

**APPROVED BIOGRAPHIES FOR  
WORKING TOWARDS RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES**

**Jerilyn DeCoteau** is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota. She received her law degree from the University of Oregon. As a lawyer, she has pressed for the rights of Indian tribes to govern themselves, control their resources and insure human rights for their members. She practiced Indian law at the Native American Rights Fund, U.S. Department of Justice, and for her Tribe. She was Director of the Indian Law Clinic at the University of Colorado and has taught Indian law courses at Yale Law School, the University of Denver law school, and at the Turtle Mountain Community College.

Jerilyn co-directs Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, a program of Friends Peace Teams. She is co-founder of Right Relationship Boulder, and she was instrumental in establishing Boulder's Indigenous Peoples Day. She currently serves as Chief Justice for the Pueblo of San Ildefonso Supreme Court. She consults on issues of tribal governance, capacity building, and the legacy of the Indian boarding schools.

Jerilyn is the past-president of the board of directors of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. She also served on the board of the YWCA of Boulder County and volunteered with its Reading to End Racism project. In 2002 she received the Multicultural Award for Government, awarded by Boulder County Community Action Programs.

**William David** is currently Director of Lands, Territories and Resources with the Assembly of First Nations. He holds a degree in environmental engineering science from MIT and a law degree from the University of Ottawa. Mr. David has over 20 years of experience working to advance the rights of indigenous peoples at the community, national and international levels. He has served as a Director for MiningWatch Canada and is currently a Director with Nature Canada.

**Freida J. Jacques**, whose native name is Whatwehni:neh, is a Clanmother of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, where she resides and which she has served for more than 40 years. For 21 years, Freida served as the home/school liaison for the Onondaga Nation School. She has served as a bridge between her culture and many educational institutions in New York City.

Starting before her retirement, Freida offered Traditional Life lessons as a New York Humanities Scholar to organizations, libraries, and historical centers throughout New York State. In her retirement she has helped develop the script for the Skanonh Great Law of Peace Center in Liverpool, NY. The Center teaches others about Onondaga culture, including the importance of all of humanity understanding that they depend on the

natural world and that Peace was established without war in Haudenosaunee Country, finalized on the shores of Onondaga Lake.

In the last couple of years, Freida has worked with Neighbors of Onondaga Nation (NOON- a subgroup of Syracuse Peace Council). NOON was granted permission from the organization KAIROS in Canada to use a basic blanket exercise that was used to teach Canadians what First Nations people experienced over the past 500 years in North America. NOON and myself and others realized that it did not cover our Haudenosaunee and Central NY well, so research was done, and the script was written for our area. The script was accepted by KAIROS, and we went through facilitator training with KAIROS. Our facilitators are taking groups from NYC, Rochester, and Buffalo through the exercise, which they call "Witness to Injustice." This past fall, we were very excited to share this exercise with the 11th grade students in the Syracuse City School District. Now with the pandemic, our group is working on how to present this historical exercise via ZOOM.

**The Rev. Dr. J.R. Norwood** is the Principal Justice of the Tribal Supreme Court of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, which he also served as a Councilman for over fifteen years. He is the Co-Chair of the Task Force on Federal Acknowledgment of the National Congress of American Indians and the General Secretary of the Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes. Dr. Norwood founded "First Light Mission," an indigenous Christian ministry. He has served for over twenty-eight years as the pastor of the Ujima Village Christian Church of Ewing, NJ, a non-tribal independent Reformed congregation. He has represented his tribe at the national and international level and has been an advisor to government commissions, testified before the United States Congress, published works and lectured in Theology, History, Culture, and indigenous issues and has been featured in numerous documentaries. He is a board member of the Penn Treaty Museum and a scholar advisor for the Faith and Liberty Discovery Center. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Missiology (Theology of Missions).

**Kenneth Deer** is a member of the Bear Clan from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake and Secretary of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake.

He is the former editor of *The Eastern Door*, an award-winning and independent newspaper serving his community. Mr. Deer has been active at the community level for many years in the areas of education, recreation, and indigenous rights. He has been involved for 16 years in education as an education counselor, high school principal, co-founder of the First Nations Education Council and co-founder and co-chairman of the National Indian Education Council in Canada.

For the last 32 years he has worked as a political activist and has been heavily involved in the Indigenous International Movement at the United Nations in Geneva and New York. He attended most of the meetings on the development of the UN Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples and organizes the Indigenous Caucus in both Geneva and New York.

Mr. Deer was also the Chairman/Rapporteur of the UN Workshop on Indigenous Media in New York in December of 2000. His report can be found at E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2001/3.

He was a member of the Board of Directors for the Quebec Community Newspapers Association from 1999-2001.

Mr. Deer also represented the Indigenous Media Network during the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society which took place in Tunis in November 2005.

He is a member of the Indigenous ICT Task Force which operates [www.indigenouportal.com](http://www.indigenouportal.com).

He also attended the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 as an invited journalist and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 to handle media for the Indigenous Caucus.

