Institute of American Indian Arts' 40th Anniversary Also Observed

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WASHINGTON – The Department of the Interior will celebrate this year's National American Indian Heritage Month on Thursday, November 21, with an observance of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), the nation's only Congressionally chartered school for American Indian and Alaska Native arts. IAIA President Della Warrior, a member of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe in Oklahoma, will be the keynote speaker at the Department's event, which will start at 10:00 a.m. (EST) in the Sydney R. Yates auditorium in the main Interior building in Washington, D.C. Also present will be Geraldine Barney, an IAIA alumnus and a member of the Navajo Nation, who will perform her own compositions and sing traditional Navajo songs.

"Art is an integral part of American Indian and Alaska Native cultural expression," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb. "National American Indian Heritage Month is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the contributions the Institute of American Indian Arts has made to increasing the public's awareness and understanding of all Native cultures."

Thursday's event, which has as its theme "Celebrating Our Past, Creating Our Future," also will include the opening of an exhibit from IAIA in the Interior Department's museum to accompany the 40th anniversary observance. Twenty-seven works of painting, sculpture, poetry and jewelry will be displayed presenting the creativity of American Indian artists in interpreting a rich diversity of cultural traditions. The exhibit continues on display through November 29, 2002, and features works of alumni and current students as well as faculty members.

Some of the American Indian art world's brightest stars have passed through IAIA's doors as students or faculty. Among them are Charles Loloma (Hopi), Fritz Scholder (Mission), Dan Namingha (Tewa-Hopi), Earl Biss (Crow) and Allan Houser (Apache).

The Institute of American Indian Arts was founded in 1962 under the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as a high school with a special emphasis on the fine arts, including a post-secondary art program. The high school program was phased out in the mid-1970s and efforts were made to gain college accreditation for the Institute, which became a two-year college in 1975. In 1986, President Reagan signed into law P.L. 99-498 establishing the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, a successor entity to IAIA that retained the school's original name and initials. The Institute now offers four-year degree programs, operates as a public-private partnership and includes a contemporary Indian art museum.

Della Warrior was named president of the Institute in 1998 after having served as the school's development director for over four years. Under her tenure as president, she led the Institute to full accreditation for its academic programs. Warrior is the first and only woman elected as chairperson and

to serve as chief executive officer for her tribe. She has a Master of Arts Degree from Harvard University's School of Education.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of tribal governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The Assistant Secretary, who oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is also responsible for providing services to approximately 1.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives from the 562 federally recognized tribes.

The Interior Museum is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except for federal holidays) and the third Saturday of each month from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. Adults must present photo identification when entering the Interior building at 1849 C Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. For information, call 202-208-4743. For photographic prints, contact Anne James, Assistant Curator, The Interior Museum, at 202-208- 4659.

Note to Editors: *Program information about DOI's National American Indian Heritage Month event, including a photo of Della Warrior, may be viewed via the Department's web site at www.doi.gov*
