The 2019 Vision Maker Media Annual Report was created in-house by staff.
INTRODUCTION

A WORD FROM SHIRLEY SNEVE

I am honored to present to you the 2019 Fiscal Year Annual Report from Vision Maker Media (VMM). Our mission is to empower and engage Native People to share stories. We envision a world changed and healed by understanding Native stories and the public conversations they generate.

I am extremely proud of Vision Maker Media filmmakers, who rocked the Public Broadcasting System this year—literally—with the presentation of RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD, on the INDEPENDENT LENS series.

Two other series brought important Indigenous stories to life: SKINDIGENOUS—about traditional tattoos, and GROWING NATIVE—a four-part series about Tribes who reclaim traditional old ways for their health today.
INTRODUCTION

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Altogether, we brought audiences **16 hours of outstanding television** programming that otherwise would not happen without the support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, as well as through other public and private foundations and donors. Please read on to learn about these films. We heard stories of veterans, activism, politics, water rights, women’s issues and Maine’s truth and reconciliation efforts.

We presented **film festivals** in Rapid City, South Dakota, Lincoln and Omaha in Nebraska. We partnered with Migizi, Big Sky Film Festival, the Sundance Institute, Firelight Media, LA Skins and the Seattle International Film Festival.

We said farewell to Mary Ann Koehler, VMM’s Business Manager for 22 years. We welcomed Alyssa Ranard to the staff as Marketing and Creative Specialist and Matthew Nehe as Director of Finance and Administration. And we’re cultivating the next generation of filmmakers in a very personal way, as Assistant Director Rebekka Schlichting gave birth to daughter Elizabeth Chibitty.

We completed a new **strategic plan**. Mark Trahant, editor of Indian Country Today stepped down as chair of the Board of Directors, and Attorney and Playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle was elected chair for 2020.

And after 15 years, I’m writing my **last letter to you as VMM’s executive director**. I’ve accepted the position of President & CEO of the Minnesota-based Tiwahe Foundation.

**I’m going home—in a way.** My Dakota ancestors were exiled from Minnesota to Dakota Territory in the 1860s. I look forward to continuing our important work in Indian Country—to uplift Tribal voices, celebrate our culture and continue the economic impact of investing in Native peoples.
OUR MISSION

Vision Maker Media empowers and engages Native people to share stories.

We envision a world changed and healed by understanding Native stories and the public conversations they generate. We work with Native producers to develop, produce and distribute programs for all media. VMM supports training to increase the number of American Indians and Alaska Natives producing quality public broadcasting programs.
OUR VALUES

Traditional knowledge to **educate future generations of American Indians and Alaska Natives.**

**Giving voice to Indigenous stories** that serve as a catalyst for change in an honest and authentic way.

**Quality and professionalism** in electronic media to inspire, educate and heal through innovation.

**Diversity** in cultures, people and programming.
2019 AT A GLANCE

120 FILMS AVAILABLE VIA DVD AND/OR STREAMING

DAWNLAND RECEIVED AN EMMY FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

53 PRODUCERS TRAINED THROUGH PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

GROWING NATIVE WON FOUR BRONZE TELLY AWARDS

37 FILMS IN BROADCAST

10 NATIVE FILMS RELEASED TO BROADCAST

295 SCREENINGS FILMMAKER Q&A’S & DIVERSITY-LED FILM FESTIVALS

27 ONGOING PROJECTS

WORDS FROM A BEAR SELECTED FOR SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

NATIVE FILMS AQUIRED 36,000 TIMES ON PUBLIC TELEVISION

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THE TEAM

Shirley Sneve  
(Rosebud Sioux)  
Outgoing Executive Director

Rebekka Schlichting, MA  
(Iowa Tribe of KS and NE)  
Assistant Director

Dawn Amory  
Director of Marketing & Development

Alana Stone  
(Sicangu Lakota)  
Project Coordinator

Alyssa Ranard  
Marketing & Creative Specialist

Matt Nehe  
Director of Finance & Administration

Ann McKeighan  
Department Assistant

Stacy Price  
Accounting Assistant
BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Trahant  
(Shoshone-Bannock)  
Board Chair  
Indian Country Today

Maya Austin  
(Pascua Yaqui/Blackfeet)  
Vice Chair  
Sundance Institute

Joni Buffalohead  
(Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota)  
Secretary  
BlueLink TPA

Randal P. Hansen  
Treasurer  
Assistant General Manager, NET

Robin Butterfield  
(Winnebago/Chippewa)  
Educator

Mary Kathryn Nagle  
(Cherokee Nation)  
Partner, Pipestem Law

Franz Joachim  
General Manager & CEO  
New Mexico PBS

Walt Pourier  
(Oglala)  
Nakota Designs

Joely Proudfoot  
(Luiseño)  
Director, California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center

