

## **Kumeyaay Leader to Speak on Native American Sovereignty Oct. 23 at UC San Diego as Part of Native American Celebration**

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Jan Jennings

"Seven generations from now, I want to see a situation where our people will be able to have a place to stand which is their own land," says Anthony Pico, former chairman of the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, "and be able to contribute back to the larger community, not only Indians but the larger community; and be able to prevail culturally, spiritually, and economically."

Pico will speak on *Sovereignty in Contemporary Native America* at 7 p.m. Oct. 23 in Great Hall of Eleanor Roosevelt College at the University of California, San Diego. Pico's lecture is part of UCSD's *2007 California Native American Day Celebration*. It is free and open to the public.

The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians is a sovereign nation whose people have inhabited the San Diego County area and northern Baja California for thousands of years. Under Pico's leadership, it has become a nation of dramatic economic growth and increased political clout. Pico will look back at the accomplishments of the Kumeyaay and look forward to what he envisions as a hopeful, productive, and successful future.

Pico's reference to "seven generations from now" originates from the Great Law of Peace of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. It states that in "every deliberation, we must consider the import of our decisions for the next seven generations." Pico says that traditionally, indigenous people would not make any environmental changes until they had carefully considered how it would affect the ecology of their descendants seven generations down the line.

Pico served as Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians chairman for 24 years and is a voice both for tribal sovereignty and investing in a viable and growing tribal economic base throughout Indian country.

He was a driving force and spokesman for the successful 1998 California ballot initiative that broke the 10 year political road block to tribal state gaming compacts, and served as co-chair of the Proposition 1A campaign initiative which changed the California State Constitution to give Indians the exclusive right to engage in casino gaming on tribal land.

Pico has been involved in the numerous financial ventures of his tribe, including Viejas Casino, Viejas Outlet Center, the Broadcast Company of the Americas (BCA), and in ventures with other tribal governments including two Marriott Residence Inns. He is a director of the Native American Rights Fund and co-chair of the Tribal Leaders Sovereignty Initiative Education Committee.

Pico has received numerous awards including the Indian Leader of the Year Award from the National Indian Business Association, the 2000 Golden Achievement Award from the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Diego, the Barrio Station's Dignity in Leadership Award, and an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Long Island University in New York. He was placed into the Grossmont Community College Walk of Fame as an outstanding alumnus.

The Pico lecture is sponsored by the Helen Edison Lecture Series and the Native American Day Celebration. For further information on the lecture visit <http://helenedison.ucsd.edu> or contact Edie Munk at (858) 822-0510.

Media Contacts: Jan Jennings, 858 822-1684 Pat JaCoby, 858 534-7404

