local treatment center for Native youths with chemical dependencies. He attended the Universities of Oklahoma and Colorado and taught the Cherokee language at the Cherokee elementary school in Cherokee, North Carolina. Belt has also served as a consultant to various cultural archives and indigenous language programs in public schools and on the post-secondary level.



Beverly Kiohawiton Cook is an elected Chief on the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council. A family nurse practitioner and sexual assault nurse examiner, she served as clinic coordinator at Saint Regis Mohawk Health Services (SRMHS). She led an innovative tribal healthcare facility and systems redesign from acute medical care to trauma-informed prevention and

wellness. In 2010, she directed the implementation of Centering Pregnancy™ at SRMHS. Centering is an empowerment model of group pre-natal care that brings community members together for health assessment, learning, and support. Under her direct leadership SRMHS became the first tribally run, official Centering site in the United States in December 2011. In 2012, the program received a Local Impact Award from the National Indian Health Board. Until her election to Tribal Council in 2013, Cook was a participating member of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's Healing to Wellness Drug Court, and the Multidisciplinary Team at the Partridge House, the only tribally run chemical dependency inpatient treatment facility east of the Mississippi. She was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leader nominee in 2011.



Katsi Cook of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne is program director for the First Environment Collaborative at Running Strong for American Indian Youth (www.indianyouth.org). She is an elder Aboriginal midwife, a founding member of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives of the Canadian Association of Midwives, and is the founding Aboriginal midwife of the Six Nations Birthing Centre at Six Nations, Ontario. She works with tribal communities in the United States as well as First Nations communities in Canada to promote processes of care, both clinical and socio-cultural, that support Native women and girls in developing self-efficacy and control of their reproductive power; not just the reproduction of children but also the production of culture, knowledge, and the development of women's voices. She serves as a member of the Indigenous Peoples Working Group of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee and the National Tribal Environmental Health Think Tank of the Office of Tribal Affairs at the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry. Cook is nationally recognized for her work at the intersections of environmental justice and reproductive justice.



Renee Dufault served in the Navy as an Industrial Hygiene Officer and in the Public Health Service (PHS) as an Environmental Health Officer. During her PHS career, she worked at the National Institutes of Health, Environmental Protection Agency, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, and the Food and Drug Administration where she provided expertise in the areas of toxicology, environmental health, and industrial hygiene. In 200 she retired early from federal service after 2 years to publish her findings of mercury in high fructose corn syrup and continue her research with collaborators on the role toxic food ingredients play in the development of disease conditions. Her most popular article, published in the *Clinical Epigenetics Journal* explores the gene-environment interactions responsible for the autism epidemic in the United States. She was a distinguished keynote speaker at the 2013 Clinical Epigenetics meeting in Germany. Dufault now serves as the executive director of the Food Ingredient and Health Research Institute and works as an adjunct professor at United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck, North Dakota.



Mose Herne is a citizen of the Mohawk Nation (Turtle Clan). He grew up on the Nation until enlisting in the U.S. Navy Nuclear Propulsion Training Program. After his military service, Herne completed his Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and neurobiology at Clarkson University. He then moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where he completed the Master of Science degree program in Experimental Neuroscience at Brandeis University and the Master of Public Health program at the Boston University School of Public Health. Herne then completed the coursework and qualifying exams for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in environmental health sciences, in the area of behavioral neurotoxicology. He is the director of Planning, Evaluation, and Research, Office of Public Health Support, Indian Health Service.



Gwyneira Isaac is a curator in the Department of Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History. Her research investigates knowledge systems and the relationships societies develop with their past, especially as to how this is expressed through material culture and museums. Central to this study is her fieldwork and ethnography of a tribal museum in the Pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico, where she examined the difficulties faced by Zunis operating between Zuni and Euro-American approaches to knowledge. Through the book *Mediating Knowledges: Origins of a Museum for the Zuni People* (2007), she argues that the Zuni Museum reconciled the different approaches to knowledge both within its own constituency and cross-culturally, and consequently, that it took on the role of mediator between internal and external expectations about Zuni history.



Jennie R. Joe PhD, MPH, MA, (Diné), is Professor Emerita in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine. Her tenure at the University included directing the Native American Research and Training Center in addition to holding an affiliate faculty position in the American Indian Studies program. Currently, she continues to be involved in several national and international committees, including the Institute of Medicine and the National Library of Medicine. Joe was a founding member of the Board of Trustees for NMAI.



Tewakierahkwa (Louise McDonald) is a Bear Clan Mother of the Mohawk Nation from the territory at Akwesasne, condoled in the traditional Chieftainship title of Tehanakarine (Dragging Horns) since 2005. The title has been in her family for almost 100 years. She is also a ceremonialist in moon-based rituals as well as lodger leader/conductor of the Moon Lodge Society. Working with women of all ages and tending to maternal and child wellness in her community, she conducts a coming of age ceremony called Ohero:kon ("Under the Husk") for adolescent youth in her community every spring. As clan mother, she bestows ancestral names upon newborns in her clan and has the vested matrilineal authority to select a man into chieftainship title. She works as a Healing Master for the St Regis Mohawk Tribe in a Remediation Project focused on cultural restoration.