

Second time's the charm

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
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Destiny Touchine wins Miss Gallup-Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial

Queen title

After winning the first runner up title at the 2022 Miss Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Queen pageant, Destiny Touchine knew she wanted to compete again this year. The second time proved to be her time to shine, as she was crowned this year's Queen on Aug. 11.

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Touchine is from the Diné tribe, and her clans are Tabaaha nishti, Tt'aaschchi'i bashischiin, Naaneesht'ezhi dashicheii.

In an interview with the *Sun*, Touchine said part of the reason she wanted to compete again this year was because of the friendships she made with the other women last year.

"We shared many laughs together, and we just had a great time building a sisterhood together," Touchine said.

During downtime at the competition the women bonded by playing the card game Navajo Ten.

Since this was her second time at the pageant, Touchine wanted to do something a little bit different. One of the categories the women are judged on is a traditional food category, in which they have to make a dish from their individual culture.

Last year, Touchine made kneel down bread, but this year, with the help of her family, she made Navajo cake. She said her grandfather is the one who knows the recipe, and she was very thankful to him for helping her.

"I've helped make Navajo cake before, but to be able to know the process from the beginning to the end was amazing to learn," Touchine said.

Touchine has big plans for her year as Miss Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Queen. She currently attends Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and she plans to take the crown to many different places, including Duke.

"I love to travel, and I want to let other people know about the Ceremonial and about all the different tribes out there and let people know that Indigenous people are still here and that our

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cultures are beautiful,” Touchine said.

Touchine is going into her junior year at Duke, where she is studying dance and psychology. She said she chose psychology after she struggled with her own mental health during her first year of college. She came back home to Window Rock, Ariz. after that difficult year.

But after weathering that difficult time, Touchine said she realized she wanted to do something in the mental health field, and she wanted to help people in the reservations where access to doctors specializing in mental wellness can be difficult to find.

“It frustrated me because I knew I probably wasn’t the only one experiencing that,” Touchine said.

As for her upcoming reign, pageant coordinator Fluerette Brown gave Touchine some advice. She told the 24-year-old to just have fun with her time as Queen.

“I think everything else comes naturally [while] holding a queen title. Public speaking comes, presentation comes, confidence comes, everything comes with that crown,” Brown said. “So, with all the presentations she has to make, with all the events and appearances where she goes, she will polish herself off with every single one of those every time. I think she just needs to have fun and enjoy.”

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