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Indigenous Leaders — 150 Years of Women

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Indigenous Leaders – 150 Years of Women

By Patrick Naranjo and Mary Tan



Graduating Class of 2018. Courtesy of the UC Berkeley American Indian Graduate Program.

The UC Berkeley American Indian Graduate Program (AIGP)

The American Indian Graduate Program (AIGP) at UC Berkeley was established in 1971 in the University of California, Berkeley's School of Public Health. This initiative developed in response to a need for more American Indians and Alaska Natives in graduate study, and particularly health professions. Now a unit of the Office for Graduate Diversity, AIGP celebrates Indigenous leadership, advocacy, and research through mentorship and resources. With a strong sense of community, American Indian and Indigenous identified graduate students can realize their full academic potential at Berkeley. As we celebrate 150 Years of Women, we are not only celebrating the accomplishments of women, but the way they view the world and the impact they leave. These are some of the tremendous AIGP alumnae and Native American Studies faculty who created legacies of women's leadership at UC Berkeley.



LaNada War Jack, Distinguished Professor of Native American Law and Politics at Boise State University, ID and President of Indigenous Visions Network. Courtesy of the 21st Century Native Leaders podcast.

Dr. LaNada War Jack

LaNada War Jack is an enrolled member of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho. She attended the University of California, Berkeley and graduated in 1970 with an independent major of Native American Law & Politics. While a student at UC Berkeley, War Jack participated as the Native American component of the Third Worlds Strike to establish the first Ethnic Studies Program in the statewide UC system. In 1969, War Jack and other students throughout California took over Alcatraz Island in a peaceful protest of the federal government's ill treatment of Native people and the broken treaties with tribes. This facilitated certain subsequent government funded policies for Indian tribes nationwide while recovering millions of acres of land back.

Pursuing enforcement of treaty obligations and Indian Rights, War Jack was on the founding board and executive board of the Native American Rights Fund for nearly a decade and maintains a current relationship. She has been an elected councilwoman for her tribes and served on many boards both locally and nationally. Dr. War Jack completed her graduate work at Idaho State University with a Masters in Public Administration and a Doctorate of Arts Degree in Political Science, Pocatello, Idaho in 1999. She served as the Executive Director for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes for three years and is presently the President of Indigenous Visions Network. She taught classes in Native American History at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska and Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. She was also a Distinguished Professor at Boise State University teaching Native American Law and Politics.



Deborah Ann Begay, Moon Valley Justice of the Peace in Maricopa County, AZ.
Courtesy of the Deborah Begay Campaign.

Judge Deborah Ann Begay

On January 8 2020, Deborah Ann Begay became the first Native American to be elected as a judge with the Moon Valley Justice of the Peace in Maricopa County. Judge Begay earned her B.A. in Native American History from UC Berkeley in 2002 and her J.D. from Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law with a focus on Federal Indian Law. Begay is Naakai Dine'é born Kinyaa'áanii. Known as "Ann", Begay was a McNair Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley and worked in software project management in Silicon Valley post-graduation. She was an Udall Foundation Congressional Fellow at ASU and worked for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Begay is also a veteran of the United States Navy, having served 14 years in the Naval Reserves.

Prior to winning her election for the Moon Valley Justice of the Peace, Begay worked for the Arizona Department of Education, Policy & Government Relations as a Tribal Policy Specialist. She is a public speaker on matters concerning restorative justice, tribal sovereignty, LGBTQ+ inclusive practices in the workplace, theological perspectives as they relate to social justice and building diverse community partnerships. Following her swearing-in, she thanked her supporters and acknowledged the financial support she received from the Navajo Nation to pursue higher education.



Amy Lonetree, Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
Courtesy of UC Santa Cruz faculty profiles.

Dr. Amy Lonetree

Amy Lonetree is an enrolled citizen of the Ho-Chunk Nation and an Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She received her Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley in 2002. Her scholarly research focuses on Indigenous history, visual culture studies, and museum studies, and she has received fellowships in support of this work from the School for Advanced Research, the Newberry Library, the Bard Graduate Center, the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Research Center, the Institute of American Cultures at UCLA, and the University of California, Berkeley Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.

Her publications include *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012); a co-edited book with Amanda J. Cobb, *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008); and a co-authored volume, *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011). Amy is currently working on two new projects. The first is a visual history of the Ho-Chunk Nation. This research explores family history, tourism, settler colonialism, and Ho-Chunk survivance through an examination of two exceptional collections of studio portraits and tourist images of Ho-Chunk people taken between 1879-1960. The second research project is a historical study documenting the adoption of Indigenous children throughout the twentieth century.



Beth Piatote, Associate Professor of Native American Studies and Interim Director of Center for Race & Gender at the University of California, Berkeley. Courtesy of UC Berkeley faculty profiles.

Dr. Beth Piatote

Beth Piatote is a scholar of Native American/Indigenous literature and law; a creative writer of fiction, poetry, plays, and essays; and an Indigenous language revitalization activist/healer, specializing in Nez Perce language and literature. She is the author of two books: *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature* (Yale 2013), which won an MLA award; and *The Beadworkers: Stories* (Counterpoint 2019), which was longlisted for the Aspen Words Literary Prize, the PEN/Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction, and shortlisted for the California Independent Booksellers Association “Golden Poppy” Award. Her current projects include a series of scholarly essays on Indigenous law through sensory representations of sound, vision, synaesthesia, and haunting in the long 20th century literary works; essays on Indigenous language revitalization; a novel, a poetry collection, and further development of her play, *Antikoni*, which was selected for the 2020 Festival of New Plays at the Autry. She has held several artist residencies and frequently teaches writing at Fishtrap: Writing and the West and other workshops. In 2021, she will serve as a judge for the PEN America/Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize.

