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Honoring the Mother of All People; Contemporary Indigenous Leadership in Revitalizing Environmental and Cultural Sustainability

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CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Saul O. Sidore Memorial Lecture Series 2020–2021

***Honoring the Mother of All People; Contemporary Indigenous Leadership
in Revitalizing Environmental and Cultural Sustainability***

Final Report

Organizing Team: Katharine Duderstadt (Earth Systems Research Center), Alexandra Martin (Anthropology), Svetlana Peshkova (Anthropology), Siobhan Senier (English), Jennifer Brewer (Geography), Daniel Howard (Biological Sciences).

Website: <https://cola.unh.edu/center-humanities/events-programs/sidore-lecture-series/2020-21-honoring-mother-all-people>

Video Playlist: https://media.unh.edu/playlist/dedicated/1_h9jp09hj/

Honoring the Saul O Sidore Memorial Foundation

The organizers and participants would like to thank The Saul O Sidore Memorial Foundation, the Center for the Humanities, and Indigenous New Hampshire Collaborative Collective for this series.

The University of New Hampshire Land Acknowledgement

As we all journey on the trail of life, we wish to acknowledge the spiritual and physical connection the Pennacook, Abenaki, and Wabanaki Peoples have maintained to N'dakinna (homeland) and the aki (land), nibi (water), lolakwikak (flora), and awaasak (fauna) which the University of New Hampshire community is honored to steward today. We also acknowledge the hardships they continue to endure after the loss of unceded homelands and champion the university's responsibility to foster relationships and opportunities that strengthen the well-being of the Indigenous People who carry forward the traditions of their ancestors.

Other Acknowledgements: We would like to give a special thanks to Alexandra Martin for introducing and narrating the panels and providing logistical support. We also grateful for the audiovisual expertise of Andrew Dolph and the UNH audiovisual team for enabling this series to pivot to a virtual format and to Catherine Stewart for video editing services. Finally, we express appreciation for the guidance provided by Katie Umans and Stephen Trzaskoma from the Center for the Humanities and Doris Woodruff, Audra Coon, and Carole Main for business services.

Abstract

This series of events brings Indigenous perspectives from 22 Indigenous speakers across the U.S. and Arctic regions to discussions of sustainable futures within the New Hampshire community. There is growing movement in the academic community to understand how Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage can deepen our thinking about sustainable futures. While most researchers recognize that anthropogenic climate change and other sustainability challenges require humanistic as well as scientific approaches, many have yet to thoroughly understand the colonial legacies that initiated many of these sustainability problems and continue to impede our study and solutions. The 2020-2021 Sidore Series was designed to increase awareness about Indigenous perspectives on climate change and cultural resilience; showcase examples of how Indigenous groups are engaged in regional, national, and international dialogues on climate and sustainability; explore how the University of New Hampshire can bring these ideas into teaching, research, and scholarship; and initiate relationships with Indigenous communities to pursue collaborative capacity-building for the co-production of knowledge.

Overview:

This series of events contributed Indigenous perspectives to discussions of sustainable futures. While we had initially hoped to gather Indigenous participants from across North America on campus for a symposium in October 2020, the pandemic shifted plans toward a series of virtual seminars and panels. This virtual platform allowed us to bring 22 Indigenous speakers from the U.S. and Arctic regions of Canada to the New Hampshire community. The COVID-19 crisis made the theme of this Sidore Series even more relevant, highlighting the position of Indigenous communities at the front lines of change within our societal and institutional structures.

There is growing movement in the academic community to understand how Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage can deepen our thinking about sustainable futures. While most researchers recognize that anthropogenic climate change and other sustainability challenges require humanistic as well as scientific approaches, we have yet to thoroughly understand the colonial legacies that produced many of the sustainability problems in the first place and that often impede our study and solutions. The 2020-2021 Sidore Series was designed to:

- Increase awareness about Indigenous perspectives on climate change and cultural resilience.
- Showcase examples of how Indigenous groups are engaged in regional, national, and international dialogues on climate and sustainability.
- Explore how UNH can bring these ideas into teaching, research, and scholarship.
- Initiate relationships with Indigenous communities to pursue collaborative capacity-building for the co-production of knowledge.

In addition, these events served to promote the new UNH Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) minor, initiate or enhance relationships with UNH scholars and Tribal representatives, and contribute to making UNH a more supportive campus for students, faculty, and staff from Tribal communities. These events and our team build on Indigenous UNH and community projects from the past decade: *Dawnland Voices*, an anthology and digital archive developed by Siobhan Senier during her tenure as Hayes Chair; the Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective, led by Svetlana Peshkova, Alexandra Martin, and colleagues and students in Anthropology, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous community partners; and the MIST team “Indigenous Communities in New England and the Arctic,” led by Jennifer Brewer, Katharine Duderstadt and Siobhan Senier in partnership with the new UNH Arctic Network and New England Arctic Network.

