



# BEING NATIVE. BEING KANSAN.

With deep roots in the state, Native cultures continue to thrive.



PHOTOGRAPH Jason Dailey

# BEING NATIVE. BEING KANSAN. (BEING YOUNG.)

Traveling through the rolling Flint Hills or the sweeping Konza Prairies, I often imagine young Native Americans on horseback, galloping alongside a swift herd of buffalo. Part of experiencing the beauty of our state is appreciating its history. Today, as we settle into a new year, young Native Americans living in Kansas are creating new narratives. Native-American millennials are embarking on a modern-day hunt finding that entrepreneurship, education, civic leadership, athletic ability, and self-expression provide subsistence for their resilience and perseverance. They are raising their voices with confidence and finding effective new ways of continuing their stories.

In the pages of this section, readers will find young Native leaders in contexts that go beyond the regalia and the mouth-watering frybread of powwows. The stories are told from Native perspectives and reflect unique abilities to embrace cultural identities while sometimes living separated from tribal communities. Thriving in Kansas, these leaders are contributing to a larger Native-American narrative and providing new paths for future generations to follow. It is an exciting time to celebrate being Native, being young, and being Kansan.

—Lori Hasselman

*“Being Native. Being Kansan. (Being Young.)” was produced under the guest editorship of Lori Hasselman. Hasselman is the editor of The Indian Leader, the student newspaper at Haskell Indian Nations University.*

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY by Mark and Tree Mangan

Spending time on her grandmother’s land on the Navajo reservation, Analyss Benally naturally picked up some of her nation’s traditions—such as hoops.

“Where I’m from, everyone plays basketball growing up. We played every weekend, but nobody ever talked about playing college ball,” says Benally.

Now they are.

This past year, the 5’9” point guard from Wichita Heights High School in Park City has signed a letter of intent to play for San Jose State Spartans, an NCAA Division I team.

Benally credits her family for much of her success. “My parents always pushed me to do better and to reach my full potential in all that I did. I loved to watch my sister play when I was younger,” says Benally. “I watched her receive a scholarship for basketball to a NAIA school, I told myself, ‘If she could do it, then so could I.’”

Benally also had two Native role models for her college career: former University of Louisville standout Jude Schimmel and her sister, Shoni Schimmel, who now plays in the WNBA.

“I realized that as a Native American going into the next level, I could inspire more kids,” says Benally. “And that made me work even harder and want my story to get out there for others, just like the Schimmel sisters did for me.”

The young athlete is already a role model for the next generation of Native basketball players.

“She’s a leader by example. She spends extra time in the gym, and when others see that, they follow her lead,” says Benally’s Wichita Heights coach, Kip Pulliam. “When we need a basket, the team knows she can make the shot. When she’s got the ball, everyone knows it’s going in.”

“Follow your dreams, believe in yourself, and don’t just hear other people’s stories; work for your own,” says Benally. “Through all of it, be family oriented, because they are the people who are there to pick you back up when you get knocked down.”

—Raquel Butler



## ANALYSS BENALLY

Rising basketball star | Navajo | 17

**“MY DAD TOLD ME THAT WHERE I’M FROM CAN’T BE SOMETHING THAT STOPS ME FROM FOLLOWING MY DREAMS.”**



# FIVE POWWOWS FOR 2016

**Isaiah Stewart, a Kansas-based Native dancer and powwow circuit host/judge, provides this must-see listing**

## AIHREA O.N.E. POWWOW

May TBA | Johnson County Community College, Overland Park

This annual event is marking its 10th anniversary with a special lineup of guest performers and its superb host drum crew. The anniversary-celebration Grand Entries will be held three times during the weekend and will feature some of the Midwest's most talented dancers in one circle.

## PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI POWWOW

TBA June | Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Mayetta

This event is full of championship singing and dancing. Native people arrive from as far as Canada to come and celebrate in Mayetta. The contest schedule is packed full, running from Friday to Sunday evening (traditionally in the first or second weekend of June).

## WASHUNGA DAYS POWWOW

June 18-19 | Council Grove Allegawaho Heritage Memorial Park

Tribal Chair, Elaine Huch, invites Washunga Day attendees to witness a celebration of the Kaw Nation. "Each year, Kaw citizens make the trip to central Kansas from their homes in Oklahoma and elsewhere to be a part of this exciting celebration of the tribe's historical heritage in the area. We also come to honor the bond of goodwill that exists today between the tribe and the people of Council Grove. Generations of good people—Native and non-Native alike—have endeavored to forge and continually strengthen this important cross-cultural relationship," she writes on the event website.

