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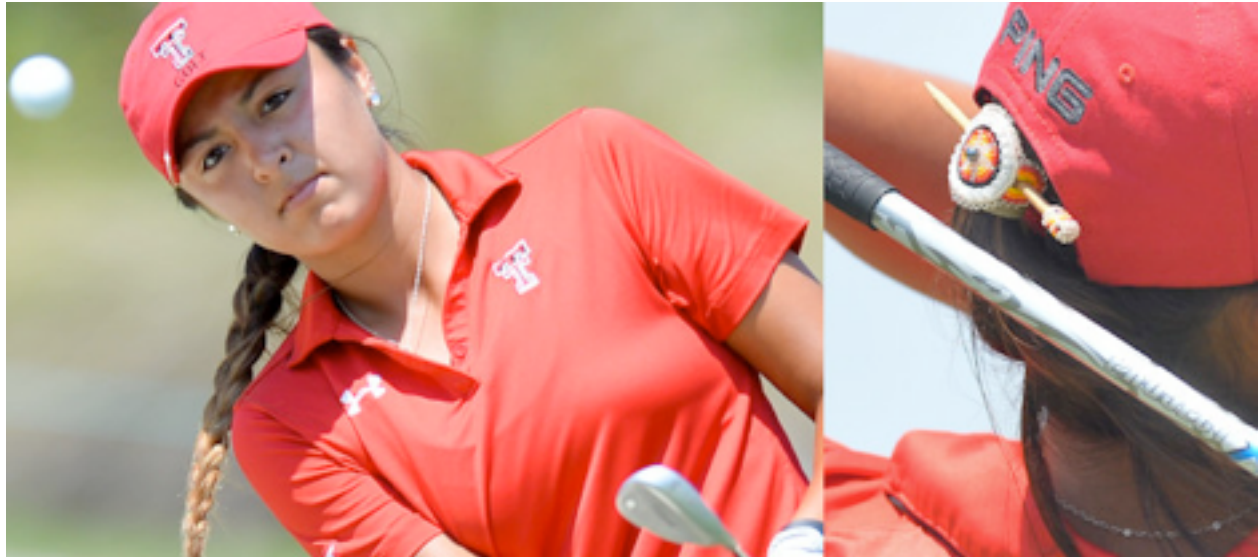
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Gabby Barker (Shoshone-Paiute) has been tabbed as the nation's No. 8 women's collegiate golfer in the latest GolfWeek rankings Posted on October 12, 2015 by...ndnsports.com

In the Land of My Ancestors: Native Woman Stands Her Ground in Ohlone Territory

Monday, 12 October 2015 00:00 By [Rucha Chitnis](#), [Indian Country Today Media Network](#) | Photo Essay

"I am living my dream to live in the same home site of my ancestors," said Anne Marie Sayers. "I can literally feel my ancestors dancing when there is a ceremony going on." (Photo: Rucha Chitnis)

Also see: [Winnemem Wintu Fight for Cultural Survival in Northern California](#)

Ann Marie Sayers walks by Cottonwood and Sycamore trees, stopping to examine poison oak. She gently cradles the leaves. "They don't bother me. I have a relationship with them," she says. And this relationship, Sayers knows, spans millennia. She is right at home in Indian Canyon, the only federally recognized Indian country for over 300 miles from Sonoma to the coast of Santa

Barbara. "I was born and raised in the Indian Canyon. My umbilical chord was buried here," she says.

As a Costanoan Ohlone, Sayers is a rare example of a Native woman who continues to live in her ancestral land. California Indians suffered a brutal history of colonization, diseases and heinous violence and servitude during the Gold Rush and California Missions era. "This is the most exciting time to be alive as a California Indian since contact," she says. "In 1854 alone, the government spent 1.4 million - \$5 a head, 50 cents a scalp for professional Indian killers." As the population of Natives precipitously shrunk during the Gold Rush, the Canyon served as a safe haven for those who were able to find it after passing through a swamp.

