

NAS NEWS

www.nativeamericanstudies.org

Spring 2024 Edition Volume 14 Issue 1



Photo by Sharon Simmers-Norton.



Native American Studies Center
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA LANCASTER

Greetings from the Director!

I hope everyone is having a productive and prosperous 2024! Since our last newsletter, we've had a number of exciting events and great successes at the Native American Studies Center. As the pages that follow detail, we've had a great experience with our 2023-2024 Artist-in-Residence Bill Harris. For the first time, we asked our artist to visit local schools, and Bill happily spent a day at Great Falls Elementary and Andrew Jackson Middle School. I know the kids had a great time! We also hosted USC's First Lady, and longtime family friend, Ero Aggelopoulou-Amiridis, for our first Lunch and Learn lecture of 2024. Thanks to the efforts of Professor Brittany Taylor-Driggers, our collections area now has new moveable shelving. Professor Taylor-Driggers also curated the exhibit "The Language of Clay," which is currently on exhibit at the Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage. The Morris Center also hosted Beckee Garris and myself for the exhibit opening. Professor Judge has curated a new exhibit on his work in the Wateree Valley. Claudia Heinemann-Priest has been working on projects on both frybread and the anti-Santa folklore figure Krampus. And we continue to celebrate the new books by Evan Nooe and our friend and former colleague Brooke Bauer.



Director of Native American Studies Dr. Stephen Criswell gives USCL Interim Dean Courtney Catledge a tour of "The Story of Catawba Pottery" exhibit during her January visit. Photo by Ashley Lowrimore.

The spring and summer of 2024 promise to be even more productive. Professor Judge has received a RISE (Research Initiative for Summer Engagement) grant from USC to continue his archaeological work over the summer. Professor Taylor-Driggers and her staff are preparing for new exhibits and our May 18th art and craft festival. And I will be doing fieldwork documenting the cultures of our state-recognized tribes. I hope to see some of y'all at an upcoming powwow!

We did receive sad news in early January of the passing of Ralph Oxendine, Chief of the Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians. Chief Oxendine was a faithful, strong, and committed leader of his people and an honorable gentleman. He will be missed.

In our next newsletter, we hope to announce the hiring of a new archivist for the NAS Center, another slate of Lunch and Learn speakers, a new initiative to help bring more Native American students to USC Lancaster and the USC campuses in general, and information about November 2024's Native American Studies Week and Heritage celebration. Stay tuned!

Stephen Criswell

**NOTE
FROM THE
DIRECTOR**

Hours and Location:

Monday: Closed to the public
Tuesday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

119 South Main Street
Lancaster, SC 29720

To visit our website [click here!](#)

Contact Information:

Phone: [\(803\) 313-7172](tel:(803)313-7172)
Email: usclnasp@sc.edu

Learn more about
Native American Studies
Faculty and Staff [here!](#)

NAS News Staff:

Feature Writer and Newsletter Editor:
Ashley Lowrimore

Design and Production Editor:
Elisabeth Avelar



Thank you to Andrew Jackson Middle School for hosting the Center's Fall 2023 Artist-in-Residence Bill Harris for a day of pottery discussions and demonstrations with 6th-8th graders in February! Photo by Ashley Lowrimore.

Follow the Center on social media!



05 Dreams into Degrees:
Celebrating our Successful
Graduates

08 Criswell Awarded Racial
Justice Grant

10 Recent Events

16 Upcoming Events

17 Center Exhibitions




Center Program Assistant Beckee Garriss presents a gift of a reed basket by Catawba artist Faye Greiner and a piece of pottery made by Garriss to USC First Lady Dr. Ero Aggelopoulou-Amiridis during her January trip to the Center. Photo by Ashley Lowrimore.

On the cover:

In January, we were pleased to welcome Chief Lisa Collins and Tribal Council Members Janie Shumak and Joshua Shumak of the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians, who delivered a large drum, several pieces of beaded jewelry, and small hand drums to the Center's Special Collections. The artwork will be on display later this fall as part of an exhibition featuring the artwork of South Carolina's Lowcountry tribes.

