



## Saginaw Grant to Receive Humanitarian Award

By Simon Moya-Smith (Courtesy of Indian Country Today)

Actor and public speaker Saginaw Grant will be honored next month with an award by a California nonprofit for his commitment to Native American communities.

Grant, who is a citizen of the Sac and Fox, Iowa and Otoe-Missouria nations, will receive the 2015 Native American Humanitarian of the Year Award from Four Directions Education -- an Orange County, California-based nonprofit working to get more Native Americans into college.

In 2013, Grant, who has appeared in AMC's Breaking Bad and Jerry Bruckheimer's The Lone Ranger, told ICTMN he works tirelessly to inspire Native Americans of every age.

"Every morning, I start off my day by talking to the Creator," he said. "And these are the things I tell my young people: Keep true to who you are. You are a Native person. You're different than all these other cultures. It doesn't hurt to compliment somebody. This is what I teach the young people. I go to recov-

ery houses where men are suffering and wanting to get away from alcohol. I know that life. I've been through it. And when I talk to them they know I've had that experience that they are in or are going through. I'm somewhat successful in my endeavor. I was at one time an alcoholic myself, but I'm no longer an alcoholic. And it makes me feel very proud because I'm making up for what disgrace I did bring to my people when I was using alcohol. I try to get this across to our people who are still suf-



Actor Saginaw Grant, (left) walks the red carpet at the premiere of The Lone Ranger at Disneyland California Adventure in Anaheim, California, in June 2013. Grant will be honored with a humanitarian award in 2015. (Photo courtesy Jonathan Wheelhouse)

## It's Time to Bring Home Jim Thorpe

Harlan McKosato (Courtesy of Indian Country Today)



Harlan McKosato is a citizen of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma. He is the Director of NDN Productions, an independent media production company based in Albuquerque. (source Myspace.com)

On the surface it seems like quite an honor to have a town named after you. Take the case of what is officially known as the Borough of Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. It's a municipality named after the Olympic champion and the American sports legend from the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma. Growing up and reading about arguably the most famous Native American of the 20th Century (Thorpe) I was always puzzled about one part of his biography. Why was he buried in Pennsylvania?

It's been over 100 years since Jim Thorpe was crowned "World's Greatest Athlete" by the King of Sweden in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics after winning a Gold Medal in both the decathlon and the pentathlon. Combined they are actually 15 different track and field events. No one else has ever accomplished this feat.

The Washington Post has

called Thorpe "the star who almost single-handedly created professional football." He also played professional baseball. In 2000 he was voted "Athlete of the 20th Century" by ABC's Wide World of Sports, beating out Babe Ruth and Muhammad Ali. These awards have extra significance to me because I am a citizen of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma as well. Although not related directly by blood, our families have been very close for generations. My son affectionately calls him "Grandpa Jim."

Under the surface is where this story gets complicated. You see, come to find out Jim Thorpe never wanted to be buried in Pennsylvania even though he attended the Carlisle Indian School in the Keystone State and made his fame as a college football player there. He wanted to be buried in a traditional burial with his family and Sac and Fox people.

It's a long story but here's the short version. After his death in April 1953 his third wife Patricia Askew Thorpe, a non-Indian, burst into Thorpe's traditional Sac and Fox funeral wake with Oklahoma state troopers at her side. She ordered him to be loaded up and whisked him away in the middle of the night, and had him put in a mausoleum. The ceremony was never completed. She started shopping the legendary athlete's body to the highest bidder.

Two dying coal mining towns called Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk, tucked away in the Poconos of Pennsylvania, went in together to

buy his remains for a reported \$25,000 and renamed their two towns jointly -- the Borough of Jim Thorpe. It was meant to attract tourists, but it only created a trickle. Maybe the NFL would choose the little town for their Hall of Fame location? It didn't happen.

According to Steve Ward, an Indian law attorney who represents the tribe and Thorpe's two remaining sons, Richard and William, grandiose plans were made to use Thorpe's body to reverse the town's economic fortunes. Plans called for the commercialization of the Jim Thorpe name, to include a football shrine, a museum, a 500-bed hospital, an Olympic stadium and a sporting goods factory. None of these plans were ever realized, and the Borough of Jim Thorpe continues in decline today. Let's fast forward.

In June of 2010, Thorpe's sons filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, citing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or NAGPRA. The Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma also joined the suit in the U.S. District Court of Pennsylvania to bring Thorpe's remains back to finish his traditional burial. The delay in filing was because of the son's respect for the wishes of Thorpe's daughters to leave him in Pennsylvania. When all the daughters passed away, the sons filed the suit. The case is known as John Thorpe, Sac and Fox Nation et al. v. Borough of Jim Thorpe et al.

The final judgment of the district court was filed on April 19, 2013. Judge Richard Caputo ruled that NAGPRA, by its plain language, was applicable to Jim Thorpe's remains. The tribe and the Thorpe family were all anticipating the homecoming of this Olympic champion and hero sometime this year. Of course, the Borough refused to follow the order and appealed the ruling, saying basically that they had "bought him fair and square" and that his remains should remain their property even though the family and tribe have said the Borough can keep the Thorpe name.

On October 23, 2014, a three- (Continued on Page 3)

fering from it. The Creator gave us the ability to know right from wrong. We just have to make the right decision. Today, if we live by these principles, we can be happy."

Four Directions Education will host its "Honoring Traditions" gala January 31, 2015

from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at El Adobe in San Juan Capistrano, California. The gala is open to the public.

Read more at <http://indian-countrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/12/25/saginaw-grant-receive-humanitarian-award-158446>

## Chief's Address To The Nation

Happy New Year! I'm very excited about the direction that our Sac & Fox Nation is moving and the year 2015 promises to be a very prosperous time for our Nation. The planning for a new health clinic; development of an economic development department; obtaining a grant's writer; plans to improve our tribal parking lots; implementation of VAWA; obtaining new software for financial reporting; updating our code of laws and adding new laws; and planning to initiate electronic filing of records are just some of the things planned or have been implemented. Our tribal government is not stagnant, we are moving in the right direction which is forward!

National News

Congress' HR 83 with Amendments Now Signed into Law

President Obama signed into law, as PL 113-235 the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 on December 16, 2014. This act is an Omnibus bill package which provides yearlong funding to a number of programs which affect our community. Included in the bill is continuous funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs programs, in-

cluding those related to Self-Governance and Education, which are of a major concern for our nation. Also included in the funding package are funds for Housing Projects and the USDA Food Distribution Programs. The bill is a great leap forward in this direction because it makes the funds we receive available for the entire fiscal year instead of the smaller continuing resolution appropriations bills that were being approved in the following years on a shorter basis. This allows our programs to meet their federal trust requirements but also to meet the service needs of all the members who participate in these programs.

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that this legislation passed as I personally wrote letters to the Oklahoma Congressmen urging them to act on this measure with full approval. I even conveyed my sentiments on the issues to Representative Coles office over the phone in early December. The approval of this measure is a great benefit for us and we look forward to being able to have our programs fully funded to serve the needs of our members for the entire year.

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## Upcoming Events

**January 13**  
Sac and Fox Nation  
Veterans Meeting  
Cultural Center

**January 14**  
Sac and Fox Elders  
Monthly Meeting  
Stroud

**December 18**  
Sac and Fox Nation  
Womens Auxillary



Employee of the Year: Mason Williamson was named "Employee of the Year" at the annual employee Christmas dinner. (SFNews)