

Museum of New Mexico Media Center

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Public Invited to Sculpture Unveiling & Celebration of Life

Museum of Indian Arts and Culture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The Museum of Indian Arts & Culture invites the public to a commemorative sculpture unveiling *and celebration of life* – honoring the late Valentino Tzigiwhaeno Rivera (Pojoaque Pueblo), 2008 - 2016.

The unveiling and celebration takes places on Sunday, November 5 from 1pm to 4pm at the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture (710 Camino Lejo), featuring speakers George Rivera (Pojoaque Pueblo), Olympian Gold Medalist Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), Steve LaRance (Hopi/Assiniboine), as well as performances by the Pueblo Buffalo Dancers, Santa Fe Break Dancers, Jir Project, and Lightning Boy Hoop Dancers.

“We are honored to have this sculpture – depicting Valentino in his Hoop Dance Regalia – created by his father George Rivera, the renowned sculptor, in the Museum’s permanent collection,” says Della Warrior (Otoe Missouriia), director of the museum.

“The Museum of Indian Arts & Culture is truly grateful for this outstanding gift celebrating the life of Valentino and his love and joy of dancing,” says Warrior.

Valentino was inspired by world champion hoop dancer Nakotah LaRance (Assiniboine/Hopi/Tewa), and had an affinity for the late Michael Jackson’s dance and performance abilities. His relationship with LaRance – and his father Steve – led to the founding of the Pueblo of Pojoaque Youth Hoop Dance Group.

“Valentino immediately started sharing Nakotah and Steve’s instruction, showing gratitude and blessings for the well-being of others any time he was able,” says his mother Felicia Rivera, “at family parties, at school, in the parks, for relatives when they were sick or well.”

He performed at Pearl Harbor at the Homecoming of the USS Santa Fe, in San Diego with fellow dancers from around New Mexico for the National Indian Gaming Association, and in Phoenix at the World Hoop Dance Competition. In 2014 they traveled to Europe and performed in Paris, Florence, and Geneva, where they danced at the US Embassy for Keith Harper, US Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council, and Ambassadors for many other countries. “Valentino left a lasting impression everywhere he danced,” says Felicia Rivera. “While many

[people] are advised to ‘dance like no one is watching’...Valentino danced like the whole universe was watching...”

A world performer, Valentino danced at the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, too, in the former Ann and Alan Rolley Performance Circle, now being sponsored by Ashlyn and Dan Perry in Valentino’s honor

“This sculpture of Valentino performing the ‘Hoop Dance’ will greatly enhance the beauty of Milner Plaza and Museum Hill. We commend Dan and Ashlyn Perry for their leadership role in making this gift possible, with the support of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation.”

For more information, please visit the museum’s website at indianartsandculture.org or call 505-476-1271.

About the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture: <http://miaclab.org/> *As the 19th century closed, one of the Southwest’s major "attractions" was its vibrant Native American cultures. In response to unsystematic collecting by Eastern museums, anthropologist Edgar Lee Hewett founded the Museum of New Mexico in 1909 with a mission to collect and preserve Southwest Native American material culture. Several years later, in 1927, John D. Rockefeller founded the renowned Laboratory of Anthropology with a mission to study the Southwest’s indigenous cultures. In 1947 the two institutions merged, bringing together the most inclusive and systematically acquired collection of New Mexican and Southwestern anthropological artifacts in the country. The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture is a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs. Hours: 10 am to 5 pm daily, May through October; closed Mondays November through April, closed Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s. 710 Camino Lejo off Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87504, Phone: (505) 476-1269. Events, news releases and images about activities at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture and other in divisions of the Department of Cultural Affairs can be accessed at media.newmexicoculture.org.*

[Back to Press Release Details](#)