The canyon is a mile long and has lush streams and a cascading waterfall when the rains are plentiful. Sayers used the [Allotment Act of 1887](#) to reclaim land that had been in her family for centuries in the Indian Canyon. "The canyon is alive through the power of ceremonies," Sayers says. And she has taken to heart the painful history of religious persecution Native Americans endured, when they were prohibited from practicing their traditional spirituality until 1978. "My mother believed that when ceremonies stop, so does the Earth. And I do too. We opened up my great grandfather's trust allotment for all Indigenous Peoples who need traditional lands for ceremonies."

The canyon has a large arbor, where storytelling gatherings, cultural dances and ancient chants bring together Indigenous Peoples from around the world. The canyon receives thousands of visitors every year - from the Maoris of New Zealand to the Gwich'in of Alaska. "I can feel my ancestors dancing when there is ceremony," Sayers says. The canyon is also home to the [Costanoan Indian Research, Inc.](#), which has ancient tools and artifacts that were used by Ohlones and ancestors of Sayers.

"It seems the society today is absent of the sacred. Many places that should have remained have been destroyed," she says. Sayers has devoted her time to honor the legacy of her Ohlone ancestors and their sacred connection to land. Last year, she was involved in organizing efforts, where voters in San Benito County passed a measure to ban fracking.

Sayers remains committed to educating and empowering youth to reconnect their sacred relationship to Earth. "Today, people are shortsighted. When you make a decision, think how this will affect the next seven generations. And we need our youth to start thinking this way." Last year, Sayers was also instrumental in organizing "[Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy](#)," an exhibit that illuminated the history of Ohlones and their efforts for cultural revitalization.

As we walk around the canyon, Sayers shares intimate stories of her family, and the canyon landscape and medicinal plants and trees dotting the property. "The Earth is alive. You can feel the energy. And it's a reason for living."

great pics:

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33194-in-the-land-of-my-ancestors-native-woman-stands-her-ground-in-ohlone-territory>

For US Tribes, a Movement to Revive Native Foods and Lands

Monday, 12 October 2015 00:00 By [Cheryl Katz, Yale Environment 360](#) | Report

On ancestral lands, the Fond du Lac band in Minnesota is planting wild rice and restoring wetlands damaged by dams, industry and logging. Their efforts are part of a growing trend by Native Americans to bring back traditional food sources and heal scarred landscapes.

Two by two, the wild rice harvesters emerge from the grass-filled lake and drag their canoes to shore. The harvesters, Lake Superior Chippewa, are reaping their ancestral food in the traditional way - one poling the boat through the waist-high tangle, and the other bending the stems and gently brushing ripe seed loose with a pair of batons. It's hard, dirty work on a steamy Minnesota late-summer day. They're caked with chaff and sweat.

But the canoes are loaded with the sacred grain they call *manoomin*. It was a good harvest, they say.

For decades, this lake on the reservation of the [Fond du Lac band](#) of Lake Superior Chippewa, near Duluth, was choked with weeds and produced little of the so-called wild rice that once blanketed the upper Great Lakes. Huge swaths of the nutritious native plant - not actually rice but an annual aquatic grass (genus *Zizania*) - were reduced to remnants by dams, industry, logging, and other disruptive land uses over the past century-and-a-half.

But with a blend of ancestral knowledge, modern equipment, and cutting-edge expertise, Fond du Lac natural resource specialists are bringing back the "food that grows on water." Reservation lakes will yield an estimated 30,000 pounds this year, feeding families and hosting ceremonies with the delicacy that tribal legend says was prophesied to their ancestors. Their approach has been so successful that the band is now leading the first major state, federal, and non-profit collaboration to restore part of Lake Superior's former vast wild rice ecosystem.

The earthy grain prized by epicureans is fundamental to the indigenous people, also called Ojibwe or Anishinaabeg, who flank the Great Lakes from Michigan to Minnesota. "It's in every bit of our way of life," says Thomas Howes, the Fond du Lac natural resources manager, sitting on the gunwhale of a canoe filled with the bright green spikelets he has just finished harvesting. "That's why you see Ojibwe people make this degree of effort."

One group is restoring mountain meadows that tribes maintained for generations in California's Sierra National Forest.

