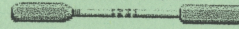




Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits

Started in 1999, BAAITS is a community-based volunteer organization whose mission is to create forums for the spiritual, cultural and artistic expression of Two-Spirit people. The BAAITS office at 1800 Market Street in the new SF LGBT Center will provide information and referrals to and about the Native American/First Nations community. BAAITS sponsors traditional Native art classes, and other cultural and educational events. Two-Spirit is a term derived for American Indian/First Nations traditions expressing the belief the LGBT people are gifted people who manifest a balance between the masculine and feminine.

HONOR



BARBARA CAMERON

February saw the loss of Barbara Cameron, Native American activist and writer. Born in May of 1954, Barbara was raised by her grandparents on the Standing Rock Reservation. After two years at the American Indian Art Institute in Santa Fe, Barbara moved to San Francisco, where in 1975 she co-founded Gay American Indians along with fellow activist Randy Burns.

Being Native American and lesbian put Barbara in conflict almost anywhere she went. Barbara wrote "We not only must struggle with the racism and homophobia of straight white America, but must often struggle with the homophobia that exists within our 3rd world communities."

Barbara's grace in the face of disagreement made her a successful organizer and bridge-builder from SF's Pride Day to Jessie Jackson's Rainbow Coalition for whom she was a delegate to the 1988 Democratic Convention, as well as mayoral appointee to the SF Human Rights Commission.

Barbara Cameron is this years Pride Heritage Award recipient.



Barbara Cameron died at home on February 12, 2002. She was taken home to Wakpala, South Dakota on the Standing Rock Reservation. She is survived by her partner of 20 years, Linda and their son Rhys.

Two-Spirit: a Definition and a Vision

The term **Two-Spirit** was coined in the early 90s' by Native American individuals during a lesbian and gay conference in Winnipeg. Many contemporary LGBT Native Americans use **Two-Spirit** to maintain cultural continuity with past cultures where some individuals possessed and manifested a dynamic balance of both feminine and masculine energies, making them inherently sacred people.

The English phrase **Two-Spirit**, which originated primarily in urban Native American/First Nations contexts is not meant to be translated into Native American languages and terms because to do so may change the common meaning it has acquired. In some cultural contexts, translating it to a Native language would not be appropriate (adapted from *Two-Spirit People* eds Jacobs, Thomas and Lang, Univ of Illinois Press, 1997:2-3).

Two-Spirit reflects traditions among many Native American nations that accepted and celebrated the diversity of human gender, spirituality and sexuality. As Owlfeather says:

"Traditions need to be researched and revived. If traditions have been lost, then new ones should be borrowed from other tribes to create groups of societies for gay Indians that would function in the present" (Owlfeather in: *Living the Spirit* eds W. Roscoe and GAI, 1988:104. St Martin's Press).

Accordingly, BAAITS sees itself as an organization for **Two-Spirit** people to explore their rich heritage in a safe environment. To that end, BAAITS is committed to offering culturally relevant activities for LGBT individuals of Native American ancestry and their friends.



BAY AREA AMERICAN TWO-SPIRITS

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JOIN US

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Phone _____

Email _____

"If nature puts a burden on a man by making him different, it also gives him a power"

LAME DEER, 1972



"We, as a people, need to allow and accept the gay, they are the bridge that is needed"

CROW DOG, 1995



"I was once told to look to nature for what is. So I looked. I found all this is life around me and it was balanced. I looked again and found that within this balance is also the Two-Spirit. If nature allows this gay in and of itself, then surely I can accept this balance".

Anonymous 1997



BAY AREA AMERICAN INDIAN TWO SPIRITS

Holds monthly meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month at the SF LGBT Center

We teach Native American craft classes twice a month, currently on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month (check with us for changes)

In addition, we also host a monthly potluck on the last Friday each month.

Check us out...we also sponsor and help to sponsor various projects in the Gay and Native American communities.

BAY AREA AMERICAN INDIAN
TWO-SPIRITS

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