

November 2023

# mylibrary

A monthly guide to events, services and resources

**Celebrate  
Native American  
Heritage Month**

**mi biblioteca  
en español**  
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Tulsa City-County  
**LIBRARY**



# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN RESOURCE CENTER

For two decades, the American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) has illuminated the rich tapestry of American Indian heritage and cultures in Tulsa County and beyond. As one of only two centers dedicated to the American Indian housed in public libraries, and the only one in Oklahoma, the AIRC is an invaluable hub of historical and contemporary information. Its trove of over 4,000 books, periodicals and multimedia content amplifies the stories, traditions and voices of American Indians.

In addition to its special collection, the AIRC offers cultural and educational programming that celebrates the wisdom, creativity and resilience of Indigenous peoples.

"I focus heavily on the cultural arts and language programs simply because customers ask for them," said Teresa Runnels, AIRC coordinator. "One year, I had an elder thank me for bringing the classes to the library. He explained that he knew he should have

learned the language as a child, but his parents wouldn't teach him because of what they had endured. He told me that he now learns about his culture through programs like this. I will always carry that conversation with me."

The AIRC's annual award ceremonies highlight contributions from American Indians nationwide. The American Indian Circle of Honor Award recognizes American Indians who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of Indian



**2000**  
American Indian Collection opens at the Central Library

The Festival of Words celebrates the history, culture, arts and achievements of American Indians through enlightening family programs at area libraries during the month of March.



Formerly named the American Indian Author Award, this accolade recognizes written contributions of outstanding American Indian authors, poets, journalists, and film and stage scriptwriters. It is the first and only award given by a public library to honor an American Indian writer and is given in odd-numbered years. Recipients receive a \$10,000 cash prize funded by the Tulsa Library Trust through a grant from the Maxine & Jack Zarrow Family Foundation.



Inaugural American Indian Festival of Words  
**2001**

**2001**  
Inaugural American Indian Writers Award honors Joy Harjo



American Indian Collection formally becomes the American Indian Resource Center (AIRC)  
**2003**



**2004**  
Inaugural American Indian Circle of Honor Award presentation honors Charles Chibitty



The Circle of Honor Award honors an American Indian for their lifetime achievements and contributions that have enriched the lives of others. Induction into the Circle of Honor is a celebration of the honoree's actions in the face of adversity, commitment to the preservation of American Indian culture and legacy for future generations. An individual is inducted into the Circle of Honor in even-numbered years. Recipients receive a \$10,000 cash prize funded by the Tulsa Library Trust through a grant from the Maxine & Jack Zarrow Family Foundation. See Page 6 of this guide for information about the 2024 Circle of Honor Award presentation.

The AIRC moves to its current home at Zarrow Regional Library  
**2012**



"Place of the Turtles" screen erected at Zarrow Regional Library  
**2014**

Designed by James L. Henkle, an associate professor at The University of Oklahoma's School of Art, and commissioned by the Tulsa Historical Society, the "Place of Turtles" screen features a stylized turtle crafted from oxidized copper, surrounded by flame forms made of brazed brass, polished brass and copper symbolizing the sacred fire of the Creek Indians, Tulsa's first inhabitants. The screen weighs more than 500 pounds.



**2023**  
The AIRC celebrates 20th anniversary





Customers learn traditional beading at a make-and-take event.

Country, while the American Indian Writers Award brings nationally known American Indian authors to Tulsa. Held annually in March, the American Indian Festival of Words offers monthlong programming throughout Tulsa County for all ages to learn about and celebrate American Indian cultures.

"My favorite Festival of Words programs are when I see customers following the programs around the county," said Runnels. "I have heard people say, 'Tomorrow we will go to \_\_\_\_\_ library for another event.'"

While the AIRC helps Tulsa County celebrate American Indian culture and heritage year-round, special events in November are scheduled for Native American Heritage Month. Find upcoming events and activities on Page 8 of this guide.



2022 Circle of Honor Award recipient Archie Mason



Customer Marley Bible browses books at Zarrow Regional Library.

## YOU ALSO CAN LEARN A NATIVE LANGUAGE!

Cherokee and Potawatomi language courses are available on Mango Languages. Use your library card to access Mango Languages at [www.tulsalibrary.org/online-learning](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/online-learning).

Plains Indian Sign Language instruction is available on our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/TulsaLibrary](http://www.youtube.com/TulsaLibrary).

# SAVE THE DATE!



AMERICAN INDIAN  
FESTIVAL OF WORDS  
CIRCLE OF HONOR

2 0 2 4

## Honoring John Herrington

Saturday, March 2 • 10:30 a.m.  
Central Library



John Herrington, Chickasaw, is a retired United States Naval aviator and former NASA astronaut. In 2002, he was selected as a mission specialist for STS-113 Endeavour, the 16th Space Shuttle mission to the International Space Station, and became the first enrolled citizen of a Native American tribe to fly in space.

In 2016, Herrington authored a children's book called *Mission to Space*, which provides a glimpse into his experience as an astronaut, including training and missions. The book includes an English to Chickasaw vocabulary list with space-related terms.

Herrington was inducted into the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame in 2002, the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame in 2007, and the International Air & Space Hall of Fame in 2017. In 2018, he was inducted into the inaugural National Native American Hall of Fame. Visit [www.tulsalibrary.org/american-indian-circle-honor](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/american-indian-circle-honor) for more information.

Sponsored by the American Indian Resource Center, Tulsa Library Trust, and Maxine & Jack Zarrow Family Foundation, with additional support by Draughton Trust, Southwest Trading Company, and Visions and Voices.