## HASKELL INDIAN ART MARKET



PICTURED RIGHT

September 9-11 | Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence

This is a unique combination of a powwow and one of the nation's top authentic Native art markets. Guests can purchase jewelry, pottery, paintings and sculptures directly from Native artists and enjoy the regular, free dance performances at one location.

—Isaiah Stewart/KANSAS! Staff



PHOTOGRAPHS Mark and Tree Mangan

## SHANNON HAWKINS

Sorority Pioneer | Inupiaq | 26

For many college students and grads, the Greek system of fraternities and sororities offers community and lifelong friendships. But the Greek system has not really been a part of Native college traditions. This was something that Shannon Hawkins learned when she left her home in Alaska to begin studies in Kansas at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Here, Hawkins joined the Alaskan Club, an association of students from Native nations of that region. It offered fellowship and more. "It was also important for me to be part of teaching others about my culture as well as learning from others," says Hawkins.

But it was not long before Hawkins became friends with fraternity brothers from Phi Sigma Nu, the only Greek group on campus at the time. These connections spurred her to explore starting a campus sorority.

Hawkins initially thought to reestablish a dormant sorority before deciding on Gamma Delta Pi, one of only three all-Native-American sororities in the United States. After reaching out to one of the five original sorority members and completing the application, Hawkins won approval for her new chapter and began the pledge process in May 2015 with nine students.

"It was harder than we all expected," recalls Hawkins, who is now in her junior year. "Trying to organize something from scratch, even though we had a foundation, we still needed to establish connections and partnerships with the different organizations we wanted to work with."

Still involved with the Alaskan Club, Hawkins has helped the Gamma Delta Pi Haskell chapter grow to 19 members. She is also working to reestablish Haskell's participation in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), where students compete with other tribal colleges in a variety of academic and extracurricular categories.

—Rustie Anglin



**"STARTING YOUR OWN CHAPTER ANYWHERE IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE EASY."**

# FIVE NATIVE NATIONS CONNECTED TO KANSAS

Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri

## SAC & FOX NATION OF MISSOURI | [Sacandfoxcasino.com/history](http://Sacandfoxcasino.com/history)

The Sac and Fox (Mesquakie) people were originally two distinct groups who formed an alliance in the 1700s to fend off a French attack. Historically, they were located in the Great Lakes region but were eventually removed into Kansas in 1837. They now reside in Richardson County, Nebraska, and Brown County, Kansas, with their offices in Reserve.

## KAW NATION | [kawnation.com](http://kawnation.com)

Originally the Kaw, or Kansa, Indians resided on vast reservation land near Council Grove, but they were forced to migrate to Oklahoma in 1872 by the federal government. The Kaw people still celebrate their Kansas heritage with an annual powwow called Washunga Days each June and have a marked historical site where the last Kaw village was located 3.5 miles south of Council Grove. Their capital is in Kaw City, Oklahoma.

## IOWA TRIBE OF KANSAS AND NEBRASKA | [iowatribeofkansasandnebraska.com](http://iowatribeofkansasandnebraska.com)

The Iowa Tribe of Kansas are of Sioux stock. They were originally located in the Plains region where present-day Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri are located. In 1836 a treaty assigned them to a reservation in Brown County and Richardson County, Nebraska, but the official headquarters is in the Sunflower State, located in the small community of White Cloud, along the four-state border of Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa.

## KICKAPOO NATION OF KANSAS | [ktik-nsn.gov](http://ktik-nsn.gov)

The Kickapoos originally inhabited lands in Ohio and Michigan but were forced to remove through several migrations west. The Kickapoo Nation of Kansas came to Brown County in the 1830s and continues to have its capital in Horton.

## PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION | [pbpindiantribe.com](http://pbpindiantribe.com)

Though the Potawatomi has its seat of government in Mayetta, on the Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation in Jackson County, this nation originally resided in the Great Lakes region. The Potawatomi were forced into Kansas in the 1840s, where they remain living on diminished reserves.

