



## ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture  
Educating Youth • Building Capacity

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPATRIATION CONFERENCE

Native Country, U.S.A., June 27, 2023 – The Association on American Indian Affairs (the Association) is proud to announce that registration is open for its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Repatriation Conference, themed “Building a New Fire.” The theme invites participants to come together to build a new fire that will support new laws and regulations as well as more collaborative methods for undertaking the return of Ancestors, their burial belongings, and sensitive cultural heritage.

The Association expects 700 attendees at this three-day hybrid conference hosted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation at the Grand Casino Resort & Hotel in Shawnee, Oklahoma on November 7, 8 and 9. This is the leading training opportunity in repatriation of Native heritage and will center on providing training on current issues in repatriation including the expected publication of the new Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) regulations, as well as illegal trafficking and the Safeguarding Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act, which was signed into law in December 2022. The Association is currently accepting presentation proposals through June 30 on the Association's website.

"Things have changed. The law has changed, and the public is calling out institutions around the world for their failure to return Indigenous bodies and sensitive cultural and religious items stolen in the name of science, conquest and war," said Shannon O'Loughlin, a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Association's CEO and Attorney. "It is time for a radical change of perspective and time to build a new fire."

Keynote speakers include New York Times bestselling author Angeline Boulley, a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Professor of International Law at the University of Colorado Law School, S. James Anaya, who is an Apache descendant. In May, Boulley published "Warrior Girl: Unearthed," a high-stakes repatriation story that follows a young Anishinaabeg woman who uncovers a plot to sell her Nation's stolen Ancestors and sacred items. Anaya is also an author and renowned legal scholar, specializing in human rights law and international Indigenous Peoples' rights, including repatriation.

Native Nation officials and representatives can register to attend in-person for free, and registration scholarships are available for in-person and virtual attendance. Early bird registration rates are available through September 5. There are also a limited number of exhibitor and vendor spaces for the 3-day conference. The hybrid Conference will allow all registered attendees to access the recordings from the 3 days of training.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Repatriation Conference registration, presentation submissions, hotel room block information, scholarship application, agenda, t-shirt sales, sponsorship information and vendor and exhibitor registration are available on the Association on American Indian Affairs' website at [Indian-Affairs.org/9thannualrepatriationconference](http://Indian-Affairs.org/9thannualrepatriationconference).

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The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Native Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its over 100-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Native Nations to support the implementation of programs on the ground.

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