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WTCH: Diversity among people, nations

Summary: A UMM alumnus, storyteller and artist and a community leader, educator and activist will help UMM celebrate "Diversity Among People and Nations: Messages for the Next Generation" during World Touch Cultural Heritage Week March 20-25.

(March 13, 2006)-The 33rd year of World Touch Cultural Heritage Week, along with the 22nd year of the Circle of Nations Indian Association (CNIA) Powwow and the 23rd annual CNIA Peace Run, all at the University of Minnesota, Morris, will be celebrated during UMM's annual World Touch Cultural Heritage Week March 20-25. The week's events will feature Matthew Uses Knife, UMM alumnus, storyteller and artist and Todd Yeary, community leader, educator and activist. (*Chitra Divakaruni, award-winning author and poet who was scheduled to give the keynote address for the week, has cancelled her presentation. Plans will be underway to try to reschedule her visit to the campus.*)

Activities will include the annual Peace Run, Mexico Lindo Folkloric Dancers and "The H-Project." The weekend concludes with the CNIA Powwow. All WTCH Week events will focus on the theme, "Diversity Among People and Nations: Messages for the Next Generation."

The CNIA 3K Peace Run will begin at 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 21, in front of Minority Resource Center on the campus Mall. Also on Tuesday,

Matthew Uses Knife, UMM alumnus, storyteller and artist, will give a lecture on "American Indian Storytelling" at 7:30 p.m. in Oyate Hall. A reception and art sale will be held following the lecture in the Alumni Room. This event is co-sponsored by the Circle of Nations Indian Association.

Todd Yeary, community leader, educator and activist, will present "Among People" at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 22, in Edson Auditorium. Yeary is the senior pastor of The Empowerment Fellowship of Logan Street Baptist Church in Batavia, Ill. He also serves as the assistant director of the Center for Black Studies at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, teaching in the areas of African studies, psychology and religion. Additionally, Pastor Yeary serves as a consultant to organizations dealing with change in an era of fewer resources through his company R.E.A.L. Initiatives, Inc. Yeary spent 13 years as an air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration. He is writing two books, "Welcome to Already" and "From Point Seven to Ph.D." The event is co-sponsored by the Black Student Union. A reception in the Alumni Room will follow the lecture.

Mexican Folkloric Dancers will perform "Mexico Lindo" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 23, in Edson Auditorium. This event, with a reception to follow in the Student Center Alumni Room, is co-sponsored by the United Latinos student organization.

The annual Invitational Ethnic Dinner will take place at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 24, in Oyate Hall. Mike Miller, World Touch Cultural Heritage Week coordinator, will provide the welcome. Multi-Ethnic Student Program (MSP) graduates will be presented by MSP Director Aida Martinez. The H-Project, a group of artists who bring awareness of tragic

events occurring in Laos toward the Hmong people, will perform in Edson Auditorium at 7:30 p.m., also on Friday. A reception will follow in the Alumni Room. According to group members, "the H-Project goals are to: 1) give artists an opportunity to use art as a vehicle for social change 2) raise awareness of the situation in Laos and encourage action 3) promote unity within the Hmong community and 4) fundraise for Hmoob Hlub Hmoob (H3), a local group of activists working to provide humanitarian aid for the Hmong in Laos." This event is co-sponsored by the Asian Student Association.

The week will conclude with the 22nd Annual CNIA Pow-Wow on Saturday, March 25. The Grand Entries will perform in the P.E. Center gym at 1 and 6 p.m.

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are free and open to the public.

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