Elizabeth Weatherford  
Indigenous Media Initiatives

Patrick Yack  
Executive Director, Florida Public Media
FILMS RELEASED TO BROADCAST

SKINDIGENOUS
DAWNLAND
GROWING NATIVE
MORONI FOR PRESIDENT
RUMBLE
WARRIOR WOMEN
RETURN
THE SEVEN GENERATION RIVER
THE PEOPLE’S PROTECTORS
AND NOW WE RISE
Skindigenous is a 13-part documentary series exploring Indigenous tattooing traditions around the world. Each episode dives into a unique Indigenous culture to discover the tools and techniques, the symbols and traditions that shape their tattoo art. In this series, the art of tattoo becomes a lens for exploring some of the planet’s oldest cultures and their unique perspectives on life, identity, and the natural world.

Released: 9/6/2018
Distributor: APT
Produced by: Jason Brennan
For decades, child welfare authorities have been removing Native American children from their homes. In Maine, the first official “truth and reconciliation commission” in the United States begins a historic investigation. DAWNLAND goes behind-the-scenes as this historic body grapples with difficult truths, redefines reconciliation, and charts a new course for state and tribal relations.

Released: 11/5/2018
Distributor: Independent Lens
Produced by: Adam Mazo
Growing Native is a four-part series focusing on reclaiming traditional knowledge and food ways to address critical issues of health and wellness, the environment and human rights. Growing Native focuses on Tribes, stories and events from four geographic regions, including Alaska, Oklahoma, Northwest and Great Lakes. Across the country, Native people are regaining health and strength through the recovery and revitalization of traditional knowledge systems of land, language, traditional arts and health.

Released: 9/8/2018
Distributor: APT
Produced by: Shirley Sneve
Moroni Benally runs for the presidency of the Navajo Nation, the largest Native American nation in the U.S. Young, gay, Mormon and highly educated, he sets out to confront the political establishment in a homecoming that challenges what he imagined home, and himself, to be.

Released: 11/20/2018
Distributor: America ReFramed
Produced by: Saila J. Huusko
This feature documentary, about the role of Native Americans in popular music history, tells the story of a profound, essential, and, until now, missing chapter in the history of American music: the Indigenous influence. Featuring music icons Charley Patton, Mildred Bailey, Link Wray, Jimi Hendrix, Jesse Ed Davis, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Robbie Robertson, Randy Castillo, and others, Rumble will show how these talented Native musicians helped shape the soundtracks of our lives.

Released: 1/28/2019
Distributor: Independent Lens
Produced by: Catherine Bainbridge
Warrior Women is the story of Madonna Thunder Hawk, an AIM leader who shaped a kindred group of activists’ children - including her daughter Marcy - into the “We Will Remember” Survival School as a Native alternative to government-run education. Together, Madonna and Marcy fought for Native rights in an environment that made them more comrades than mother-daughter. Today, with Marcy now a mother herself, both are still at the forefront of Native issues, fighting against the environmental devastation of the Dakota Access Pipeline and for Indigenous cultural values.

Released: 2/25/2019
Distributor: NETA
Produced by: Elizabeth Castle
RETURN: NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN RECLAIM FOODWAYS FOR HEALTH & SPIRIT is about empowering people to overcome their current circumstances through eating as their ancestors did — nutritiously and locally. RETURN explores the food-sovereignty movement occurring across the country through the stories of women championing the return to traditional food sources.

Released: 3/19/2019
Distributor: APT
Produced by: Karen Cantor
Unlike many Native American tribes, The Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Indians were never removed from their ancestral lands, but they saw their environment and way of life fractured over time. A small group of tribal citizens fought for decades to keep traditional ways alive. When the US Federal government recognized the Pokagon as a sovereign tribal nation in the early 1990s, the tribe launched a series of cultural preservation and environmental restoration efforts. They are now actively working to restore with traditional arts, their language and ways of life, while creating new traditions to inspire tribal citizens to protect and preserve waterways for the next seven generations.
Four Native American veterans reflect on their experiences in the military during the divisive Vietnam War and how their communities helped them carry their warrior legacy proudly. From the Marine Corps to the Navy to the US Army, veterans Valerie Barber, Art Owen, Sandy White Hawk, Vince Beyl, and civilian eyapaha (announcer) Jerry Dearly recall their memories of one of the most controversial wars in United States history.

