

Tiajuana Cochnauer  
Biography for 2020 Academy for Lifelong Learning

“We’re Still Here – American Indians Today” is presented by Tiajuana Cochnauer, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a Federally Recognized Tribe [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) .

Her message of tribal endurance begins with this continent at the time of European arrivals through countless events that wiped out many peoples. It’s a hard message to tell and, for some, a hard message to hear.

Tiajuana’s professional experiences enable her to share this message to, hopefully, reach all. She is a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation. Combined with her teaching experiences of K – 12, and undergraduate course at Washington State University, she welcomes learning and the classroom.

Tiajuana served as the Acting Director of the Office of Tribal Relations at the national level of the USDA Forest Service in Washington, DC. She contributes research and Choctaw history to the Oklahoma Historical Society’s Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. Her family history research traces her Choctaw ancestors from the late 1700s and includes the documentation of her maternal great-great-great grandfather’s immigration from Mississippi in 1832 to what is now Oklahoma during the “Removal Period”, later known as the Trail of Tears.

She has also established an enrichment fund at the University of Oklahoma Western History Collections. Tiajuana’s extensive personal library of Choctaw and American Indian publications will be donated there.

Tiajuana is on the Artist Registry of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Prior to the USDA Forest Service, she was a program manager of university and education programs with the US Department of Energy (DOE) in Idaho serving the northwestern United States. She also earned a temporary promotion at DOE’s Headquarters in Washington, DC, for education programs.

Tiajuana earned a Master of Education and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Oklahoma (OU). She has additional course work at the graduate level in public school administration and natural resources from a number of universities, including the University of Idaho, Boise State University, Utah State University, Oklahoma City University and Furman University.

She currently volunteers for the American Red Cross and fosters bottle-fed kittens for the Albrecht Center for Animal Welfare SPCA. She is the OU alumni chapter leader.