

SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN - SEPTEMBER 21, 2004 - APRIL 3, 2005



THE JEWELRY OF BEN NIGHTHORSE

Nighthorse



Smithsonian
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Early Years	4
Indian Jewelry Meets Madison Ave	5
The Nighthorse Name & a Buffalo Skull	6-7
Home In Colorado	8
Award Winning Jewelry	9
<i>Arizona Highways Magazine</i>	10
Ben Campbell & Leonard Burch	11
Chairman Leonard Burch	12-13
Parallel Lives	14
Nighthorse Invents Painted Mesa	15
Southwestern Influence	16
Innovative Artistry	17
Contemporary Nighthorse	18
Conclusion	19
Nighthorse Awards List	20
Nighthorse Timeline	21
Select Bibliography	22
Fort Lewis College - Our Sacred Trust	23

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The Early Years: Jewelry to Make Ends Meet

Ben Nighthorse Campbell began creating jewelry out of necessity. At the age of 14 he learned silversmithing by watching his father who learned from Navajo friends. Using silver from silver dollars flattened on train tracks, Nighthorse created designs with very little stone work by stamping, shaping, and bending the metal. Like many Native Americans, Nighthorse and his father used their creative skills to meet their basic needs.

In the early 1970s, Nighthorse found a necklace in a Northern California store that he had made years before. Proprietor Peggy Puffer's encouragement and the necklace's \$400 price tag convinced Nighthorse to make more jewelry. He made necklaces, silver canteens, bracelets, and rings. Puffer bought everything he made and suggested Nighthorse enter his jewelry in the 1973 California State Fair and Exposition where he won first place. Nighthorse's career as a jeweler was launched; he would go on to win awards for his outstanding designs.

Morningstar Symbol

Nighthorse's trademark stamp, the morning star, is a Cheyenne symbol that represents the "son of the sun and moon." The Northern Cheyenne tribe granted Nighthorse permission to use the morning star symbol as his jewelry stamp. This stamp, along with the name, Ben Nighthorse, appears on all Nighthorse jewelry.





Indian Jewelry Meets Madison Avenue

In the late 1960s, when Ben Nighthorse's jewelry career began, Indian jewelry was defined by Southwest Indian jewelry styles and was created with the region's trademark materials: silver and turquoise. In the 1970s, the Madison Avenue fashion industry popularized Indian jewelry. Artists such as Ben followed this new trend and focused their artistic talents on jewelry making. The growing Indian jewelry market encouraged artists to experiment with innovative forms and styles, and to exchange design ideas. Ben's early work shows the range of techniques and designs explored by Indian jewelers during this pivotal era.

True to traditional Indian jewelry, Ben's jewelry is heavy. Native Americans use jewelry as portable assets that can be pawned. In the old days, the weight of the silver determined the value of the jewelry.

The Nighthorse Name and a Buffalo Skull

As an adult Nighthorse sought out his Native American heritage even though Nighthorse's father downplayed his Native American ancestry to shield him from ethnic bias of the time.

As an adult Nighthorse sought out his Native American heritage. Based on his father's ancestry, Nighthorse was accepted as a member by the Northern Cheyenne tribe, and in 1976, the Black Horse family of Lame Deer, Montana, acknowledged him as their son.

A Northern Cheyenne leader gave Ben Campbell the name Nighthorse in memory of Nighthorse's great-grandfather, Black Horse. Black Horse fought General George Armstrong Custer in the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876.

To acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Battle, Nighthorse designed his Buffalo Skull. He attached 10,000 karats of ox-blood coral, highlighted with black jade, mother of pearl, turquoise and sterling silver, to a female buffalo skull. He inlaid its horns with silver and placed a little flower on the inside of the skull to represent the Sun Dance. He intentionally misplaced the sun and moon so the Northern Cheyenne elders would know it was not an authentic Sun Dance skull.

