

Native American Film Actor, Producer & Director Wes Studi honored at the Chairman's Luncheon

Las Vegas, NV – April 23, 2018 –The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) held its annual Chairman's Leadership luncheon on Wednesday, April 18th honoring Native American Film Actor, Producer and Director Wes Studi, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation with the coveted Chairman's Lifetime of Achievement Award at the 2018 Indian Gaming Tradeshow and Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada



Studi, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, where he was born and raised. He began acting at the American Indian Theatre Company in Tulsa in the mid-80s, and his many works in film, television and on stage have become a testament, which has led to him becoming one of the most acclaimed Native American actor today. Studi has since appeared in more than 80 film and television productions, where he has been playing Indian leaders, both historical and fictitious, for more than 20 years now, which include his most recent 2017 mega film *Hostiles*, where he starred alongside Christian Bale. He also was a presenter at the 90th Academy Awards, Studi introduced a tribute to military movies and gave part of his speech in the Cherokee language, which was his traditional first language growing up in Oklahoma. Among his many talents, Wes is also a professional horse trainer.

NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr., said, "It is an amazing opportunity to have someone like Wes Studi here with us. We honor him for his hard work and dedication that has not only brought about success to his career, but to Native America. This guy has broken down barriers, and he did nothing other than being who he is, a powerful Indian who knows where he comes from and is ready to do what he has to do. We are proud of his representation of Indian country and his exceptional contributions to the mainstream film industry. He is an American hero."

Upon receiving his recognition, Studi spoke about the importance of elevating our Native American talent within the film and media industry. He said, "One of the moves toward helping our young kids understand that they are a part of the world is if they

see themselves portrayed on the screen like every other race, and that we have stories we can tell, and we have something to contribute. This is what the entertainment industry does not ever realize is that we have the stories, and we have gotten to the point that we can tell our stories.”

Wes Studi joins other past distinguished recipients such as Tricia Wood, Native American Casting Director, Lynn Valbuena, Chairwoman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, LaDonna Harris, Founder and President of Americans for Indian Opportunity and Steve Ortiz, Chairman of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and Stanley Jones, Sr. former Councilman of the Tulalip Tribes, to name a few.