This work is supported by the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation's "Broadening Narratives" grant, a groundbreaking collections initiative illuminating underrepresented stories, funding the Center's mission to identify and preserve largely undocumented traditions and stories of Native American tribes in the Lowcountry.

Pictured from left to right are Native America Studies Director Dr. Stephen Criswell, Janie Shumak, Lisa Collins, and Joshua Shumak. Center Assistant Curator Sharon Simmers-Norton and Director of Campus Collections & Galleries Brittany Taylor-Driggers, not pictured, also facilitated the accession.



DREAMS INTO DEGREES: CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSFUL GRADUATES

In February, President Joe Biden announced [new initiatives](#) aiming to make higher education more affordable and obtainable to Native American students as a part of National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week (Feb. 4-10, 2024).

Though USC Lancaster is not a tribally affiliated university, it aims to help students succeed however it can, whether someone is a first-generation student, starts school later in life, or isn't sure what to expect from the college experience. We're proud to have three Catawba citizens among our many successful graduates, who share their thoughts and experiences here.



Center Assistant Beckee Garris, then working full time at the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, was approached with the idea of being the first Native American student to graduate with a stand-alone degree in Native American Studies from USC's Palmetto College, which was then in an early stage of development (students may now currently graduate with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts with either a major concentration of study or a cognate in Native American Studies). Though the timing did not work out (the stand-alone interdisciplinary degree is still going through the process of development), Garris graduated with an Associate in Arts.

Garris says it's never too late to go back to school and earn a degree, which she did herself as a student more advanced in age than other traditional college students. She said she wanted to prove to herself that she could earn her degree.

"I'll be 77 in May," she said. "Who knows who might be influenced by you? Life happens and a lot of times, you don't have the opportunity to go when you're younger. In my generation and growing up where I grew up, education wasn't pushed because there weren't that many opportunities for someone who was not of the general population, but it is possible. You're never too old to learn if you're willing to put in the effort and the work, and once you get it, it can't be taken away from you."

Encouraged by others in her own collegiate experience, Garris says that faculty and staff are there to help new students as they begin their own journeys, even if they don't know what field of study to pursue as they start their path in higher education.

"So, you get started and you don't know what you want to do. That's what the classes are for, to help you decide what degree you want to go after," she said. "It's also preparing you for whatever degree you decide you want. It could be from a two-year college, or it could be a steppingstone to go further in the same school, or in a different state at a different school."



Previously participating in Center events and acting in a short film series that is currently part of the [Native American South Carolina Archive](#), Center Assistant Curator and Program Assistant Sharon Simmers-Norton was well-acquainted with USCL before becoming a student. She never considered attending the college until Native American Studies Director Dr. Stephen Criswell raised the subject with her.

“We were filming, we were coming in for art sales, we were connected with the school in so many different ways just being Native,” she said. “Stephen asked me if I had thought about going to school, and I told him that I hadn’t really, but it did seem like a good idea the more I thought about it.”

Simmers-Norton enrolled at USCL with a decision to study child psychology, earning an Associate in Science. She said that between filling out forms and scheduling classes, college can seem overwhelming for some at first; however, finding funding for college as an Indigenous student does not have to add to the stress of enrolling in higher education.

“In my first year, I had no idea what the college experience was going to be like,” she said. “Most people get overwhelmed because it does seem like they ask for a lot to get started. There were so many funds and scholarships and Native American grants that people are not aware of that’s out there, so you literally can go to school for free. I did.”

When Simmers-Norton did a Google search to find grants and scholarships for attending school, she said that she found several resources available, some available through the [Catawba Nation](#) itself.

“There’s a place on the reservation called the S.C. Indian Development Council, which was run by Phyllis Williams at the time I went to school,” she said. “Phyllis and her office would find ways to offer anything you needed to help for school- if you needed tires on your vehicle, books, or any kind of supplies, they helped in that manner. It was just a matter of applying. Funds are there for you to go for free, it’s just a matter of knowing.”



