

November is National Native American Heritage Month

2019 Theme: *Honoring Our Nations: Building Strength through Understanding*

“National American Indian Heritage Month” had its origins in 1986 when Congress passed Pub. L. 99-471 which authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week of November 23-30, 1986, as “American Indian Week.” In 1990, President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating the month of November 1990 as “National American Indian Heritage Month.” Similar proclamations, under variants on the name have been issued each year since 1990.

SPOTLIGHT: Eric Locklear, OAR Deputy Chief Financial/Administrative Officer



From the age of five, Eric lived in Reston, Va with his younger brother, mother and father. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in business and an MBA from Johns Hopkins University. Even though he spent over 90% of his life in NOVA, his family identity is with the Lumbee Tribe of Robeson County, NC, a nation he was born into 53 years ago to a mother and father who are both Lumbee Indians.

The Lumbee Tribe is the largest tribe in North Carolina with 55,000 members and the ninth largest in the nation. The Lumbee take their name from the Lumbee River which winds its way through Robeson County, with the town of Pembroke as the economic, cultural and political center of the tribe.

The Lumbee Tribe is not without controversy, having only been officially recognized by the state of North Carolina and

not a federally recognized Indian Nation. There are 573 federally recognized tribes and more than 200 that are not recognized. Because the Lumbee Tribe is not federally recognized, they do not have sovereign rights, lands, nor receive any government services. But there has been an ongoing effort by the Lumbee to attain federal designation and they are getting closer and closer with each court ruling.

Eric said, “Navigating the dual communities of rural North Carolina farm life and middle class suburban Washington, DC made for an exciting childhood. I would spend part of my summer going to the pool and playing soccer with my friends in Reston, then head to Robeson County where I would crop tobacco, pick cucumbers, make bows and arrows, and spend most of my days wearing just shorts; enjoying the freedom one has when unencumbered by the banality of middle class America. It was fantastic!”