Similar efforts are underway by native communities across North America. From restoring salmon nurseries in the Pacific Northwest, to rebuilding caribou herds in the Canadian Rockies, to removing New England dams blocking alewives and sturgeon from their historic runs, tribes are reviving traditional food sources and healing scarred lands, both on and off reservations. The path isn't easy - tribal projects face daunting obstacles, including a crazy-quilt of property rights, circumscribed jurisdictions, and conflicts with neighbors over visions for the land. But their centuries of practical knowledge and cultural focus provide valuable guidance for stewards of the environment today.

"There has been a new movement by indigenous people to restore tribal lands and resources," says Darren Ranco, an anthropology professor at the University of Maine in Orono, and a member of the Penobscot Nation, which is realizing an ambitious goal of reopening fish freeways on the dam-choked Penobscot River. "There's also been a reimagined focus on food and food sovereignty."

The movement was bolstered by 1970s court decisions increasing tribal resource rights, 1980s expansion of environmental quality legislation, and an infusion of money after Indian gaming was legalized in 1988. Now, a new generation of Native American scientists, attorneys, and politically savvy advocates are bringing their expertise back to the reservation, joining government and conservation coalitions and procuring grants.

"That's brought some really important solutions to the table that probably weren't there before," says Ranco, who directs the university's Native American Research program. "The Western tradition was continually marginalizing indigenous knowledge and values, and no longer is that happening. ... At least it's not happening as much."

Near the union of the St. Louis River and Duluth - the Great Lakes' largest industrial port - Fond du Lac resource specialist Terry Perrault is coaxing the waters into producing their first wild rice harvest in more than 100 years.

The site of former Ojibwe villages, this was once the largest single wild rice stand in the region, holding an estimated 3,000 acres.

Wild rice (*Zizania*) is actually not rice, but a native aquatic grass. (Photo: Cheryl Katz) Perrault stands on the deck of the tribe's fan boat in a tapering rain, showing young Minnesota Conservation Corps workers how to spread rice seed over a choppy gray expanse. "You used to do all this by canoe," he tells them. "Paddle all the way out, paddle all the way back. It's a lot easier now."

The 1,600 pounds of seed they're spreading this early September day were harvested by Fond du Lac ricers just a day earlier. The band's rice experts selected this particular strain for hardiness in the estuary's tide-like water fluctuations, called *seche*, which can raise and lower water by two or more feet daily.

Changes in water level can uproot or drown young rice plants at their tender "floating leaf stage" before they stand upright, explains Perrault, who had spent the bulk of the summer hacking through pondweed, arrowhead, and other tenacious weeds with a truck-sized aquatic mower. They'll do it again next year, and the rice could take up to five years to become established. The 150-acre project, which will expand to perhaps 1,500 acres eventually, is part of the massive, multi-agency [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#). The St. Louis River, which includes a Superfund site contaminated by steel and cement manufacturing, along with former coal docks, chemical plants, ship building and more, was designated one of the nation's [10 Most Endangered Rivers](#) this year by the conservation group American Rivers.

For tribes, one of the biggest challenges is that their restoration vision is not always shared by their neighbors.

Bringing back wild rice is integral to the [St. Louis River](#) project because it's a "really key component" of the wetlands ecosystem in the upper Midwest, says Daryl Peterson, director of restoration programs for the nonprofit [Minnesota Land Trust](#), a project partner. It's a critical food source for migrating waterfowl, ripening just in time for the fall migration. And for local wildlife, "it's a keystone species because it's such a prolific seed producer," Peterson says.

Numerous other environmental efforts around the country are also taking cues from native traditions. One is bringing back mountain meadows that tribes maintained for generations in what's now California's [Sierra National Forest](#). The moist, fire-resistant clearings - critical in the region's current matchstick conditions - have become crowded with invasive young pines, firs, and cedars that provide "a step-ladder for fire," says Ron Goode, [North Fork Mono](#) tribal chairman. Moreover, the thirsty conifers soak up water and keep it out of the watershed, he adds.

So Goode and tribe members launched a demonstration meadow restoration for the U.S. Forest Service and local officials. The former meadow "was overgrown with scotch broom, invasives, and people dumping their trash there," Goode says. "Over the years it had become quite a mess." It took nearly a month to clean up, hauling off truckload after truckload of trash and wood. But in the end they opened the 5-acre meadow and revealed steams. The success brought grant money and requests for more restorations, he says. The tribe has now restored three meadows, covering 15 acres, and has several more restoration projects underway.

