



SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORY CONFERENCE & GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR HISTORY
April 22 - 23, 2022 | Ramkota in Pierre | In person & virtual option

Friday, April 22

- 11:00am - 4:00pm **Registration Table Open**
- 12:30pm - 1:00pm **Vendor Area Open**
- 1:00pm - 1:30pm **Welcome** - Dr. Benjamin F. Jones, director South Dakota State Historical Society
- 1:40pm - 2:30pm **Marcella LeBeau**, Pretty Rainbow Woman of Cheyenne River - Donovan Sprague, professor of history and political science at Sheridan College will present the story of his dear friend, Lakota nurse Marcella LeBeau (Pretty Rainbow Woman). In 1943, she enlisted in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, serving in France, England, and Belgium. Her combat service included treating soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge. Belgium granted her a medal of honor for her service.
- 2:30pm - 3:00pm **Vendor Break**
- 3:00pm - 3:50pm **Kenny Higashi**, Nisei Son of SD & the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team – Lauren Harris, author of *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi*. Lauren Harris will convey how the connection of a small agrarian town and immigration in her new illustrated children's book (to be released in mid-April), *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi*, summarizes South Dakota's rich heritage of loyal and industrious American communities while highlighting the courage and determination of the all-Japanese American Army unit, 100th/442nd RCT. In 1942, Kenny enlisted to keep his family together and to maintain their Spearfish farm. To date, he is the only member of the 100th/442nd known to be born in South Dakota. Because of Kenny, South Dakota is forever connected to one of the most highly decorated units in the Army.

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April 22, Friday *continued*

4:00pm - 5:00pm **A Historical Society's Perspective** with Dedra Birzer - director and editor-in-chief of South Dakota Historical Society Press, Renee Boen - state archaeologist and director of Archaeological Research Center, Catherine Forsch - CEO of South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, Katy Schmidt - curator of collections for State Museum in Cultural Heritage Center, Chelle Somsen state archivist for South Dakota State Archives, and Ted Spencer - deputy and director of South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office.

5:30pm - 7:30pm **Conference Reception**
Location: Missouri Avenue Event Center, 217 W Missouri Ave, Pierre

Cartoon Propaganda and American Perceptions of World War II, presented by Kurt Hackemer - provost and VP for Academic Affairs at University of South Dakota. During the war, propaganda was a constant presence on the America home front. This presentation will explore how both traditional and animated cartoons defined "the enemy" (and some Allies) for American civilians, including the racial overtones that differentiated depictions of American adversaries in the Pacific Theater from those in the European Theater.

Book Signings & Art Display at the reception – author Lauren Harris and illustrator Felicia Hoshino for *A Place for Harvest* and author and illustrator Hector Curriel for *Joe Foss Fighter Pilot, American Ace*.

April 23, Saturday

7:45am - 3:00pm **Vendor Area and Registration Table Open**

8:15am - 8:30am **Welcome** - Dr. Benjamin Jones

8:30am - 9:20am **Joe Foss: From Farm Boy to American Hero** - Hector Curriel, author and illustrator of *Joe Foss Fighter Pilot, American Ace*
Presentation will be a reflection regarding his experience writing and illustrating a graphic novel about the American hero, Joe Foss. He will also explain his fascination with Foss's life, and why his life story is still relevant to the people of the present time.

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April 23, Saturday *continued*

9:30am - 10:20am

Exploring Our Artifacts - Archivists Sam Herley, Liz Cesar, and Matthew Reitzel will present a panel on WWII archival collections at their respective South Dakota institutions.

- **"The Glenn E. Soladay Collection (147th Field Artillery) 1940-1945"** - Liz Cesar, collections assistant at the Center for Western Studies
- **"Oral Histories of World War II Veterans from the 1960s, and 1970s"** Sam Herley, curator of South Dakota Oral History Center at USD
- **"United We Stand Magazines and Elizabeth (Meadow) Crissman Collection - Summer 1942"** Matthew T. Reitzel, manuscript/photo archivist for South Dakota State Archives
- State Historical Society department directors will describe WWII related aspects of their collections and offer brief updates on the latest happenings at the South Dakota State Historical Society.

