

Diné Trans Herstory: Following My Dreams to Help My Diné People

By Trudie Jackson

As a young rez kid growing up in Coyote Canyon, New Mexico which is the homeplace of my late mother and Chief Manuelito, I was always fascinated with tribal politics. One of my childhood memories is Peter MacDonald getting elected for the Navajo Nation Chairman. Former Chairman MacDonald, who is my proud clan relative, is from Teec Nos Pos, Arizona, which is also where my late father is from. Growing up, I was intrigued with my late father's engagement of tribal politics. His public services and tribal politics planted a seed in my mind that one day I would run for tribal office.

Throughout the duration of my education at Arizona State University majoring in American Indian Studies, I often wondered why very few to no openly tribal members that identified with the Two Spirit, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (2SLGBTQ) identity run for political office in their respected community. As an undergraduate studying Public Service and Public Policy at ASU, I wrote a paper about former Navajo Nation Chairman/President, Peterson Zah. In the process

of writing the paper, I learn that my professor, including non-Native Americans, lack knowledge of prominent Native American leaders, especially Navajo leaders. I was in disbelief about my discoveries and it made me contemplate on running for public office, The Navajo Nation President! I thought of running for public office in Phoenix, but I was keen on providing public service to my tribal communities.

In April 2018, I officially announced my candidacy for the office of the Navajo Nation President in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Gathering of Nations' Honoring Two Spirit Elders dinner event. My initial thought was how will I fund my campaign? I was amazed with the amount of financial support I received as a Navajo Nation Presidential Candidate from friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. I was able to pay for my Navajo Nation Presidential candidate fee, which is 1,500 hundred dollars, with the campaign contribution I received. As I made the trip to Window Rock, Arizona to pick up my candidacy paperwork, I was advised of the necessary steps needed to be "officially"



Photo: Trudie Jackson

Trudie Jackson is an ASU alumna and a doctoral student at UNM.

on the 2018 Navajo Nation Presidential Ballot.

So many thoughts ran through my mind especially being perceived as an urban Diné since I have resided off the Navajo reservation for more than 35 years. What will the voters think of me as an urban Diné and the first transgender women to run for the highest office on the Navajo Nation? I went in with deep passion and desire in my heart to help my Diné people. With the same passion and desire, I dove right into the campaign, including assembling my campaign team. After reviewing the candidates for my campaign manager, I selected Lynn Curley, who is from Navajo, Arizona and

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The Tipi Story

By Jeston Morris

Mr. Ksaws Brooks was the featured speaker for the Simon Ortiz RED INK Indigenous Speaker Series on Friday March 23, 2018. Mr. Brooks, who is an elder from Confederated Tribe of Colville, told the tipi story and conducted a tipi set up demonstration to an audience from all walks of life on the Hayden lawn. The lecture is sponsored by the Labriola National American Indian Data Center. Mr. Glen Juste provided the invocation and cedar blessing. Mr. Juste and his crew set up regular size tipi and then Mr. Brooks set up a personal size tipi for his lecture and demonstration.

Tipi are used for many occasions such as Native American Church meetings. A regular tipi ranges in size from 22 to 32-feet in diameter. A tipi that is 22-feet fits 25-30 people whereas a tipi that is 32-feet fits 35 plus people. Tipi poles range in length and weight depending on the size. Tipi canvas also ranges in diameter, height, and weight depending on size. A tipi set up usually begins with bipod but is quickly turned into a tripod after its raised. Setting up a full-size tipi usually requires a minimum of three or four people. Setting up a small personal size tipi requires one person.

Mr. Brooks began his lecture by discussing the ceremonial aspect of tipis, including its purpose, usage, and origin. The tipi demonstration was captivating. As part of his demonstration, he asked for two student volunteers. First, the students raised the bipod tipi poles up and converted it to a quad pod, which allowed it to stand on

its own. Next, one student place all the tipi poles on the south side and the other student placed all the poles on the north side. Last, the students raised the main pole which had the canvas attached to it and placed it between the door poles, and folded the canvas around the tipi and then fastened the canvas to the ground with wooden pegs. Two different students took down the tipi in reverse process. Mr. Brooks named all the tipi parts during the demonstration process.

