



Delegate Nathaniel Brown Bestowed as a Naat'áanii Honoree at Diné Pride's Closing Ceremony

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PHOTO: Delegate Brown receives Naat'áanii Award from; Nicole Johnny, Academic Director for Diné Pride, Alray Nelson, Executive Director for Diné Pride, and Ahskai LaFrance-Chachere, CEO and founder of Ah-Shi Beauty.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Concluding Navajo Nation Pride Week, Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chííłchinbii'tó) accepted this year's *Naat'áanii (Leadership) Award* at Diné Pride 2021 during the closing ceremony and pride showcase.

"I'm always going back to K'é, you know, as Diné that's really the core of who we are," said Delegate Brown "We have our kinship system where if we really mean it and if we really mean that we love our relatives and family - then I think that's acknowledging all people, including our LGBTQ relatives."

This year's Diné Pride closing ceremony and pride showcase featured guest speakers such as former Navajo Nation President Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., Dr. Andy Nez, and Radmilla Cody. To end the night, the Navajo Nation Council Chambers were illuminated with colors of the Pride Flag.

As stated on the award, "This honor acknowledges his leadership as a changemaker & fierce ally whose work reaffirms the sacredness of LGBTQIA+ identities since our creation."

Ahsaki LaFrance-Chachere, CEO and founder of *Ah-Shi Beauty*, presented Brown with the honoree award in recognition for his tireless work and advocacy efforts for the Indigenous Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, & Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2+) community.

Delegate Brown sponsored the “Diné Pride Week” legislation, alongside co-sponsors Council Delegate Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tséché’izí, Lukachugai, Tsaile-Wheatfields) and Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh), last summer. Making the Navajo Nation the first federally recognized tribe to acknowledge LGBTQ+ Pride in the country.

In his speech, Brown recalled when Alray Nelson, Diné Pride’s Executive Director and Diné Equality’s Lead Organizer, and him first introduced Legislation No. 0140-20 to the 24th Navajo Nation Council in June 2020, proclaiming the third week of June as Diné Pride Week on an annual basis.

“It was one of the most nerve-racking [pieces of] legislation that I’ve ever introduced,” said Delegate Brown. “Sitting there and when you are up here (Navajo Nation Council Chambers) and looking at your colleagues, you can see the expression on their face — it is a lot of mixed emotions.”

Brown informed the crowd the next step is to pass a Navajo Nation Equality Act that will protect Navajo LGBTQ2+ citizens from discrimination. Along with the teachings passed onto him from his family surrounding this community and their cultural importance to Navajo society.

To learn more about Diné Pride and the work they do to uplift, support, and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community on the Navajo Nation, please visit <https://www.navajonationpride.com/> or visit the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NavajoNationPride/>.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Kolton Nephew, Legislative Staff Writer, koltonnephew@navajo-nsn.gov (928) 380-5733
Kyron Hardy, Public Information Officer, kyronhardy@navajo-nsn.gov (928) 380-5732
Donovan Hanley, Legislative Staff Assistant, dahanley@navajo-nsn.gov