

## **IFAIR Announces 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Luci Tapahonso Distinguished Indigenous Speaker Series with Author Diane Wilson**

The Institute for American Indian Research (IFAIR) is pleased to announce the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Luci Tapahonso Indigenous Distinguished Speaker Series with Dakota/Lakota author Diane Wilson. This year's event kicks off Native American Heritage Month on Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The event will be held at the University of New Mexico's Albuquerque campus in the Hodgin's Hall Bobo Room from 4-6 PM. Reception immediately following.

Wilson's presentation, "Seeds and Stories, will explore the ways in which seeds carry stories of the seasons and the people who grew them. As Wilson states, seeds carry our stories and the future we hope to create. During her presentation, Wilson will discuss her award-winning novel, *The Seed Keeper*, which explores how Dakota women sustained their families during the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War by sewing corn seeds into the hems of their dresses. In addition to being an writer, Wilson is also the former director of the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance and Dream of Wild Health and will discuss the relationship she has nurtured between writing and food sovereignty.

Native American food sovereignty is a critical cultural, health, and environmental issue for many tribes across the country. The Luci Tapahonso Distinguished Indigenous Speaker Series allows IFAIR to bring together Indigenous scholars and intellectuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to share their perspectives on Indigenous issues with UNM's faculty, staff, students and the general public.

IFAIR named this new speaker series after Luci Tapahonso (Diné), who began her literary career at UNM. After receiving her MFA from UNM, Tapahonso was hired as an assistant professor in the English Department. After years at the University of Kansas and the University of Arizona, she returned to UNM and retired as Professor Emeritus of English Literature and Language.

Professor Tapahonso's achievements sparked an Indigenous literary renaissance at the University of New Mexico, which included such luminaries as N. Scott Momaday, Simon Ortiz, Linda Hogan, Paula Gunn Allen, Leslie Marmon Silko, Joy Harjo, and Louis Owens, among others, who studied in UNM's English Department and often returned as faculty. Internationally acclaimed for her poetry and narratives about Diné life and culture, Tapahonso has brought recognition to Diné literary and storytelling traditions. She has been a role model to young Diné who are encouraged to revitalize the Diné language and cultural values that reflect the teachings of their elders. Tapahonso is the author of several books of poetry and stories, including *Blue Horses Rush In* and *A Radiant Curve*. In 2013, she was named the Navajo Nation Inaugural Poet Laureate.

IFAIR is pleased to honor two Indigenous women who have made their radiance known to their tribal nations and communities. For more information, contact IFAIR's Director Sarah Hernandez at [hernands@unm.edu](mailto:hernands@unm.edu).