

Wisconsin Indian Education Association Announces 2017 Award Recipients

Awardees to be honored Saturday, May 13 in Lac du Flambeau, WI.

LAC DU FLAMBEAU, WI - The Wisconsin Indian Education Association (WIEA) is pleased to announce the annual award recipients for 2017-2018. The awards highlight individuals who have made a lasting impact on the educational opportunities of American Indians and Alaskan Natives living in Wisconsin.

This year the awards span five categories with honors going to 14 individuals. Those categories include: Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year; Outstanding Indian Elder of the Year; Indian Educator of the Year; Ronald N. Satz - Friend of Indian Education; and Indian Parent(s) of the Year.

This year's awardees are:

- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year Pre-K 3rd Grade: ***Grason Ozaawaanakwaad Jackson, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 4th - 7th Grade: ***Corbin Welch, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 8th - 10th Grade: ***Eve Hawpetoss, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin/Forest County Potawatomi***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 11th - 12th Grade: ***Saychia Wayka, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 11th - 12th Grade: ***Autry Johnson, Forest County Potawatomi***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 11th - 12th Grade: ***Jon Poupart, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians***
- Outstanding American Indian Student of the Year 11th - 12th Grade: ***Emily Skenandore, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin***
- Under Graduate Student of the Year: ***Alexis Harris, Forest County Potawatomi***
- Graduate Student of the Year: ***Timothy Fish, Muskogee Nation of Oklahoma***
- Outstanding Indian Educator of the Year: ***Thomas Boelter, Forest County Potawatomi***
- Outstanding Indian Parents of the Year: ***James and Jennifer Crawford, Forest County Potawatomi***
- Friend of Indian Education of the Year: ***Samantha Smith***
- Outstanding Indian Elder of the Year: ***Mildred "Tinker" Schuman, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians***
- Outstanding Indian Elder of the Year: ***Gary Kmiecik, Hunkpapa, Standing Rock Sioux***

"The individuals selected are each in their own way, champions of Indian education," said Wisconsin Indian Education Association president Brian Jackson. "It is through their diligence and commitment to education that we celebrate Indian achievement at all levels of the educational process," added Jackson.

Award winners will be honored at an awards banquet on Saturday, May 13, 2017, at Lake of the Torches Resort Casino Convention Center in Lac du Flambeau. The awards banquet will be held in association with the 31 st annual Wisconsin Indian Education Association conference titled, *"Mino-Ayaa 'Idiwin: Let's Be Healthy Together"*, May 12-13, 2017. The conference is set to take place at The Waters of Minocqua with related events at Lakeland Union High School, Lac du Flambeau Public School and Lake of the Torches Resort Casino Convention Center.

The conference is the only statewide conference that specifically addresses issues in Native American education at all educational levels from early childhood programs to graduate and professional schools.

"On behalf of the conference selection committee, we congratulate this year's field of winners," said 2017 conference committee chair Susan Crazy Thunder, who also serves on the WIEA board of directors. "This is a competitive nomination process and we truly appreciate everyone who took the time to participate in this year's awards process. Thank you for your commitment to building a better tomorrow for Indian education in Wisconsin and beyond."

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