We greatly appreciate the commitment of the panel moderators to be willing to lean into challenging dialogues in order to help shift traditional academic views of sustainability toward the language of Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing. The moderators helped navigate discussions of cultural appropriation, repression, the survival of languages, seizures of land and resources, and socioeconomic inequality critical for confront privilege and the lasting effects of colonization.

The series began with an opening event amplifying the voices of local Abenaki Indigenous neighbors and current New Hampshire residents. A second discussion expanded focus to include Indigenous scholars from Maine representing the Wabanaki region. Our third panel looked even further north, convening anthropologists and curators from across the Canadian Arctic. The fourth presentation brought together storytellers from New England and Canadian Yukon Territory. A fifth event assembled professional Indigenous actors from New York City with members of our local NH community in a performance written and directed by an Assiniboine playwright currently living in Maine. We ended the series with a sixth event, a workshop for UNH students and faculty designed to bring storytelling into communicating academic research.

A common refrain throughout the events was an assertion that environmental sustainability and cultural sustainability are “one in the same” within Indigenous ways of knowing. Cultural survival is intimately connected to the land, as families traditionally pass on information and knowledge during excursions onto the land. Even in a virtual setting it was important to acknowledge the land from which the speakers joined. Another common thread was the importance of language – that preserving language and storytelling is critical for cultural sustainability. This series provided models for Indigenous Knowledge along with examples of reciprocity between Western and Indigenous research. There was a crosscutting theme noting the power of individual experience and disseminating knowledge within communities through stories. It also highlighted the prominence of women in spanning these knowledge systems and finding new ways to “indigenize science” in order to counter established colonial extractive approaches.

Although we could not gather people together in person as planned in our original workshop proposal, we are pleased at the number of new relationships developed among our Sidore speakers. The meetings leading up to each event initiated relationships with and among Indigenous speakers from New England and Northern Canada. There were also opportunities for UNH and local community members to participate “behind the scenes” during the virtual events. The hours of preparation for the dramatic reading of the play “The Council” inspired forward-looking discussions on how our societies and institutions might better understand the role of Indigenous ways of knowing within sustainability.

In many Indigenous communities, especially in the Inuit communities, the younger generations are leading the way toward ensuring ancestral knowledge is passed along while also reviving the self-governance structures needed to thrive within the contemporary world. The messages are positive, of hope and excitement, a welcome contrast to the discouraging dialogues many of us hear around the existential threat of climate change. During and shortly following this series, Deb Haaland of the Laguna Pueblo was appointed Secretary of the Interior, Inuk leader Mary Simon was named Canada’s first Indigenous governor general, and closer to home UNH officially adopted an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement – all demonstrating Contemporary Indigenous Leadership in Revitalizing Environmental and Cultural Sustainability. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to bring NH audiences into this emerging movement.

Event #1 – Contemporary Native Peoples of New Hampshire; Honoring Mother Earth Through Sustainability

November 23, 2020 – 190 in attendance (143 registered)



Kathleen Blake, Koasek Traditional Band of the Sovereign Abenaki Nation
James Edgell, Mohawk, Mi'kmaq, and Wabanaki (Chick family of Newmarket)

Anne Jennison, Abenaki Storyteller

Denise Pouliot, Sag8moskwa of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People

Paul Pouliot, Sag8mo of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People

Daniel Howard, Ph.D. (Moderator), citizen of Shawnee Tribe/Cherokee Nation, Assistant Professor of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at UNH

Video Link: https://media.unh.edu/media/2020-2021+Sidore+Lecture+SeriesA+Indigenous+Peoples+of+NH/1_uj6zeg6a

Theme of the Discussion: There is a growing movement to reframe New Hampshire's history, correcting a common misconception in history books that the Native Peoples of New Hampshire perished with colonization. This panel celebrated the Native Peoples living among us today, including the Cowasuck Abenaki and related Pennacook communities. Panelists described N'Dakinna (Our Homelands) and the relationship between the people of the region and their environment, including places within the New Hampshire landscape that we all recognize. They considered the meaning of sustainability from an Indigenous perspective in relation to both culture and the environment in our region, including topics such as climate change, air and water pollution, resilient ecosystems, and food security. Finally, they discussed what Native Peoples of New Hampshire need from the citizens and institutions of New Hampshire in order to continue to practice, reclaim, and share (when appropriate) the Indigenous knowledge and practices of both ancestors and contemporaries.

