

Mikwendamang ishkweyaang, Niigaan inaabidaa



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"When we remember the past, let's look to the future"
Dean Smallwood, photographer
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“When we remember the past, let’s look to the future”

Time and time again, young people within Anishinaabe communities inspire the world with their accomplishments and their desire to create a better place for all to live. Over 150 years have passed since the signing of treaties relevant to present-day Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota tribes. But the recent resurgence of an old style of dance marks a sure sign that the teachings from long ago are still alive today, guiding future generations forward.

Woodland style dancing has made a comeback on the powwow scene. For Great Lakes Anishinaabeg, Woodland style resembles the regalia worn in early years, and even during treaty signing time. Floral designs and beadwork are often key indicators of Woodland regalia. Bandolier bags, furs, turbans, and even bonnets are worn for this style. Old style split toe and pucker toe moccasins adorn the feet. Woven sashes and various bells grace the stylized curves and edges of these colorful, ornate outfits.

Drums are beginning to sing the old Woodland songs once more.

Many aspects of Ojibwe song and dance are derived from the environment. When we watch these old dances and hear these old songs, we are reminded that everything the Anishinaabeg were given, ultimately comes from the woods. Ojibwe language and culture are beautifully woven from and with the earth. Resiliency and strength within the culture are recurring themes in Indian Country, just as they are recurring themes in nature. Resilient in the face of trauma, yet still here and still strong.

On this year’s poster are Noodin Niimebin Shawanda, Miisheen Meegwum Shawanda, and Ningozis “Gosy” White. The photo was taken by Dean Smallwood, the son of the late Larry Amik Smallwood. GLIFWC is proud to share this powerful photograph and the story it encapsulates, and continues.

Ojibwe bandolier bags are a symbolic example of history that still thrives today. Bags and pouches like this have been used by Ojibwe people for centuries, but upon increased importation of European trade goods in the late 1800s, the wool/material and beaded bags became more prevalent.



18” x 24” posters are available from Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission at PO Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861; by phone at 715.685.2108; or by email at lynn@glifwc.org.