



Kerry Steiner, *Executive Director*
Mike Pence, *Governor*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOVERNOR AWARDS LOCAL NATIVE AMERICAN WITH HIGHEST STATE HONOR

LeRoy Malaterre (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) was presented the Sagamore of the Wabash Award at a reception ceremony on Saturday at the Indiana State Museum. Representing the office of Governor Mike Pence was Diego Morales, special assistant to the governor, who presented Malaterre with the state's highest honor.

Malaterre, one of the most highly respected Elders in the state, has lived in and served Indiana's Native American community for over 40 years. He is the founder of the American Indian Council in Lebanon, Ind., where he resides. Other contributions to the community include advocating for Native American issues in Indiana and traveling to Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio to deliver cultural speeches and promote Native American heritage, racial tolerance and education. Malaterre has also served as the Native American culture and heritage instructor for the Indiana Department of Correction, and has worked tirelessly in schools, civic and senior citizen organizations to enhance awareness of the Native American culture. He is well known for being master of ceremonies at countless gatherings across the Midwest, and he continues to volunteer over 500 hours a year to Native American organizations and various groups around the state.

Malaterre was born on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa reservation and grew up in a home with no electricity and no running water. His community often held in jig dances, which he still participates in today; in fact, he won first place in the jig dancing contest earlier this year when he returned to the reservation for a visit. After serving 15 years in the U.S. Army, Malaterre settled in Indiana and raised his family. He went to work at Alison Transmissions and retired after 31 years of employment.



In addition to the Sagamore Award, Malaterre was presented with a Pendleton blanket by his nephew, Chris Orcutt (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians), and an Eagle feather by long-time friend, Clarence Syrette (Odawa). Malaterre's great-nephew, Matt Orcutt (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians), provided the invocation, and Jefferson Ballew and Bryan Dyson from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians were the hand drum singers; the Pokagon Band Honor Guard posted the colors.

The award ceremony was hosted by the Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission as part of their "Honoring Elders" event for Native American Heritage Month and was attended by a large crowd of Malaterre's family and friends from across the state.

Photo #1: LeRoy Malaterre (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) receives the Sagamore of the Wabash Award from Diego Morales, special assistant to Gov. Mike Pence during the "Honoring Elders" event at the Indiana State Museum. (Photo by LeAnn Malaterre Winningham)

Photo #2: LeRoy Malaterre (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) shows the audience the Sagamore of the Wabash Award and the Eagle feather he was presented at a special ceremony held at the Indiana State Museum for Native American Heritage Month. The Pendleton blanket he received is visible in the background. (Photo by LeAnn Malaterre Winningham)

Photo #3: LeRoy Malaterre (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) is presented a Pendleton blanket by his long-time friend Clarence Syrette (Odawa, left) and his nephew, Chris Orcutt (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians), during a special ceremony recognizing Malaterre's 40-plus years of service to Indiana's Native American Community. (Photo by Darren Thomas)

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