The series opened with a welcome by Svetlana Peshkova and Alexandra Martin, providing a formal introduction of the Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Series and a description of the new Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) Minor at the University of New Hampshire. Paul Pouliot and Denise Pouliot sang an opening Abenaki song and a land acknowledgement. Moderator Dan Howard introduced the panelists and began the discussion by asking, "Who are the Indigenous people of the region that we know today as Seacoast New Hampshire?" Paul Pouliot described the 12,000 thousand years of history of the Wabanakiak, or the ancient people of the Dawnland. Since colonial contact and domination, they have been in a survival mode, persevering by assimilation and acculturation, while continuing to maintain traditional lifeways and culture within an occupied homeland of N'Dakinna. Kathleen Blake emphasized that, although many assume "All the Indians have disappeared" in this region, "We are still here." She also stressed the damage still being perpetuated by the use of Native American mascots.

Denise Pouliot noted the manipulated history still being taught in the United States, "destroying Indigenous communities in order to justify the theft of Indigenous lands and resources." She argued, "It is crucial that we decolonize our educational system and begin telling the inclusive history of this nation. In order to have a common future, we must have an inclusive past." Anne Jennison also promoted the importance of education about Abenaki history, referencing "Abenaki hiding in plain sight" in order to

avoid discrimination within with society so that over the generations, people with Abenaki heritage no longer fully understood their own history. James Edgell shared a series of painful, disturbing, and thought-provoking experiences and stereotypes while growing up as an “Indian” in New Hampshire, serving as a U.S. Marine, and working at the University of New Hampshire. He also emphasizes the importance of focusing on the positive values, included the humor imbued within family gatherings.

Dan Howard shifted the conversation to sustainability and the traditional ecological knowledge encoded within stories. Anne Jennison then gifted the audience with the Abenaki story, “Gluskabe and the Game Bag.” Inspired by the story, Dan Howard asked the panelists how they perceived Indigenous knowledge as relevant to sustainability. Paul Pouliot reiterated, “living within the natural world of our Earth Mother has always been a way of life for us.” Survival such as hunting, fishing, and gathering was seasonal and historically relied on both traditions (only eat the male caribou) and natural restrictions (waterfalls and rapids to slow the fish). The construction of dams and overharvesting by colonists disrupted this sustainable way of life. Anne Jennison then described how other stories of Gluskabe point to many of these dangers (Gluskabe defeating the Water Monster who tried to dam the rivers) as well as explain natural phenomena like seasons (Gluskabe’s attempts to defeat Winter). She said, “stories carry not only practical knowledge about how to interact with the world physically, but also that value system... which is service beyond the needs of self to take into consideration the greater needs, the greater good.”

Denise Pouliot emphasized that environmental and cultural sustainability are “one in the same” and, “Indigenous culture and lifeways are directly tied to our environment and our environmental protection and sustainability.” This perspective is in contrast to contemporary practices where “people don't seem to pay much attention until something is critically endangered or completely lost.” She then used the tradition of basket making – using ash, sweet grass, white pine needles, birch bark, porcupine, etc. – as an example of culture and environmental sustainability are simultaneously threatened. James Edgell presented Chicks’ Weir in Newmarket as an example of how tribes show us how to respect nature, following the three R’s of “Respect, Reason, and Responsibility.” He affirmed the importance not only of striving for balance with Mother Earth but also giving thanks for all that we already have. Kathleen Blake emphasized that the Indigenous people of this nation “were always environmental stewards *and we still are.*” She emphasized the importance of rising above partisan conflict and recognizing that “we are all connected to this Earth,” and ending with a call to action, urging each of us to “grow something that’s indigenous to this area.”

Event #2 – Decolonizing Science: Centering Indigenous Science, Methodologies, and Practices

February 24, 2021 – 145 in attendance (205 registered)



John Daigle, PhD, Penobscot, Professor in the School of Forest Resources, University of Maine (panel moderator);

Simone Whitecloud, PhD, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Research Ecologist, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, Hanover, NH;

Suzanne Greenlaw, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Ph.D. Candidate in Forest Resources, University of Maine;

Natalie Michelle, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, Ph.D. Candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Maine.

Darren Ranco, PhD, Penobscot, Professor in the School of Forest Resources, University of Maine (designed the panel, organized speakers and led rehearsals)

Video Link: https://media.unh.edu/media/2020-2021+Sidore+Lecture+SeriesA+Decolonizing+Science/1_38953jfr

Theme of the Discussion: Decolonizing requires us to recognize the limits of Western science and reconcile academic research with Indigenous ways of knowing. This panel will showcase efforts within our region to bring Indigenous knowledge and decolonial approaches into scholarly methodologies, including the collection, stewardship, and analysis of data from Native lands.

The event began with a local land acknowledgement read by UNH student Paige Radcliffe, and an introduction of the moderator, John Daigle, a citizen of the Penobscot Nation, and Professor in the School of Forest Resources at the University of Maine. **John Daigle** provided an introduction to Indigenous scholarship and research practices quoting, "A body of culturally transmitted knowledge and beliefs about the relationships of living beings, including humans, with one another and with their environment" (Fikret Berkes). He then introduced each panelist with traditional Native American introductions that detail their identity through names of family members and Tribal ancestries.

