

COMMUNITY NEWS

Chairman Jon Huey speaks at Indigenous People's Day In Flagstaff on October 14

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

October 14 is traditionally called Columbus Day throughout the United States but over time, many states have changed this official day from Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day.

Such is the case for the city of Flagstaff which has thousands of Native Americans surrounding the city and living in the city as well.

Now, in its second year of Indigenous People's Day, Mayor Coral Evans of Flagstaff read a Proclamation designating October 14 as the official holiday to

council.

Out of the tribes located in northern Arizona, 9 tribal groups showed up for Indigenous People's Day.

These groups included the Hopi, White Mountain Apache, Yavapai-Apache Nation, Havasupai, Southern Paiute Nation, Navajo, Hualapai, Tonto Apache and Zuni (who have a piece of land south of St. Johns, Arizona).

Chairman Huey acknowledged at the beginning of his talk that he had been "in the office one week so far" with a chuckle.

Mr. Huey gave a brief history of the Yavapai-Apache Nation people

made it. We lost a lot. It's an absolute tragedy this happened," he added.

Mr. Huey talked about the barren lands of San Carlos and how he enjoys fishing today and perhaps his ancestors missed those same hunting grounds of Verde Valley which were no longer available after the removal of the Yavapai-Apache to old San Carlos.

For 25 years the Yavapai-Apache were imprisoned in old San Carlos which was located now at the bottom of dried up lake called Collidge Dam.

Mr. Huey talked about the adjustments that had to be made for



White Mountain Apache Singers singing for the YAN Warrioretts.

"Historically, we want to be known for our culture, our spiritual beliefs, our language and the things we have preserved within our tribe because those are most important to us.

"We survived a terrible time and we have a strong indigenous story. So being here as a chairperson of the Yavapai-Apache Nation, I am really proud to speak to everybody in this room, (to the) brothers and sisters from tribes across Arizona," said Mr. Huey who concluded saying the "future is grand- the future needs a relationship with everyone"

Other tribes in attendance

President Jonathan Nez of the Navajo Nation also attended the same Proclamation event for Indigenous Day. He spoke prior to Chairman Huey's presentation.

"I am here as a citizen, (from) the Navajo Nation and thank you brothers and sisters that live in Flagstaff for opening your doors to all the Native people around the region. By working together in collaboration we can get a lot of this done for all the people. So, we stand for unity today, a change for all of us for the betterment of the people. We need to re-write history. Columbus didn't discover America," said President Nez as the audience clapped with approval.

Mr. Nez said that such states as Maine, Oregon, Alaska and New Mexico as a few of the states making the official holiday as Indigenous People's Day.

Divine guidance

Dianna Uqualla, spiritual leader from the Havasupai Nation gave the opening prayer. "I come here to greet and share the faith of my people-what they taught

me to do prayer, to be sincere, to understand there is a higher power. Let's talk to one another, let's shake our hands and say, 'I will help you' and ask 'what do you need?' she said. "I ask today, each of you that are here, hear this and spread the word that we need to look forward and not backwards. We heal ourselves and we have to let go of our pain...we can make it better from day to day," she concluded before she prayed in her native Havasupai.

The City of Flagstaff Proclaims 'Indigenous People's Day

Mayor Coral Evans encouraged the audience to be mindful of the moment so as to create a positive environment. "We want to have everyone have access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, to make sure everyone has equality. It was only after this (discussion within the city council) that we decided to declare Indigenous People's Day. I want everyone to stop and think this one day is the time that we acknowledge Indigenous People's Day. Let's be clear, everyday is Indigenous People's Day," said Mayor Evans.

The city of Flagstaff established a committee of 8 prominent

Native American leaders called the Indigenous Circle of Flagstaff led by Rose Tohe, a Navajo and a longtime resident of Flagstaff. This committee was established to be the eyes and ears of the Indian community and share their concerns with the city council of Flagstaff. Mrs.Tohe's husband, Steve Darden, a Navajo, was the first Native American to be elected on the city council in the 70s.

Mayor Evans concluded the Proclamation by stating the concerns of the city relative to human rights of Indian people and the adoption of designating Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day henceforth.

"This proclamation recognizes the areas of Flagstaff that has been inhabited by Native people since time immemorial and the city has the responsibility to combat racism and to build justice and equity for Native Americans and all people who are targets of discrimination," said Mayor Coral Evans of Flagstaff.



Jon Huey speaking before the City council of Flagstaff and Indian community.

be called 'Indigenous People's Day' henceforth. Long gone is Columbus Day according to Ms. Evans.

Ms. Evans mentioned that she is a 3rd generation member of her family who moved from Louisiana and to McNary, Arizona where the lumber industry attracted people from the south.

Ms. Evans is Afro-American.

Chairman Huey spoke before a crowd of 150 people who joined the city council gathered in the council chambers downtown Flagstaff. Prior to the official program, a brunch was held for the visiting dignitaries joined by the city

and the historical trauma experienced during the relocation of the Yavapai and Apache people who were forced marched to old San Carlos in February of 1875.

"We were removed from the lands. The men, women, children and grandparents were forced marched over 200 miles to old San Carlos by the U.S Cavalry," said Chairman Huey as he painted a dismal picture of the February 25 when the march began. Mr. Huey used an analogy of carrying all of his 5 children the complete distance and the hardships encountered along the way. "Not all of our peo-

ple who were born in San Carlos whose ancestry was from Camp Verde and that they had no idea what the long walk was as they returned to Camp Verde from San Carlos. "Twenty -five years later, you had to adjust to a place you probably don't remember as a child," said Mr.Huey about the return to Camp Verde.

He recalled for the audience what the view might have been as the Yavapai-Apache returned to Verde Valley as squatters occupied the former lands of the Yavapai-Apache at the turn of centry..

It was not until 1992 when the Yavapai-Apache Nation adopted their very first tribal constitution according to Mr. Huey that cleared the way for guidelines and policies which still govern the Nation today. Mr. Huey talked about the contribution of the Cliff Castle Casino-that it is the largest employer in Verde Valley. He also spoke about the various departments within the Nation that has provided numerous services to the Nation's members.



Coral Evans, mayor of Flagstaff dancing with female dancers from YAN.



YAN warrioretts

Testing the limits of a marathon

BY
LAURIE WATHOGOMA,
Middle Verde

Another run completed on October 12 at the Lake Powell Half Marathon. This run is very scenic and the weather at this time of year in Page is always cool and sunny.

This was my third time running the LPHM. The run- course starts at a park in the town of Page and takes you through the neighborhoods and making way to a trail run along Lake Powell. The views along the lake are spectacular and

running across the bridge at Glen Canyon is a site for all the runners to enjoy.

The course ends at the lake-side and crossing the finish line is rewarding with a nice medal along with snack boxes, bananas, oranges, and chocolate milk. I am happy to say this was my 21st half marathon completed. Running is a passion of mine and has taken me to many places of travel.

I am grateful for the support and motivation of my husband Albert Wathogoma who always encourages me to stay active in my



Running across the Glen Canyon Dam going west.

running. He's always there from start line to finish line. Also I must thank the Yavapai-Apache Nation and Robin Hazelwood/Diabetes Program for their continued support of health and wellness.



Laurie Wathogoma stands on a hilltop with Lake Powell behind her to the north.