—Suzanne Heck



Kaw Nation



Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF Kansas Historical Society

## SHANE WILSON

Civic leader | Shawnee | 27

This summer marks Shane Wilson's 10th year of volunteering with the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy. It's a week-long leadership exercise for rising high school seniors, using a mock government as a mechanism to teach leadership skills, promote mutual respect, and help shape identity. Wilson began his journey with the program as a participant from Abilene High School in 2006 and was immediately hooked by the hands-on education about government.

"I really didn't have a grasp on the importance of having my voice heard and how I could bring some of the issues my family faced into a political realm," says Wilson. "Boys State changed all that. I knew that because I had the capacity to strive for change and collaborative success, I also had the responsibility to make it happen—not just for myself, but for those in my community."

At Boys State his first year, Wilson served as a Supreme Court justice. He returned nearly every year after as a volunteer counselor and served as a program coordinator for the last three years.

Wilson says the experience is invaluable, particularly for Native youth with few opportunities.

"Boys State provides all people, regardless of background, the opportunity to challenge themselves, make critical decisions, and really find out who they are as individuals and as leaders."

Wilson firmly believes that his work with Kansas Boys State is the best way to educate other Native youth on the importance of being involved in the political process. "It is a big responsibility to educate our communities and to be engaged, whether it be at the tribal government level or the next presidential election. Leadership is action, and taking action means our issues as tribal people are heard."

That leadership experience could one day expand the base of political role models in the Native communities. According to Pew research, only 8 percent of Native Americans in the United States are represented by someone of the same racial or ethnic group in Congress.

But Wilson notes Boys State isn't just for those with political aspirations. It offers students a rare opportunity to develop identity.

"For many states—those students who are involved in the program—the chance to truly discover your own opinions about this and that is one that's hard to come by," Wilson says.

—Derek Ziegler



**"IT DOESN'T SIMPLY TAKE A POLITICIAN TO EFFECT CHANGE—IT'S UP TO INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN EFFECTIVELY PAIR PASSION WITH PURPOSE."**

# LEE MEISEL

Butcher and entrepreneur | Standing Rock Sioux | 32

It's a Sunday afternoon, and Leeway Franks is closed, but owner Lee Meisel arrives at his hot dog joint in Lawrence to butcher and make his own sausage using the recipes his family created on their nation's reservation in North Dakota.

For Meisel, his creations are a mix of Native and American heritage.

"Hot dogs evoke really strong memories, good ones from your childhood at a cookout or barbeque. It just evokes a lot of memories for people, especially Americans, because it kind of has that traditional Americana aspect to it," says Meisel.

Many of the menu items at Leeway Franks reflect Meisel's childhood where family members prepared summer sausage sandwiches and fried bologna. In fact, Meisel credits his grandfather, a rancher, as the inspiration for the restaurant. Meisel first learned to prepare meat on his ranch, and his Native cultural influences helped him connect with using the whole animal in the butchering processes.

But Meisel's path to owning his own business was anything but direct. Reservation life was not always easy for Meisel, who, as a restless teen, tried a year of college, dropped out, then eventually landed at Haskell Indian Nations University.

His plans were still up in the air after graduation. Though he had a business degree, he didn't think about owning his own business—something that is still rare for Natives in Kansas. In fact, according to the latest Small Business Administration figures, Native Americans make up less than 1 percent of Kansas business owners. But Meisel began thinking of breaking this trend after entering the workforce. "I started to see the way businesses were being run, and there were things I thought I would want to consider improving," recalls Meisel. "So I thought to myself, 'I bet you I could do this on my own and I bet you I could do it better than them.'"

In 2015, Meisel and his wife, who goes by the initial "K.," opened Leeway Franks. The couple has put their life into creating the shop, which specializes in authentic, local-sourced meats. They encourage others to take the risk with them.

"Go for it," says Meisel. "Native Americans can start their own business. There are people who can help you start." And Meisel, now an entrepreneur with a successful restaurant, is one of them.

—Rachel Whiteside



**"I WOULD LOVE IT IF INDIAN STEREOTYPES WERE BUSINESS ORIENTED AND DRIVEN. JUST BREAK FREE FROM THOSE OLD STEREOTYPES AND START ON NEW ONES."**



# FIVE NATIVES TO KNOW FROM MODERN KANSAS HISTORY

## WALTER RICHARD "DICK" WEST (SOUTHERN CHEYENNE)

Artist and Educator (1912–1996)

Dick West was a renowned artist who won numerous honors and awards for his work, primarily pictorial narratives of the Cheyenne and Plains Indian cultures. His art appears at the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), the Philbrook Museum of Art (Tulsa) and the George Gustav Heye Center (New York City), to name a few. He attended Haskell Institute during his high school years and taught art at Haskell Indian Junior College from 1970–1977. From 1979–1980, West served as a commissioner for the federally appointed Indian Arts and Crafts Board, where he worked to ensure Indian arts and crafts could not be counterfeited.

