



AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Contact: Montoya Whiteman
Office: 720-552-6123
Cell: 303-829-7501
mwhiteman@aises.org
www.aises.org
Twitter: @AISES
Instagram: AISES_HQ
YouTube: AISESHQ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Patricia Nez Henderson Receives AISES 2017 Ely S. Parker Award

BOULDER, Colo., September 20, 2017 – Patricia Nez Henderson, M.D., M.P.H. is the AISES 2017 Ely S. Parker Award recipient. The Ely S. Parker Award is the highest AISES honor and recognizes outstanding First Peoples scientists and engineers in North America. The award recognizes individuals who advance the AISES mission through their achievements and contributions to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

The 2017 award winner, Dr. Nez Henderson, is vice president of the Black Hills Center for American Indian Health, a nonprofit organization in Rapid City, S.D., that addresses myriad health needs of Northern Plains tribes. “Dr. Nez Henderson,” who has had a distinguished career as a physician and health researcher, is the first American Indian woman to graduate from the Yale School of Medicine. The Ely S. Parker Award will be presented to Dr. Nez Henderson at the AISES 40th Anniversary Gala on Saturday, September 23, in Denver, Colo.

Dr. Nez Henderson’s work centers on tobacco control and prevention programs among American Indian populations. She is most effective in this campaign as a member of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health within the Office on Smoking and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2010, Huff Post recognized Dr. Nez Henderson as their “Greatest Person of the Day” for her exceptional work in confronting tobacco use among American Indians and advancing the health of Native communities across the U.S. Dr. Nez Henderson was central in the advocacy and implementation of smoke-free policy initiatives on the Navajo Nation with a precedent-setting effect on tribal lands.

Dr. Nez Henderson credits her interest in medicine to her grandfather, a Navajo medicine man. Her mother also inspired her with the gift of a stethoscope, which Dr. Nez Henderson used to listen to the heartbeat of the family’s sheep on their land in Teesto, Ariz., on the Navajo Reservation. She grew up in a home with no running water or electricity, and graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in biochemistry followed by a master’s in public health at Yale University. She went on to complete medical school at Yale in 2000.

“Dr. Nez Henderson is a remarkable leader. She has dedicated her career to improving Native peoples’ lives through research and health policies,” said Sarah EchoHawk, AISES CEO. “Dr. Nez Henderson has worked on the frontlines in challenging and changing attitudes around commercial tobacco use in Indian Country. She has originated studies on targeted commercial tobacco marketing and its health

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consequences on reservations. As a medical student, Dr. Nez Henderson faced isolation and loneliness to persevere and become a strong female role model to tribal nations, as well as AISES students. In its 40th Anniversary year, AISES is pleased to recognize Dr. Nez Henderson with its highest award.”

AISES 2017 National Conference

The 2017 Ely S. Parker Awardee, and all 2017 Professional honorees, will be recognized at the 2017 AISES National Conference, the largest gathering of Indigenous STEM students and career professionals in the United States. The 2017 conference takes place in Denver, Colo., from September 21 to 23 at the Colorado Convention Center, where participants will experience educational sessions, networking opportunities, student research presentations, the largest College and Career Fair in Indian Country, and traditional cultural events. Over 2,000 participants are expected. Awards will be presented at the 40th Anniversary Gala on September 23, 2017, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Visit conference.aises.org to learn more and to register.

About the American Indian Science and Engineering Society

AISES is a national Native American nonprofit whose mission is to substantially increase the representation of American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, First Nations, and other indigenous peoples of North America in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies and careers. Founded in 1977, with a rapidly expanding membership of more than 4,000 individual members, AISES sustains 190 chartered college and university chapters, 15 professional chapters, and 158 affiliated K-12 schools supporting over 55,000 students. AISES has awarded over \$10.3 million in academic scholarships to over 5,000 American Indian STEM students. Through scholarships and internships, workforce development and career resources, national and regional conferences, science fairs, leadership development, and other STEM focused programming, AISES is the leader in STEM opportunities for indigenous people of North America.

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