

“People are like trees, and groups of people are like forests. While the forests are composed of many different kinds of trees, these trees intertwine their roots so strongly that it is impossible for the strongest winds which blow on our Islands to uproot the forest, for each tree strengthens its neighbor, and their roots are inextricably entwined.

“In the same way, the people of our Islands, composed of members of nations and races from all over the world, are beginning to intertwine their roots so strongly that no troubles will affect them.

“Just as one tree standing alone would soon be destroyed by the first strong wind which came along, so is it impossible for any person, any family, or any community to stand alone against the troubles of this world.”

Haida Chief Skidegate (Lewis Collinson)
March, 1966

Creating the New Paradigm for Survival

The principal objective of the 2007 Forum is to fulfill a 2005 Elders Circle mandate: “get the Elder voice out” and get dialogue started across cultures. The essential elements of their message include:

- ✚ We are destroying the earth and the life on it.
- ✚ We are killing each other. War and genocide are rampant in many parts of the world because of race, ethnicity, religion and greed. The same factors, along with drugs and alcohol, are at work in more subtle ways throughout the world.
- ✚ The indigenous voice is the only one that takes a holistic view of both environmental and social destruction. The indigenous voice is ancient and proven. It is a spiritual voice unencumbered by religious dogma. It is not parochial or selfish, and can be a saving factor in meeting the issues that threaten the world.

Ancient Voices Contemporary Contexts

A People's Cross-Cultural Forum at Haida Gwaii

September 14-16, 2007 at the new Haida Heritage Center
at Qay'llnagaay, Haida Gwaii, British Columbia

Photo by Rolf Bettner

Haida Gwaii Ancient Voices Forum Keynote Speakers



Photo by Joe Cantrell

Giindajin Guujaaw is of the Raven clan of the Haida Nation. Born in Masset in northern Haida Gwaii, he is of the Gakyaals Kiiqawaay Skedans Ravens like his

mother. His father, Chiits Gitnail, is an Eagle from the Yakoun River. Guujaaw is a past 'Firekeeper' for the Hereditary Chiefs of Haida Gwaii, and is currently President of the Haida Nation.

Traditional and political leader, talented carver, traditional medicine practitioner, singer, teacher, and negotiator; Guujaaw has worked with great dedication and purpose for more than three decades to advance the cultural, political, and environmental interests of the Haida Nation.



Photo by Danny Beaton

Tom Porter is the Chief Spiritual Leader of the Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke in Fonda, New York. A member of the Bear Clan, he was acting Bear Clan Chief in the

traditional longhouse movement, opposite the state-sanctioned Tribal Council. He has served numerous positions on the Mohawk Nation of Chiefs Council for over 25 years.

A nationally recognized figure in Indian Country since the 1960s, he co-founded the White Roots of Peace, a group of Iroquois Elders who toured the country encouraging Indians to embrace their respective Native traditions.



Photo by Danny Beaton

Angaangaq Lyberth, whose name means "The Man Who Looks Like His Uncle" is an Eskimo-Kalaallit Elder whose family belongs to the traditional healers of the Far North from Kalaallit

Nunaat, Greenland. As a traditional healer, storyteller, and carrier of a Qilaut (drum), he conducts Healing Circles, Intensives, and sweat lodges integrating the wisdom of traditional Inuit teachings from the unwritten healing traditions of the Eskimo-Kalaallit people.

He is known for his "Teaching of the North".

An Unprecedented Gathering

Seldom have so many traditional grassroots spiritual leaders of Indigenous nations of North America come together to share their cultural and spiritual wisdom with non-Native people. Contemporary social and environmental problems are in desperate need of alternative approaches. The traditional Native perspective offers new ground from which to address these issues.

The voice of Elders is an ancient voice with deep spiritual roots.

Participants at the Ancient Voices Forum will have an opportunity to share in the perspective of traditional Native American leaders and together will:

- 📖 Explore our common concerns about the human condition in modern times.
- 📖 Seek ways of living within the natural capacities of the earth.
- 📖 Recognize what the future holds for our children, and explore alternatives.

The ancient indigenous voice is relevant to today's world, and *may hold keys to our common survival*. This three-day Forum offers participants a unique opportunity to sit with the most revered traditional voices from Indian country – to hear first-hand their perspectives and concerns, and to explore these ideas in close dialogue.

The Elders will begin each day in ceremony of thanksgiving. A keynote address will follow, laying the foundation for discussions in small group sessions, each led by one or more traditional leaders. These sessions provide the opportunity for close exploration and discussion of traditional indigenous wisdom and its modern relevance and implications.

Afternoons will be devoted to small group activities out in the physical indigenous environment and in the community. Outdoor activities will include a trip in a Haida ocean-going canoe, visits to cultural sites, and walks to other special places on the island. Elders or traditional leaders will accompany the groups to interpret deeper meaning and to make the outings more enriching.

In the community, sharing cultural elements such as art, music and dance will reflect a sense of community and common humanity critical to understanding indigenous culture.

As a way for Forum participants to honor local Elders and members of the community, there will be a community dinner held on Saturday night hosted by the American Indian Institute and Forum participants.

General Forum Schedule

September 14 - Friday

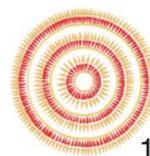
Forum Registration
Opening Ceremony & Plenary Welcome
Haida Gwaii: Historical Contexts & Keynote Address
Discussion Circles
Community Cross-Cultural Activities
Dinner & Haida Culture

September 15 - Saturday

Morning Ceremony
Keynote Address
Discussion Circles
Community Cross-Cultural Activities
Community Dinner & Haida Culture

September 16 - Sunday

Morning Ceremony
Keynote Address
Discussion Circles & Plenary Roundtable
Community Cross-Cultural Activities
Dinner, Storytelling, Singing, & Closing Ceremony



Cosponsors are the Haida Nation, Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, and the American Indian Institute, Post Office Box 1388, Bozeman, Montana 59771-1388

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