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**“Native Voices on Mixed Race” at the  
Mitchell Museum of the American Indian**

**Local Native Americans discuss the legal, cultural,  
and social boundaries of Native American status**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**February 7, 2014** – There are over 30,000 Native Americans living in the Chicago area, all of whom identify or hold status with different tribal nations across the country. But how is tribal status preserved in bands, and how do the rules differ from tribe to tribe? How do individuals maintain their Native American culture when they or their children no longer qualify for membership? What are the difficulties culturally blended families face as they create new traditions, on and off the reservation? The Mitchell Museum of the American Indian hosts a panel discussion on these varied perspectives of Native American identification on February 13, 2014 from 6:00 to 7:30 at the Mitchell Museum in Evanston.

The discussion panelists each have something different to share from their personal perspectives. Anthropologist, Terry Strauss is the editor of “Race, Roots & Relations; Native and African Americans” and “Native Chicago”, an anthology of fiction and non-fiction work that brings together the art, poetry, and history of Native Americans living in Chicago. Debra Valentino, Oneida, is the Association Executive of Association Management Company and a mother in a diverse and blended family living in Chicago, seeing and experiencing first-hand the issues faced by Native American families. And, Lawrence Santiago, member of the Coushatta tribe of Louisiana, is an architect, actor, musician, graphic artist, Marketing Coordinator at the Mitchell Museum, and a new father. This diverse panel is moderated by Melissa Halverson, curator at the Mitchell Museum.

Admission to the event is \$10 for Mitchell Museum members and Tribal citizens, and \$12 for non-members. The discussion blends into one of the Mitchell Museum’s current temporary exhibits entitled “Cultural Identities: Mixed Blood”. The exhibit is free with regular admission.

The Mitchell Museum is one of only a handful of museums in the country that focuses exclusively on the art, history and culture of American Indian and First Nation peoples throughout the United States and Canada. In 2012, The Mitchell Museum was named “Best Museum of The North Shore: Up and

Comer" by *Make it Better* magazine, won the Superior award by the Illinois Association of Museums and was named a national finalist by the American Association of State and Local History award program.

For more information about The Mitchell Museum of The American Indian, visit [www.mitchellmuseum.org](http://www.mitchellmuseum.org) or call 847-475-1030. The museum is open Tuesday-Wednesday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday- Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors, students and children and Free for Mitchell Museum members and Tribal members.

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