

Richard Zane Smith

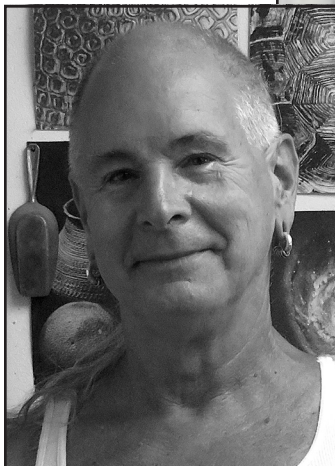
Richard Zane Smith is a renowned ceramic artist from the Wyandot Nation, which was originally based in northeastern woodlands near Toronto and is now in Kansas and Oklahoma. He developed his passion for the fine arts while at University City High School where he worked with clay and other natural materials, including wood, leather and stone. He earned an art associate's degree at Meramec Community College and pursued pottery at the Kansas City Art Institute. Enchanted by family stories about his Wyandot heritage, he began exploring his roots.

In 1978, Smith moved to Arizona, where he served as an art instructor

at a Navajo mission school. In Arizona, he worked with native clays and discovered ancient Puebloan potsherds and fragments that influenced his designs and a new style of pottery. Smith's creations are reminiscent of prehistoric corrugated pottery found in the Southwest, featuring exposed and rough-textured coils that pay homage to the ancient basketry of the Wyandot people and further blends influences of Anasazi pottery. His creations have been recognized internationally, and pieces are on permanent display in museums and galleries throughout the United States.

Smith is also actively involved in revitalizing the Wyandot language. Since its decline in the 1960s, Smith has studied and taught the language with the help of trained linguists. He teaches the language, songs and dances to the Wyandotte people of Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma.

Through his art, studies and community collaborations, Smith bridges past and present, celebrating his heritage's beauty while impacting the art world.



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Class of 1973