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CONTACT: Amy Blum  
[amy@ganondagan.org](mailto:amy@ganondagan.org)  
(585) 425-1864

## GANONDAGAN SITE MANAGER G. PETER JEMISON HONORED WITH NATIONAL AWARD

*Jemison one of six Native American artists to receive prestigious award*

Victor, NY—Ganondagan State Historic Site Manager and well-known visual artist **G. Peter Jemison** (Seneca) has just been named one of six winners of the prestigious **2012 Jennifer Easton Community Spirit Award fellowship** from the **First Peoples Fund** in Rapid City, SD. Jemison received this national award for his accomplishments in Fine Art Painting, Mixed Media.

Each year, the national organization honors and celebrates exceptional American Indian artists who embody *Collective Spirit*® — “that which manifests self-awareness and a sense of responsibility to sustain the cultural fabric of a community.” Each honoree is recognized with a \$5,000 no-strings-attached fellowship. Over the past 13 years, First Peoples Fund has recognized a total of 59 Community Spirit Award honorees representing 43 tribal nations.

“I am honored to have been nominated and selected for a Community Spirit Award,” said Jemison. “Over the last 16 years, I have mounted the Iroquois Biennial at the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, and it has been one of my proudest achievements. It has given me the opportunity to select Haudenosaunee artists who represent the best of our artistic tradition. This has been one way for me to give to our community and at same time, help our artists.”

For more than 30 years, Peter has explored a variety of topics, from creating political works that portray contemporary social commentary to works of art that reflect his relationship with the natural world. His works embody orenda, the traditional Haudenosaunee belief that every living thing and every part of creation contains a spiritual force. Educated in New York and Italy, Peter's work has been exhibited around the world and is highly sought after by museums and collectors. The subject of numerous articles and publications, Jemison often is called one of the most “eloquent Native American voices.”

First Peoples Fund's President Lori Pourier (Oglala Lakota) explains that honorees are chosen not only for artistic excellence but for exemplifying indigenous values of generosity, wisdom, respect, integrity, strength, fortitude and humility. "Each artist exemplifies *Collective Spirit*® which moves each one of us to stand up and make a difference, to pass on the ancestral knowledge, or simply extend a hand of generosity," she said.

The First Peoples Fund receives nearly 100 nominations annually. Honorees are nominated for the national award by members of their own tribes and selected by an independent panel of American Indian cultural leaders. This year's panel included: Shannon Martin (Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomini Indians), Ron Martinez Looking Elk (Isleta/Taos Pueblo), and Darrel Norman (Blackfeet).

The five other honorees are: Duane Goodwin (Anishinaabe), sculptor; Elizabeth Jaakola (Anishinaabe), Music/Voice/Composition/Performance; Jackie Parsons (Blackfeet), Traditional Arts; David Boxley (Tsimshian), Visual Arts; and Charlie Hill (Oneida), Stand Up Comedian, Spoken Word. The national award ceremony will take place in October at the Cowles Center for the Performing Arts in Minneapolis.

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*First Peoples Fund is dedicated to the preservation, advancement and well-being of American Indian arts and culture, deeply rooted in Indigenous values and place-based practices. The Fund's mission is to cultivate and strengthen American Indian artist leadership, nurture the Collective Spirit® that allows them to sustain their people, develop successful artist entrepreneurs, and sustain arts and culture at the community level. First Peoples Fund's grantmaking initiatives include: the annual Community Spirit Awards, Artists-in-Business Leadership, and Cultural Capital Fellowship programs. Visit: [www.firstpeoplesfund.org](http://www.firstpeoplesfund.org).*