Natalie Michelle discussed climate change impacts on Cultural Practices, Food Sovereignty, Indigenous Research Methodology, TEK (traditional ecological knowledge), and Language as an Adaptive Strategy. She described her research on food security of the Peskotomuhkati, providing an overview of Wabanaki epistemology and cosmology as "a central way of life that includes the paradigm of being a co participant amid a dynamic changing ecology." She outlined differences in how Indigenous people and colonial systems see the environment. She also honored individual stories and truths according to the tribal worldview by describing methods of interviews and story circles surrounding harvesting and fisheries. She ended with a community-based model utilizing the Indigenous perspective to "foster avenues of incorporating traditional values systems into environmental stewardship through the individual agencies of tribal members and steer towards policies of inclusiveness that are sustainably and culturally responsive."

Simone Whitecloud presented recent research of plant-plant interactions in the alpine regions of New England, deciphering the language of communication and documentation of plant knowledge among the Inuit of southern Greenland. She noted that similar species link the climate histories of New England and Greenland. When beginning her project in Greenland she was first told, "no one knows about plants.

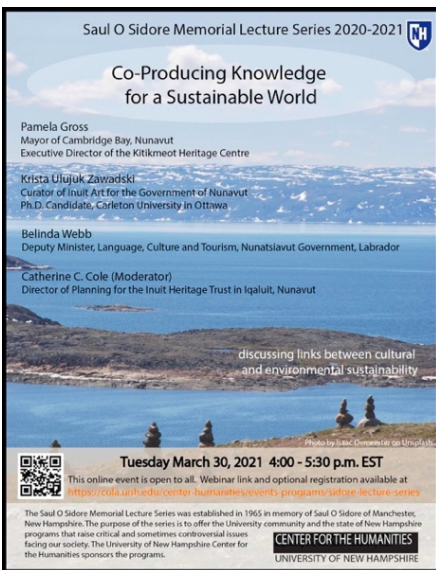
Those are the old ways and Greenland is modern now.” However, as her interviews progressed, she noticed that “every household had at least one book that described how to identify plants or how to use them,” particularly as foods and medicines. She observed cognates with other languages across the Arctic, suggesting that these species were important enough to migrate along with traditional Thule ancestors. She is currently working to find support to build a platform for sharing traditional plant knowledge and community gardening practices as a means of enhancing resilience and food security for rural and indigenous communities and the far North. She also advocates for the “practice of Indigenizing science” as a proactive and empowering vision for the knowledge systems we would like to create.

Suzanne Greenlaw discussed her work as an ethnobotanist focused on mobilizing Wabanaki Knowledge and cultural practices to address Indigenous cultural resource issues such as reduced access and invasive species planning. She showcased a project called “Restoring Sweetgrass Gathering In Acadia National Park” that follows a 2016 rule change allowing federally recognized tribes to enter agreements on sustainable harvesting in these protected lands, as long as an Environmental Assessment results in no significant impact. She shared the results of a rigorous field study that concluded that following traditional Indigenous protocols produced much more sustainable harvest than using Western scientific methods. Western science is generally privileged over Indigenous knowledge, and Suzanne Greenlaw promotes an emerging ‘Reciprocity’ approach where research can be updated, and comments and concerns recognized, especially within the permitting process.

Questions to the panelists centered around the experiences of youth and the role of women. When speaking about engaging youth in research, Natalie Michelle stated, “the more that they communicate, connect to the culture and the cultural teachings, the more resilient and strong and self-realization will take place.” Suzanne Greenlaw added, “when we feel pride in this knowledge base we can...empower our own language...and our own communities and people around us.” Regarding the strong presence of women in the role in crossing Western Science with Traditional Science, Simone Whitecloud responded, “Well, women are better at multitasking, right? So it kind of makes sense that as we're going on this journey of trying to bring all these different things together, that it would appeal to us and that we would be successful in doing it.” Natalie Michelle concurred, “Women have always been the backbone of Native communities and we have always taken the lead...we've always been the teachers.”

Event #3 – Co-Producing Knowledge for a Sustainable World

Tuesday, March 30, 2021 – 69 in attendance (69 registered)



Catherine C Cole (Moderator), Director of Planning for the Inuit Heritage Trust in Iqaluit, Nunavut;

Belinda Webb, Deputy Minister, Language, Culture and Tourism, Nunatsiavut Government, Labrador;

Krista Ulujuk Zawadzki, Curator of Inuit Art for the Government of Nunavut and a PhD candidate at Carleton University in Ottawa;

Pamela Gross, Mayor of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut and Executive Director of the Kitikmeot Heritage Centre.