10:30am - 11:00am

Vendor Break

11:00am - 11:50am

"Call-Sign 'Chief': A Lakota Sioux Aviator at War in the Pacific" - Sean Flynn, professor of history Dakota Wesleyan University examines Lt. Col. John P. "Pat" Flynn's colorful career as a Marine Corps aviator, which included combat missions in the Marshall Islands and during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. A member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe, Flynn was one of the few aviators of Lakota descent who fought in the Pacific Theater. His experiences, in addition to heightening our appreciation for the military achievements of modern American Indians, form a unique chapter in the history of South Dakota during WWII.

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Luncheon Keynote: "Hearing Their Stories: South Dakota's Native Sons During War" - John Little, director of Native recruitment and alumni engagement at USD will discuss the Lakota Veteran's Oral History project.

Governor's Awards for History presented by Sean Flynn, president of

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trustees for the South Dakota State Historical Society and Dr. Ben Jones

April 23, Saturday *continued*

1:45pm - 2:30pm

“Don Smith, Doolittle Raider” – Paul Higbee, author of *The First Strike: Doolittle Raider Don Smith* offers a presentation about Don Smith, who grew up in Belle Fourche, SD, inspired by all manner of human flight, including the stratobowl balloon flight of 1935 and the rescue flights of aviation pioneer Clyde Ice. He hoped the United States would not enter WWII, but when it did in 1941, Smith was piloting the new B-25 as part of the U.S. Army Air Corps. He volunteered to be one of the sixteen B-25 pilots who launched their airplanes from a ship deck to bomb the Japanese mainland just four months after Japan struck Pearl Harbor. Pierre’s Hank Potter also flew the Doolittle Raid as a navigator.

2:30pm - 3:00pm

Vendor Break

3:00pm - 3:50pm

“The Black Hills Veterans Oral History Project” - Kelly Kirk, director of Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center
For the past five years, Black Hills State University has partnered with the National Cemetery Administration to develop public history and educational materials, telling the story of the veterans interred in the veterans’ cemeteries in the Black Hills region. This presentation will review the Veterans Legacy Program, highlighting the work completed surrounding World War II and its veterans.

4:00pm - 4:45pm

Podcast *History 605 Live!* with host Dr. Benjamin Jones and guest, Francis Whitebird a Vietnam Purple Heart recipient and historian. Francis and Ben will speak about the Lakota Code Talkers of WWII, a group that included his father.

We are offering Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for educators.

For questions please call (605) 773-6000.

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SPEAKER BIOS

Dedra McDonald Birzer is director and editor-in-chief of the South Dakota Historical Society Press. She holds a doctorate in the History of the American West from the University of New Mexico and is currently writing a biography of Rose Wilder Lane. She is married to Dr. Brad Birzer and has six children, five cats, and one dog.

Renee M. Boen is the State Archaeologist and Director of the Archaeological Research Center. She has also served as the South Zone Archaeologist for Hell Canyon and Mystic Ranger Districts at the Black Hills National Forest, and as Area Archaeologist/Principal Investigator at the Bureau of Reclamation, Dakotas Area Office.

Liz Cisar is collections assistant at the Center for Western Studies of Augustana University in Sioux Falls. A Minnesota native, she received her B.A. in history from Augustana in 2006. Most of her archival training has been on the job, but she completed the Western Archives Institute in 2021.

Hector Curriel is a visual artist from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A native of Lima, Peru, his variety of art production include fine art, book illustration, and cartooning. His distinctive personal style emanates in his composition's different stages of the human spirit. As an artist, he defines himself as a storyteller.

Sean Flynn is professor of history at Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South Dakota. He is the author of *Without Reservation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation* (South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2018), and *Chief, Marine Corps Warrior* (2003), which chronicles his father's exploits as a combat aviator and prisoner of war.

Catherine K. Forsch is the CEO of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation. She previously worked in donor relations at Sanford Health Foundation and has over twenty years in executive planning, administration communications, and marketing.

