



AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND
EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

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Native American Higher Education Professionals and Students Earn Top Awards from American Indian College Fund and Adolph Coors Foundation

March 20, 2017, Denver, Colo.– The American Indian College Fund honored 34 American Indian tribal college students of the year, tribal college president Dr. Laurel Vermillion, and U.S. Department of Education employee John Gritts on March 19 at the 2017 Student of the Year and Coca Cola Award Banquet in Rapid City, South Dakota in conjunction with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Spring Student Conference.

Dr. Laurel Vermillion, President of Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, North Dakota and a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation, was named the 2017 American Indian College Fund TCU Honoree of the Year. This honor recognizes a distinguished individual who has made a positive and lasting impact on the tribal college movement. Dr. Vermillion was chosen for her leadership in expanding opportunities in workforce education, business, and environmental science through developing an exemplary relationship with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, allowing Sitting Bull College to lead and collaborate with all educational entities on the reservation, in addition to her support of Lakota language education within her community and throughout the Lakota Nation.

In addition John Gritts, management and program analyst, Federal Student Aid department, U.S. Department of Education, was awarded the American Indian College Fund's first Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his ongoing service in supporting and furthering the missions of tribal colleges and universities throughout his career. Gritts said, "When I learned about the award, I was totally shocked. When you work, doing your job, you are not looking for these things. When you learn about tribal colleges and universities, you can always be an advocate."

In honor of their service, President Vermillion and John Gritts were each wrapped with a Pendleton blanket and presented with a \$1,200 honorarium provided by the Adolph Coors Foundation. Mr. Gritts's honorarium is being donated in memory of his son, Trevour Joe Gritts, to the Salish Kootenai College Foundation.



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The following students were named 2016-2017 students of the year by their tribal colleges and the American Indian College Fund. They each received a \$1,200 scholarship from the Adolph Coors Foundation.

Jacob Doney, Aaniiih Nakoda College
Ronald Carrick, Bay Mills Community College
Terydon Hall, Blackfeet Community College
Danacia Greywater, Cankdeska Cikana Community College
Savannah Chavez-Charette, Chief Dull Knife College
Franny Reiter, College of Menominee Nation
Allissa Bell, College of Muscogee Nation
Kimberly Chavez, Diné College
Tamara Montano, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Donovan Archambault Jr., Fort Peck Community College
Marcell Grant, Haskell Indian Nations University
Ashley Reich, Ilisagvik College
Manuel Ramirez, Institute of American Indian Arts
Michelle Moulden, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
Charity Valentin, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College
Adriana Kingbird, Leech Lake Tribal College
Jesse LaForge, Little Big Horn College
Tyren King, Little Priest Tribal College
Felicia Chischilly, Navajo Technical College
Anthony Sharpfish, Nebraska Indian Community College
Azure Boure, Northwest Indian College
Florence Garrett, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
Darin Janis, Oglala Lakota College
Anna Winters, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
Robin Maxkií, Salish Kootenai College
Tanya Larvie, Sinte Gleska University
Maurice Redday, Sisseton Wahpeton College
Christina Dwarf, Sitting Bull College
Ivan Toya, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
Joanie Bull-In-Sight, Stone Child College
Jasmine Lopez, Tohono O'odham Community College
Memphis Belgarde, Turtle Mountain Community College
Darla Pikyavit, United Tribes Technical College
Sasha Munnell, White Earth Tribal and Community College



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About the American Indian College Fund

Founded in 1989, the American Indian College Fund has been the nation's largest charity supporting Native higher education for more than 25 years. The College Fund believes "Education is the answer" and has provided more than 100,000 scholarships since its inception and an average of 6,000 scholarships per year to American Indian students. The College Fund also supports a variety of academic and support programs, ensuring students have the tools to graduate and succeed in their careers. The College Fund consistently receives top ratings from independent charity evaluators. For more information about the American Indian College Fund, please visit www.collegefund.org.