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# The Voice of the **Taino People**®

*The Voice of the Taino People is the Official News Journal of the United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP) and is distributed by the UCTP Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination  
Volume 12, Issue 3, July - September 2009 © All Rights Reserved • ISSN 1553-9350*

## PR Representative Vassallo Urges Respect for Taino



**In Ponce, UCTP Liaison Roger Guayacan Hernandez looks on as the Hon. Victor L. Vassallo Anadón sign the official proclamation urging respect for the Taino People in Puerto Rico.**

*Ponce, Borikén (UCTP Taino News)* – Representing **District 25, Ponce – Jayuya**, the Hon. **Victor L. Vassallo Anadón** this week urged the citizens and government of Puerto Rico and federal agencies to respect the island’s “sacred national patrimony” and the rights of the Taino People.

The official statement was presented to the **Borikén Liaison Office** of the **United Confederation of Taino**

**People** in the form of a proclamation displaying the seal of the **Puerto Rican House of Representatives**. The proclamation issued by Vassallo recognizes Taino People as pre-Columbian inhabitants of Puerto Rico whose descendants remain on the island today.

Photo: In Ponce, UCTP Borikén Liaison Roger Guayacan Hernandez looks on as the Hon. Victor L. Vassallo Anadón signs the official proclamation urging respect for Taino People in Puerto Rico. ●

### **Bermuda’s 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration to Honor Native Peoples**

*Bermuda (UCTP Taino News)* – As part of the island of **Bermuda’s 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary** celebrations, the **St. David’s Island Community** will host its fifth **Native American Festival** on Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

Previous festivals were hailed as overwhelming successes locally and internationally. The special event is held on the St David’s County Cricket

Field and it continues to grow with about 2000 local people attending.

The festival began as a project to reconnect St. David’s Native American descendants with their contemporaries from East coast areas of the United States. The historical record reveals that Indigenous Peoples were taken from the United States as well as from around the Caribbean region to Bermuda as part of the slave trade in the 1700s.

About 80 **American Indian** representatives have been invited to attend and participate in the cultural festival, which will highlight American Indian song, dance, story telling and craft making as well as local artisans.

Among the invited delegates, **Mildred Karaira Gandia** (Borikén Taino) will represent the **United Confederation of Taino People** at this historic anniversary event. Gandia will present an official statement to the gathering which is expected to include Bermuda’s Governor, his Excellently Sir **Richard Gozney** among other Bermudan government officials and dignitaries.

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### Bermuda 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

North of the Bahamas in the mid-Atlantic, Bermuda's settlement began in 1609.

Contrary to popular belief Bermuda is not one island – but a string of islands now linked by causeways and bridges. ●

### Guzmán Celebrating 50 years in the Arts



Utua, Borikén (UCTP Taíno News) – Celebrated artist and elder community member, **Miguel Angel Guzmán** will be featured in a special exhibition honoring his 50 years in the Arts. The exhibition will be held at **Galeria Maboiti, Museo del Cemi** in Cedetra, Jayuya. The exhibit will open on July 2 at 6pm with a musical presentation by Guzmán and a reception. The honorable **Georgie Gonzalez**, the Mayor of Jayuya will host the event.

Born in **Barrio Caníaco** in Utua in 1939, Guzmán recently celebrated his 70 birthday in Utua at a special gathering attended by local artists, friends, and supporters including representatives of the **Consejo**

### General de Tainos Borincanos and the UCTP Borikén Liaison Office.

Among his many distinctions, Guzman is credited with founding **Taller Herencia Indigena**, the Taino arts workshop operating near the **Caguana Ceremonial Center** in Utua. The Taller Herencia Indigena celebrates Borikén's (Puerto Rico) indigenous legacy through the arts. ●

### UN Observes Indigenous Peoples Day



Program Master of Ceremonies **Roberto Borrero** (Taino) and UN Deputy Secretary-General **Asha-Rose Migiro** at the 2009 Observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. (UN Photo)

United Nations (UCTP Taíno News) – An official observance commemorating the United Nations **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples** was held at UN headquarters in New York on Monday.

The program was organized by the Secretariat of the United Nations **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**, in cooperation with the **NGO Committee on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples** and the New York Office of the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**.

The theme of the observance at UN Headquarters was "Indigenous Peoples and HIV/AIDS".

The event included messages from the

United Nations Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly, the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, and the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. There were also performances by indigenous artists, and a panel discussion on "Indigenous Peoples and HIV/AIDS".

In his message to mark the day, UN Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** emphasized the vulnerability of indigenous peoples to HIV/ AIDS. "It is essential that indigenous peoples have access to the information and infrastructure necessary for detection, treatment and protection," he noted.

Other observances for the UN Indigenous Day were held around the world with events celebrated in Suriname, Brazil, Northeast India, Nepal, and Geneva among others. ●

### Kalinago Carib Elect New Chief in Dominica

Waitukubuli/Dominica (UCTP Taino News) - Elections were held in July in the Carib territory of Dominica, West Indies to choose a Chief for a new 5-year term of office. Former **Chief Garnet Joseph** won the election over incumbent **Charles Williams**.