Nighthorse donated the skull to the Northern Cheyenne tribe to honor the tribe during the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Because of its value, the skull has been locked in a bank vault for over twenty-five years. This is the first time it has been viewed by the public. The skull belongs to Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, Montana

Cheyenne Fallen Warrior Medal

Nighthorse designed the Fallen Warrior medal with an Indian chief, the morning star symbol, and the slogan, "100 Years Not Forgotten." On the reverse are arrows from the sacred medicine bundle and the symbol of the four directional winds. Characteristic of Nighthorse's generosity he fashioned this medal to raise funds for a Northern Cheyenne warrior sculpture. In addition, he gave fifty medals to Cheyenne descendants of fighters in the Battle of the Little Big Horn and to Cheyenne tribal officials.







Top Left- Linda and Ben Campbell at the Ranch.

Top Right- Linda and Ben with their horses.

Right- Leonard Burch and Ben Campbell at the National Congress of American Indians



Home in Colorado

In 1977, Ben Nighthorse and his wife Linda moved to Ignacio, Colorado, located in the heart of the Southern Ute Reservation. There they built the Nighthorse Ranch and raised quarterhorses. The late Southern Ute Chairman, Leonard Burch, hired Nighthorse to manage the Sky Ute Horse Training Facility.

Nighthorse developed a warm relationship with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Leonard Burch, who in later years would be proud to say that he had hired Ben Nighthorse Campbell. Projects Chairman Burch initiated, such as the Southern Ute horse facility, included a number of significant business and investment projects which helped to assure the tribe's future and establish the Southern Utes as an economic force in and beyond the Four Corners states Colorado, Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. Chairman for three decades, Burch was instrumental in helping Nighthorse become part of the Southern Ute community in Ignacio.

While establishing his family in Colorado, Nighthorse continued using his creative skills as a means to meet his needs. He traded jewelry for dental services and for projects at the ranch. He also taught jewelry-making at Fort Lewis College in Durango 1980-81, just as he had in California during the mid 1970s. His classes were designed to retain Native Americans in school and to develop marketable skills.



Award Winning Jewelry

Once introduced to juried Indian jewelry shows, Nighthorse's competitive spirit flourished. In 1973, he entered the California State Fair and Exposition and took first place in a field of thirty-six hundred entries. The next year, he won first place and a Gold Medal in jewelry. At the 1977 Intertribal Indian Ceremonial at Gallup, New Mexico, he won first and second place awards for his jewelry. By the mid 1980s Nighthorse had won over two hundred awards.

Nighthorse's competitiveness and attention to detail earned him regional recognition. Intricate designs, such as a herd of horses on the inside of an elaborate inlaid bracelet, made him one of the top Indian jewelry artists of the time. He was on the road to national and international recognition.

Nighthorse does not accept full credit for his artistic achievement. He notes, "Indian people, all the... really good artists, always think that what they do with their hands is really an extension of what the creator wills ... The only person that can create is the creator."



Arizona Highways Magazine Contemporary Indian Jewelry Issue

Too innovative to limit his work to silver and turquoise, Nighthorse experimented with new techniques, design and materials early in his career. One of the first Indian artists to use precious materials in Indian jewelry, he used diamonds, opals and gold at a time when contemporary Indian jewelry was not entirely accepted by the influential purveyors of Indian jewelry.

In 1978, Nighthorse was among twenty artists selected by *Arizona Highways* magazine for a contemporary jewelry issue. These successful Indian artists were well known in jewelry circles for working with nontraditional designs and materials. Nighthorse observed that most of the artists selected had two things in common: first, they all sought to maintain a balance between working with new designs and materials while retaining the traditional elements in their jewelry, and second, they all credited a higher power for their artistic achievements.

The 1979 *Arizona Highways* issue opened doors for the artists and helped establish credibility for contemporary Indian jewelry. After his jewelry appeared in the magazine Nighthorse was invited to show his innovative work in many galleries where his list of clients grew to include celebrities. With the publication of the magazine, Nighthorse emerged as one of the leaders of the evolving contemporary Indian jewelry movement.