In the Pacific Northwest, indigenous communities have been working for years to bring back the salmon and trout that once teemed in the Columbia River basin. [The Columbia](#), one of the most heavily dammed and industrialized rivers on the continent, is also on American Rivers' top ten endangered list. The [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission](#), a coalition of tribes with fishing rights on the river, has adopted a "gravel-to-gravel management approach concerned with all the issues impacting salmon throughout their life," says Sara Thompson, spokeswoman for the commission. The tribes, working with state and federal biologists and conservation groups, have restored habitat and taken other steps that have helped Chinook populations rebound.

"Rice supported our lives for generations, and so you're doing things right if it's around," says one tribal member.

Despite mounting success stories, Native American environmental endeavors face a number of hurdles.

"For tribes, one of the biggest challenges is that their restoration vision is not always shared by their neighbors," says Catherine O'Neill, a law professor and senior fellow at Seattle University's [Center for Indian Law and Policy](#). State pollution laws are often inadequate for native people, whose diets can expose them to far higher levels of toxic contaminants than the general population, so some tribes have set tougher standards in their jurisdictions, she said. Washington's Spokane tribe, for instance, whose members eat much more fish than state water-quality regulations take into account, has established the nation's strictest standards for its own waters. But a bid to increase the amount of pollution discharge allowed in neighboring [Idaho](#) now threatens the Spokanes' downstream fishery, she says.

Tribes can also butt heads with activists on both sides of the environmental spectrum.

"Some of the conservation groups don't want any [fish and animal] harvest," says Barbara Harper, a public health toxicologist and professor at the Oregon State College of Public Health in Corvallis, who has worked on a number of tribal projects. "And of course the sportsmen groups, that's all they're interested in. And the tribes are kind of in-between."

The Fond du Lac band's projects face several obstacles, natural resource manager Howes says. Rebuilding the reservation wetlands, which were confined to ditches during a state push to increase farmlands in the early 1900s, is hindered by a checkerboard of state, county, and private land ownership. Old dams continue to disrupt water flow. And tribal attorneys and scientists have been keeping a watchful eye on proposed copper-nickel mining in the nearby [Duluth Complex](#), which they fear could release sulfides and other pollutants harmful to wild rice and the watershed.

Looking out over wild rice-studded waters, where a wood duck dabbles and blackbirds flit through the prolific stalks, Howes says, "This supported our lives for generations, and so we see it as like a debt to repay, to take

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33195-for-us-tribes-a-movement-to-revive-native-foods-and-lands>

Lakota Women and Ranchers Lead Charge to Break Silence Against Uranium Mine

Monday, 12 October 2015 00:00 By [Suree Towfighnia](#), [Waging Nonviolence](#) | Report

With a population of around 1,000 people, the rural town of Crawford, Nebraska was an unlikely setting for a federal hearing, but it became the site of one in late August thanks to the dogged determination of a group of Lakota and environmental activists, as well as geologists, hydrologists and lawyers - all of whom have been fighting the permit renewal of a uranium mine located in town.

The region is ripe with stories from the brutal Indian wars, when Lakota and neighboring tribes fought over western expansion. Today, this intersection of frontier America and Native resistance is a battleground in the war between environmental advocates and energy corporations, only this time allies from all sides are joining forces in the effort to protect their water.

The Crow Butte Resources, or CBR, uranium mine is comprised of thousands of wells at the base of Crow Butte, a sacred site located within Lakota treaty territories. For the past couple decades CBR has mined uranium using the in situ leach process, which injects water under high pressure into aquifers, extracts uranium ore, and then processes it into yellow cake. Each year 700,000 pounds of uranium is produced here and shipped to Canada, where it is sold on the open market. CBR has applied for a permit renewal and expansions to three neighboring sites.

Cindy Meyers, a rancher and resident of central Nebraska, drove four hours to attend evidentiary hearings regarding the renewal of the mine's permit. It's not unusual for Meyers to travel with her own water, which she gets directly from a well on her land that's tapped into the Ogallala aquifer - considered the largest, underground freshwater source in the world, covering eight states from South Dakota to Texas. CBR uses Ogallala water to mine the uranium. "I keep bottles of the aquifer water in a cooler in my car," Meyers said. "This is what water is supposed to taste like. We call it sweet water." She notes the absence of a chemical taste often found in other drinking

water. Cindy shares a large jar with her ally Debra White Plume. The two women met during their work to stop the Keystone XL pipeline in 2011. Both women share an understanding that once water is contaminated it can't be restored and a belief that pure water is worth protecting at all costs.

