

**SAM NOBLE MUSEUM RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD  
FOR OKLAHOMA NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH LANGUAGE FAIR**

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NORMAN — The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History is the recipient of the prestigious 2017 University Museums and Collections Award from the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which was recently presented in Helsinki, Finland. The museum program that has been recognized for the international award is the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, a program that for 15 years has reached thousands of young Native Americans across Oklahoma and the Southwest.

“The university is proud of the well-earned international recognition received by our natural history museum,” said OU President David L. Boren.

Each spring, hundreds of students, parents, teachers, elders and community members attend the fair at the Sam Noble Museum on the University of Oklahoma campus. Now approaching its 16<sup>th</sup> year, the event celebrates language diversity and recognizes the efforts of students and teachers to revitalize Native American language and heritage.

The fair provides a unique opportunity for teachers and students to share their experiences in live presentations of song, speech and story. Students also compete in material submission categories that include poster art, films, books, cartoons and advocacy essays. Native language speakers, teachers and elders serve as judges for the competitions.

Among the many nominations, the fair stood out to the award committee because of its “innovation, creativity, excellence, transferability and significant impact on the university, the community and society at large.”

“This award, coming as it does after winning the national conservation award, the U.S. National Medal and the European Heritage Award, underscores the quality and diversity of the museum’s programs and the quality of the staff,” said Michael Mares, Ph.D. “I think the museum is among the best and most visible departments of the University of Oklahoma. The repercussions of the IMLS 2014 National Medal for Museum and Library Services and the 2015

Best in Heritage award of the European Heritage Association, continues to impress museum professionals throughout the world with our remarkable story.”

ONAYLF began in April 2003 at the Sam Noble Museum when elder and teacher Geneva Navarro (Comanche), Native American educator Quinton Roman Nose (Cheyenne) and the museum's first Native American Languages curator, Mary Linn, sought to recognize the Native language teachers and students in Oklahoma. The fair has encouraged and supported the efforts of Native communities in Oklahoma and the surrounding region to document, revitalize and perpetuate their ancestral languages.

Providing a unique event to showcase linguistic diversity in Oklahoma, the fair contributes to the public’s understanding of the value of maintaining ancestral languages. Steady growth in attendance over 15 years has established it as a major celebration of indigenous languages.

The Sam Noble Museum was one of three finalists announced in June. The other two were the University of Rennes, France, and the National Cheng Kung University Museum, Taiwan.

ICOM’s international committee for university museums and collections, UMAC, is an international forum for all those working in, or associated with, academic museums, galleries and collections. As a global advocate for higher education museums and collections of all disciplines, the organization supports the continued development of university museums and collections as essential resources dedicated to research, education and the preservation of cultural, historic, natural and scientific heritage.

The Sam Noble Museum is located on OU’s Norman campus at J. Willis Stovall Road and Chautauqua Avenue. For more information, call (405) 325-4712 or visit [SamNobleMuseum.ou.edu](http://SamNobleMuseum.ou.edu).

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From left to right: Dominique Bernard, University of Rennes, France, UMAC Award second place for Replication of Marie Curie experiment on radioactivity; Jeng-Horng Cheng, National Cheng Kung University Museum, Taiwan, UMAC Award second place for "I C Taiwan" Exhibition; Ing-Marie Munktel, Uppsala University, Sweden, chair of the UMAC Award Committee; Marta C. Lourenço, University of Lisbon, Portugal, president of UMAC-ICOM; Dan Swan, ethnology curator at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, UMAC Award of Excellence for Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. Photo credits: UMAC



Marta C. Lourenço, University of Lisbon, Portugal, president of UMAC-ICOM, presents the 2017 University Museums and Collections Award to Dan Swan, ethnology curator at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.



Dan Swan, ethnology curator at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, accepts the 2017 University Museums and Collections Award from the International Council of Museums in Helsinki, Finland.