Video Link: https://media.unh.edu/media/2020-2021+Sidore+Lecture+SeriesA+Co-Producing+Knowledge+for+a+Sustainable+World/1_tc5apfhl

Theme of the Discussion: This panel highlighted Arctic voices discussing links between cultural and environmental sustainability. The goal was to provide New Hampshire residents with a better understanding of how sustainable futures in the North connect with our own experiences.

Catherine C Cole began the event with a virtual ceremony showing women lighting the ‘qillik’ which is the traditional Inuit lamp. She then provided an overview of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the four distinct regions of the Inuit territory in Canada: Nunavut, Nunavik, which is in Northern Quebec, Nunatsiavuk in northern Labrador and Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territory.

Belinda Webb is the Deputy Minister, Language, Culture and Tourism, Nunatsiavut Government, Labrador, where they recently opened the Illusuak Cultural Centre. She praised Nunatsiavut as the first Inuit region in Canada to achieve self-governance in 2005 after three decades of negotiation. While remaining a part of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunatsiavut Government has the authority over many central governances, including health, education, culture and language, justice, and community matters. She described the Nunatsiavut Government as a consensus form of parliamentary democracy with a constitution holding core beliefs in democracy, equality, preservation of culture and language, pursuit of a healthy society, pursuit of a sustainable economy, and the preservation of our lands, waters, animals, and plants of the ancestral territory, “We continue to set new standards for people in the way we interact with the provincial and federal governments as well as other entities.”

She also provided a virtual tour of the Illusuak Cultural Center. A topographic map is a focal point for the older generations to share stories and knowledge on travel routes, hunting grounds, and historical homesteads. A language exhibit designed to attract youth and ignite discussion between elders and youth to promote the preservation of the Inuttitut language. There is a story-telling igloo surrounded by a historical timeline that includes traumatic events that happened to the Inuit of Nunatsiavut in the past as well as how they overcame them. “We really wanted to show how far we’ve come and where we are today so that everyone is still left feeling very positive and happy about where we are and where we have come from.” The museum is designed so that generations can share their traditions and culture. While entering the museum, visitors see historic black-and-white photos but upon leaving the photos

are modern and in color. “Our traditions and culture and language are just so entrenched in what we do and continue to do while we are adapting with the times with iPads and Internet and Zoom meetings.”

Krista Ulujuk Zawadski is the Curator of Inuit Art for the Government of Nunavut and a PhD candidate at Carleton University in Ottawa. She shared how she integrates her traditional knowledge/experience on the land with her academic work. She introduced us to her home in Rankin Inlet and discussed the deep connection with land and culture, including how family experiences on the land are a huge part of education, pedagogy, and upbringing. As a consequence, “the incorporation of family in all aspects of Inuit and Indigenous research is really important. Kids are involved, my parents are involved, my grandparents are involved, my elders and community members.” She also provided a description of the new Qaumajuq museum at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, beginning with her experience over two years in an Indigenous advisory circle to determine how to indigenize the spaces. She provided a virtual tour of the centerpiece of the museum, a visible vault storage of Inuit sculptures and carvings and then discussed other exhibits as well as activities designed to promote interaction with the community.

Pamela Gross is the Mayor of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut and Executive Director of the Kitikmeot Heritage Centre. She focused on the way the Kitikmeot Heritage Centre works with elders and youth to transfer knowledge. She stressed that the mission of the heritage center is to preserve and renew Inuinnait knowledge, language, and culture for the benefit of all Inuit. Because of the recent construction of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station, there has been a lot of growth and buildings and programs and infrastructure and significant traffic through the cultural center. The cultural center is located in the High School, “It’s a very beautiful spot to learn about our culture but be entrenched in the immersive side of the academic world as well.” Their priorities are the survival of the Inuinnaqtun language as well as knowledge renewal and transfer, referring to elders as “living textbooks” and describing the Inuinnaqtun language as, “a fundamental piece of who we are. It’s our identity, everything, our worldview is all stemmed through our language. And without the language, we don’t have our culture.” She noted that that the younger generation is learning how to navigate both the modern technological world and the cultural traditions easily, and online tools such as Facebook have been valuable for sharing culture and language. However, there is also a strong desire among young people for hands-on, visual, and on-the-land learning, triggering stories and memories that pass on through the generations.

Both Krista and Pamela laud the archaeological sites they visit when their families are on the land, “I find your mind just gets in a trance when you pass those sites and you wonder what it was like back then to live way before our ancestors had any type of technology, what they use to navigate and different animals that they hunted with the tools...And we’re excited for that future, that archaeology and our organization can play together and how we can be co-researchers on projects that have impacts to the world and scientific research.”