The Friendship between Leonard Burch and Ben Nighthorse Campbell

When Ben Campbell left California for Colorado, the home state of his wife, they relocated to the Native American community of Ignacio on the Southern Ute Reservation. Linda began to teach math at the high school and Ben continued his success as a jeweler. A dedicated horseman and a former member of the mounted sheriffs patrol in Sacramento County, California, Ben applied for the position of manager of the Southern Ute quarter horse training facility. Leonard Burch had seen Ben around town and he knew of the Nighthorse Ranch on a bench of land just above the Los Pinos River. When Ben came before the Tribal Council seeking the manager's job, Leonard thoroughly appraised him for the first time. He liked what he saw and so did the other members of the Southern Ute Tribal Council.

Here was a Northern Cheyenne, a veteran, an Olympic judo finalist, a family man with two children, and an experienced horseman. Ben Campbell got the job. Later he would run in state and national elections and have the political success of his good friend Tribal Chairman Leonard Burch who served as Tribal Chair for three decades. Like Leonard, Ben Nighthorse Campbell never lost an election.

In the halls of Congress and the Senate they would meet each other and shake hands warmly. Leonard Burch liked to say, "See that man? See Ben Campbell? I hired him once. He used to work for me." Ben Campbell would reply, "You're from southern Colorado and you vote. I still work for you."

Leonard Burch

"The Jewelry of Ben Nighthorse" has been sponsored by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe in honor of Chairman Leonard C. Burch (1933-2003) who helped the Southern Ute Tribe rise from financial obscurity to financial success in his three decades as tribal chairman. Because of his vision, his ability to compromise, his negotiating skills, and his forward thinking, the Southern Ute Tribe from Ignacio, Colorado is now economically and financially secure and looking forward to a dynamic role in the 21st century. Each December 10, the Southern Ute community observes Leonard C. Burch Day, a recognized holiday, and the new 45,000 square foot Tribal Administration Building was officially dedicated and named for him.

Leonard C. Burch was born in 1933 and grew up on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. After graduating in 1954 from the Ute Vocational School on the reservation, he enlisted in the United States Air Force. His military service took him all over the world. Leonard Burch returned home, married Irene in 1959, started a family and entered into a lifelong career in political leadership. In 1966, at the age of 32, he began serving his first term as tribal chairman, the youngest Southern Ute ever elected to the position. Over the years, he developed a national presence, working closely with local and national governments, business leaders and native organizations. In a memorial entered into the Congressional Record, U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell wrote:

Leonard Burch was a quiet man of enormous vision who led the Southern Ute Indian people for nearly three decades, from a little known, mostly poor tribe to the preeminent energy producing Indian tribe in the world, the leader among tribes, just as Leonard was a leader among men. Leonard's dream for the tribe was audacious, but he persisted where others might have faltered, and he believed in his vision, but more importantly he believed in his people. His faith in the inherent strength of the Southern Utes was unshakable. It speaks well of the Southern Ute Tribe, that they were perceptive enough to know a great leader when they saw one and continued following his lead even when the way was difficult. Leonard and the tribe deserve each other and a mutual commitment was rewarded in the community transformed. Leonard Burch will be missed by the Southern Ute Indians, by me and by all who call Southwest Colorado home. He remains in our hearts and with the dedication of the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Office Building, his memory will be forever honored by the tribe he loved.





Tribal member Andrew Frost explains that Chairman Burch "was a very traditional person. He took his Indian ways very seriously, and he wanted to convey to the outside world that the tribal government here would be a force to be reckoned with now and into the future. He preserved a lot of the culture. Future growth, I think, will be due to his leadership as chairman."

Service Officer for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe Rodenck Lee Grove states that Leonard Burch, "always led by example. He was there for ceremonies or burial of our tribal people, and he never forgot us, and I think he will go down as one of the great humanitarians of our tribe." But Leonard also worked on and supported Indian issues of national consequence such as tuition waivers for Native Americans. John Echohawk, Executive Director of the Native American Rights Fund in Boulder, Colorado remembers Mr. Burch as "a national model that tribal leaders can look to."

Leonard Burch insisted on water rights for the tribe, which will be delivered through the Animas La Plata Project. David Getches, Dean of the University of Colorado Law School at Boulder and considered a national authority on natural resources and Indian law, worked with Leonard Burch during these negotiations. Getches explains, "There was a generation of emergent leadership in Indian country beginning in the late 1960s and extending through the 1970s and 1980s. For this region Leonard Burch was the Indian leader who stands out as the person who lead that revolution in Indian country."

