

Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 05 October 2018 12:51

Editor,

On Oct. 8, the Annual “Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day” event will take place from noon to 5 pm at the Gallup Cultural Center located at 201 East Highway 66.

This marks the 14th year in Gallup that I have been organizing this particular event here while I have joined other nations and organizations across America during my travels since 1992, when Congress, by Public Law 102-188, designated it as the «Year of the American Indian.»

“Indigenous Peoples Day” actually began in July 1990, when representatives from 120 Indian nations from every part of the Americas met in Quito, Ecuador in the First Continental Conference (Encuentro) along with many human rights, peace, social justice, and environmental organizations to recognize 500 Years of native Resistance against the continued colonization of our original homelands.

It was also in preparation for the 500th anniversary of Native resistance to the European invasion of the Americas from 1492 to 1992. The Encuentro saw itself as fulfilling a prophesy that the Native nations would rise again “when the eagle of the north joined with the condor of the south.”

In the face of the deaths of millions of Indigenous peoples through the rampant slaughter of innocents, war, famine, forced relocations, poverty and disease, there has been the celebration of life and the native civilizations that promote the ideals of self-governance and tireless determination that are the framework of our nations.

In the ensuing years, “Native Americans” have provided important contributions to American society that include agriculture, medicine, art, infrastructure, music and the basis for the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights appropriated from the Six Iroquois Confederated Nations—Haudenosaunee (“People of the Longhouse”) by Benjamin Franklin who was befriended by them.

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And then there was the contributions of the Navajo Code Talkers, who in World War II not only sacrificed their lives in service of the United States but used our language as a secret code that could not be broken by the Japanese and helped end the war with their surrender.

Here in Gallup, it is very fitting that this be recognized even as much as the City touts itself as the “Indian Capital of the World”. The many contributions that Navajo individuals made can be seen everywhere from the exquisite art work and murals to the land base that once was Navajo territory before the founding of the City as the Gateway to the “Wild West.”

With more that can be added, suffice it to mention that the City of Gallup has passed a 2017 Resolution R2016-40, declaring the Second Monday of October as “Indigenous Peoples Day” into perpetuity. McKinley County also Approved Resolution/Proclamation No. OCT-17-085 Designating the Second Monday in October of each year as Indigenous Peoples Day.

You are invited to join us Oct. 8, as we “Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day” from noon to 5 pm at the Gallup Cultural Center located at 201 East Highway 66. Bring your signs, banners and prayers.

Mervyn Tilden
Gallup, New Mexico