Event #4 – The Power of Storytelling in Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Thursday April 22, 2021 (Earth Day) – 106 in attendance (87 registered)



Anne Jennison, Abenaki Storyteller

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc, Tse Duna, Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation of the Yukon Territory Traditional Storyteller

Cheryl Savageau (Moderator), Abenaki Poet and Author

Video Link: https://media.unh.edu/media/2020-2021+Sidore+Lecture+SeriesA+The+Power+of+Storytelling+in+Indigenous+Ways+of+Knowing/1_awoxq8fe

Theme of the Discussion: This event highlighted the power of storytelling and oral traditions in sharing knowledge within Indigenous communities. Anne Jennison, an Abenaki storyteller and UNH alumna, has been telling Native American stories and teaching throughout New England for over three decades. Louise Profeit-LeBlanc, a Traditional Storyteller from the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation of the Yukon Territory in Northern Canada, is founder of the Yukon International Storytelling Festival and the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry.

This event was scheduled as an Earth Day celebration. It began with a prayer and smudging by panelist Louise Profeit-LeBlanc to make the event a sacred space. Paul Pouliot and Denise Pouliot sang an Abenaki greeting song to welcome the audience. Alyssa Moreau, a senior at UNH in the Native American and Indigenous Studies program delivered a local land acknowledgment for both N'Dakinna and Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation.

Cheryl Savageau introduced herself, including her family origin, and provided a land acknowledgement for her location on the traditional homelands of the Wampanoag in what is now Massachusetts. She then introduced both Louise Profeit-LeBlanc and Anne Jennison. Cheryl Savageau, herself a storyteller, spent some time telling the audience about traditional storytelling, the journey stories have taken, and the respect they deserve. "Traditional stories are often told during the winter time, during the dark time," were told to all ages, and were meant to entertain as they teach. She alerted the audience to things to pay attention to when listening to the stories, including how the stories are "embedded in the land and how it teaches the people how to live" as well as the use of repetition, rhythm, tone, and timing. She also emphasized the reciprocal relationship between the teller and listener.

Louise Profeit-LeBlanc began her story by telling the audience about the land where she is from with the big river and caribou and Auntie Mary Vittrekwa who gifted her the story. She then proceeded to tell the wonderful story of the "Boy on the Moon."

Cheryl Savageau then prepared the audience for Anne Jennison's Abenaki story, reminding the audience, "As you listen, it's important to understand that creation is not something that happened only once a long time ago. Creation stories, like all deep time stories are happening all the time." She introduced the traditional call "hey" and response "ho" and encouraged the audience to respond.

Anne Jennison told two Abenaki stories. The first story described the creation of the Alnobak (people) from the ash trees. She then discussed how Abenaki stories have been passed down from generation to generation and that many were written down during times when it became unsafe for people to express their culture. Fortunately, over the past 30 to 40 years there has been a “resurgence, revitalization, renaissance...a rebirth of Abenaki culture” as storytellers merge the pieces of stories that have been passed down orally with stories in written collections. She proceeded to tell a second story of “Two-Feather” and how the corn woman helps him overcome loneliness.

Following the stories, the panelists discussed how their stories connect to the land. Louise Profeit-Leblanc described growing up surrounded by storytellers, with stories reaching back to the times of volcanic eruptions and Woolly mammoths. This led into her experiences helping guide groups of “ologists”– archaeologists, anthropologists, paleontologists all come to look in the dirt.” Anne Jennison recounted stories she heard from her parents and grandfather that she now passes along to her own children, providing knowledge about “spiritual and intellectual ideas of the people, but also the information we need to sustain ourselves, sustaining livelihoods.”

Cheryl Savageau asked about cultural values within stories. Louise Profeit-Leblanc responded by referencing our relations with all things, including glaciers as living spirits and how children were told stories about respecting and traversing quietly on glaciers. She described glaciologists studying the retreating glaciers while elders affirmed, “it's not the first time that this happened.” She points to periods of great hardship, like the ones we are facing with climate change today, as making people work together to survive. Anne Jennison related lessons from her stories to contemporary people’s response to climate change, “it struck me that, you know, many of the problems, the climate issue problems today are because people have moved to become hardened [like the rock people], to be unaware of how they need to live in harmony or in relations respectfully with the Earth.”

