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**Mitchell Museum of the American Indian Announces its Newest Exhibit
“Connecting Cultures: 40 Years at the Mitchell Museum”**

Feb. 18, 2016—Evanston, IL—The Mitchell Museum will unveil its latest exhibit “Connecting Cultures: 40 Years at the Mitchell Museum” on Saturday, February 27. The exhibit celebrates four decades of thought provoking exhibits, lectures, and performances through photographs and memorabilia, and a dazzling display of 45 objects donated by key collectors and Native artists who have presented at the museum.

Founded in 1977, the mission of the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian is to promote and share a deeper understanding and respect of Native American peoples through the collection, preservation and interpretation of their traditional art and material culture. Sparked by a passion for dispelling misconceptions about Native Americans, museum founders John and Elizabeth Seabury Mitchell built a collection of over 3,000 objects from tribes throughout North America which they later donated to Kendall College to found the Mitchell Museum. With the support of artists and collectors from across the country, the collection grew to over 10,000 pieces. Needing more space, the museum moved into its current location at 3001 Central Street in Evanston in 1997, and formally completed its separation from Kendall College to become an independent not-for-profit institution in 2006. “Connecting Cultures: 40 Years at the Mitchell Museum” celebrates not only the museum’s 40th anniversary, but also its 10th anniversary as an independent institution in 2016.

The exhibit will take visitors down memory lane with detailed pictures and memorabilia from past event invitations, news clippings, and behind the scenes photos of collections, exhibits and programs with premiere artists and performers such as author N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), potter Dextra Quotskuyva Nampeyo (Hopi) and fashion designer Patricia Michaels (Taos Pueblo). Visitors will see how the museum and its collection grew to become an integral fixture in the Chicago Native American and cultural communities; attracting visitors from around the world.

The exhibit's center case features exquisite examples of pottery, basketry, sculpture, dolls, beadwork, jewelry and more from Native artisans across the United States and Canada, some of which were donated by the artists themselves. Other pieces were given to the museum by major collectors who shared in the museum's mission. Visitors will see a stunning example of a Lakota doll by artist Rhonda Holy Bear (Cheyenne River Sioux) donated by Elizabeth Seabury Mitchell. The 1880s style doll stands 30 inches tall and is wearing a detailed replica of Red Cloud's shirt and beaded moccasins. From the Van Zelst family, an intricate statue of a standing bear attacking a seal made of steatite, ivory and bone is a superb example of Inuit carving by artist Simeonie Elijassiapik. A divine necklace made of silver, turquoise and bear claws from Navajo artist Ervin Hoskie was donated by June and Bernard Kleban. Also in the display case are photographs featuring many of these same Native artists demonstrating their art during public programs at the museum.

"Looking at this spectacular sampling from the museum's collection, visitors will see the stories from the artists, the collectors who supported them, the donors who saw the value in sharing these pieces with the public, and finally those who built the bridges for both Native and non-Native audiences to experience these diverse cultures for years to come," said Kathleen McDonald, Executive Director of the Mitchell Museum.

Central to the museum's mission is to further educate the community about misconceptions of Native American peoples by dispelling stereotypes. "Connecting Cultures: 40 Years at the Mitchell Museum" includes an education section demonstrating how the museum has presented key contemporary issues facing Native peoples today, displaying hands-on objects offered to schools, and including a response board to stimulate thoughtful visitor participation. Finally, visitors will learn about the Mitchell Museum's partnerships within the Native Community and its vision for the future of the museum.

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, 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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