



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Eleanor E. Roehrig Advocate Award recognizes years of service by Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty

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PHOTO: Janice Patch, Vurlene Notsinneh-Bowekaty, Lenny Hayes, and Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty were presented the Eleanor E. Roehrig Advocate Award in Tucson, Ariz.

TUCSON, Ariz. — Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty of the 24th Navajo Nation Council was honored by the Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition (SWIWC) with the Eleanor E. Roehrig Advocate Award for her demonstrated commitment, compassion, and respect in responding to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. An award ceremony honoring five recipients was hosted during the 7th Gathering for Healthy Relations Conference in Tucson, Ariz.

Eleanor E. Roehrig was a fierce champion for Indigenous women and girls. A member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, she was a loving mother, grandmother, sister, niece, and auntie who passed on in January 2010. As a founding member and the first President of the SWIWC Governing Board, Roehrig worked tirelessly so women could live their lives free of any violence.

“The Navajo Nation commends the leadership of Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty for her decades-long work to uplifting the voices of our Indigenous women and children. She is deserving of the Eleanor E. Roehrig Advocate Award because this prestigious honor is given to leaders who exemplify unyielding advocacy at the grassroots level for those who need a voice. We appreciate the impactful work of the Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition for fighting every day for our women, children, and the LGBTQ+ community in Indian Country,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

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Serving tribal nations in Arizona since 2006, the SWIWC is a statewide tribal domestic and sexual violence coalition. Working with local governments and tribal programs, the organization achieves its goals by providing technical assistance, policy advocacy, and outreach education.

This includes the SWIWC Two-Spirit and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ Advisory Council that is working to educate, support, and empower Native communities to increase awareness, safety, healing, justice and resources for the Indigenous LGBTQ+ community.

“Serving as the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee Sexual Assault Prevention sub-committee Chair, I have seen our relatives deal with unbearable violence and many remain missing today. In 2016, the Navajo Nation lost our baby girl, Ashlynn Mike, who was violently taken from her home after school. She was full of life and exemplified kindness, love, and innocence. We will continue to raise awareness so that not one child is harmed. Make sure to tell your children that you love them and hold them tightly,” said Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’ahnáoozt’í’í, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’i).

Roehrig often spoke of the tragic death of one of her sisters that was the result of domestic violence and of her own survival. It was these experiences and her desire to protect those close to her that led to years of advocacy for the most vulnerable.

Madam Chair Crotty added, “Four other Indigenous leaders doing this important work were honorees in Eleanor’s memory. The Navajo Nation offers its congratulations to them and their families for the sacrifices they make as victim advocates, healers, and change makers. I am deeply honored to accept this award on behalf of our resilient Diné women.”

LGBTQ+ leader Lenny Hayes, victim advocate Janice Patch, Pascua Yaqui Attorney General Alfred Urbina, and community health educator Vurlene Notsinneh-Bowekaty were recipients.

Madam Chair Crotty continues to lead the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force that is developing a framework for a proposed data institute and the development of a missing persons community action toolkit to empower communities.

Resources from the Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition can be accessed here: <http://www.swiwc.org/>

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