Event #5 – “The Council” A Dramatic Reading

Thursday, May 27, 2021 – 41 in attendance (33 registered)

“The Council” A Dramatic Reading - by William Yellow Robe Jr



Cast & Crew

Director..... **William Yellow Robe Jr.** (Assiniboine and Sioux)
Being One..... **John Scott Richardson** (Haliwa-Saponi Nation)
Being Two..... **Danielle Soames** (Mohawk of Kahnawake)
Being Three..... **Albert “Abby” Ybarra** (Pascua Yaqui)
Being Four..... **Denise Pouliot** (Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People)
Being Five..... **Paul Pouliot** (Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook Abenaki People)
Being Six..... **Melissa Wells**
Woman Six..... **Svetlana Peshkova**
Being Seven..... **Libby Schwaner**
Music..... **Charlie Jennison** (Mohawk)
Stage Manager..... **Alix Martin**
AV Support..... **Andy Dolph**
Producer..... **Siobhan Senior**

Video Link: https://media.unh.edu/media/2020-2021+Sidore+Lecture+SeriesA+The+Council+-+A+Dramatic+Reading/1_pbd1398i

Theme of the Discussion: This event centered on the dramatic reading of the play “The Council” by William Yellow Robe Jr., a member of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes raised on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana. “The Council” describes the struggle of (hu)man to recognize his relationship among animals and potential for destructive power. The dramatic reading of the play was followed by a panel discussion with the actors relating the themes of the play to contemporary issues in environmental sustainability and climate change.

This dramatic reading involved not only the live performance itself but also a series of rehearsals leading up to the event that provided a unique opportunity for Indigenous artists (a playwrights, actors, and a musicians) and local community members to meet each other, share experiences and artistic interpretations, and form new connections.

The event began by acknowledging the Saul O Sidore Seminar Series and thanking many of the Native American theater projects that supported the participating artists, including American Indian Community House, Spider Woman Theatre, Safe Harbors NYC, AMERINDA, and the Eagle Project NYC. Paul and Denise Pouliot again welcomed the audience with an Abenaki greeting song. There was a land acknowledgement for the local lands of the Pennacook and Abenaki Wabanaki Peoples as well as the homelands of the other peoples on lands from where the cast and director were joining the event, including the Nanticoke and Piscataway, the Mohawk peoples of the Iroquois Confederacy, the Lenapehoking, and the Penobscot and other Wabanaki peoples. The actors proceeded with a dramatic reading of “The Council.”

Following the performance, the audience was invited to “a talk back,” asking questions of the actors and playwright. The first question was to William Yellow Robe, Jr. concerning what inspired him to write the play. He described writing a play for a friend, the late director John Kauffman, and discovering common stories among Tribes while expanding the original story to include Pacific Islanders. The actors then

provided insight into what the play means to them. Abby Ybarra described the importance of relationships with the natural world, including animals, remarking “it’s fun to play my cousins.” Danielle described how she is from Kahnawake, the wolf clan, and noted that with the many different clans “we’re all coming from an animal archetype.” John Scott Richardson described how animals are the original teachers, “long ago, that’s how the ancestors learned, when it was time to go for cover or when it was time to fish and when it was time to hunt and gather and store by watching the animal beings, right?” The questions turned to the role of humor in Native culture and the importance of humor to counter oppression. William Yellow Robe, Jr. stated, “There comes a time when you can’t cry anymore or you can’t put your fist into the wall. And with laughter, it eases a lot of tension for people. When you laugh, you open up your lungs, open up your heart, and that’s the reason why the humor was so important,” noting that animals too enjoy humor and laughter.

The Indigenous actors then shared their thoughts on the evolution of Native theater during the course of their careers along with their hopes for the future. They all highlighted the important role William Yellow Robe, Jr. has played in promoting Native American theater. Abby Ybarra referred to him as “the Dean of, of Native, he’s the muse for so many young up and coming writers.” He also praised community theater as “our storytelling soul.” They also described challenges. Danielle Soames had difficulties being caste in Native American roles because, “I always was told I didn’t look Native enough.” She said that this is where her mission for breaking stereotypes started, “why am I not Native enough? I am Native! And why can’t I play what I am?” She attributes a recent boom in opportunity to the “people that have protested about stereotypes that exist, because it’s been literally feathers and beads and turquoise for years. And it finally is coming to a halt where we’re going to stand up and say, ‘Hey, we could be doctors, you know, we could be teachers, we could be whatever we want to be.’” John Scott Richardson attributes pioneers like William Yellow Robe, Jr. as having giving hope to young actors to, “re- believe in ourselves. Re-find a value that we once had, but find that value again, and understand that our voice matters, our narrative matters, our perspective matters.”

The questions turned to the community actors and what the themes of the play mean to them in terms of sustainability. Libby Schwaner, a recent UNH graduate, remarked, “I think the message is just such a universal and humble and beautiful message that we are all one and ...if we’re going to solve our problems, we need to work together.” Finally, Denise Pouliot noted that William Yellow Robe, Jr. through “The Council” has made this timeless story that “we have been telling amongst ourselves for generations” accessible to everyone. William Yellow Robe, Jr. provided some final parting thoughts, mentioning the healing quality of Native theater and this importance of taking theater back as Native communities, recognizing that art is a way of saying “You have sovereignty.”

The playwright passed away on July 19

(<https://bangordailynews.com/2021/07/21/news/bangor/acclaimed-native-playwright-and-umaine-lecturer-william-yellow-robe-dies-at-61/>). The UNH Sidore performance was his last, and the link to the video has been making the rounds with much appreciation via Facebook and Twitter.