Debra White Plume is a Lakota grandmother who was raised on the treaty territories of the Pine Ridge Reservation located across the border in South Dakota. She shares the Lakota worldview that water is sacred. About 10 years ago, White Plume began to notice a rise in illnesses and premature deaths among her neighbors. She heard about wells testing high for radiation, arsenic and lead. This information concerned White Plume, who lives on hundreds of acres of family land and relies on her wells for drinking water. She is an experienced researcher and organizer from decades spent protecting the nearby Black Hills, sacred sites and preserving the Lakota way of life. During her research, through ceremonies, and prayer, she connected local contamination to the Crow Butte uranium mine located just outside reservation lands.

Early in 2008, White Plume was one of 11 individuals and organizations, including the Oglala Sioux Tribe, who filed to prevent the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, or NRC, from issuing a permit renewal to Crow Butte Resources. It's been a long, slow process of submitting documents, waiting on environmental impact studies and other delays. The hearing was the final step needed for the Atomic Licensing Board - which rules over the NRC - to make its determination on the permit. Under scrutiny were nine contentions raised by the Consolidated Interveners, as the plaintiffs are called. The contentions included the lack of scientific evidence used in the permit application, the contamination of rivers and aquifers, connections between the mine and the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation, insufficient cultural surveys and consultation with the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the use of outdated and cherry-picked science, and insufficient groundwater restoration plans.

Seven years after filing the injunction, White Plume sat in the Crawford Community Center, waiting her turn to be sworn in as an expert witness. She stood with her right hand clasped around the jar of water Meyers had given her just a few minutes earlier. "Could you set your water down for a second, so you can raise your right hand?" Judge Gibson asked. "I am raising my right hand," White Plume responded, continuing to hold the water. The judge proceeded to swear in White Plume, who gave her "oath to the truth" on water.

Grouped together among the rows of empty seats were about a dozen CBR employees, handfuls of Lakota from the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation, a few elders from Crawford, and women from the Sisterhood to Protect Sacred Water - a local group concerned about long-term environmental, health and family issues resulting from the mine.

Local resident Nancy Kile was born and raised in Crawford and now lives 20 minutes east of town. "In 1991 and 1992, when CBR approached the town, we were still grieving the flood of our river and a big fire that damaged the area," she recalled. "A person died in that flood. It was a big deal for our community." Nancy believes the company preyed on the townspeople's grief and made a lot of false promises.

Older women were eager to share that they have been fighting CBR since their arrival in the town. "They promised us good and fair leases, that they would only stay 20 years and that they

would leave the water and land exactly as it was when they arrived," recalled one grandmother who was urged by her family not to give her name. "They are trying to renew their permit and expand to three more sites. So, we know they lied to us."

A few months ago, Kile and her sister Colleen Brennan grew tired of the lies they heard around town and founded the Sisterhood to Protect Sacred Water in order to give women a voice in the uranium debate. The two sisters noticed how men and youth talked about money and tax benefits when they discussed the uranium mill; and older women discussed health and human welfare, questioning high rates of cancer and premature deaths. The Sisterhood was inspired by the success of others, including White Plume and the Clean Water Alliance, who are fighting off efforts by Powertech/Azarga to open a uranium mine near the Black Hills. The Sisterhood spent the summer organizing the community, hosting screenings and educational events where people could safely share mine facts and concerns. They raised money to purchase "Protect Sacred Water, No Uranium Mining" yard signs and placed them around town. "We had some workers intimidate our allies, who put signs in their yard right in town. They immediately started calling and threatening their jobs, their persons," Kile said.

She lamented the lack of turnout by the local community at the hearings. "You would think it would be packed, but people are isolated in this community around the uranium milling," she said. "It's like a culture of silence. People are scared. They are worried about being shunned by families. They're worried about their jobs." Many in Crawford are self-employed and spoke off the record of CBR employees visiting their businesses to give reminders of their patronage and that it would be best to avoid the hearing. Others mentioned being told that Indians were coming to town to cause problems or incite violence.

