

THE LANGUAGE CONSERVANCY AND LAKOTA LANGUAGE CONSORTIUM MOURN THE LOSS OF OUR FRIEND, KEVIN LOCKE, ACCLAIMED LANGUAGE CHAMPION, EDUCATOR, FLUTIST, AND HOOP DANCER

Visionary Language Preservationist Dedicated His Life to Indigenous Languages, Teaching Young People The Lakota Language, Culture, and History

BLOOMINGTON, Ind., Oct. 6, 2022 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Kevin Locke, who passed on October 1, 2022, was noted for his outstanding efforts to preserve Native American languages, music, and culture. He was a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and was of Lakota and Anishinabe descent. Mr. Locke was closely aligned with The Language Conservancy (TLC) and the Lakota Language Consortium (LLC) and their mission to preserve and revitalize indigenous languages in North America.

For more than 15 years, Locke served as an LLC board member and volunteered and spoke on behalf of TLC at events around the world. As one of the first adult learners of the Lakota language, Locke was a role model, instrumental in language documentation, maintenance, and revitalization. His passion for languages was sparked by his own efforts as a young adult, learning Lakota by visiting elders and studying on Standing Rock. Locke looked to the past and to the future, drawing on his heritage to create a better future for his people.

An enormously gifted musician and dancer, he was widely recognized as one of the world's foremost Northern Plains flute players and hoop dancers. Locke performed for more than a million people in more than 90 countries at venues including schools, powwows, state and national parks, performing arts festivals (including the Smithsonian Folklife Festival), and at the Library of Congress. The Native American music award-winner recorded 12 highly acclaimed albums of music and stories to keep his culture alive. He was honored with numerous prestigious awards throughout his career, including a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, the highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

A deeply spiritual person, Kevin Locke was particularly committed to bringing the gift of language to young people on reservations so that their history and culture would remain vital for generations to come. He championed teaching indigenous languages in schools and was instrumental in helping to incorporate them into the classroom. Working closely with TLC and LLC, he made enormous contributions to the organizations through volunteering, performing, and developing learning/teaching tools and content used widely in Native American schools.

"Kevin's presence will be missed though his spirit will remain with us as we advance our mission of protecting and strengthening the Lakota language. We continue this important work in his honor and to honor our people," said TLC and LLC Board Member Ben Black Bear.

"There are no words to describe the depth of loss we feel at Kevin's passing, but we take solace in knowing that his inextinguishable spirit and commitment to language revitalization lives on, both in the lives of those he touched and in future generations of indigenous young people," said Wil Meya, TLC CEO. "He will be missed greatly as we continue this work, which he was so passionate about."

About The Language Conservancy

The Language Conservancy is a nonprofit organization leading the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages by developing innovative technologies and learning materials, conducting educational events, and raising awareness about the escalating loss of language worldwide. The Language Conservancy currently works with more than 50 indigenous language communities throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Australia. For more information, please visit www.languageconservancy.org.


About The Lakota Language Consortium

The Lakota Language Consortium is a nonprofit organization of Lakota community members, educators, and linguists working to revitalize the Lakota Language through the development of educational materials and technologies and the training of teachers. The Consortium also supports learners through the production of inventive media productions like the Lakota version of The Berenstain Bears and the documentary, Rising

Voices. For more information, please visit www.lakhota.org.

SOURCE The Language Conservancy (TLC)

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