Joseph said his work focus will include health, education and respect for council members in the Territory. The new chief has also pledged to bring more development to the 3,800-acre (1,538-hectare) territory, where Caribs live in greater poverty than the rest of the country. Dominica is home to about 3,000 Caribs, or ethnic **Kalinagos**. ●



**Taino Documentary Turns  
Lens to Borikén**



UCTP Liaison Officer **Roger Guayakan Hernandez**, **Naniki Reyes Ocasio** of the Caney Quinto Mundo, and videographer **Ray Ibsen** meet in Orocovis, Borikén.  
(Photo: A. Zacarias)

*Borikén/Puerto Rico (UCTP Taino News)* - Emmy Award winning team **Alex Zacarias** (Producer/Director) and videographer **Ray Ibsen** traveled to Borikén (Puerto Rico) in August to continue work on their Taino documentary production.

The filmmakers interviewed various members of the island's local Taino community including representatives of the **Consejo General de Taino Borincanos**, the **Caney Quinto Mundo**, the **United Confederation of Taino People** and others. The team also interviewed the Hon. **Victor L. Vassallo Anadón** of Puerto Rico's House of Representatives and Dr. **Juan Martinez Cruzado**, a Geneticist at the University of Puerto Rico.

Zacarias noted that the recent trip to Borikén resulted in the gathering of enough film footage and information to pursue the funding needed to continue production. •

**Confederation Welcomes  
Southern States Liaison**

*Ellijay, Georgia (UCTP Taino News)* – The **United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP)** welcomed this

month **Monika “Mamona” Ponton-Arrington** as its Liaison Officer responsible for Confederation outreach in Alabama and Tennessee. She will also serve the States of North Carolina and Georgia in coordination with elder **Mildred Mukara Torres-Speeg**.

A Borikén Taino whose family comes from Puerto Rico's *Ponce, Coamo, Dorado, Jayuya*, and *San Juan* areas, Ponton-Arrington currently resides Ellijay, Georgia with her husband **Fulton Arrington**, a Tsalagi (Cherokee). She was given her Taino name *Mamona* by her grandmother.

Ponton-Arrington is a mother of four children ranging from ages 32-23 and works as a Counselor. An advocate for Native Rights, she works to protect sacred sites in Georgia and is presently a Trustee to the **Talking Rock Cherokee Memorial Cemetery**.

She has presented lectures before civic groups, colleges and historical societies and enjoys traditional arts.



Contact information for Monika Mamona Ponton-Arrington will soon be made available at the UCTP webportal at [www.uctp.org](http://www.uctp.org). •

**Did you know:** A flat forehead was considered very attractive in many ancient Taino communities. Mothers carried their newborn babies on their backs with a padded, wooden board. The board would lay across the child's head and flattened the impressionable forehead.- *UCTP Did You Know Files (See more facts online)*

**The Voice of the Taino People®**

**ISSN 1553-9350**

Vol. 12, Issue 3 ♦ July – Sept. 2009 ©

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The **Voice of the Taino People** is a quarterly publication of the **United Confederation of Taino People** and is distributed by the **UCTP Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination**.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CALENDER OF EVENTS

### • **Presencia Taina TV**

**Date:** Saturday nights through 2009 • **Place:** <http://www.MNN.org>

*Presencia Taina.TV is televised weekly throughout the worldwide web this season on Saturday night at 9 PM (EST) by viewing it locally on Channel 67 (cableTV) in the New York City area or you can listen in online at <http://www.MNN.org>*

### • **Bronx Cultural Diversity Festival**

**Date:** 6 September 2009 • **Place:** Kingsbridge Heights, Bronx, NY • **Time:** 12noon – 5pm

*The festival is organized by the **Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association**. Cultural presentations included programs by members of the **Cacibajagua Taíno Cultural Society**, **Afro Boricua**, **“La Bruja” Caridad de La Luz**, and **Cetiliztli Nauhcampa Quetzalcoatl in Ixachitlan**, an indigenous Mexica community group and others. The event will also feature vendors, games for children, information tables, and a “Little Miss Kingsbridge” pageant. For information contact [inaru2003@yahoo.com](mailto:inaru2003@yahoo.com)*

### • **Native American Heritage Month Celebration at Florida Atlantic University**

**Date:** 4 November 2009 • **Place:** Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida • **Time:** 11:30am

*The President and Chairman of the **United Confederation of Taino People**' Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination, **Roberto Borrero** is scheduled to give the opening address at Florida Atlantic University's Native American Indian Heritage Celebration. Borrero's special address will be presented on Wednesday, Nov. 4 at 11:30am at the University's campus, Traditions Plaza Breezeway, in Boca Raton, Florida. This special event is sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs and launches a series of activities focusing on Indigenous Peoples in the United States. For information contact [oirrc@uctp.org](mailto:oirrc@uctp.org).*

**Editor's Note:** The staff at 'the Voice' looks forward to hearing from all of you, and we thank you for your comments, suggestions, and inquires. To submit items to the **Community Bulletin Board**, please email your request to [mukaro@uctp.org](mailto:mukaro@uctp.org)

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