

Museum of New Mexico Media Center

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Museum of Indian Arts & Culture Executive Director Della Warrior Announces Retirement

Department of Cultural Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) today announced that Della Warrior (Otoe-Missouria), Executive Director of the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture (MIAC), will retire effective August 27, 2021.

Warrior was appointed Executive Director in June 2013. Before joining MIAC, she was the Chief Operating Officer for the Yocha DeHe Wintun Nation and the President of the Institute of American Indian Arts. She has over 40 years of experience in management, tribal government, education, planning and evaluation, resource development, facility planning, fundraising, and economic development.

In eight years at MIAC, Warrior's leadership strengthened the Museum's renowned collection of Native art and anthropological artifacts. During that time, MIAC showcased 30 exhibitions, including "Turquoise, Water & Sky," "Footprints: The Inspiration and Influence of Allan Houser," "Indian Country: The Art of David Bradley," and "Clearly Indigenous: Native Visions Reimagined in Glass." Warrior is also responsible for leading the revision and development of the permanent and well-known exhibition "Here, Now and Always," scheduled to open in June 2022.

Educational programs Warrior established include the Summer Tribal Libraries Program, Youth Film Camp, Pottery Demonstrations, and the Wonder on Wheels MIAC mobile exhibit (2018). She was instrumental in organizing and creating a

collaborative exhibit “Creating Traditions” at the American Experience Gallery in Walt Disney World’s Epcot. She and MIAC curators worked closely with Disney in developing the first Native American exhibit at Epcot. The exhibition consists of objects from MIAC and the National Museum of the American Indian collections. This exhibit was developed in 2016 and will remain open until 2023.

During her leadership at MIAC, and in partnership with the Museum of New Mexico Foundation, millions of dollars were raised from individuals, foundations, and grants in support of MIAC’s goals, exhibitions, and programs.

“It has been my great privilege, honor, and pleasure to serve as the Executive Director of the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture,” said Warrior. “I have enjoyed the work immensely and found it interesting, exciting, challenging, and rewarding. Through the position, I have worked with some wonderful and creative individuals and made many terrific friends. I am very grateful for the wonderful support MIAC has received from members of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation. Without their invaluable support we would not have been able to showcase great exhibits nor update the “Here, Now and Always” exhibition. Although I will miss the staff, friends, donors, and other DCA colleagues, it is time for me to retire. My perspective has been that visitors coming to MIAC want to learn about Native people and their culture from Native people, and so I have strived always to have Native Artists and Community Members engaged in all of our programs and exhibitions.”

Warrior served a six-year term as a trustee for the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and served on the board of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the American Indian College Fund. Nominated by President George W. Bush to the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities, Warrior also served as Board Chair for the Earth Circle Foundation, which sponsors "Wings of America," a Native youth running program. She is a founding member of the Multicultural Intermediary for Collaborative Action.

Warrior has a bachelor’s degree in sociology with minors in business administration and psychology from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She has

a master's degree in education from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has completed more than 40 hours toward a doctoral degree.

Warrior received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Tribal Archives Libraries and Museums (2019); Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame (2007); New Mexico Women's Foundation's Alice Paul Award (2008); Paul Harris Fellow, Rotary International (2005); "Star of the Southwest," Economic Development Administration, Southwest Region (2001); and "Women on the Move" Award, YWCA, Albuquerque, New Mexico, (2000).

The Museum of New Mexico Board of Regents will initiate a search for the next Executive Director of the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture. Dr. Matthew Martinez will be interim director.

About the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture

The [Museum of Indian Arts & Culture](#) is a division of the [Department of Cultural Affairs](#), under the leadership of the Board of Regents for the Museum of New Mexico. Programs and exhibits are generously supported by the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and our donors. The mission of the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology is to serve as a center of stewardship, knowledge, and understanding of the artistic, cultural, and intellectual achievements of the diverse peoples of the Native Southwest.

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