



American Indian Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

For Immediate Release - January 18, 2019
22nd Annual Evening of American Indian Storytelling

American Indian Studies (AIS), presents the 22nd Annual Evening of American Indian Storytelling on February 1, 2019, from 7pm-9pm in the H.F. Deluca Forum at the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery.

Each year, this unique event features esteemed Native Elders from across North America who tell traditional stories in their Indigenous language followed by an English translation. The Evening of Storytelling provides the audience with an authentic and invaluable glimpse of the indigenous North American narrative tradition and supports the preservation of oral traditions, language and culture. It also forges important connections between tribal and non-tribal communities, between generations, and between cultures. Over the past two decades, this event has become a widely anticipated date in the community calendar. This year's event will feature Elders from the US and Canada as well as the UW Wunk Sheek Student Drum group, whose voices and drums create an ideal atmosphere for wintertime storytelling.

Storytelling is an important tradition in Native communities as storytellers harness the power of language to move us beyond everyday worries and to contemplate the larger world around us. The stories are living documents that teach important lessons about the natural environment, spiritual life, and tribal history. While storytelling in Native communities is not theatrical, it is a dramatic method of communicating knowledge. Storytellers often incorporate music and dance, and the audience's experience varies greatly depending on the storyteller. Storytelling is addressed in a number of courses on UW's campus. These courses help introduce students to American Indian cultures and their traditional stories. Students enjoy storytelling because it integrates humor and drama with deep moral quandaries applicable to our time. It offers students new perspectives from which to experience humankind's relationship to the earth, sky, and fellow humans.

Building on the last twenty years of success, we have invited storytellers from a broad range of cultures. **Mary Louise Defender-Wilson** (Dakota/Hidatsa) is a nationally renowned elder, storyteller, and traditionalist enrolled at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation of North Dakota. She has been honored for her artistry with a National Endowment for the Arts *National Heritage Award*, the *Jennifer Easton Community Spirit Award* from the First People's Fund, the *H. Council Trenholm Memorial Award for Human and Civil Rights* from the National Education Association, and many more. **Jerry Dearly** (Lakota) is a distinguished educator who taught elementary education and American Indian Language and Culture in Saint Paul Public Schools for nearly three decades. He co-created the curriculum for Lakota-Dakota language classes and was honored as the American Indian Educator of the year by the American Indian Graduation Committee of Minnesota. **Patricia Ningewance** (Ojibwe) is from Lac Seul First Nation in northwestern Ontario. She has traveled throughout Anishinaabe country where Ojibwe is spoken and has 30 years of experience in language teaching, translation, and media work. She has written language books including: "Survival Ojibwe," "Anishinaabemodaa: Becoming a Successful Ojibwe Eavesdropper," and "Talking Gookom's Language." **Brian McInnes** (Ojibwe) is an enrolled member of the Wasauksing First Nation and an engaged community member, dedicated to diversity education, environmental awareness, youth engagement, Indigenous language, and American Indian traditions and leadership. Brian leads the Minnesota Indigenous Youth Freedom Project and works with the Enweyang Language Nest, the Minisinaakwaang Leadership Academy, and the Maawanjii'idiwag program. He is also a distinguished professor in the Department of Education at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

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