Leonard Burch received many honors and awards based on his leadership of the Southern Ute Tribe, and he was inducted into the Colorado Business Hall of Fame. He succeeded because the tribal councils worked well with him. The bronze plaque on the Leonard Burch Tribal Administration building reads in part "former chairman, council member, sun dance chief and great visionary. Thank you for your leadership, dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of your people."



Parallel Lives: Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Leonard Burch

1. As young boys, both Ben and Leonard were not raised solely by their parents. Ben spent time in an orphanage and Leonard was raised by his aunt, Minny Cloud Williams and his uncle Bill Williams.
2. Both men entered military service in the 1950s. Ben Campbell went to Korea, and Leonard Burch went to Turkey, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.
3. Ben and Leonard both retained their traditional ties to native ways. Mr. Burch was sun dance chief for the Southern Utes, and Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Northern Cheyenne, was elected to the Northern Cheyenne Council of 44 Chiefs.
4. As politicians, both men thrived. Ben Nighthorse Campbell rose from the Colorado State Legislature through Congress to the U.S. Senate and Leonard Burch served as tribal chairman of the Southern Ute Tribe for three decades. Neither ever lost an election.
5. Both men have successfully represented Native Americans on the national level and have spent years on important issues like tribal sovereignty and tribal economic independence.
6. Both men have dedicated their lives to their constituents in southwest Colorado, have enjoyed living near Ignacio, Colorado, shared a love for horses and the landscape, and maintain strong family ties.



Nighthorse Invents *Painted Mesa*

The *Painted Mesa* style jewelry, named after the colored mesas in Ignacio, Colorado, is Ben Nighthorse's unique invention and his contribution to the development of Indian jewelry. In this style, thin metal sheets are soldered together and inlaid to achieve multi-colored designs in metal. The finished "sandpainting" look of the jewelry is achieved by hand texturing. Nighthorse entered the *Painted Mesa* style of jewelry at the 1983 Gallup, New Mexico Intertribal Ceremonial and won the coveted Handy and Harmon "Most Creative Metalsmith" award, Best of Division, and First Place awards.

Nighthorse acquired the skills necessary to develop his innovative metal techniques from various sources. He excelled in jewelry making classes while a student at San Jose State in the late 1950s. And, while he was in Japan as a member of the US Olympic judo team, from 1960 - 64, he studied Japanese metalworking with a sword-maker who taught him the Japanese metalworking technique, *mokame gane*.



Southwestern Influence on Nighthorse Designs

The culturally and geographically diverse Four Corners region encompasses New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado in southwestern United States. The spectacular landscape includes the Rocky Mountains, Monument Valley and Mesa Verde. Living in this environment has stimulated Nighthorse's jewelry-making. It inspires him to create jewelry that reflects the southwestern landscape and regional imagery. Rock art designs inspired by ancestral Puebloan petroglyphs—ancient designs drawn in rock—, animals—elk, bear and equine—, and Yei-s-Diné holy people—, have become part of his repertoire and are regularly featured. The Painted Mesa style jewelry was conceived and created in this southwestern environment.

The Orb Pendant

The hinged orb pendant is a circular silver appliquéd bead inlaid with lapis, when opened it reveals a revolving inlaid ball. Creating the orb pendant involved a complex fabrication process that required no less than thirty-nine steps involving cutting, filing, forming, sanding, soldering, inlaying and polishing both metal and stones. The whole process starts with flat sheets of silver and chunks of lapis and coral.





Innovative Artistry

Innovation and artistry characterize Nighthorse jewelry. Throughout his career Nighthorse continually has experimented, always challenging the limitations of the materials in his jewelry. His experimentation recognizes no boundaries; he is not limited by technical difficulty, time-consuming projects, nor expense of materials. Even hidden areas are adorned with personal statements for the "spirit" of the person wearing the jewelry.

Nighthorse utilizes a variety of metal working techniques, such as overlay, appliqué and inlay, all of which may appear in combination on one piece of jewelry. His materials include shells, lapis lazuli, malachite, jet, coral, turquoise, opal, sugilite, variscite and hardwoods. Use of these materials allows him to create a broad range of jewelry styles from traditional Southwest to contemporary.

