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The Voice of the Taíno People®

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Taíno People Stand Proud Among Thousands at Museum Opening

WASHINGTON D.C. – Taíno and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples were among the thousands of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the Smithsonian's **National Museum of the American Indian** (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday September 21st.



The new National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. Photo: NMAI

The United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP) was represented at this historic event by a delegation of representatives and allies who took part in the Smithsonian's Native Nations Procession. This awesome symbol of indigenous unity and pride featured about 25,000 of our relatives from throughout the

Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Islands.



UCTP Liaison Officers for the State of Washington (from left to right) Evelyn Garcia, Joe Garcia and Adria Garcia in Washington D.C.

Members of the UCTP delegation expressed their pride and joy with their tribal relatives who marched together with them in solidarity as Caribbean Indigenous Peoples. UCTP representative **Roger Atihuibancex Hernandez** stated "It was an honor to participate with such a large number UCTP reps., family members as well as our dear friends and allies".

The Taíno contingent was well received and made a great impression on the over 80,000 thousand onlookers as the Taíno presence was heralded with the sounding of many "Guamos" (conch shell trumpets).



Carib Elder Cyril Taylor in Washington D.C. on the morning of the Native Nations Procession. Photo: R. Hernandez

Taíno Delegation Story Continues on page 2



Taíno Delegation in Washington D.C.



Taino women at NMAI Procession in Washington D.C., September 21st 2004

Hundreds of UCTP news journals (The Voice of the Taino People) were distributed to eager persons looking to connect with the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean. UCTP representatives and other family members were interviewed by the press and photographed time and time again as audiences applauded and cheered the Taíno, Carib and Arawak delegation taking part in the Procession.

The new National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., is located on the National Mall between the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol Building. •

UCTP Photo Gallery: NMAI Taino Delegation to Washington D.C.



Taino delegates from left to right: Roger Atihuibancex Hernandez, Sylvia Karayaturey Rosario, Marta Morales, Roberto Múkaro Borrero and Esperanza Martell. Photo: UCTP File



Members of the Taino delegation marching in the Native Nations Procession. Photo: R. Hernandez



Taino delegates distributing educational material at Native Nations Procession.



Taino delegates making their presence known by the sounding of Guamo (conch shell trumpets).

Editor's Note: You can review more photos of the Taino delegation to Washington D.C. courtesy of R. Hernandez by visiting the Ofoto website at: <http://www.ofoto.com/l.jsp?c=j0jhd2.we030xy&x=1&y=xiaqy19>

Once you are there, click "view photos" to begin. If you're an existing Ofoto member you'll be asked to sign in. If not, you can join Ofoto for free.

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UCTP NOTICE: Are you being counted among your People? If you are a Taíno, Carib or Arawak and would like information on the **UCTP Taíno Population Census and Tribal Registration Program**, please visit our website or write to our postal address in NY.

Goodbye Mr. Columbus 2004

This year the UCTP continued its annual, month long October campaign concerned with bringing an end to the racist celebrations of Columbus Day, and the revocation of the Papal Bull *Inter Ceatera* via educational outreach and direct action (protests and letter writing).

As a result of the tremendous efforts by community members and allies, and in conjunction with other national initiatives, a considerable amount of media attention (articles, radio and TV interviews) was again brought to this issue. UCTP reps, community members and allies participated in protests throughout the U.S., from coast to coast. Events took place in California (at the San Juan Capistrano Mission), Washington State and Pennsylvania. The annual Papal Bulls Burning was also held in Honolulu.

Educational materials focusing on this subject were distributed via hard copy and Internet not only in the U.S. but internationally. As usual responses to these initiatives were positive over all but even the negative reactions sparked debate and worked to keep the issue current. Our statements and education and materials were even published this year by the United Nations Observer located at The Hague in the Netherlands!

You can review some of the education materials distributed this year by visiting the UCTP Website at <http://uctp.org/archives.html#7a>

Columbus Day may not go away as soon as we would like but neither will the Taino, Carib or Arawak Peoples – we are here to stay! •

Editorial: The Day of the Dead by Domingo Turey Hernandez

Our Taíno ancestors had faith in *Life after Life*. The body was seen as what encased the real Self which had three components. There was

no concept of hell. There were only two places to go after life in the body was done.

One could go to *Coabay* (the Shining Land) or one could stay wandering the earth. Coabay was a place of peace joy and abundance - a happy place where you were with friends and relatives who were there before you.