Kurt Hackemer is professor of history, provost, and vice president of Academic Affairs at the University of South Dakota. He teaches a wide range of military history courses at USD, including HIST 470: History of World War II, and he has published extensively on a variety of American naval and military history topics.

Lauren R. Harris is an author and writer focused on illuminating the experiences of men who fought in the 100th/442nd battalion. Her book *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi* was published by South Dakota Historical Society Press.

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SPEAKER BIOS continued

Sam Herley, Ph.D., has been the curator of the South Dakota Oral History Center at the University of South Dakota since 2015. He has served as an instructor at USD for the Department of History, Native American Studies Program, and Honors Program since 2011.

Paul Higbee is the author of *The First Strike: Doolittle Raider Don Smith*, published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press. He is a contributing writer for the next volume of *The Plains Political Tradition* series, set for publication later this year. Since 1992, Paul has been the Black Hills writer and columnist for *South Dakota Magazine*

When **Felicia Hoshino** decided to make art her career, she attended California College of the Arts, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in illustration. Felicia is the illustrator for the new South Dakota Historical Society Press book, *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi*. Felicia's prize-winning illustrations can be seen in children's magazines Cricket, Spider, and Ladybug and in children's books such as *Little Sap and Monsieur Rodin*, *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow* - the Jane Addams Children's Book Award winner and *My Dog Teny*, all accepted into the Society of Illustrator's The Original Art exhibitions. Like Kenny Higashi, two of Hoshino's great uncles served in the 442nd combat team.

Ben Jones grew up in South Dakota and served 23 years in the Air Force and was twice assigned to the History Department at the Air Force Academy. He has served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Dakota State and as South Dakota's Secretary of Education. He's been State Historian and Director of the Historical Society since December 2020.

Kelly Kirk is the Director of the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center, history instructor, and the Director of the Veterans' Legacy Program at Black Hills State University. Inspired by her surroundings, Kelly's research focuses on local history, contributing an essay to *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains* published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press in 2018. Ultimately, she enjoys finding new ways to share history with others.

John Little is the Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement at the University of South Dakota. He received his PhD in history from the University of Minnesota in 2020. John is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and is passionate about changing the way the history is written about Native people. He is the co-director of the award-winning film *More Than a Word*. His research focuses on Native American Vietnam Veterans.

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SPEAKER BIOS continued

Matthew T. Reitzel has served as the South Dakota State Archives manuscript/photo archivist for seventeen years. He earned his BA in history in 2001 from Northern State University and his MA in history in 2003 from Oklahoma State University. He also compiles a weekly history column for the Pierre Capitol Journal. He lives in Pierre with his wife Jessica and daughters Emma and Lily.

Katy Schmidt has worked as Curator of Collections for the museum since 2017. She has an MA in Museum Science from Texas Tech University and a BA in Archaeology from the University of Evansville. Her interests in WWII include not just the military conflict, but the impact the war effort had on civilians and the home front.

Chelle Somsen is the South Dakota State Archivist with degrees from South Dakota State University and Mankato State University. She received the Digital Archives Specialist certificate in 2013, is the chair of the South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board, is an alumna of the Archives Leadership Institute, and a member of the National Heritage Responders.

Ted Spencer has been the State Historic Preservation Office deputy and director of the State Historic Preservation Office for ten years. A native South Dakotan, with degrees from South Dakota State University and the University of Oklahoma, Spencer previously served in the United States Air Force for twenty-seven years.

Donovin Sprague teaches history and political science at Sheridan College in Wyoming. He serves as the advisor for the Multicultural Center as well as the Native American organization on campus. He was raised on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota where he is an enrolled member of the Minnicoujou Lakota. He is an artisan and the author of ten books.

Francis Whitebird is a fluent Lakota speaker. He earned his BS degree from South Dakota State University and a MA in Education from Harvard University. Whitebird was a combat medic during the Vietnam War and earned a Purple Heart during his service. A member of the Red Feather Warrior Society, he was a cabinet member under the Mickelson administration and served on the South Dakota State Historical Society Board of Trustees for nine years.