Released: 5/24/2019
Distributor: PBS Plus
Produced by: Leya Hale
AND NOW WE RISE

AND NOW WE RISE is a portrait of an exceptional young activist, Samuel Johns, motivated to help his Alaska Native community to lead sober, productive lives. Abandoned by his parents as a child and raised by numerous relatives, Samuel matured into a man who seeks to understand the roots of what happened within the larger context of historical trauma and loss of culture. He is an “everyman” who heals and grows by stepping up to help others, and becomes revered by the community. He is able to use his skills and talents for public speaking, writing hip hop music, and creating the Facebook Group, Forget Me Not, which connects those experiencing homelessness with far flung family members.

Released: 9/14/2019
Distributor: NETA
Produced by: Mary Katzke
Vision Maker Media (VMM) announced support for nine new American Indian and Alaska Native projects for public media for 2019. The projects were selected as part of VMM’s mission to increase documentaries by and about Native Americans in Public Broadcasting. With funding from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB), Vision Maker Media’s Public Media Content Fund awards support to projects with a Native American theme and significant Native Involvement.

100% SIGNIFICANT NATIVE INVOLVEMENT

78% NATIVE-LED PRODUCTIONS
In the sterile storage of museums and archives, our ancestor’s remains struggle to find their way home. The film follows eleven indigenous repatriation specialists fighting to rebury and return ancestors from settler-colonial libraries, archives, and museums.

Clans explores relationships among the Na-Dene, the largest Indigenous linguistic family in North America, through the origin and migration stories of the Dene in the Canadian Subarctic and the Diné (Navajo) in the American Southwest.

A national weekly news TV program produced by Indian Country Today in Washington, DC and Phoenix, AZ.
This “Indigenous Studies” virtual classroom, hosted by two well-known Native media personalities combines truth, traditional knowledge, humor, animation, and personality to present important educational themes in Indigenous Studies. The media will be accompanied by lesson plans and assessments that will support teachers to integrate Native American subject matter and knowledge across a range of subjects already being taught in high-school curriculum.

A PBS digital series that will highlight ingenuity and expertise within Indigenous communities from the past and present. Welcome to Indigi-Genius.

Searching for Sequoyah is the first documentary feature to chronicle the legendary accomplishments and mysterious death of the famed Cherokee Renaissance man, Sequoyah. From Tuskegee, Tennessee to Mexico, Searching for Sequoyah takes viewers on a journey retracing his final quest, and unlocking the mysteries of his life and death.
SISTERS GONE: MISSING & MURDERED IN ALASKA

DOCUMENTARY

*Sisters Gone: Missing & Murdered in Alaska* investigates the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Alaska, whose rates of violence are higher than any other racial, ethnic, or gender group in the United States. Through the lens of the family members left behind, Native American filmmaker Erica Tremblay reveals the impact and continuation of centuries of trauma navigated by Native Alaskan communities as a result of industry, isolation, lack of law enforcement, and racism.

(UNTITLED) BY TWIN CITIES PBS

DOCUMENTARY

*(Untitled) by Twin Cities PBS* is an evocative documentary exploring the sexual exploitation of Native women today in the context of the repeated colonization of Native people’s lands and bodies. The film will travel between the policies and treatment of Native women in the past, to the contemporary legal tensions and efforts to decolonize Native women’s bodies and spirits today.

WHEN THEY WERE HERE

DOCUMENTARY

Indigenous women and girls face rates of violence unlike any other group. The stories of these women and girls go beyond the statistics and figures used to define them. They were mothers; they were grandmas; they were daughters; they were loved *When They Were Here.*
ACTIVE FILMS

PRODUCTION

Ancestors in the Archives
Clans
Chasing Voices
Searching for Sequoyah
Without a Whisper
Daughter of a Lost Bird
Blood Memory
Home from School
Family Pictures USA
Indian Country Today TV
Manzanar Diverted
Sisters Gone: Missing & Murdered in Alaska
“Untitled” by Twin Cities PBS

BROADCAST

Skindigenous
Dawnland
Growing Native
The People’s Protectors
Moroni for President
Rumble
Warrior Women
RETURN
The Seven Generation River
And Now We Rise
Words from a Bear
ATTLA
The Blackfeet Flood

NEW MEDIA

Indigenous with Stacey Thunder
A Kayak to Carry Us
Rematriation
Native Music VR Trilogy
Indigeneity Learning Media
Indigi-Genius

POST PRODUCTION

Almost an Island
Sisters Rising (formerly Arming Sisters)

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Drowned Land
Violence Against Women Act
When They Were Here
“You are all doing such important and beautiful work bringing Indigenous voices and stories to the Lincoln area. Much gratitude from my heart to you!”

