



**SAN DIEGO FILM FOUNDATION Announces  
The American Indian Advisory Board for  
The San Diego International Film Festival**

**Press Contact: Susan Clausen, CLAUSEN COMMUNICATIONS 619-933-0038 \*  
theatersusan@gmail.com**

**The San Diego Film Foundation**, best known for presenting The San Diego International Film Festival each October, announces the members of their **2017 American Indian Advisory Board**. For the first time, the advisory board has major representation from the diverse tribes in San Diego County. The San Diego Intl Film Festival has a film track dedicated to stories of Indigenous people. The tribes are very involved in the American Indian Film track as well as the filmmaker awards. They were also instrumental in the choice to change the name of the Advisory Board from Native American to American Indian.

Hereditary Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation and Actor Saginaw Grant (*Lone Ranger, World's Fastest Indian*) is a respected voice of the Sdff American Indian Advisory Council. *"Storytelling is an intrinsic cyclical part of American Indian culture. Stories are told, tradition is shared, a culture continues - so more stories can be told.... I am drawn to cinema as it provides broader access to our culture and allows a larger community to examine our past and present as we plan for our future."*

The mission of the San Diego International Film Festival's American Indian Advisory Board is *to authentically tell the story of Indigenous people and to perpetuate the beauty and strength of these cultures*. The American Indian Film category was created to give filmmakers the opportunity to tell the stories and traditions of the American Indian and to convey historical truths from an Indigenous peoples perspective. From historical and cultural topics to contemporary local issues to the complex national and global problems faced by tribes the track provides an opportunity for dialog and understanding.

Executive and Artistic Director of the Festival, Tonya Mantooh, a Seminole Indian whose father grew up on an Oklahoma reservation, embraces the opportunity to work with the community and champion the American Indian voice. Mantooh said, *"The San Diego tribes have really come together and they see that the Festival is a platform for us communicate messages that are important to American Indians. Whether it is the local challenges of area tribes or national issues addressing tribal land usage like Standing Rock or reflections and education on the expanding economic development of the tribes - the American Indian Film track starts these conversations through the very public and accessible forum of film."*

**2017 American Indian Advisory Board Members**

- **Saginaw Grant**, Hereditary Chief - Sac and Fox Nation
- **Erica M. Pinto**, Chairwoman - Jamul Indian Village
- **Cody Martinez**, Chairman -- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- **Tishmall Turner**, Vice Chairwoman - Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
- **Adrian Brown**, Councilman - Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- **Ruben Chato**, Lipan/Mescalero Apache
- **Brandon Banegas**, Barona Band of Mission Indians

**Honorary Members**

- **Larry Banegas**, Barona Band of Mission Indians
- **Randolph Mantooh**, Seminole Indian

Asked to explain the importance of the American Indian Film Track in the Festival and why the name of the Advisory Board was changed from Native American to American Indian, Vice Chairwoman Tishmall Turner, from the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians shared *“I believe changing the name to American Indian acknowledges more directly the over 560 Tribal Sovereign Nations within the boundaries of the United States. Native American can often be confused to represent the indigenous groups from the North Americas. San Diego county has the largest number of reservations in any county in the United States and many people in Southern California do not know this. It is important to have the first peoples of the region represented at the film festival to provide an opportunity for our greater San Diego community to learn about American Indians. These films most often do not make mainstream theaters and our film festival provides an opportunity to screen these films and learn about a group that is left out of the mainstream media.”*

Chairwoman Erica Pinto added *“I feel so strongly that film is a great platform to educate people on American Indians. We are not what we have been portrayed to be in the past. We come in many forms, shapes and sizes. We are creative, we are intelligent, we are educated, our sense of humor is very unique, we are a contemporary people while at the same time maintaining our traditions and culture. Film gives the public a peek into our lives and hopefully non natives will understand and appreciate that we are quite similar. Film can also be very useful in changing the perspectives of people.”*

Chairman Cody Martinez agreed *“I am proud to be a part of a group whose goal it is to promote American Indian films and filmmakers. What a wonderful opportunity to provide exposure for American Indians in film and the incredible stories we have to share.”*

### **About the San Diego Film Foundation**

The San Diego Film Foundation (SDFF) is a 501(c)3 dedicated to making a difference through film. We believe that film can be transformative and we are bound together through human connection. Our mission is to use film to explore issues of global impact, to create dialog, to encourage self-reflection, and ultimately to develop empathy and understanding in an increasingly diverse and complex world.

The San Diego Film Foundation brings the finest independent cinematic storytelling from around the world to San Diego each year. We present films that make a difference through a robust variety of events and programs *including:*

- The San Diego International Film Festival (Oct. 4-8, 2017)
- FOCUS on Impact Film Tour for highschool students (Spring 2017)
- FOCUS on Impact Artist Residencies for highschool students (Fall 2017)
- Film Insider Screenings (Feb-July, 2017)
- Industry Insider Series (Patrons Only)
- And The Award Goes To...Oscar Awards Viewing Party Annual Gala