



Phoenix Indian Center, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BE HONORED AT NATIVE AMERICAN RECOGNITION DAYS AWARDS BANQUET *Native American Recognition Days Banquet Honors Man & Woman of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Business of the Year, Friend of the Community and Outstanding Students at Annual Event*

November 17, 2011 (Phoenix, AZ) – Continuing a 29 year tradition, the Native American Recognition Days (NARD) festivities will feature an annual banquet honoring outstanding community members from the American Indian community. Dr. Eddie Brown, Alberta Tippeconnic, Jason Coochwytewa, Loretta Damon, Au Authum Ki - Margaret Rodriguez, Capt Catherine Witte, Cheryl Thomas, Dillon Dayea, Arianna Taru Anderson and Anthony McCabe will be honored at this year's banquet planned for Thursday, November 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Fiesta Inn Resort in Tempe.

“It is exciting to continue the legacy created through Native American Recognition Days founding committee twenty-nine years ago, honoring those that have given back in so many ways to community.” says Patti Hibbeler, Phoenix Indian Center CEO.

NARD began when a community led committee, hosted a community potluck, recognizing American Indian leaders. NARD then grew to one week of activities and was called Native American Recognition Week. As more events were added to the calendar, the annual celebration stretched to two months, with 28 cultural events and celebrations. Ongoing highlights of the NARD calendar is the Miss Indian Arizona Scholarship Program, NARD Parade, several Pow Wows, rug auctions and many more events. It all culminates in the annual awards banquet honoring distinguished individuals from the community including a Man and Woman of the Year, two Lifetime Achievement honorees, Business of the Year, Friend of the Community and four youth honorees.

The banquet, hosted by the Phoenix Indian Center, attracts several hundred attendees and sponsors. The event features Native American entertainment, dinner and the awards ceremony. The NARD Awards Banquet is will be held at the Fiesta Inn Resort in Tempe, 2100 Priest Drive, on Thursday November 17, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 a person. To purchase tickets or sponsorships, please call Bridget Blixt at 602-264-6768 or email bblixt@phxindcenter.org. More information about NARD can be found at www.aznard.org



Man of the Year Award – Jason Coochwytewa (Isleta Pueblo/Hopi) President/Owner Red Note, Inc. Jason has contributed to the Phoenix valley Native American Community for over 2 decades, giving his time, ideas and support through numerous causes and events. His event management company produces some of the largest gatherings in Indian Country. He is the founding member of the Arizona Chapter of the National Association of Record Industry Professionals. In 2009, Jason was named one of the “Top 40 Under 40 in Indian Country” by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development. He currently serves on the board of directors with the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Arizona and the Arizona Science Center.

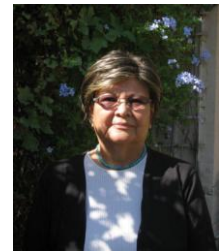
Woman of the Year Award – Loretta Damon (Navajo) Program Advisor Mesa Community College Loretta has worked within the Maricopa Community College District for 28 years and is a founding member and former Vice President of the United Tribal Employees Council. She researched and compiled “A Scholarship Information Guide for American Indian Students” and is a member of the National Indian Education Association, AZ Indian Education Association and National Congress of American Indians. She is the first in her family of seven siblings to attend college and earned a BA in Education and Master of Arts in Education from ASU. As an educator Loretta states “It’s all about students, empowering and giving them the opportunity to grow and learn, because they will eventually be our leaders of tomorrow.”