Mr. Brooks' personal size tipi has enough room for two to four people. During the question and answer session, one individual asked, "How do you deal with wind and

smoke?" "Thank you for your question," said Mr. Brooks. "When there is a fire going inside a tipi, you need to adjust the tipi flaps. If the wind is blowing north to south, you need to adjust both tipi flaps so the wind and flaps go in the same direction. The tipi flaps are adjusted by moving the tipi poles," said Mr. Brooks.

Another individual asked, "How long does a tipi last and what the average time for setting a personal size tipi?" In response, "I had this tipi for over 30 years. I had it since my daughter was born; she now in her mid-30s. It takes to about 4 minutes to set up and take down. This tipi fits 3 to 4 people and it's great for camping," said Mr. Brooks. ■



Mr. Brooks is delivering a lecture on Hayden lawn about Native American tipi and provides a hands-on demonstration.

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identifies herself as transgender Diné. My presidential campaign team consist of an all transgender Diné who were ready to break down gender barriers by refusing to remain silent, including dismantling of the heteropatriarchal structure of the Navajo Nation political system.

Hitting the campaign trail was an eye opener! My team and I were very surprised with the amount of support we received from the communities across Navajo Nation. Shaking hands and speaking with young Diné 2SLGBTQ members, I learned from potential voters that they were happy and excited to see

someone from their community seek the highest office. My presidential campaign and the possibility of being elected as Navajo Nation President gave voters a lot hope! One lesson I have learned throughout the campaign was my gender identity was never brought up as an issue but rather it was embraced! ■

She'ólta' (My Education Journey)

By Justine Morris

Yá'át'ééh, shí éí JoJo yinishyé. Táchii'nii nishl'óq' Bit'ahnii báshischíín. Áshí'íhíí dashicheii, Tábaqáhá dashinalí. Adóó Bissila' déé naashá. K'ad éí Shash Bito'di neeznánígíí yinshta'. Na'a'zhó shilnizhóní.

Hi, I am JoJo. I am from Naschitti. I am a citizen of the Navajo Nation, Wingate High School freshman, and an aspiring writer who wants to share a story about my education journey.

My mother is studying accounting at Navajo Technical University and my father is studying linguistics at Arizona State University. My little brother attends my grandpa's Sheep Camp University. He is learning about horses, cattle, and sheep. He rides my Grampa's horse, Golden Boy, everyday. In Naschitti, we live on a beautiful sandy ranch on the eastside of Chuska Mountains. My grandpa has two summer sheep camps: one at Whiskey Lake and the other at Narbona Pass. I have several ewes and cows. My favorite ewe is Dibé lizhini yázhí which I got as a tiny lamb and care for it. Raising Dibé lizhini yázhí taught me so much about personal responsibilities.

I love playing sports in school. I have played volleyball, basketball, disk and shot put, and javelin in junior high. I tried out for the high school track and field (T&F) and made the team. My hobbies are reading, writing, and fishing. An interesting author we have read in school is George Orwell. One of my favorite places to go fishing with my family is at Asaayi Lake (Bowl Canyon Lake). I fish with my family year around, including winters. My little brother also likes fishing, he has his own fishing rod. My education journey

began in Nachitti Head Start. For elementary, I attended Ch'ooshgai Community School for several years. I moved with my family to Salt Lake City (SLC) and attended school for one year. At SLC, I was introduced to skiing at Park City ski resort. I like skiing but I want to try snowboarding. I moved back to Naschitti and completed my middle school in Newcomb, New Mexico.

I learned the art of Yei Bichei ceremonial dancing over eight years. I started dancing when I was around 7 years old. My uncle Hubert, including my mothers and sisters, are my mentors and teachers for Yei Bichei ceremonial dancing. I have four sets of traditional dresses and four sets of ceremonial dresses. I wear my beautiful turquoise jewelry and big moccasins when I am dancing. As a veteran dancer, I officially led several groups of female Yei Bichei dancers in 2018. My family members and extended family members support me when I am dancing.

I am learning photography. My father is teaching me about photography. One of my favorite photography memories includes my father. He was taking photos of my mother and I as we were going up the escalator stair of a monorail near the Stratosphere in Las Vegas. When the escalator ended, my father fell over like a robot in slow motion! He was so focused on taking a picture of us that he did not even know he was falling until he hit the pavement and broke the camera. He got up smiling and we all burst out laughing! Even the escalator passengers started smiling and laughing too! The point of my story is photography is exciting, confusing, and humorous. The technical side of photography is confusing because of its complexity especially for indoor and low lighting setting. I am learning how to frame the subject and focus the lens. My father is gradually introducing me to aperture and shutter settings. There is so much to learn in photography. It's exciting, confusing, and fun!