- Festival Attendee
Vision Maker Media in partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Women’s Center, celebrating Women’s week, showcased six powerful films by and about Indigenous women, March 8, 2019. The event featured special appearances by Brooke Pepion Swaney (Blackfeet/Salish), Kendra Mylnechuk (Lummi), Elizabeth Castle, and Marcella Gilbert (Oohenumpa Lakota).
Vision Maker Media was honored to partner with Native POP: People of the Plains - A Gathering of Arts and Culture and South Dakota Public Broadcasting to present the sixth annual Native Film Showcase, July 20 in Rapid City, South Dakota. Native POP is a Native art market and cultural celebration in the Black Hills. The event featured special appearances by Madonna Thunder Hawk (Oohenumpa Lakota), Marcy Gilbert (Oohenumpa Lakota), Drew Nicholas, Sandy White Hawk (Sicangu Lakota), Dwayne Wilcox (Oglala Lakota), Myron Pourier (Oglala Lakota), and Kibbe McGaa Conti.

FEATURED FILMS

- The Blackfeet Flood
- Indigenous with Stacey Thunder: Standing Rock Part 1
- Sweetheart Dancers
- The People’s Protectors
- Warrior Women
- Blood Memory
- Héčhetu Welo
- Dakota Life: Carrying on the Vision
- Savor Dakota: Wild and Accessible
- The Goodwin Sculpture
- Quill Working
- Walter “Super” LaBatte
- Maya Bdeg’a (Pelican Hill)
- RETURN: Native American Women Reclaim Foodways for the Health & Spirit
On October 12-13, Vision Maker Media (VMM) held the first Train the Trainers: Native Youth Media Summit in partnership with MIGIZI. The summit, held at the MIGIZI headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was for instructors of youth media programs to provide Native youth with the skills and tools necessary to harness the power of media for Native-driven storytelling and narrative empowerment.
Summit instructors included John Gwinn, Project Director/Media Specialist and Binesikwe Means (Oglala Lakota), Social Enterprise/New Media Team from MIGIZI, Tiana LaPoint (Sicangu Lakota), a filmmaker from InProgress and Philip A. Sanchez (San Felipe Pueblo), filmmaker and founder of Blurred Media. Instructors led attendees through workshops aimed to innovate and improve Native youth teaching methods. John, Tiana and Binesikwe’s classes included an Introduction to the Native Youth Media Guidebook, best practices in youth media and a production activity practicum. Philip’s workshop broke down post-production, production, pre-production and examples of Virtual Reality (VR).

**STUDENT CONFIDENCE**

- **44%** INCREASE COORDINATING A NATIVE YOUTH MEDIA TRAINING PROGRAM
- **34%** INCREASE INSTRUCTING ON FORM AND CONTENT IN VIDEOS
- **29%** INCREASE INSTRUCTING ON THE FILMMAKING PROCESS

“I was able to consider possible opportunities to improve our school districts media program.”

-Student attendee
In August, 15 producers and 13 presenters/panelists, including the VMM team, gathered together for the Vision Maker Media Producer Lab and Firelight Media Groundwork, joined by the Johnny Carson School for Emerging Media Arts, Firelight Media and Flaherty.

VMM filmmakers were given the opportunity to learn about topics including film budgets, marketing and branding, safe archival storage and new media training. Filmmakers were also given a chance to network, discuss the development of their projects and meet the VMM team.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SOCIAL MEDIA</th>
<th>FACEBOOK FANS</th>
<th>TWITTER FANS</th>
<th>INSTAGRAM FANS</th>
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<td>8,295</td>
<td>15,057</td>
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OVERALL SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

+86%
Thank you to our generous 2019 partners and sponsors.

**FUNDRAISING**

**FRIENDS, GRANTS & UNDERWRITING**

- **FUNDRAISING TOTAL**
  - $36,939

- **TOTAL GIFTS**
  - 360 +28%

- **GRANT TOTAL**
  - $285,000

- **UNDERWRITING TOTAL**
  - $30,940

**GRANTS**
- The Claire M. Hubbard Foundation
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Woods Charitable Fund
- NoVo Foundation
- Acton Family Giving

**UNDERWRITING**
- Tribal College Journal
- SAY Magazine
- Native Oklahoma Magazine
- Big Sky Film Festival
- Koahnic Broadcasting Corporation
- National Indian Gaming Association

**GIFT TYPES**

- 31% OTHER
- 30% NEW
- 30% ADDITIONAL
- 28% RENEWING
THANK YOU

Generous support for this fiscal year was provided by the following. If you would like to support more Native stories by Native people, please visit visionmakermedia.org