Kent C. Ware Lifetime Achievement Award – Dr. Eddie Brown (Tohono O’odham and Pascua Yaqui), Executive Director, American Indian Policy Institute, Arizona State University Dr. Brown has worked at the highest administrative levels with tribal, state and federal governments: former Assist. Secretary of Indian Affairs, United States Department of Interior; former Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, Tohono O’odham Nation; former Chief of the Division of Social Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs to name a few. He has directed a number of research and demonstration projects related to the impact of welfare reform on American Indian families and children, diabetes prevention in tribal communities, state ICWA compliance issues and is nationally recognized for his knowledge and skills in working with tribal governments and community programs. Currently Dr. Brown serves as a member of the U.S. President’s Board of Advisors on Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Phyllis J. Bigpond Lifetime Achievement Award – Alberta Tippeconnic (Navajo), Assistant Director Inter Tribal Council of Arizona

Alberta has worked a distinguished career with the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona for the past 35 years. She has led Voter Registration projects resulting in increased awareness of the importance of voting among American Indians and developed a Voter’s Guide encompassing candidates positions on issues affecting the Native American Community. Alberta also developed a video documenting events that led to the 1948 right to vote for Arizona Native Americans. Alberta has dedicated her life working to improve the lives of Native Americans and to educate the community about Native American culture.



Business of the Year Award – Margaret Rodriguez (Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community), Owner/President—Au Authum Ki, Inc Margaret’s vision to own her own company was fostered by her father’s dream to have a business. Her dream became a reality in 1992 when she founded Au Authum Ki (“People’s Home” in Pima) which is now a 100% Native American women owned full service construction business. She passionately supports the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community by donating time and money through the Miracle House Foundation which builds new homes for seniors and disabled members living in unsafe housing. Today, Au Authum Ki is the 5th largest minority owned business in AZ.

Friend of the Community Award – Capt. Catherine Witte –Pharmacist and Chaplain Oncology Center of Excellence—Phoenix Indian Medical Center

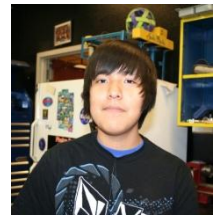
Catherine has worked at PIMC for the past 16 years. She is actively involved with the Center’s Chaplain’s Association and Traditional Cultural Advocacy Committee acknowledging the importance of spiritual care in the healing process of all patients. Cathy coordinated a successful video project “American Indian Attitudes & Values: an Integral Part of Cancer Care” highlighting the importance of providing culturally sensitive care to American Indians going through a cancer experience. She and her husband have volunteered at American Indian American Presbyterian Churches to learn from, and serve with, those in American Indian communities and on reservations.



College Student of the Year: Cheryl Thomas (Gila River Indian Community), Arizona State University Cher is currently a senior at Arizona State University pursuing two bachelor degrees: a BS in American Indian Studies with an emphasis in Arts, Languages & Culture and a BA in Human Communications with an emphasis in rhetoric. She is the Founding President of HEATHERS, a forum for students to develop self esteem, leadership and networking skills and also created and managed a political forum on Facebook, bringing together Gila River Community Members and candidates for Governor to discuss issues and problems facing the reservation. Cher also served as Miss Indian ASU 2010.

High School Student of the Year: Dillon Dayea (Navajo), Carl Hayden High School

Dillon is a Junior, actively involved with the Robotics Team which was recently the subject of a CNN television in broadcast. Dillon’s skills in quick thinking, assessment and problem solving help him to be a successful team leader. For 3 years Dillon has mentored middle and junior high school students for their Legos competitions and has helped run Lego Robotics tournaments at both the regional and state levels. He is looking forward to college where he plans to major in aerospace engineering.



Junior High School Students of the Year:



Anthony McCabe (Navajo), Carson Junior High School

Anthony is in 7th grade and maintains a straight A- average across all his classes and is a member of the Carson Native American Club. He is active in Boy Scouts, a Deacon at his church and participates in food drives and other charity events. He is an active participant in the American Indian Early Outreach Program through Maricopa Community Colleges. Anthony has future aspirations of becoming a doctor and studying at Harvard University.

Arianna Taru Anderson (Turtle Mountain and White Earth Tribes), Poston Junior High School

Arianna currently holds a 4.0 GPA and is in the National Junior Honor Society. She has served the community in many ways including making donations to local charities; organizing and leading food drives; organizing and writing letters to United States military troops stationed overseas and is a participant of the Ronald McDonald House of Charity. Arianna is striving to earn the “Honor of Excellence in Service Learning” (with a Silver Service Seal from the AZ Governor) by the time she graduates in 2016.