Mr. Deer has been appointed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund on Indigenous Peoples from 2008 to 2014.

He was at one time a North American rep on the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group for the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

He recently received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2010 for Media and Communications.

He received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in 2015.

He founded *The Eastern Door* community newspaper in 1992, which won many awards for journalism and editorial writing.

He currently is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Indigenous World Association and continues to advocate for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the UN in New York and Geneva.

He is also a member of the Haudenosaunee External Relations Committee.

**Dennis J. Coker**, a lifelong resident of Kent County, Delaware, has been honored to be elected Principal Chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware since 1996. During his term, successful collaborations with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Census Bureau, his Tribe was awarded a Census Designation Area allowing Tribal members to include their ethnicity as Lenape on the 2010 Census for the first time in history. On August 3, 2016 Delaware's Governor, Jack Markell, signed legislation officially recognizing the long and continued history of the Lenape Community in the state of Delaware.

Chief Coker's service as a past Chairman of the Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes of the Delaware Bay has allowed him to effect progress towards recognition of the Indigenous human rights of all member Tribes. His membership in the National Congress of the American Indian (NCIA) and founding membership in the Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes (ACET) has brought recognition, furthered understandings, and developed collaborations for the betterment of Delaware's Indigenous population.

As a well-respected public speaker and story teller, Chief Coker has helped educate diverse leadership as well as the public leading to Delaware's General Assembly proclamation that all residents celebrate November as Native American Heritage Month and learn to honor "The First People of the First State." In his well-received keynote address at Delaware's First Annual Environmental Justice Conference, Chief Coker challenged educators to learn and pass on the Lenape view of the interconnectedness of all living things, the sanctity of place, and the concept that man is but one small part of the web of life, not the center of it.

Collaborating with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Renewable Energy Initiative, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of the Oceans (MARCO) and his membership on the Chesapeake Bay Advisory Council, Chief Coker's rare sensitivity for the balance of ecology, economy, and ethnicity makes him a valued member of many committees and task forces where he continues to work diligently with federal, state and local governments to improve the health and wellbeing of the Lenape People remaining in their original homeland, now known as the State of Delaware.

Chief Coker currently sits on the boards of Friends of Delaware Archives, Inc., Preservation Delaware, Inc., and Friends of the First State National Park. In 2020, National Geographic designated Chief Coker a National Geographic Explorer 2020.

**Elicia Goodsoldier** (she/her) is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and is a relative of the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe. She is the Children and Youth Training Coordinator at Red Wind Consulting and also consults as a TA Specialist with the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. She frequently presents on understanding historical and intergenerational trauma and creating awareness of the importance and efficacy of traditional and spiritual healing within Native communities as well creating. She also seeks to educate non-Native folks, on cultural and spiritual co-option and the increasing commercialization of Indigenous spirituality in the new age market that displaces, distorts, marginalizes and belittles Indigenous histories and identities. She has served on the Board of Directors for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and the Cultural Competency Advisory Council for the Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Health and Human Services. Elicia served as Co-Chair of the Denver American Indian Commission. Her most important work is being a mother to three teenagers.

**Cante' Waste Win (Good Hearted Woman)** is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe. She is also a relative to the Navajo Nation and Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes. Cante' is currently in her second year at Arizona State University, majoring in Secondary

Education. After graduation, she wants to return to her home community on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation to teach high school history courses. She has been a peer mentor for six years at a traditional youth healing camp on Pine Ridge, that works with young women who have experienced trauma. For her volunteerism, she received the 2018 Robert Wood Johnson Youth Health Equity award. She enjoys beading and sewing and making tik toks to educate mainstream society on American Indian issues.

**Denise Altvater**, Passamaquoddy from Sipayik, has served as Coordinator of Wabanaki Youth Program for the American Friends Service Committee for over twenty-five years. She was central to the creation, design, and implementation of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, being the first to share her experiences in state foster care with the community and public. Denise now serves as Treasurer for the REACH Board of Directors and the Finance Committee.

**Esther Anne**, Passamaquoddy from Sipayik, joined the Muskie School of Public Service in 2003 where she works on projects that engage and benefit tribal communities including facilitating the Maine tribal state Indian Child Welfare Act workgroup and creating child welfare resources with the Capacity Building Center for Tribes. She had a primary role in the creation and establishment of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Maine-Wabanaki REACH. Esther now serves as secretary for the REACH Board of Directors and the Fundraising Development Committee.

**Pentheia Burns** has worked at the University Of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service since 1999 and in the field of child welfare since 1981. Her experience includes delivering direct service, advocacy, training and technical assistance, and policy guidance. Pentheia currently serves on the REACH Board of Directors (Board co-chair), Fundraising Development Committee, and initiatives focused on decolonizing higher education and faith communities. She is a co-founder of Maine-Wabanaki REACH, the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (youth leaders in foster care), and Camp To Belong Maine (a summer camp program that reunites siblings separated by foster care and adoption). Pentheia has an adult son who lives in PA.