When Billy Canty, Catawba Nation Employee Relations Manager and Commissioner for the Catawba Nation Gaming Commission for Two Kings Casino, enrolled at USCL at 23 years-old, he was the first student in his family to attend college.

“I went to York Tech for a semester, had a 1.0 GPA, and realized I did not have a grasp on what I wanted to do, so I was navigating it blindly,” he said. “I read about USC’s business school, but found out that I could go to USCL and then transfer to Columbia for the rest of my classes, so I applied and was accepted on probationary status. I ended up having really outstanding professors, great class sizes, and advisors that helped me figure out my class schedule.”

While at USCL, Canty took anthropology classes with USCL Instructor of Anthropology and Archaeology and Center Archaeologist Chris Judge. In 2012, Judge, along with then-Dean John Catalano, helped Canty become the first recipient of a scholarship that was later established as a diversity scholarship.

“I wouldn’t say I was struggling to go to school, but it took an incredible financial burden off of me,” said Canty. “I have a very esteemed opinion of them and how community and tribal focused they were. They proactively found a way to give back and help me achieve my educational dream.”

“Billy was one of those great students who I really hoped would pursue archaeology, but he serves his Nation far better with a business degree,” said Judge. “He is a USCL success story!”

“I credit USCL that everything great that’s happened afterwards,” said Canty. “They took me in when I did not have a great academic standing and believed in me.”

While taking a full class load, working full time, and starting a family during his college career, Canty made the Dean’s List or President’s List every semester. Majoring in a double concentration in Management and Human Resources and minoring in Criminal Justice at USCL, Canty went on to study Marketing at USC’s Darla Moore School of Business. He graduated USCL with a 4.0 GPA, going on to graduate from USC with a 3.541.

“As a Catawba citizen, USCL helped me achieve the education I was going after,” said Canty. “I would love for more Catawba citizens to be able to take advantage of the curriculums that are there and achieve their educational goals. It would be amazing if USCL and the Catawba Nation partner to make that more of a streamlined process.”

In his role with the Catawba Nation, Canty and his team are poised to help citizens attend college. He says there are many scholarships available to potential students, including the Catawba Indian Nation Scholarship (which has increased to \$5,000 a semester thanks to the support from Two Kings Casino), the S.C. Indian Development Council Scholarship, the Pell grant, and others (a list of scholarships can be found on the Catawba Nation’s [website](#)).

“I have 2 H.R. generalists on our team and they’re very passionate about creating internships here and trying to find what schools would work well with our economic development team for people obtaining education, working with schools, and getting involved with academic planning so that students can be successful,” he said. “Getting started is the hardest part.”



Photo by Tylee Anderson

“USCL has my heart; I was there when the Native American Studies Center opened. A lot of my grandmother’s, great-grandmother’s, and family’s items and pottery are in there. USCL celebrates and gives people a chance to learn more about their culture and take pride in that.”

-Billy Canty

CRISWELL AWARDED RACIAL JUSTICE GRANT



Photo of Dr. Stephen Criswell by Sharon-Simmers-Norton.

Congratulations to Native American Studies Director and folklorist Dr. Stephen Criswell, who was awarded a grant from the USC Racial Justice and Equity Fund to document and preserve cultural traditions and oral histories among South Carolina's recognized tribes.

Now in the early stages of the project, "Navigating Indigenous Identity in Bi-Racial South Carolina: A Cultural Documentation Project and Multi-Site Exhibition," Criswell is coordinating interviews with tribal leaders, identifying community events and/or festivals and powwows to document, and selecting artwork for a future exhibit. Working with USCL Director of Campus Collections and Galleries and Associate Professor of Art and Art History Brittany Taylor-Driggers and Curatorial Assistant Sharon Simmers-Norton, their research will culminate in an exhibition on South Carolina's state recognized tribes that will be offered in total or in part to the tribes involved in the project.

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs recognizes nine communities in the state that trace their origins to pre-contact Indigenous populations: the Beaver Creek Indians, Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe of South Carolina, Pee Dee Indian Nation of Upper South Carolina, Pee Dee Indian Tribe, Piedmont American Indian Association Lower Eastern Cherokee of South Carolina, Santee Indian Organization, Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians, Waccamaw Indian People, and Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians.