I began my high school journey at Wingate High School (WHS) in the fall of 2018. I

choose to attend Wingate High School because it's far from home which allows me to focus on my academic studies, yet it's close to home which allows me to go home on weekends to be with my family and participate in ceremonies. So far, I like WHS. The teachers, especially the science teacher, hold their students accountable to high standards. My experience of being held to high standards can feel like someone is really mean to you! I believe WHS teachers want their students to succeed not only in high school but also in college. WHS teachers are excellent. My favorite teacher is my English teacher.

I stay in the dorm and take seven classes. We get up at 6:00 am and get ready for class. We have breakfast by 7:30am. My first class is at 8:00am. At the end of the day, I go back to my dorm. I share a room with my friend from Newcomb middle school. I like to work out in the recreation gym. I do my homework and read in the study room which has computers. On Fridays school gets out early at 2:00 and I ride the bus back to Naschitti. On Sundays, I ride the bus back to WHS. Some students who live far away stay in the dorm during the weekends. I like my school's two-week holiday break in late December and early January. I made the school honor roll! My family are very happy and proud!

I am planning on getting into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) for my career. My parents are attending tribal and state institutions. I am planning on applying to several Ivy Leagues schools (such as Harvard, Dartmouth, and Yale) and state universities (such as ASU, U of A, and UNM). For my undergraduate, I would like to major in biology or life science and minor in genetics or chemistry. I would like to get my advanced degree in dental medicine and practice in among the Native communities. When I was growing up, I rarely saw a Native dentist. I think it is crucial for Native communities to have Native dentists. As a Native Youth, having a bright beautiful smile is very essential! ■



Photo: Justine Morris



The Labriola National American Indian Data Center was officially dedicated on April 1, 1993. The Center was made possible by the vision of Frank and Mary Labriola, whose generous endowment gift supports its work. It is their wish that "the Labriola Center be a source of education and pride for all Native Americans."

The Labriola National American Indian Data Center, part of the ASU Library, is a research collection international in scope that brings together in one location current and historic information on government, culture, religion and world view, social life and customs, tribal history, and information on individuals from the United States, Canada, Sonora, and Chihuahua, Mexico.

Newsletter published by **Joyce Martin, Curator**

Editor: **Jeston Morris, Archival Assistant**

Copy Editor: **Hannah K. Turner, Archival Intern**



IndiGenius

By IndiGenius Executive Officers

IndiGenius is a portmanteau of the words indigenous and genius. More than a clever literary combination, it means the use of both native and academic backgrounds to improve indigenous communities.

IndiGenius is a student organized organization based on Arizona State University's West Campus. The student leaders are President, Samantha Lupnacca, and Vice-President/founder, Elisabeth Johnson. The organization was founded for the purpose of sharing Native American culture, history, and language to all students who are interested. The objective of each IndiGenius meeting is to discuss modern and historical concepts of Native Americans through literature, media, and present-day activism. IndiGenius was established based off the idea of family which does not have a traditional definition. Family in many Native cultures does not end at immediate relations. On campus,

IndiGenius works to create lifelong connections with members and community leaders. For example, IndiGenius is partnered with Hospice DreamCatchers Foundation, an organization powered by volunteers working towards fulfilling wishes of hospice patients. IndiGenius' role is to assist in the fulfillment

of the patient's wish by means of fundraising and/or direct participation. IndiGenius is a forward-thinking and innovative club of students who are proud of their native heritage and have a passion to share it with all student organizations on ASU campuses, including other Native American student organizations. IndiGenius' most recent event was the Native American and Native Hawaiian Culture Showcase displaying indigenous artifacts, and including a panel discussion on the two cultures. IndiGenius is located on ASU West campus in the American Indian Student Support Services office in Fletcher Library. Come by if you're interested in making new friends, becoming a club member, volunteering for events or to know what we are reading next.



Photo: IndiGenius Executive Officers

Top (Left to right): Allison Michael (Treasurer), Daphne Leonard (Public Relations Coordinator), Samantha Lupnacca (President), Dia Bailey (Member); Middle: Elisabeth Johnson (Vice-President, Founder); Bottom (Left to Right): Jacob Briones (Member); Teverrick Chee (Member)

For inquiries about IndiGenius, please email indigeniusorg@gmail.com. ■