Significance of Nighthorse Jewelry

Caption from a personal letter from William P. Bell

The buckle by Ben Nighthorse was acquired as a Father's Day gift in 1999. I had seen the buckle some time earlier and immediately fractured the tenth commandment but had no hope of being the proud possessor. . . . I was completely and emotionally overcome with joy when the seven children of my family gave me the buckle (with their mother's help I am sure.)

Aside from the fact of excellent craftsmanship the buckle has some symbolic associations that enhance its value for me. I am a native son of the golden west just as Nighthorse. . . . The golden bear on the buckle speaks of this to me. (The turquoise and variscite . . . remind me of the ancient stone walls that I saw in Japan in 1952 and in Korea in 1968. I know that Nighthorse served in Korea during that conflict and that he spent time in Japan. I have often thought that his time in the Orient must have had an influence when he started working on the buckle sometime in the late 1970s. . . . The variscite looks almost like a highway. To me it symbolizes the westward migration. . . . Maybe Ben had nothing more in mind than a desire for color contrast. . . .



Contemporary Nighthorse

As an artist, Nighthorse would dream new designs and wake up to draw them on paper. He invented jewelry designs and crafted them in a variety of materials, but an active career in politics has taken him away from his home studio so he has limited time at the workbench. While traveling and in meetings he often initiates designs on paper. What used to be his livelihood has become an important outlet for his creativity. Nighthorse still actively designs and molds new jewelry pieces, but two Southern Ute craftsmen who do the buffing, polishing and finishing to his specifications. Ben Nighthorse states, "I was a jeweler before I was a politician. Jewelry was my sole income for years. It has now become my therapy."

Nighthorse creates and saves his molds because he is committed to the process of jewelry design. In Herman J. Viola's biography *Ben Nighthorse Campbell: An American Warrior*, Nighthorse states, "In reading about some of the great jewelers of the past, including Tiffany, Cellini, and Tillander as well as my two favorites, Boucheron and Faberge, I began to see a pattern. Each of those artists had coupled craftsmanship and design with the building of name recognition through marketing. They documented their work and, in so doing, enabled their sons or daughters to carry on their art." Nighthorse has saved several hundred molds and they are kept off site so that if anything happened to his shop his designs would not be lost. Nighthorse states, "Even after I am gone, anyone who apprenticed with me would be able to look at the original model and craft another. Each succeeding piece could be unique, yet it would be based on the original."

As with other families of Native American artists, everyone is involved. For the Ben Nighthorse family, artistry and politics are family traditions. His son Colin Campbell is active in Colorado politics, having once made furniture and helped with the jewelry business. Daughter Shanan Campbell decided she would rather market art than make it, and she owns and operates Sorrel Sky Gallery in Durango, Colorado.



Ben Nighthorse Campbell

Establishing ties to his Native American heritage has been central to Ben Nighthorse Campbell's life and art. He is devoted to preserving Native American culture and believes he appreciates his heritage more because he found it late in life. By expressing his heritage through his art, Ben Nighthorse has used his creative drive to promote Native American culture.

In 1985, the Northern Cheyenne inducted Ben Nighthorse Campbell into the Council of 44 Chiefs, a lifetime honor that designates him as a Cheyenne leader responsible for moral and spiritual leadership. He was also selected to be one of the individuals to lead the Native Nations Procession for the grand opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Indian in September 2004.

First elected as a Colorado state representative in 1982, Ben Nighthorse Campbell became a U.S. Congressman and U.S. Senator. Throughout his political career, he never lost his interest in art. Among other achievements, Ben Nighthorse Campbell helped strengthen the Indian Arts and Crafts Act.

By integrating modern design with exceptional craftsmanship and innovative techniques, he created the "Painted Mesa" jewelry, a milestone in the development of Indian jewelry. Ben Nighthorse Campbell has continued to influence the direction of Native American art both as an artist and as an arts advocate for Native Americans.

