

ABOUT JAMES PEPPER HENRY

Ho Kóya Yegáha. Amaxpáyin angáye. Zházhe wíta che hínsche'ska. Kaánze aká, hánga tànga aká.

My name is James Pepper Henry and my Kaw name is Hínsche'ska (White Eagle Plume). This name was given to me by my great-grandfather, Ralph Pepper. I am the first-born great-great grandson of James Pepper, traditional leader of the Eagle Clan and one of four Kaws who brought the Ilóshka ceremony to the Osages in Pawhuska and Hominy in the 1880s. I am the grandson of Gilbert Pepper and son of Suzie Pepper Henry. I am also the nephew of legendary jazz musician, Jim Pepper. I have Muscogee Creek blood from my grandmother, Floy Pepper.

I grew up learning my Kaw ways from my grandfather Gilbert. He grew up in Washunga, Oklahoma and was a well-regarded fancy dancer, traditional straight dancer and singer. He instilled in me a sense of pride in my Kaw heritage and cultural lifeways. Every year when I was growing up, we would make the pilgrimage to Oklahoma to participate in the annual Kaw Powwow and the dances of other tribes in the area. I danced in the very first Kaw Powwow at Washunga Bay and have been participating in our Kaw dances for five decades.

I have dedicated my professional life to serving Native Peoples. I have worked in the museum field for more than three decades protecting, preserving, and presenting Native American cultural and historical items and educating the broader public about our rich and diverse histories and cultures. Over the years, I have developed a vast network of contacts at the tribal, state, and federal levels.

During the past 35 years I have served as an associate director of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Director of the Anchorage Museum in Anchorage, Alaska, Director of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, Director of Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, and now as Director and CEO of the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City. I have managed annual operating budgets of more than \$40 million and managed assets worth more than \$3 billion. I have also administered multi-million-dollar construction projects including the \$175 million First Americans Museum, currently in development.

I am a graduate of the University of Oregon and of the Museum Leadership Institute at the Getty Center in Los Angeles. Other post graduate studies include Portland State University and Harvard University Center for the study of World Religions. I have contributed essays to various publications including *Stewards of the Sacred*, co-published by the American Association of Museums and Harvard University, and; *Native Universe: Voices of Indian America*, co-published by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society.

Throughout the past 25 years it has been my honor to serve our Kaw people. In the mid-90s I served the Kaw Nation as the inaugural director of the Kanza Museum. During that time, I helped to establish the Kaw language program through the acquisition of our Kaw language tapes and assisted in writing the first ANA language grant. I helped our Nation with negotiations for the acquisition of lands in Council Grove, Kansas which later became Allegawaho Memorial Heritage Park.

In 2004, I co-organized the renewal of our Kanza Ilóshka ceremonial dances and founded the Kanza Heritage Society to support Kaw cultural activities in Oklahoma and Kansas.

I am at the point in life where I can share these decades worth of experiences for the benefit of our Kaw people through service as your Vice Chairman. As we expand our enterprises, including the new casino in Braman, I will bring years of experience negotiating and overseeing contracts and major construction projects. I will help develop short and long-term strategic plans to expand and diversify our investments; all in an effort to provide improved services and educational opportunities for all our people. We are a small Nation, but we have great potential to be a mighty Nation.

It would be my honor to serve as your Vice Chairman.

Wíblahaⁿ

James Pepper Henry