Beth is part of the core faculty group that created the Designated Emphasis in Indigenous Language Revitalization (established in 2018) and currently serves as Chair of the DE. She earned her PhD in Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford University and joined the Berkeley faculty in 2007. In 2020, she joined the Comparative Literature department; she holds a dual appointment in Comparative Literature and Native American Studies. She is an affiliated faculty in the Department of Linguistics; Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies; and American Studies. Beth is Nez Perce, enrolled with Colville Confederated Tribes. In addition to her research and teaching, she is involved in ongoing efforts to repatriate ancestors from museums as part of a larger movement of reparation and redress. She currently serves on the international Council of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.



Olivia Chilcote, Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies at San Diego State University, CA.
Courtesy of SDSU faculty profiles.

Dr. Olivia Chilcote

Olivia Chilcote (Luiseño, San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians) received her B.A. in the Ethnic & Women's Studies Department at Cal Poly Pomona and both M.A. and Ph.D. in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley in 2013 and 2017 respectively. She is currently an Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies at San Diego State University. Her research and teaching focus on the areas of interdisciplinary Native American Studies, federal Indian law and policy, Native American identity, and Native California. Professor Chilcote grew up in the center of her tribe's traditional territory in the North County of San Diego, and she is active in tribal politics and other community efforts. She is the first person in her tribe to earn a Ph.D.

Professor Chilcote's first book project investigates the politics and history of federal recognition in California and uses a case study of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians. Her manuscript analyzes the intricacies of identities structured by legal definitions, the ways in which unrecognized tribes assert tribal sovereignty despite legal classifications, and how tribal engagement with the Federal Acknowledgment Process is part of a longer history of U.S.-tribal relationships. Her future research will build on themes explored in her manuscript including the limits of tribal sovereignty, identity, race, and gender in unrecognized tribal contexts across California and the United States, with implications for the politics of recognition of indigenous peoples internationally.



Jen Rose Smith, Assistant Professor of Geography and American Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Courtesy of UW Madison faculty profiles.

Dr. Jen Rose Smith

Dr. Jen Rose Smith is a dAXunhyuu (Eyak, Alaska Native) geographer interested in the intersections of coloniality, race, and indigeneity as read through aesthetic and literary contributions, archival evidences, and experiential embodied knowledges. An assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Geography Department and American Indian Studies program, she earned a Ph.D. in Comparative Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley in 2019. Smith graduated with a B.A. in English Literature and the Environment from the University of Alaska, Southeast.

Smith serves on an all-Native women advisory board for the Eyak Cultural Foundation, a non-profit that organizes annual language and cultural revitalization gatherings, and directs a Cultural Mapping Project in their homelands of Eyak, Alaska. She is also an Editor as part of the Editorial Collective at the journal *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*. Smith's research has been funded by the University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, and the Ford Foundation.

Dr. Smith's book manuscript in process, *Icy Matters: Race, Indigeneity, and Coloniality in Ice-Geographies*, undertakes an analysis of coloniality and racialization in icy locales to demonstrate how ice has been a foundational object for making sense of the world and beyond. She analyzes ice in three formations: ice as a material entity and terrain of conflict; ice as a cultural and scientific imaginary; and ice as an analytic that produces a temporalized, universal logic of human historicity and futurity. By centering ice, the book investigates the milieu and non-human relations as sites and sources of analysis that are integrally bound up with colonial and racial formations.



Caitlin Keliiaa, Assistant Professor of History and Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
Courtesy of UC Santa Cruz faculty directory.

Dr. Caitlin Keliiaa

Professor Caitlin “Katie” Keliiaa is an Indigenous Feminist Historian focused on Native American experiences in the Western Pacific region. She earned a B.A. in Native American Studies and Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley; an M.A., American Indian Studies from UCLA; and Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley in 2019. She explores the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity and their historical consequences. As a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow and Assistant Professor of History and Feminist Studies at UC Santa Cruz, her scholarship centers Native agency and community engaged research. She draws from interdisciplinary fields and a variety of methodologies, including qualitative data analysis, digital humanities, oral history, in-depth interviews and archival research.

Her dissertation, “Unsettling Domesticity: Native Women and 20th-Century Federal Indian Policy in the San Francisco Bay Area,” examines labor history and dispossession that continues the U.S. project of settler colonialism, genocide, and surveillance of Native bodies. Specifically, this project examines how Native women domestic workers negotiated and challenged the Bay Area Outing Program. It focuses on how Native girls and women were able to create communities, access education, and leave the situations they were forced to be in. Native women’s voices, uncovered from federal archives, are the heart of her study. This project has been supported by competitive grants from the Ford Foundation, The American Council of Learned Societies, and the American Indian Graduate Center, among other organizations.

Acknowledgements

These profiles were created and compiled by Patrick Naranjo, Director of AIGP, and Mary Tan, Class of 2020. This effort marks the start of an initiative to highlight the achievements of Native American and Indigenous alumni.

Resources

Indigenous Leaders - 150 Years of Women

<https://grad.berkeley.edu/american-indian-graduate-program/indigenous-leaders-150w/>

150 Years of Women at Berkeley (150W):

<https://150w.berkeley.edu/>

American Indian Graduate Program (AIGP):

<https://grad.berkeley.edu/american-indian-graduate-program/>

Berkeley Graduate Division:

<https://grad.berkeley.edu/>