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## Local Leaders from Native Communities to Speak at 'Indigenous in Rhode Island: Reflections on Courage and Community'

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BRISTOL, R.I. – This year marks the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' arrival along the shores of what is now known as Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the signing of the first treaty between the Pokanoket Nation and the Pilgrims. More often than not, our awareness and mainstream education focuses the story on the Pilgrims' perspective and their arrival. This milestone year provides us with an opportunity to explore the less examined side of the narrative and its impact over four centuries from an Indigenous perspective.

On Monday, October 12, members of the campus community and the public are invited to spend an evening with Sagamore Winds of Thunder of the Pokanoket Nation and Lorén Spears, Executive Director of the Tomaquag Indigenous Museum and award-winning Narragansett educator, for an event titled "Indigenous in Rhode Island: Reflections on Courage and Community" at Roger Williams University. This event is sponsored by the Office of the President, the Provost's Office, the Multicultural Student Union and Student Senate.

"We are excited to bring together these local leaders to speak to our campus community about the Indigenous experience," said RWU President Ioannis Miaoulis. "Their work contributes significantly to raising awareness for Indigenous identity and culture and toward reframing and deepening our sense of place."

In a wide-ranging conversation, facilitated by RWU Provost and Doctor of Anthropology Margaret Everett, local leaders from Rhode Island's native communities will center Indigenous voices and reflect upon our local history, from pre-contact with colonists to the present day, providing an opportunity to celebrate our region's Indigenous communities, gain critical perspective on the legacies of colonialism, and appreciate the enduring vitality of the original peoples of these lands. The event will feature short video presentations about the Pokanoket and Narragansett

nations and provide the opportunity to take questions from the audience.

Sagamore William Guy, whose Pokanoket name is Po Wauipi Neimpaug (“Winds of Thunder”), is the principal chief of the Pokanoket Nation, the confederation of native peoples who first greeted the Pilgrims when they arrived in New England in 1620. He is the ninth-generation great-grandson of Po Metacom, the Pokanoket leader known to the English as King Philip. As leader of the Pokanoket Tribe, Guy has led his peoples’ efforts to reclaim their identity as an Indigenous nation separate from the Wampanoag Tribe and work toward strengthening their community throughout southern New England.

Lorén M. Spears, Narragansett, Executive Director of Tomaquag Museum, holds a master’s in education and received a doctor of humane letters, honoris causa, from the University of Rhode Island. She is an author and artist who shares her cultural knowledge with the public through museum programs. She has written curriculum, poetry, and narratives for publications such as *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing of New England*; *Through Our Eyes: An Indigenous View of Mashapaug Pond*; and *From Slaves to Soldiers: The 1st Rhode Island Regiment in the American Revolution*. Recently, she co-edited a new edition of *A Key into the Language of America* by Roger Williams.

The Oct. 12 event will be held virtually (Zoom) from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. It is free and accessible to the public. Please register in advance [here](#) for the presentation.