## CHARLES CURTIS (KAW NATION)

Vice President of the United States (1860–1936)

Charles Curtis was born in Topeka one year before Kansas became a state and lived on the Kaw Reservation. He attended Topeka High School and was admitted to the Kansas Bar in 1881. Considered charismatic and bright, Curtis was elected to the House of Representatives for six terms and served in the U.S. Senate from 1915 to 1928. Tapped by Herbert Hoover as a running mate for the Republican Party in the 1928 presidential elections, Curtis served as the nation's vice president from 1929–1933. In his political life, Curtis never forgot his Indian heritage. He was one of the first legislators to introduce the Equal Rights Amendment for women and fought for the rights and dignity of Native people.

## BILLY MILLS (COGLALA-LAKOTA SIOUX NATION)

Olympic Gold Medalist (born 1938)

Billy Mills' come-from-behind victory in the 10,000 meter run at the 1964 summer Olympics in Tokyo has been described by sports historians as one of the greatest upsets in Olympic history. Born on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Mills struggled as a youth until he was sent to Haskell Institute in Lawrence (a high school at the time) and graduated in 1957. He became a standout track and field athlete at the University of Kansas before graduating and joining the Marine Corps. Following his Olympic triumph, Mills went on to become a role model to young Native athletes and helped found the Running Strong for American Indian Youth organization dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles. Mills has also supported the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame located at Haskell Indian Nations University and visits Kansas often.

## WARNER A. "TONY" COFFIN (PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION)

Educator (1916–1966)

Hired by Haskell Indian Nations University as a football coach in 1945, Warner A. "Tony" Coffin went on to become the school's athletic director, coaching and mentoring many famous athletes, including Billy Mills. Haskell honored Coffin posthumously in 1981, when the school named their new sports complex after him. Coffin was raised in Mayetta and received college degrees from the University of Kansas.

## CHARLES J. CHAPUT (PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION)

Religious Leader (born 1944)

Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia, is the first Native American to be installed as an archbishop in the Catholic Church. He made news in September 2015 when he hosted Pope Francis in Philadelphia. Born in Concordia and enrolled by the Potawatomi as a boy, Chaput knew he wanted to become a priest after attending Our Lady of Perpetual Help grade school in Concordia and St. Francis Seminary High School in Victoria.

—Suzanne Heck

# RIC DUNWOODY

Artist | Pawnee/Otoe/Wyandotte | 25

Born and raised in Wichita, Ric Dunwoody grew up with the artistic influences of his Pawnee grandfather, renowned Native artist Baptiste Bayhille Shunatona. Dunwoody says his grandfather's art spoke directly to him and inspired him to create his own narratives addressing modern issues facing Native Americans.

For example, Dunwoody's mural piece *The Future's Past* depicts a Native chief on horseback analyzing Native-American mascots with confusion. Another piece, *A River Toke*, displays a Native man smoking a pipe while sitting on the Arkansas River bank against the backdrop of a modern Wichita skyline.

This visual juxtaposition of ages and cultures is also reflected in Dunwoody's choice of themes.

"Sometimes I like to keep my message simple or easier to digest while in others I'll focus on more serious matters I see Natives facing every day such as poverty, alcoholism, and drug abuse," says Dunwoody.

