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Contact: ncore@ou.edu

Phone: (405) 325-3964

Pewewardy, Jones to receive NCORE's Suzan Shown Harjo Systemic Social Justice Award

Norman, OK – The National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education will recognize two leaders in the area of social justice at its 33rd annual conference, taking place virtually June 7-11. Dr. Cornel Pewewardy and Dr. Barbara Jones will be presented with the Suzan Shown Harjo Systemic Social Justice Award during the conference's keynote session, set for 12:30 p.m. CDT Wednesday, June 9.

The award is given to individuals who have accomplished extraordinary achievements in social justice and advocacy work. Both Pewewardy and Jones have demonstrated transformational change in the areas of race and ethnicity, spurring changes in law, policy, and organizational and community practices.

“We are thrilled to honor two extremely exceptional individuals this year, both of whom have changed countless lives and communities through their years of hard work and dedication,” said Dr. Belinda Biscoe, senior associate vice president for University Outreach/College of Continuing Education.

Dr. Cornel Pewewardy (Comanche-Kiowa) is professor emeritus, Indigenous Nations Studies, at Portland State University. His research explores the theoretical and philosophical foundations of postcolonial Indigenous research paradigms that focus on historical and political insight into the lingering impact of colonization, considering the issues faced by Indigenous peoples today and identities to survive in the 21st century. Now retired from higher education, Pewewardy teaches an online doctoral-level course at the University of Washington Tacoma, Cameron University, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Bacone College.

“Dr. Pewewardy is a well-deserving higher education administrator, professor and researcher whose career spans many decades of work focused on the ongoing effect of colonization and its impact on indigenous peoples,” Biscoe said. “His scholarship and its application have transformed the lives of individuals and communities.”

“Dr. Pewewardy has committed his life's work to advocating for Indigenous people, particularly within the field of education,” added Heather Shotton, director of indigenous education initiatives with OU's Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. “His scholarship and advocacy has inspired generations of educators, scholars, and students. We have all been tremendously blessed by commitment to bettering educational futures for Indigenous people.”

Jones is dean and professor emerita of economics, Alabama A&M University College of Business and Public Affairs. She has taught at several historically Black colleges and universities in the south, focusing her research on labor force participation among Black women. She joined the youth council of the Oklahoma City [NAACP](#) at the age of 14 and was a leader of the 1958 Katz Drug Store sit-in as a high school student. Throughout her career, Jones has been committed to advancing the civil rights and well-being of Black Americans and has mentored many students along the way.

“Dr. Barbara Jones’ life and career as a social justice warrior began at a very young age as a member of the NAACP Youth Council, sponsored by Clara Luper, a history teacher and civil rights activist who organized sit-in demonstrations in Oklahoma City,” Biscoe said. “Her lifetime commitment to research, teaching and service is reflected in her mentorship of hundreds of students at several historically Black colleges and universities. Dr. Jones’ tenacity and grit in pursuit of social justice for students and communities of color clearly demonstrate why she is so deserving of the Suzan Shown Harjo Systemic Social Justice Award.”

About the Suzan Shown Harjo Systemic Social Justice Award

The Suzan Shown Harjo Systemic Social Justice Award, created in 2015, is inspired by the life and work of Suzan Harjo, an unwavering champion, thoughtful leader and advocate whose talents as a poet, curator, author, national political leader and legal advisor created action on the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978), American Indian Museum Act (1989), American Indian Graves and Repatriation Act (1990) and the elimination of the Native American cultural appropriation in sports mascots. Her activism has translated to tangible outcomes for the greater good of underrepresented communities nationally and internationally.

About NCORE

NCORE is a dynamic annual conference that creates a community for individuals and campus teams to work collaboratively under the guidance, tutelage and expertise of recognized and effective scholars, practitioners and changemakers. Organized by the Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, a department of the University of Oklahoma’s Outreach/College of Continuing Education, it is a place where individuals and institutions share their knowledge, analyses, innovative program development, assessment tools, effective theoretical frameworks, latest practice-based research findings and radical and innovative experiential curricula to transform higher education in its mission for diversity and inclusion for students, staff, faculty and administration. For more information about the conference and this year’s schedule, visit www.ncore.ou.edu.

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