

The Winter Issue 2025

AILA Newsletter

A biannual newsletter for the American Indian Library Association



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Meet our President! Jonna C. Paden

"It is invaluable to have Native people in the information science field because we know best how to preserve, assess, collect, and provide access to our materials and materials about us."



Jonna C. Paden, an archivist at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, has been named president of the American Indian Library Association for 2024-2025. A graduate of the San José State University School of Information's Master of Library and Information Science program, Paden brings extensive experience in library science and archival work to her new leadership role.

For Paden, pursuing archival studies was a way to document her tribal heritage while asserting her authority in a field dominated by Western perspectives. Paden also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the fall semester at the Institute of American Indian Arts, a tribal college located on Pueblo homelands in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

As Paden steps into her role as AILA president, she remains dedicated to preserving Indigenous knowledge and ensuring Indigenous voices are heard in the library and information science field.

If you'd like to connect with Jonna, you can email her at ailapresident1979@gmail.com.



The Extraordinary Opening of Waagax Hakiruxaraxara Hosto

By Izzy Marini, UW-Madison iSchool Student



Waagax Hakiruxaraxara Hosto held its Grand Opening, on September 12th, 2024 in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. It is the first Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk) library in Wisconsin but hopefully not the last. After Hoocąk elders, such as Library Board President and former AILA President, Janice Rice, started a library board out of concern of the increase of banned books, a room that was previously used as a daycare was designated to be remodeled into the library in the local community center. Community members eagerly began donating books before the library even had any shelving!

The community came together in such beautiful ways by forming the board and also recognizing talent that already existed in the Hoocąk Education Department. Leslie Falcon, originally hired as a Student Services Specialist for the Education Department, has spent years building a collection of Native authored books for use in book clubs and educational programming for K-12 students of the Hoocąk Nation. One of her many passions is “to show kids their own voices in the books and be able to hear from a Native perspective.”

The library has a designated section for Hoocąk-specific materials, Indigenous authors, Indigenous topics, and non-native topics too. It was a labor of love to create a genre-based system for library organization, but Leslie, Janice, the board, and the team of volunteers did an incredible job to develop a system that speaks to their community.

The library has welcomed a partnership with the Tribal, Libraries, and Museums program from the iSchool at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Students come to Waagax Hakiruxaraxara Hosto to learn more about tribal libraries and to gain experience in what a true community effort looks like. While I was the first TLAM student to do a practicum with the Waagax Hakiruxaraxara Hosto, I know there will be many more students lucky enough to get to continue to learn from these incredible library professionals.



Top Left: The Library Board poses with TLAM students at the February 2024 soft-opening of the library.

Top Right: JoAnn Jones (Board Secretary) and Janice Rice (Board President) speak to the community at the February 2024 Soft Opening

Bottom Left: A Chalkboard sign greets the community at the grand opening in September 2025.

2024 American Indian Youth Literature Awards (AIYLA)

By Joy Bridwell

*AIYLA Committee Chair and
Stone Child College Librarian*

The 2024 American Indian Youth Literature Awards Reception took place on January 25, 2025, at Cahokia PHX Social Tech and Art Space in downtown Phoenix, AZ. The awards were announced at the ALA Youth Media Awards in Baltimore, MD in January 2024 by then AILA President Allison Waukau. Awards are granted in even years. Authors/Illustrators may win the American Indian Youth Literature Award in the categories Best Picture Book, Best Middle Grade Book and Best Young Adult Book. This year's reception was the first time that all winners in all categories were present. The event was catered by Native owned Blue Corn Café and Bakery. The event started with a presentation by Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Dancers. ALA President Cindy Hohl spoke about the importance of the AIYLA. Naomi Bishop was the main emcee of the event.

Naomi Bishop announced the winners of Best Picture Book. The winners were "Forever Cousins" by Laurel Goodluck (author) and Jonathan Nelson (illustrator) and "A Letter for Bob." by Kim Rogers (author) and Jonathan Nelson (illustrator). Goodluck stated that Forever Cousins is a story of her family and many families who experienced the Indian Relocation Act. She went on to say, "I soon discovered I could tell a universal story of love and friendship between cousin with all the beauty of our Native culture sprinkled through the story as organically as we live." Rogers stated "Our work is incredibly important. Its essential for out Native youth to see themselves in books. We must push back against book bans in efforts to silence our voices. We must continue on and write our stories for the sake of our children and future generations."

Danielle Burbank and her daughter Elisabeth announced the winner for Best Middle Grade Book. The winner for Best Middle Grade Book was "We Still Belong" by Christine Day. Day stated that she carries the stories of her maternal grandmother and her mother with her. "This is part of the reason why I write the books that I write. It's also one of the reasons why this award means so much to me. Because the American Indian Youth Literature Award committee isn't only honoring me: you have chosen to honor them, as well. Lorraine and Sue, their stories are separate yet inseparable from mine, like three strands of the same braid. I would not be here without them.

Joy Bridwell announced the winner for Best Young Adult Book. The winner for Best Young Adult Book was Byron Graves for "Rez Ball." Graves stated that he was inspired to write Rez Ball from his fond memories of playing basketball for his high school basketball team on the Red Lake Reservation. He went on to say, "As I wrote Rez Ball, I delved into more memories. Some of love, some of pain. The excitement and the thrill of winning under bright lights in the biggest of moments. The crushing heartbreak of losing the final game."



AIYLA Award winners and honorees pose for a photo at the AIYLA Award Ceremony in Phoenix, AZ, January 2025.

Pictured Left to right: Christine Day, Jonathan Nelson, Traci Sorell, Arigon Starr, Laurel Goodluck, Byron Graves, Kim Rogers



For a full list of awardees and honorees, please [click here](#).

AILA in Action



AILA meetup at the ATALM conference in Palm Springs, November 2024.

Have an event or story that you'd like featured in the newsletter?

Email us at ailanewsletter@gmail.com

Sacred Librarianship, Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Practice

Webinar
Friday, December 20, 2024

ALA President and former AILA President, Cindy Hohl led a panel discussion with Indigenous scholars, who are in the field of Library and Information Science, to uplift the role of libraries in Tribal communities. This panel was organized by Alexander Soto (AILA Member at Large) and the team at ASU's Labriola Center.



Books are Good Medicine

Check out a new podcast! Co-hosted by Allison Wauka (AILA Past President) and Odia Wood-Krueger, this new show is sponsored by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and its recent Understand Native Minnesota campaign to improve the Native American narrative in Minnesota's schools. It's a great resource for all!

[Listen now!](#)



Upcoming Events

Membership Meetings: Online, 2pm CST, 3rd Friday of the Month

ALA Annual, June 26-30, Philadelphia, PA

AILA Executive Board

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Jonna C. Paden
(Pueblo of Acoma)

VP/President-Elect

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(Grand Portage Ojibwe
Direct-Descendant)

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AILA Newsletter

American Indian Library Association

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