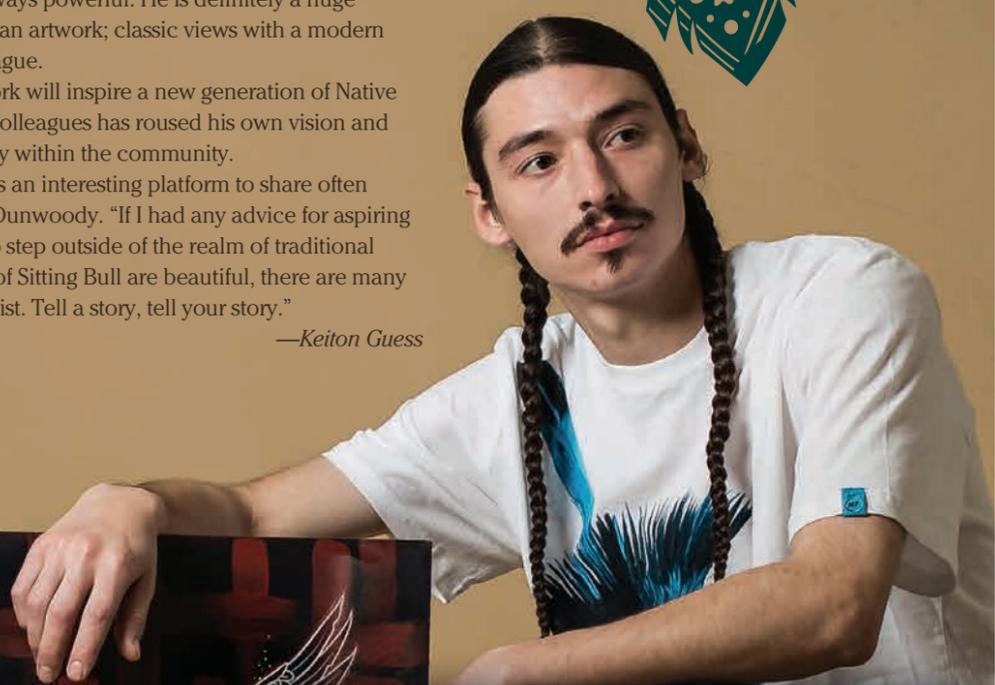
The questions that Dunwoody brings up in his art are also part of a larger dialogue in the Native communities, and Dunwoody is quick to point out other like-minded artists he admires, such as Bunky Echo-Hawk.

"His subject matter of his artwork is always powerful. He is definitely a huge influence to me. I think of it as modern Indian artwork; classic views with a modern twist," says Dunwoody of his Pawnee colleague.

Ultimately, Dunwoody hopes his artwork will inspire a new generation of Native artists, just as work by his grandfather and colleagues has roused his own vision and awareness of the role a Native artist can play within the community.

"Being a Native modern painter creates an interesting platform to share often overlooked views in life and society," says Dunwoody. "If I had any advice for aspiring Native artists, I would say to not be afraid to step outside of the realm of traditional Native paintings. While charcoal paintings of Sitting Bull are beautiful, there are many ways to look at being a Native-American artist. Tell a story, tell your story."

—Keiton Guess



**"I LIKE TO CREATE PIECES THAT KIND OF FORCE THE VIEWERS TO RETHINK SITUATIONS THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE UNDERSTOOD FULLY."**



# TIPS FOR RESPECTFUL NATIVE TOURISM

Being a guest at a Native-American event or celebration can be exciting and educational. But there is protocol to follow when attending Native events in the age of the ubiquitous selfie. Here are some guidelines to honor yourself and your hosts.

## SOMETIMES, NEVER IS ENOUGH.

Keep in mind, some Native Americans simply don't want to be photographed. The famous Lakota warrior Crazy Horse, for example, was said never to have been photographed. Not everyone will feel this way, but it's always important to inquire before snapping away.

## SACRED TIMES

Photographing might be particularly sensitive during sacred ceremonies, including some dances performed at public powwows. Usually, an announcement is made, asking people to refrain from photographing a particular dance or dancer—but you can always ask if you are in doubt.

## SACRED SPACES

Native-American sites in Kansas are available to visit. From the Shawnee Indian Mission to El Cuartelejo or even a current school like Haskell Indian Nations University, there is much to see. Just use common sense when taking pictures. For example, at Haskell there is a cemetery for young students who died at the school, and while it is picturesque, it is also regarded as a somber memorial. The world has seen enough insensitive selfies at memorials such as Auschwitz or the World Trade Center site—there's no reason to add more.

## TOUCH TOURISM

Eagle feathers, fans and other ceremonial objects can be sacred items. Please do not touch something used in a ceremony without asking permission. Never touch a dancer's regalia without asking as well.

## TRIBAL LANDS

Remember, when you attend an event on tribal land, you are effectively on another nation's territory. Though tribal laws do not apply to non-Native U.S. citizens, kind consideration and respect are always appreciated. **KM**

—Rhonda LeValdo

KANSAS!

# DESTINATIONS & ATTRACTIONS