While Indigenous communities did not disappear after the Yamasee War in the 18th century as history books often indicate, Criswell says that some of these populations were enslaved by European colonists or driven to near extinction. Some members of these tribes identified as white, African American, or Turkish (as the Sumter Tribe of Cheraw).

Criswell says that little scholarly work has been done to document the cultural traditions of these tribes.


"Each of these tribal communities were displaced and nearly devastated, yet they have persevered and continue to maintain their identities and heritages in the face of extreme difficulties," he said. "Native American Studies at USCL is committed to assisting our state's Native communities by documenting their cultures, histories, and narrative traditions, preserving them for future generations, and celebrating the

history and knowledge they carry.”

Criswell anticipates fieldwork taking six to nine months to complete, with the exhibit opening in about a year. Artwork, artifacts, and other materials will become part of the Center’s Archive and Special Collections, with selected materials available on the [Native American South Carolina Archive](#) (NASCA), a comprehensive digital archive for tribal histories, photos, correspondence, oral histories, and more. A collaboration between the Center’s Archive, the USC University Libraries Digital Collections, and the USC Institute for Southern Studies, NASCA provides resources for studying Native American culture and highlights the important role Native South Carolinians have played in our state’s history.

The award from the USC Racial Justice and Equity Fund follows Criswell’s most recent fieldwork among five South Carolina Lowcountry tribes (Beaver Creek Indians, Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe of South Carolina, Santee Indian Organization, Waccamaw Indian People, and Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians) from 2022-23. This research was funded thanks to the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation’s “Broadening Narratives” grant, a groundbreaking collections initiative allowing the Center to illuminate underrepresented stories and preserve largely undocumented traditions and stories of Native American tribes in the Lowcountry.

Congratulations Dr. Criswell!



Watch our previous virtual programming on the Center’s [YouTube Channel](#)! Be sure to like, subscribe, and ring the bell for the notifications!

RECENT EVENTS



Our Condolences

We send our condolences to the family of Ralph Oxendine, Chief of the Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians, who passed away in early January. It was our pleasure to host Chief Oxendine, pictured here with Councilwomen Courtney Tice (left) and Tammy Ray Stevens (right), in March 2022 for an interview in conjunction with the exhibit [“A People Once Lost, Now Found: The Sumter Tribe of Cheraw Indians.”](#) Rest in power, Chief Oxendine.

View the obituary [here](#). Photo by Ashley Lowrimore.



Special Collections Receives New Shelving/ “Save America’s Treasures” Grant

This winter, the Center installed moveable shelving in Special Collections, made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Save American’s Treasures grant. Images show the early stages of installation to the completed project featuring the installation crew. To learn more about the grant, click [here](#). Photo of installation by Sharon Simmers-Norton. Photo of crew by Ashley Lowrimore.



View current and upcoming
exhibits from the Special
Collections and galleries [here!](#)

Bauer Receives Best Ethnohistory Award

Congratulations to Catawba citizen and former Native American Studies Co-Director Dr. Brooke Bauer, who received the American Society for Ethnohistory's 2023 Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Book Award for her book, "Becoming Catawba: Catawba Indian Women and Nation Building, 1540-1840." Bauer, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Tennessee, presented a book talk during the 2nd Annual W. Brent Burgin Lecture Series at the Center in October 2022 (pictured here). Congratulations, Dr. Bauer! Click [here](#) to read more about the award. Photo by Ashley Lowrimore.



Pottery Demonstration Filming

In mid-January, Assistant Curator and Program Assistant Sharon Simmers-Norton, Director of Campus Collections and Galleries Brittany Taylor- Driggers, and Native American Studies Director Dr. Stephen Criswell traveled to the Catawba Nation for a special filming session with Catawba artist Faye Greiner, who taught citizens an older way of preparing clay as she was taught by her mother, Evelyn George. Here, Greiner (left) is assisted by Cheyenne Sanders, Senior Center Coordinator. Photo by Sharon Simmers-Norton.



