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– Vangie Robinson

Choctaw pottery by hand and fire them in an open wood fire. At the time, the class would also make trips to museums and learn from master potters.

“Vangie was present for all of that. It’s five years later and we are still teaching classes, and she is still coming,” Thompson said.

Vangie Robinson is also branching out to other traditional arts like beadwork, and even teaches pottery classes herself. “I want to teach others who want to learn. This is important to me, because

it makes sure our culture is passed on,” she said.

Robinson said pottery is very unique. It covers many forms, like storage, dishes, eating utensils, and music. “Over time, metal will rust, but with pottery, archaeologist can date it and know what tribes were in the area. Even if it breaks, or is thrown away, it will still be there if it is fired, it will stand the test of time,” she said.

Speaking on Robinson’s success with Choctaw art, Ian Thompson said, “It was

ultimately her interest level. She had a lot of interest in learning how to do pottery. Over time she became very proficient at it. She’s also a personable individual, so she interacts well with the community and people who come to class. It was a natural progression for her to become a teacher.”

“If I can do it, anybody can do it,” Robinson said. “I didn’t think I could ever do anything like this, especially at the beginning.”

Contact Robinson at 580-513-0170.

Traditional storyteller, author to be honored at 2015 Festival of Words

TULSA – Joseph Bruchac will receive the Tulsa Library Trust’s “Festival of Words Writers Award” March 7, 2015, 10:30 a.m., at Hardesty Regional Library’s Connor’s Cove, 8316 E. 93rd St. His award presentation will be followed by a day of educational American Indian family events from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

The award, presented every other year, consists of a \$5,000 honorarium and an engraved crystal. Previous winners include: 2001, Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek); 2003, Vine DeLoria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux); 2005, Leslie Marmon-Silko (Laguna Pueblo) 2007, Carter Revard (Osage); 2011, LeAnne Howe, (Choctaw) and 2013, Sterlin Harjo, (Seminole/Muscogee Creek).

Bruchac is a traditional storyteller and author of more than 120 books often reflecting his American Indian (Abenaki) ancestry and the Adirondack Region of northern New York. He lives in the house that he was raised in by his grandparents. It was in this house, which his grandmother filled with books, where his love of storytelling began. His Abenaki grandfather would take him into the woods and quietly teach him about the natural world in ways that were connected to their native heritage. He would tell a young Bruchac about logging, working with horses and hunting. Bruchac uses these memories as the foundation for his books and storytelling that serve in the preservation of Abenaki culture, language and traditional Native skills.

“The only time he even mentioned the word ‘Indian’ was when he told me, more than once, how he left school in the fourth grade, jumping out the window and never coming back because they kept calling him a ‘dirty Indian,’” recalled Bruchac. “I had to go outside my own immediate family to hear

those stories, which for some reason I was always eager to hear. Because of his dark skin and very Indian appearance, he dealt with prejudice often during his life and that made him reticent to speak directly about being Indian.”

Bruchac’s poems, articles and stories have appeared in over 500 publications, from National Geographic and American Poetry Review to Smithsonian Magazine. His honors include a Rockefeller Humanities fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Writing Fellowship for Poetry, the Cherokee National Prose Award among others. In 1999, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas.

He holds a B.A. in English from Cornell University, an M.A. in Literature and Creative Writing from Syracuse and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the Union Institute of Ohio.

Bruchac’s latest novel is “Killer of Enemies,” a young adult post-apocalyptic novel following 17-year-old Apache hunter Lozen and her quest of survival and renewal. It received the 2014 Native American Librarians Association Award.

He and his two grown sons, James and Jesse, work together on projects involving the preservation of Native culture, Native language renewal, teaching traditional Native skills and environmental education. His newest books include a picture book, “Rabbit’s Snow Dance,” written with his son James and a bilingual collection of poems in English and Abenaki, “Nisnol Siboal/Two Rivers,” written with his younger son Jesse.

For more information on library programming, call the AskUs Hotline, 918-549-7323, or visit the library’s website, www.tulsalibrary.org.