Event #6 – Moving From STEM to STEAM - Using the Art of Storytelling in Science Communication to Breathe Life into Your Research Narrative

June 8, 2021 4:00-5:30 – 12 in attendance (20 registered)



Video Link for the story “How Gluskabe Defeated the Sorcerers at the Intervale.”

https://media.unh.edu/media/Glusakabe_and_Intervale_Anne_Jennison.mp4/1_kzz2zx61

Anne Jennison (Abenaki storyteller) taught students how to deliver their data and discoveries through narrative. They learned the basic techniques and components of a compelling story as they began their summer research adventures.

Theme of the Workshop: Storytelling is becoming more important in science communication, especially when translating scientific results into a narrative form that is more accessible to a non-expert audience. This workshop considered the ways that research and data can be told as a story that will engage listeners or readers with the sense of the quest that scholars experience when hot on the trail of researching, analyzing, and making sense of their findings. When told from the perspective of a storyteller, each research project then becomes a detective story of sorts, an adventure, and sometimes a soul-searching drama, but always a quest. When framed in this way your results can become a well-told, captivating and imagination inspiring story to share with others. This workshop offered time-tested suggestions from a traditional storyteller about how to best shape stories so that the audience will better understand - and want to know more about - your work.

Anne Jennison presented an overview of storytelling as an art differentiated from written narrative or theater, stressing the interactive nature of storytelling connecting the teller and audience, encouraging the active imagination of the listeners. She provided guidance on how to tell an engaging story, providing models on structure (e.g., exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution). She shared the Abenaki story “How Gluskabe Defeated the Sorcerers at the Intervale.”

The participants were given individual time to create outlines of their own stories based on their own research efforts and then returned together to shared their thoughts. Anne Jennison shared a recommended reading list and handouts to help everyone begin their journeys as storytellers. The participants were challenged to record short stories to share at the end of summer (planned for August 24th) at an “**End-of-summer Sharing Celebration**” where Anne Jennison intends to teach peer review skills of providing positive and useful feedback, focused on appreciations and clarifying questions.

During the Sharing Celebration, participants presented their research stories. Anne Jennison provided guidance on how to provide feedback, stressing the importance of initially providing positive appreciations and asking for clarifications. Insightful discussions arose on the role of storytelling in science as well as when and how to use personification, anthropomorphism, and first person – literary styles generally discouraged when reporting academic research. The group concluded with the idea of interspersing vignettes throughout presentations of scientific projects, grounding each story with evidence from observation and analysis. This event called attention to the unique potential of bringing the techniques and tools of storytelling into academic research.

Publicity

The events were advertised widely on UNH and community online calendars, email listservs, department and community newsletters, websites and social media. Community audiences were reached through the Indigenous New Hampshire Collaborative Collective, the New England Arctic Network, NHPR community calendar, 5 Colleges NATAM listserv, Durham Community Church, and local libraries and historical societies. Within UNH, announcements included NRESS, ESRC, EOS, SMSOE outreach lists, COLA faculty, Anthropology and NAIS students lists, the UNH Arctic network, and DEI committees across campus. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the Sidore committee, we were able to advertise broadly across diverse disciplines, directly reaching thousands of people per event. We also scheduled announcements and a banner add on NHPR prior to Event #4 and as spring progressed to counter “Zoom fatigue” as more people became vaccinated, the weather improved, and the end of the UNH semester approached.

Reception

We received many messages of thanks and praise for both members of the audience and speakers following the events. Here are a few selections:

Many thanks to you all, for sharing your knowledge and hearts on such an important subject! You offer hope for the future for all of us! – Audience

The presentation was wonderful! The research the presenters shared was just awe inspiring. The content was fascinating. Sooooooo good!! Thank you so much. – Audience

Thank you to all the speakers. This has been fascinating and I've loved hearing all the languages and learning a bit about your cultures. – Audience

Thank you both so much for these beautiful stories! – Audience

It was an honour to participate in the storytelling and discussion sessions . More universities should do the same. – Louise Profeit-LaBlanc

I thank you for letting me be a part of this and I pray we all work together or see each other again. I leave with this; the drum brings our people together calling the nations near and far.... but once we gather storytelling is what lands the message. Then once we leave we all leave better than which we came...The bonds, relationships and memories that are formed will live on... that to me is where the real, Medicine rest. – John Scott Richardson

Recommended Citation: Duderstadt, K.A., Martin, A.G., Peshkova, S., Senier, S., Brewer, J.F., Howard, D.R. (2021), Honoring the Mother of All People; Contemporary Indigenous Leadership in Revitalizing Environmental and Cultural Sustainability, final report on the Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Series 2020-2021, The University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH.