



2023 Annual Convention Grand Mound, Washington

RESOLUTION #2023 – 41

“RECOMMENDING JOHN E. ECHOHAWK FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM”

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

WHEREAS, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, established in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy, is an award bestowed by the President of the United States to recognize people who have made an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors and, along with the Congressional Gold Medal, is the highest civilian award of the United States; and

WHEREAS, John E. Echohawk is a citizen of the Pawnee Nation and an internationally recognized expert and successful advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, John E. Echohawk was the first graduate of the University of New Mexico Law School's renowned program to train American Indian lawyers; and

WHEREAS, upon receiving his law degree, John E. Echohawk became an attorney and became a founder of the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), a premier non-profit legal organization for Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, since 1977, John E. Echohawk has served as NARF's Executive Director, and has led NARF's outstanding work in protecting and preserving Tribal sovereignty, Treaty rights, protecting Tribal natural resources, promoting Native American human rights, holding all American governments accountable to Indigenous peoples, and developing educational forums regarding Indian law; and

WHEREAS, Under John E. Echohawk's leadership, NARF has represented directly over 275 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes in tribal, state, federal and international fora, and has influenced the legal and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide; and

WHEREAS, John E. Echohawk has been a steadfast leader as an American Indian and Alaska Native Indian law advisor to the Tribal leadership including the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and its Governance and Litigation Committee and Sub-Committees as well as establishing the NARF Tribal Supreme Court Project which, for over 40 years, has been protecting our sovereignty and jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, the National Law Journal named John E. Echohawk as one of the most 100 influential lawyers in the United States, and John E. Echohawk has received numerous other honors including the Spirit of Excellence Award from the American Bar Association in 1996, and an induction into the Class of 2022 National Native American Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, John E. Echohawk has served on the Presidential Transition Teams of the Clinton/Gore and Obama/Biden Administrations; and

WHEREAS, President Clinton appointed John E. Echohawk to serve on the Western Water Policy Review Commission; and

WHEREAS, John E. Echohawk has served and continues to serve on the boards of countless national organizations, including the American Indian Resources Institute, the Association on American Indian Affairs, the Indigenous Language Institute, the Keystone Policy Center, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, and the Natural Resources Defense Council; and


WHEREAS, due to his extensive, dedicated, and stellar legal work over 50-year career and organizational service, John E. Echohawk unequivocally is worthy of being recommended for the Presidential Medal of Freedom; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI urges President Biden to honor John E. Echohawk for the Presidential Medal of Freedom; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI and fully supports NCAI's in-kind resolution for the same purpose until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Washington on September 18 - 21, 2023, with a quorum approving.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary