

Harvard Alumni Allyship Series: Indigenous Peoples Case Study – *Allyship Across Cultures, Countries, and Continents*

**Wednesday 24 February 2021 – Virtual Event
1:00PM Navajo Time; 2:00PM Choctaw Time;
3:00PM EST; 8:00PM Dublin Time**

About the speakers:



Chief Gary Batton

In 1997, Chief Gary Batton was appointed to the position of Executive Director of Health by Chief Gregory Pyle. His first undertaking after stepping into the role was replacing the Choctaw Nation Hospital, a former Tuberculosis Center constructed in the 1930s, with a state-of-the-art Choctaw Nation Health Care Center. He continued to expand and improve the Choctaw Nation health system by adding clinics in Idabel, Stigler and Atoka and replacing or expanding outdated existing clinics in Hugo, Broken Bow and McAlester. He constructed a new facility for adult inpatient alcohol and drug treatment and a hospitality house for patients traveling long distances for appointments at the health care center in Talihina.

Upon Chief Gregory Pyle's retirement, Gary Batton became the 47th Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the third-largest Indian tribe in the United States, on April 28, 2014. He works to protect the culture, provide opportunities for education, employment, improved healthcare, and ultimately, do what is best for Choctaws. Under Chief Batton's administration, the Choctaw Nation has opened or expanded its health clinics, wellness centers, restaurant franchises, travel plazas, casinos, community centers, food distribution centers, country markets, independent living communities for Choctaw elders, and homes for families. It also opened a new Judicial Center, the focal point of an expanding tribal justice system.

Chief Batton has represented the Choctaw Nation on the National Budget Committee for Indian Health Service, the National Health Service Corps Advisory Council, the Tribal Technical Advisory Committee for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Thunderbird Youth Academy Foundation Board. <https://www.choctawnation.com/government/executive-branch>



Turtle Bunbury

Turtle Bunbury is an author, historian and public speaker based in Ireland. His books include *Ireland's Forgotten Past* (2020), *1847: A Chronicle of Genius, Generosity and Savagery* (2016) and the award-winning Vanishing Ireland series. [Click here](#) to read *Hope in 1847*, Bunbury's most recent book. His next book, *The Irish Diaspora* launches in March 2021. <https://turtlehistory.com>



Alex Pentek

Alex Pentek is an artist based in Cork Ireland, creating temporary gallery-based work and large-scale sculpture in the public realm internationally. Recently this includes the internationally acclaimed work *Kindred Spirits*, remembering the 1847 Choctaw Gift to Ireland during the Great Hunger and is currently creating a new work titled *Unity*, reflecting the achievements of black activist Charles Hamilton Houston in Washington DC. This year Alex has begun an MFA in Art in the Contemporary World at the National College of Art and Design and is also researching origami with robotics education at University College, Cork. www.alexpentek.com



Ethel Billie Branch, AB '01, JD '08, MPP '08

Ethel is the Founder and Interim Executive Director of Yee Ha'oolniidoo (may the Navajo people have fortitude) dba Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund, which has provided over \$6 million in direct relief to Navajo and Hopi families during the pandemic. In order to do COVID relief work, she is on a leave of absence as a Member of the law firm of Kanji & Katzen, PLLC. She was born and raised on the Navajo Nation and is an enrolled Navajo tribal member. She previously served as the 11th Attorney General of the Navajo Nation. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School ('08), Harvard Kennedy School ('08), and Harvard College ('01). <https://www.navajohopisolidarity.org/staff>



Yee Ha'ólñii Doo
"May The People Have Fortitude"
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Families COVID-19 Relief Fund

