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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“Contemporary Native Women Opening Doors to Change” Exhibit Opens  
June 18<sup>th</sup> at Mitchell Museum of the American Indian**

May 27, 2016—Join the Mitchell Museum on Saturday, June 18 for the opening of its latest exhibit “Contemporary Native Women Opening Doors to Change.” The year-long exhibit takes an in-depth look at twelve Native women leaders whose contributions have shaped the future in a range of social justice issues from tribal sovereignty, culture and language, land and environmental issues, imagery and stereotypes to the arts. A welcoming reception will be held at 1pm, followed by a curator led tour at 2pm and a panel discussion from 3:00-4:30.

The exhibit is guest curated by Arlene Hirschfelder and Paulette Molin (a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, White Earth Reservation), two prominent humanities authors and museum consultants with over 25 years of experience. Through biographical accounts and each woman’s own words, photographs, videos, documents, art, and artifacts, visitors will learn about major issues faced by indigenous people today and how these challenges are being overcome to bring about change, inspire the next generation, and break ground for women everywhere.

As Ada Deer (Menominee), one of the influential Native women featured in the exhibit says, “You don’t have to collapse just because there is a federal law in your way. Change it!”

Find out who the first Native American woman was to successfully argue a case before the United States Supreme Court. Learn who is leading the charge in the fight against using racial stereotypes as mascots. Discover who was named one of the “35 people who made a difference in the world” in 2005 by Smithsonian Magazine. Meet an internationally recognized Native woman featured on postal stamps. Designed to stimulate conversations in community responsibility and engagement, visitors will learn the unique life stories of the incredible women behind these and many more accomplishments.

Throughout the exhibit, the women’s life stories are supported by art and artifacts that represent the challenges the women have faced and the victories they have championed. Among these is a large pictorial quilt featuring agronomics expert Jane Mt. Pleasant (Tuscarora) that hangs in the area where visitors will learn about land and environmental issues, an activist shawl worn by Sarah Deer (Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma) in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in the social justice area of the exhibit, and the bold and colorful artwork of painter Daphne Odjig (Potawatomi) in addition to a showcase of

stunning works of art in many mediums including quillwork, pottery, beading, basketry and more from Native women artists across the country.

The Mitchell Museum will be offering programming throughout the year-long run of “Contemporary Native Women Opening Doors to Change” that takes a further look into many of the issues explored in the exhibit. From discussion panels to guest lectures from some of the women featured, visit [www.mitchellmuseum.org](http://www.mitchellmuseum.org) for the schedule and more information as it becomes available.

“Contemporary Native Women Opening Doors to Change” is supported with funding from the Illinois Humanities Council, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Driehaus Foundation, Evanston Arts Council, Laura Saviano, Susan and Tim Salisbury, and Nancy Cunniff and Alan Zunamon.

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. The *Chicago Tribune* named the Mitchell Museum one of its top 10 museums for 2015.

For more information about The Mitchell Museum of The American Indian, visit [www.mitchellmuseum.org](http://www.mitchellmuseum.org), call 847-475-1030 or see our verified Facebook page. The museum is located in Evanston, Illinois at 3001 Central Street. It 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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