USC First Lady Presents Jan. Lunch and Learn

In January, we were thrilled to welcome the University of South Carolina First Lady Dr. Ero Aggelopoulou-Amiridis to the Center as she presented “Breaking Barriers” as part of the W. Brent Burgin Lunch and Learn Lecture Series! After the lecture, the First Lady received a tour of “The Story of Catawba Pottery” exhibit from Native American Studies Director Dr. Stephen Criswell (pictured here with Columbia philanthropist Dot Ryall) and a tour of Special Collections from Director of Campus Collections and Galleries Brittany Taylor- Driggers. Photos by Ashley Lowrimore.



Visit [NASCA](#) to learn more about South Carolina's Native communities and access letters, images, videos, timeline, an interactive map, and more!



Judge Speaks in Indian Land

In February, Center Archaeologist Chris Judge spoke at Sun City Carolina Lakes' "Seminar Saturday," promoting USCL's Indian Land campus. Photo by Anthony Brockington.



Center Faculty & Staff Attend Pottery Firing

Thank you to the Catawba Nation Senior Center for having USCL Native American Studies Director Dr. Stephen Criswell, Director of Campus Collections & Galleries Brittany Taylor-Driggers, and Center Assistant Curator Sharon Simmers-Norton out in early February to view an "old way" of firing vessels, pictured and created here by the seniors. Photo by Sharon Simmers-Norton.

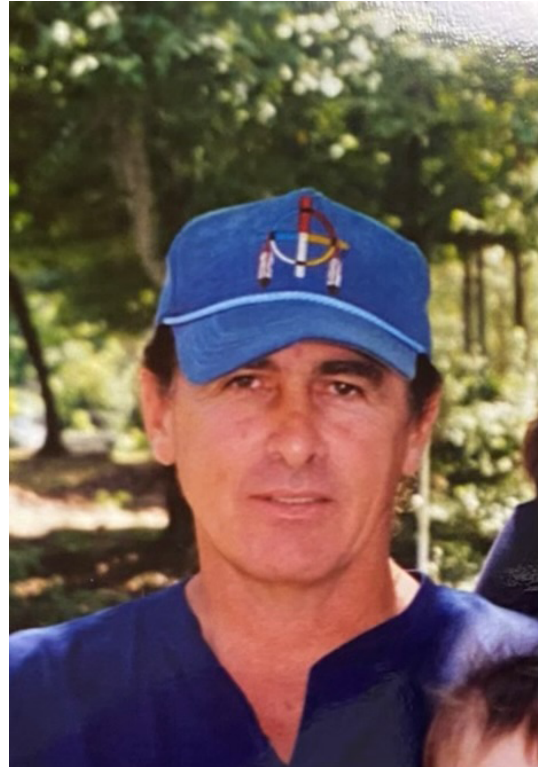
In Memorium, Val Green

By Chris Judge

Val Green, self-described “Southern Dirt Farmer” passed away on Saturday, Jan. 13 at 81 years of age. Val was a frequent visitor to the NASC and in particular our Archives as an avid avocational historian of Native American tribes, particularly the Pee Dee, whom he was helping with a federal acknowledgement petition. He also published on 16th century Spanish expeditions through South Carolina, with different routes than the ones scholars had supported. Val also walked most if not all of John Lawson’s 1701 epic trek through both South and North Carolina.

Val worked in many capacities as a teacher, civil engineer, history sleuth, and Native American advocate. A proud 9th-generation South Carolinian, Val was passionate about family, land, genealogy, history, and Native American culture. He became fascinated with buffalo and, at one time, was the owner of the largest herd of buffalo in the state.

At his graveyard service, his son described him as an “Intellectual Redneck,” a fitting tribute.



View the official obituary of Val Green [here](#).

Upcoming Events

March 20, 5-7 p.m.

Author Talk and Book Signing at Medford Library Center

Historian Dr. Evan Nooe presents a talk on his new, award-winning book "Aggression and Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South" in this special talk and book signing held at USC Lancaster's Medford Library. Copies of books will be available for purchase at the program.