Nadema Agard
Dawn Amory
Cathryn A. Antkow-
ak-Howard
Gwen Archer
Tara L. Arquette
Alfonso Arredondo
Augustine Band of
Cahuilla Indians
Adrian Auler
Catharine Axley
Terry Baber
Mary Bailey
Rebecca Barker
Regina Bennetts
Kristine Benson
James Berthet
Helen Bishop
Francis Blythe
William Booker
Richard Bosshardt
Forrest Boyd
Robin Brack
David Braff
Bernard
Bredbenner Jr.
John Brennan
Janet Brown
Sharon Buchbinder

Joni Buffalohead
Cynthia Burton
Robin A. Butterfield
Errol Callaway
Sandy Cargile
Janet Carlson
Noreen Cartwright
Victor & Joanne
Chandler
Chicken Ranch
Rancheria of
Me-wuk Indians of
California
Kasia Chmielinski
David Ciotti
Roy Clem
Gwendolyn Cook
Diane Corbman
Bette Crouse
J Griffin Crump
Peter Cuckovich
Elinore Cumings
John Cunningham
Jo Anna Dale
Samira De Lanie
Phyllis Deal
Jan Deeds
Deborah DiPlacido
David C. Dister

Dennis Dohner
Elaine Dorough
Johnson
Judy Eggleston
Connie Eigenmann
Cindy Elder
Megan Elliott
Teresa Enking-Novak
Amy Epstein
Pam Evans Mitoraj
G Steven Ferris
Marguerite Fitch
Kenneth Flanders
Lawrence Forte
Katsitsionni Fox
Jeffri Frontz
Patricia Gallimore
Lydia Garvey
Mark Giese
Helen Gildred
Louis Goldich
Kenneth Gonzalez
Lori Gottula
Teresa Graedon
Glennon Graham
Tia Graham
Katharine Grant
Anne Greene
Irvin Grika

Charlotte Griswold
Tergis
Robert Grossman
Clara Guellil
Chereeze Hall
Evelyn Haller
Randy Hansen
Donna Haraway
Cynde Harmon
Thom Harney
Meg Hayes
Anne Helms
William Hoffhines
Don Holliday
Elizabeth Horikawa
Jack Hoyer
Norman Huggins
Cindy Hughes
Ron Hull
Robert Hungate
Gerald Hurt
Marc Imlay
Margaret Jacobs
Katrina Jagodinsky
Kay Jantzen
Franz Joachim
Irene Kao
Charles Kapela
James Kearney
Constantin Kehaya
Torsten Kjellstrand
Jack Kohler
Ramona Kohrs
Elizabeth Koopman
Karla Kozach
Peter & Carol Kozik
Theodora Kramer
Susan M. Kus
Susan Kyle

Danny & Margaret
Ladely
Mike LaMair
Becca Landsberry
Nancy Larson
Norbert
Larson
Christine Lesiak
Angelo Lewis
Max Licher
Helen Lipham
Myron & Virginia
Long Soldier
Aesha Lorenz
Al-Saeed
Lark Lucas
Lorene Ludy
Walter Maeyama
Steve Maly
Laura Markman
MATCH-E-BE-
NASH-SHE-WISH
Band of
Pottawatomi
Indians, Gun
Lake Tribe
Kate Mathias
Ann McKeighan
Kathy M’Closkey
Joey Proudfit
Elizabeth
Queffenne
Katherine Racette
John Raible
Alyssa Ranard
Patricia Rathmann
Paul Renn
Jane Renner Hood

Justine Nagan
Mary Kathryn Nagle
Alice Nash
Lyne Neel
Matthew Neveen
Robert North
Sharon Olbertson
Jim Pagliarini
Joseph Palen
Dahya Patel
Ray Patton
Steven Payne
Donald Pepion
Wima Jeanne
Perry-Jones
Martha Pessaro-
Mikmaq
Evon Peter
Beth & Stan
Peterson
Leighton Peterson
Mary Ann Peterson
Penelope Phillips
Bryan Pollard
Frederick Pomper
Walt Pourier
Stacy Price
Joely Proudfit
Elizabeth
Queffenne
Katherine Racette
John Raible
Alyssa Ranard
Patricia Rathmann
Paul Renn
Jane Renner Hood
The following is a summary of financial information for the fiscal year ending in Sept. 30, 2019 based on audited financial statements.

**REVENUE & SUPPORT**

CPB Grant Revenue

$1,358,591

Other Grants & Contributions

$357,127

Other

$163,082

**Total Revenue & Support**

$1,878,800

**EXPENSES**

Programming

$1,030,090

Management & General

$510,310

Fundraising

$43,894

**Total Expenses**

$1,584,294

**Change in Net Assets**

$294,506