Family was so important that not even Coabay could keep one away from relatives on earth, so at night the Spirits could come and visit loved ones on the earth. It was an opportunity to warn, advise, and remind their loved ones that they still cared for them.

To receive the departed in a respectful way, Taíno would place a bowl of fruit, especially guavas for the ancestors to eat. It is said that this is the reason why many persons on the island still put plastic fruits on their dinning room tables; this is a custom left from the old ways.

Most if not all visitations would happen at night. However, if a visiting Spirit was caught by the rising sun they would turn into fruit or another kind of vegetation until the day was over.

According to my great grandmother not everyone went to the sky. Although she never used the term heaven or Coabay, she explained that greed was what kept the spirit of a person wandering the earth.

Stealing or hoarding according to her, were signs that greed had taken root in one's heart. Greed was the origin of all negative actions taken against individuals or the community.

When the Spirit left the bodies of these 'greedy' persons they would wander seeking help and so they would appear to people walking alone at night. The help they needed was of two types. The first was to be acknowledged and forgiven by someone from the community.

The second was to reveal an item or valuable object they had hidden or buried to the person they appeared too. In this way they returned what should have been shared in the first place. It was these unfortunate ones that became *Maboya* (Ma = without, bo= great or abundant, ya= origin, source, center, principle as in *YAYA*) and a loose translation of this word could be "those who lost their great origin".

It was taught to me that greed made one forget one's relatives and relatives are our source. It is only in relation to them that we know ourselves as parents, sons or daughters, uncles or aunts etc. To forget them would be to break our connection back to the ancestors. For Taíno People community was and is vital and linked to the spirit world.

During this time of year many cultures honor those who passed away, for example Catholics have *All Souls Day*. In Mexico natives celebrate their ancestors on that same day and they call it el **Dia de Los Muertos**.

In recognition of this special day, I invite all Taíno who are searching for traditional ways of honoring our *muertos* to consider the following possibilities:

1. To remember and call by name your ancestors and include the names of our Caciques and Cacicas.
2. To light a vigil candle in their memory.
3. To place a bowl of fruit in their honor.
4. To meditate on sharing with relatives and friends.
5. To celebrate their life by dedicating yourself to helping in some community or family project.

Most importantly let us remember our great origin every day all year round. •

CALENDER OF EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Celestial Event: Winter Solstice**

Date: 21 December 2004

- **Taino Art Exhibition: "The Power of Spirit" by Millie Mucara Torres Speeg**

Date: Dec.28, 2004 - Feb.27, 2005

Location: Georgia Heritage Center for the Arts, Hwy. 441 N., Tallulah Falls, Georgia.

The pastel and oil fine art portraits by Mildred Torres-Speeg (Taino), award winning, internationally recognized artist, will be on exhibit in the Heritage Room Gallery of the Georgia Heritage Center for the Arts. She will display a variety of paintings, including "Claudia – Taino Woman", which was featured at the United Nations ART EXHIBITION "IN CELEBRATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES" sponsored by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from May through August, 2004. If you missed the UN exhibit, you can now see "Claudia," in Tallulah Falls, GA., along with "Winterhawk"; "Spirit of the Hurricane"; "The Shaman"; "Taino Warrior" and other paintings depicting the life and culture of the Indigenous Peoples of North, South and Central America. For directions or information about the exhibition, please call 706-754-5989. Art Gallery hours are Mon – Sat 10 – 5 and Sun 1-5. To see Millie's artwork visit at WorldsBestArt.com and www.nighteaglestudio.com

- **Global Four Directions Prayer for Peace**

Date: 12noon December 31, starting in the Eastern Time zone, through January 1.

This is a call for Global Four Directions Prayer for Peace, a 24 hour effort to end the war and global violence. All leaders and peacemakers are requested to join in this effort. This activation request comes from some of the Four Directions Elders and Medicine People as communicated to Grace Smith Yellow Hammer (Navajo Elder). This call for prayer is also supported by Grandfather William Commanda (Anishinabe), Grandfather Martin Gasbeseoma (Hopi), Chief Arvol Looking Horse (Lakota), Grandmother Naniki Reyes Ocasio (Borike Taino) and many others. For more details, please see the website at <http://www.fourdirectionsprayerforglobalhealing.org/> or you can contact the UCTP at uctp_my@yahoo.com.

VTP 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 the Chief Editor at rjhnyc@nyc.rr.com

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