White Plume sympathized with the fear of Crawford residents. "The uranium corporation has been here long enough to embed itself in the community as an economic support, while holding people in economic bondage in terms of choosing between a job and fresh, uncontaminated water," she said. Nevertheless, White Plume, who has worked for the last decade to educate her family and community about the dangers of uranium mining, sees the issue as cut and dry. "You're either for it or against it." White Plume notes there are other ways to get energy - wind, solar and industrial hemp - but there is no way to filter radiation in water.

Kile likened the situation to what she's experienced in her life working with domestic violence survivors, saying, "No one wants to know. Denial is so deep. And then people are ashamed because there are experts here who know what's going on."

The late summer heat and a faulty air conditioner made the community center stuffy. Nevertheless, the three Atomic License Board judges spent careful time unraveling CBR's permit application, often expressing concern over the lack of tribal consultation, faulty cultural site surveys, use of outdated science (some geological models were from 1937), or tornado calculations from 100 miles away.

Tom Ballanco, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, explained that the NRC's role is to protect the public's safety and security when it comes to handling this dangerous and toxic material. "The NRC is tasked with monitoring and minimizing any risks associated with uranium and having such a dire responsibility, we feel like they need to pay more attention than we've seen in the past," he said.

Ballanco went on to note that "in a somewhat controversial move" the NRC staff has already issued the license in advance of the ruling.

Debra White Plume (with Lakota cultural experts) prepares to testify at the Nuclear Regulatory Commissions' hearings. (Photo: WNV / Rosy Torres)

White Plume felt the hearing was thorough, saying, "I didn't expect the Atomic Licensing Board to go to the levels they did. I'm really pleased with how they peeled away the layers of the onion as to the NRC involvement with Cameco Corporation [the parent company to Crow Butte Resources]. To me it appeared as an alliance and collaboration, versus the NRC being a public protector of health and water in the United States."

White Plume is optimistic that the townspeople will learn of the dangers of the uranium mine, its impact on their water and the future of their town. "I have a lot of hope that they lose fear, take courage and develop the sense that they are obligated to question authority," she said. "In this town that means [questioning] Cameco and the NRC."



The Atomic License Board judges will host a conference call in mid-October to answer remaining questions. Although the NRC gave preliminary permit approval to CBR, the judges have the final ruling, which is expected to be granted in early spring.

Kile believes people will become more involved with the Sisterhood once they are educated. She will share information with those who missed the hearing. Kile said their work will take place at old-fashioned kitchen tables, and involved listening to stories, reading handouts, and

watching video recorded at the hearing. She recognized that trust is necessary to empower the town to stand up to the mine. "Our town has been silenced," she said. "Silence is violence in this community. That's what it feels like to me. It feels like they are raping my homeland."

Kile was emotional as she shared her hope for the community, which is to see it "grow and show up for each other." Ultimately, she wants people to feel safe and come out. If that happens, she explained, "We will continue to grow resistance and shut that thing down."

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33196-lakota-women-and-ranchers-lead-charge-to-break-silence-against-uranium-mine>



<http://americanindiansource.com/columbusday.html>

During Columbus's time in Haiti, he and his men hunted the Taino Indians for sport, beating, raping, torturing, killing, and then using the Indian bodies as food for their hunting dogs.

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To Whom It May Concern:

United Native America and Students and Teachers Advocating Respect would like to encourage your school to participate in Native American Day and November as Native American Heritage Month, as first proclaimed in 1990 by the U.S. Senate and President George W. Bush. While California has selected September 26 as Native American Day, seventeen states have chosen to eliminate Columbus Day and South Dakota has replaced it with Native American Day.

Across the country, several states have already taken the first steps in developing legislation to make these holidays become a reality. Many states already study Native Americans in the month of November as part of their Thanksgiving preparation. However, much of the educational material that is readily available has focused on stereotypes of Native people. STAR and UNA have been working with Native educators nation-wide to provide you with appropriate and culturally sensitive materials that will enhance the studies that are currently taught.

Material is now available that makes the old methods of teaching about