



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: AUGUST 4, 2020**

**FROM: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: DEACCESSION OF ONE (1) DIEGUEÑO SHAMAN'S CEREMONIAL  
FEATHERED BASKET HAT (A83-373) FROM THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE'S  
PERMANENT COLLECTION**

## **ISSUE:**

Approve the deaccession of one (1) Diegueño shaman's ceremonial feathered basket hat (A83-373) from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve the deaccession of one (1) Diegueño shaman's ceremonial feathered basket hat (A83-373) from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

## **BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

On June 24, 2020, the Museum of Riverside Board, with seven (7) members present, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve the deaccession of one (1) Diegueño shaman's ceremonial feathered basket hat (A83-373) from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In May 1952, the Museum Department received the donation of a Diegueño basket hat from a bequest of Mr. S. Leonard Herrick. This object was accessioned as A83-373. "Diegueño" is a name formerly in use to refer to the Native American people who are now more commonly known as the Kumeyaay. The hat is constructed of juncus, sumac, and grass and embellished with owl and quail feathers. It dates to circa 1900.

Based on the donor's record and curatorial research, the former Curator of Anthropology Christopher L. Moser, Ph.D. (Museum Curator of Anthropology from 1979 to 2003) identified the shaman's feathered basket hat as a ceremonial artifact. Identification as a "ceremonial shaman's hat" may not be the preferred Kumeyaay cultural term.

On February 26, 2020, with nine (9) Committee members supporting and two (2) Committee members absent, the Museum's Collections Committee approved a recommendation for the

deaccession of the shaman's hat from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection so that it may be transferred to the Kumeyaay people.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Deaccessioning is the process by which an object or specimen is formally removed from the permanent collections of a museum. The Museum of Riverside's Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies state that deaccessions can occur when an accessioned object has "doubtful potential to be exhibited or published" or if it "falls outside the scope of the Museum's mission." While an object stemming from the Kumeyaay culture is within the Museum's mission, the respect that the Museum accords to Native cultures prohibits use of an object with a sacred function in exhibitions, programs, or publications against the preferences expressed by official representatives of Indigenous peoples. The Museum wishes to act in the same spirit that led to passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) regarding sacred objects even when a given sacred object may not technically be considered grave goods or otherwise within the scope of NAGPRA.

In consultation with Kumeyaay culture bearer Clint Linton, a member of the Lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel, it was determined that the ceremonial shaman's hat (A83-373), which reflects the heritage of the Diegueño people of Southern California, should be returned to today's descendants, the Kumeyaay. Linton indicated that the Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians of the Barona Reservation would be the appropriate recipient for this ceremonial basket hat as the Barona Group has the resources and a tribal commitment to their heritage. Director Laurie Hedley of the Barona Cultural Center and Museum will act as liaison with Kumeyaay tribal leadership with respect to the repatriation of this sacred object to its culture of origin.

A letter was also sent to the thirteen (13) federally recognized Kumeyaay tribes (Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians of the Campo Indian Reservation, Capitan Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians of California, Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians of the Barona Reservation, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Inaja Band of Diegueño Mission Indians of California, Jamul Indian Village of California, La Posta Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, Lipay Nation of Santa Ysabel, Manzanita Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, Mesa Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, San Pasqual Band of Diegueño Mission Indians of California, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians) in San Diego County with respect to the deaccession and transfer of this sacred object. The Museum expressed its willingness, upon approvals, to transfer this sacred object to a Diegueño / Kumeyaay Tribe who incorporates the shaman's hat into their cultural practices and has the resources to provide for its stewardship. The transfer would ensure the preservation of the Diegueño / Kumeyaay shaman's basket hat and provide a link between their cultural past (circa 1900) and today.

Deaccession and transfer of the ceremonial shaman's feathered basket hat to the Kumeyaay people demonstrates the Museum of Riverside's continuing commitment to cultural sustainability and its respect for the practice of contemporary American Indians using historic tribal ceremonial objects for continuing spiritual practice.

Note: An image of the artifact has not been included in this report in order to respect the preference of many Indigenous peoples not to photograph or publish their sacred rituals or artifacts.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by:	Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney
Attachment:	Museum of Riverside Board Draft Minutes June 24, 2020