

March 13, 2025

ITEM 217-2003-R0325

Request for Authorization to Award an Honorary Doctorate to Wendy Red Star; Montana State University

THAT

In recognition of many career achievements and the distinction brought to the Montana University System, the Board of Regents grants Montana State University the authority to confer an Honorary Doctor of Arts to Wendy Red Star.

EXPLANATION

Wendy Red Star, an esteemed Apsáalooke (Crow) contemporary artist, has made significant contributions to the fields of art, education, and cultural preservation, while maintaining a profound connection to her heritage and the state of Montana. Wendy Red Star was raised in Pryor, Montana, on the Crow Reservation, and her cultural roots deeply inform her artistic practice. She is a proud alumna of Montana State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2004 with an emphasis in sculpture and a minor in Native American Studies. She continued her academic journey at the University of California, Los Angeles, completing her Master of Fine Arts in 2006.

Red Star's multidisciplinary work spans photography, sculpture, installation, and multimedia, addressing themes of Native American identity, history, and representation. Her art critically engages with colonial narratives, offering powerful visual commentary that blends humor, irony, and vivid imagery. One of her most acclaimed series, "The Four Seasons," juxtaposes historical images with contemporary interpretations, challenging stereotypes and inviting discourse on Indigenous histories.

Wendy Red Star has earned numerous prestigious awards, including the MacArthur Fellowship (2024), Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Fellowship (2015), and Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship (2009). Her work has been exhibited internationally in prominent institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, and the Portland Art Museum. These accolades reflect her exceptional creativity and her significant impact on the global artistic landscape.

Red Star is a dedicated educator and advocate for Indigenous representation. She has lectured at esteemed institutions, including Yale University and Dartmouth College, and has collaborated with museums to inspire the next generation of artists and cultural advocates. Her commitment to amplifying Native women's voices in the art world underscores her role as a mentor and leader.

Wendy Red Star's remarkable contributions to art and culture, coupled with her dedication to education and community engagement, would not only recognize her outstanding achievements but also affirm the university's commitment to celebrating diverse perspectives and fostering cultural understanding.

For these and other extraordinary contributions, the Board of Regents is pleased to confer an Honorary Doctor of Arts at Montana State University upon Wendy Red Star and wishes her well for many years in the future.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1: Letter of Nomination from President Cruzado