March 22, Noon

Lunch and Learn: "How DNA Technology Can Reveal Identity, Ancestry, and Appearance in Forensic Science"

Lecture by Deborah Rowell, USCL Instructor of Criminal Justice.

March 31

Exhibit Closing

Last day to see the exhibit, "Sounds of Religion."

April 26-27

47th Annual Edisto Natchez-Kusso Powwow

Join the Edisto Natchez-Kusso for their powwow in Ridgeville, S.C. Click [here](#) for more information.

April 26, Noon

Lunch and Learn: "Blood Residue Analysis of Paleoamerican Stone Tools in the Carolinas"

Lecture by Dr. Chris Moore, USC's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology.

May 4, 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois, and United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc. Powwow

Join the ECSIUT for their powwow in Pickens, S.C. Click [here](#) for more information.

May 18, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Spring Art & Craft Festival

In conjunction with the annual Red Rose Festival, shop for pottery, jewelry, baskets, beadwork, and many more unique creations by Native American artists from around the region. This event is free and open to the public.

May 24, Noon

Virtual Lunch and Learn: "Rich from the Sea: Florida Native Americans' Indigenous Wrecking in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"

Lecture by Dr. Peter J. Ferdinando, Assistant Teaching Professor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Department of History.



Stay up to date on all our upcoming events from our [website!](#)

Center Exhibitions



D. Lindsay Pettus Gallery: The Story of Catawba Pottery: This National Endowment for the Arts funded exhibit traces the art, culture and history of Catawba pottery, the oldest Native American pottery tradition in the United States. Permanent Exhibit.

Duke Energy Gallery: Native American Archaeology in the Wateree Valley: Artwork and artifacts tell the story of Indigenous mounds in the Wateree Valley region. Through Aug. 5, 2024.

Five Points Gallery: More than a Game: Indigenous Sports and Athleticism. Opening in conjunction with the 18th Annual Native American Studies Week, this exhibit highlights Indigenous athletes, some with Carolina connections, and their contributions to competitive sports such as hockey, football, wrestling, track and field, the Olympics, and more. Through Aug. 30, 2024.

North Gallery: Backyard Vines: Artwork by Nancy Basket. View the beautiful weavings and sculptures made of wisteria, kudzu, long leaf pine needles, and more from traditional artist Nancy Basket. Through Sept. 1, 2024.

Red Rose Gallery: Sounds of Religion: Choirs singing. Monks chanting. The reading of religious texts. These are religious sounds. But so too are the creaking of church pews and the clanking of pots during the preparation of a communal meal. “Sounds of Religion” is a poster exhibition that explores how rituals and gatherings of religious communities create a complex soundtrack of religions in the United States that teaches us how people behave, how they’re different, and how they’re alike. Through QR codes, viewers are invited to listen to eight contemporary recordings that serve as an audio portrait of the rich and dynamic differences that make religious life in the U.S. unique. “Sounds of Religion” is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in cooperation with the American Religious Sounds Project of The Ohio State University and Michigan State University and made possible through the generous support of The Henry Luce Foundation. Through March 31, 2024.

Back Gallery: This is Us: Native American Studies at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. This exhibit celebrates the history and 10th Anniversary of USCL’s Native American Studies, including artifacts and artwork from Collections, and a history of the building our Native American Studies Center calls home. Semi-permanent Exhibit.

Upcoming Exhibitions



Red Rose Gallery: Painted Voices: Discover the two-dimensional array of landscapes, abstracts, and portrait-style artwork from Catawba Nation artists DeAnn Beck and Nicole Foxx Braswell. Opens April 5, 2024. Through June 20, 2024.

SPRING ART & CRAFT FESTIVAL



Saturday, May 18
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Shop for pottery, jewelry, baskets, beadwork, and many more unique creations by Native American artists from around the region! Held in conjunction with See Lancaster's annual Red Rose Festival, this event is free and open to the public.

The Center's Galleries
119 South Main Street
Lancaster, SC 29720
www.nativeamericanstudies.org
803-313-7172

