



# LUMBEE TRIBE OF NORTH CAROLINA LUMBEE TRIBAL COUNCIL

August 1, 2023

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To Whom It May Concern,

One may say, "It's not my problem." A problem may become everyone's problem. The healing becomes everyone's healing; otherwise, the problem continues to exist. The problem – the epidemic, so serious, so traumatic, so lamenting – "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women/People."

According to research, Native American women are much more likely to be the victims of violence than the general American population. Native women face murder rates ten times the national average.

We are thankful that awareness has reached political leaders. In the fall of 2019, former President Donald Trump rendered an executive order to attack the problem. Part of that order revolved around the opening of cold case offices across the United States to focus on unsolved crimes involving indigenous victims, especially, women and children.

Governor Roy Cooper declared May 5 as a day of awareness for such crimes in North Carolina. Governor Cooper made reference to studies that revealed that American Indian women are more than three times as vulnerable to violent crimes and twice as likely to be raped as women of other races.

S.Res.144 – A solution was designated for May 5, 2019 as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls."

Just in 2017, three Lumbee Indian women were found dead in Lumberton, N.C. within four blocks of each other.

These tragedies are not just the tragedies of the victims and their families. These are also ours. Galatians 6:2 requests each of us to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Through an art competition with the theme, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women," sponsored by the Education, Culture, and Public Relations Committee of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Keely Oxendine, a 2022 Purnell Swett High School graduate, received the overall winning position. Her art piece depicted six Native American women who were murdered in Robeson County.

Keely's art also was selected for a billboard display to proclaim justice and bring awareness for the victims and their families.

The Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina has designated \$5,000.00 towards the rental and design of a billboard to promote and advertise Keely's art revealing compassion and concern for the victims and their families.

We kindly request your financial support to rent a billboard in helping us to bring more awareness, create strong and determined efforts to touch minds and hearts of individuals who can make a difference, and bring justice for all the victims – women, girls, and men who have been missing and murdered.

You may write a check or money order to - Lumbee Nation Tribal Programs, Inc. and address it to Sharon Bell, Director of Finance of the Lumbee Tribe. For the memo, write MMIP. Your contribution is tax deductible.

We sincerely appreciate your concern and support to help solve these cases and bring healing to the families and our communities.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Barnes Dial  
Education, Culture, and Public Relations Committee Chair  
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

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