

## **National Indian Gaming Association Announces 2016 Recipients of the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award**

**Washington DC (March 11, 2016)** - National Indian Gaming Association has announced the 2016 award recipients for the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award: Chairman Jose "Moke" Simon III of Middleton Rancheria, CA and Chairman John Berrey of Quapaw Tribe, OK. Chairman Simon III and Chairman Berrey will receive their awards at the annual Wendell Chino Humanitarian Awards Banquet on Tuesday, March 15th at the Phoenix Convention Center during the Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention event.

The Wendell Chino Humanitarian Awards Banquet is the National Indian Gaming Association's most prestigious event, honoring the legacy of longtime president Wendell Chino of the Mescalero Apache Nation. President Wendell Chino spent his life protecting tribal sovereignty and advancing Indian self-governance. At this banquet, the National Indian Gaming Association will celebrate President Wendell Chino and honor individuals whose actions have improved the lives of citizens in Indian country.

*"This year we are pleased to be awarding two individuals with the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award,"* said Chairman Ernie Stevens. *"The work that both Chairman Simon III and Chairman Berrey do are a true testament to their leadership in Indian Country."*

### **Chairman Jose "Moke" Simon III**

Chairman Simon III's responsibilities include leading and representing the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California in all major decisions directly involving all entities of the Tribe, which include but are not limited to overseeing all Tribal Government Operations.

As Chairman, he oversaw all aspects of construction of a new 15,000 square foot gaming facility. During his recent time off as Chairman, he worked in the maintenance department of the Twin Pine Casino & Hotel. On behalf of the Tribe, Mr. Simon also negotiated with the State of California and acquired the gaming compact for the Middletown Rancheria. He helped negotiate \$47.5 million to build and construct the new Twin Pine Casino & Hotel gaming facility, which was completed in 2009.

Chairman Simon's leadership was instrumental to an entire community affected by what is now known as The Valley Fire -- one of the most destructive fires in California history, which burned 76,067 acres in September of 2015. The fire burned right through the small town. Under his leadership, the Tribe provided temporary housing for members and employees in the Twin Pine Hotel and the Red Cross used the Special Events Center as an Evacuation Center, providing 260 beds for community members displaced by the fire. The tribe communicated vital information to the community through the casino operations to inform them of changing information on a daily basis. Under the Leadership of the Middletown Rancheria, this community came together and both Indian and non-Indian alike were assured of their safety and well-being in a time of crisis. It is in the extension of this type of goodwill that Indian Gaming prides itself on and is a clear example of tribal gaming extending beyond our own communities. We applaud Chairman Simon and the Middleton Rancheria for their humanitarian efforts.

Mr. Simon brings to the Tribe a substantial amount of knowledge and passion. An avid sports fan and former professional football player with the NFL Indianapolis Colts, AFL Arizona Rattlers, WFL Barcelona

Dragons in Spain and Scottish Claymores in Scotland as World Champions, he also attended Butte College and Texas A&M. He volunteers at the local high school as the defensive coach for the varsity football team.

Mr. Simon lives on the reservation with his wife and son and recently became a grandfather.

### **Chairman John Berrey**

During Chairman John Berrey's tenure on the Business Committee, the Quapaw Tribe has experienced exponential growth. The Tribe has expanded its economic development activities, and it has increased employment among tribal members and the community as whole to nearly 2000. Enrollment has grown, the Tribal land base has increased, and the Tribe has Tribal Health Insurance for all enrolled members. The Tribe has expanded its Social Services programs, Senior Housing, Day Care, Education Support, Wellness Center, Library, Title 6, Environmental Department, Facilities, 5 Fire-EMS Stations, Tribal Marshal Service, Tribal Courts, 638 Compacting of DOI Services, and much more. During this period the Tribe has also received ten years of clean audits.

Working in partnership with United States Senator James M. Inhofe, multiple federal agencies, and state leaders, Chairman Berrey has taken an active role in pursuing an environmental cleanup of the Tar Creek Superfund Site, which is located on the Quapaw Reservation and which is one of the largest Superfund Sites in the nation

In the federal courts he has also represented the Quapaw Tribe as the key negotiator in the Tribe's landmark settlement of trust litigation against the United States and in an environmental claims settlement related to the Tar Creek Superfund Site.

During his term as Tribal Chairman, the Quapaw Tribe successfully raised over \$700 million dollars on Wall Street and constructed a world-class destination resort in far northeast Oklahoma.

Chairman Berrey is a fourth generation rancher on his family's original allotment on the Osage Reservation north of Tulsa, Oklahoma and lives there today with his family including two children.

For more information on the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Awards Banquet visit [indiangaming.org](http://indiangaming.org). For more information on Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention visit [indiangamingtradeshow.com](http://indiangamingtradeshow.com).

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### **ABOUT NIGA**

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), established in 1985, is a non-profit organization of 184 Indian Nations with other non-voting associate members representing organizations and businesses engaged in Tribal Gaming. The common commitment and purpose of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian peoples economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational, legislative and public policy resource for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information, visit [www.indiangaming.org](http://www.indiangaming.org).