On March 3, 2004, Ben Nighthorse Campbell announced his retirement from the U. S. Senate and his intention to focus on his family and his art. Whether as an artist, Olympic athlete or politician, Ben Nighthorse Campbell continues to be an example to those with a determination to succeed. His devotion to his Native American heritage, his rise from humble beginnings and his ability to transcend cultures inspires others to achieve success in the modern world.

Ben Nighthorse Campbell Select Jewelry Awards

- 1986 M.L. Woodard Memorial Award: InterTribal Indian Ceremonial Gallup, New Mexico - Bolo and Buckle Set
- 1984 Second Place: O'odham Tash Casa Grande: Arts and Crafts
- 1983 Handy & Harman Metalsmithing - Special Technique Best In Class InterTribal Indian Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico Second Award and Artist's Duplicate: SWAIA 62nd Annual Indian Market
- 1982 First and Second Place: O'odham Tash Casa Grande: Arts and Crafts
- 1981 Best Craftsman: Alicia & Don Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial
 First Prize: InterTribal Indian Ceremonial Gallup, New Mexico
 First Prize: Aladdin Indian Arts & Crafts Show Las Vegas, Nevada
 1st Award, Artist's Duplicate, 2nd Award, Third Award: SWAIA 60th Annual Indian Market Santa Fe, New Mexico
 2nd prize Man's Ring Inlay; 2nd prize Bracelet Gold Channel; 2nd prize Ladies Ring: InterTribal Indian Ceremonial Gallup, New Mexico
 First Award: Shield Shaped Ring; Best Craftsman: Necklace and Bracelet Alicia and Don Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial Santa Monica, California
- 1980 First Award and Artist's Duplicate: SWAIA Annual Indian Market, Santa Fe First Place Gold Earrings; Second Place Gold Necklace: O'odham Tash Casa Grande: Arts and Crafts Honorable Mention: Indian Arts and Crafts Association IACA Competition
 First Award: SWAIA Annual Indian Market, Santa Fe
- 1977 First Award Winner: InterTribal Indian Ceremonial Gallup, New Mexico
 Special Award, Best Craftsman: Alicia and Don Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial Santa Monica, California
 Special Award: Doug Allard Presents 7th Annual Scottsdale Indian Art and Crafts show and sale
 Special Award: Doug Allard Presents 9th Annual Oakland American Indian Arts & Crafts Show
 Special Award: Tri-West Indian Arts & Crafts Show - Riverside, CA
 Second Prize: InterTribal Indian Ceremonial Gallup, New Mexico
- 1976 1st Place: The Original American Indian & Relic Show, Los Angeles
 Special Award: Doug Allard Presents: 6th Annual Scottsdale Indian Arts and Crafts show
 1st Place: Phoenix Indian Arts & Crafts Show
 1st Place & Special Award: Salt Lake City Authentic Indian Arts and Crafts Show
 Medal: California State Exposition and Fair: Awarded to Ben Nighthorse In Appreciation for Art in Action California State Fair
 Special Award, 1st Place: The Original American Indian & Western Relic Show Los Angeles
 Special Award: Doug Allard Presents: 8th Annual Oakland American Indian Arts & Crafts Show
 Special Award: Alicia and Don Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial Santa Monica, CA
- 1975 Honorable Mention Art Show: California State Fair
 Judges Award: 7th Grand National Indian Collectors Western Relic Show San Jose, California
 Honorable Mention Art Show: California State Fair
 Judges Award, Special Award, 1st Place, 2nd Place, Premium Award: Reno Indian & Early West Show
 Grand Prize, Best of Show: Sacramento Indian and Early West Show
 Special Award: Alicia and Don Bullock's Santa Monica Indian Ceremonial
 Special Award: Doug Allard Presents 7th Annual Oakland American Indian Arts & Crafts Show
- 1974 First Award Art Show: California State Fair
 1st Place: 7th Grand National Indian Collectors Western Relic Show San Jose, California
 Christmas Show Special Award: Doug Allard Presents 3rd Annual San Francisco Indian Arts and Crafts Fair

Nighthorse History

1933	Born in Auburn, California
1945	Worked on a pear farm north of Sacramento and befriended by Japanese boys who introduced him to judo.
1948-1950	Ranch work, Auburn, California. Quits high school at age 17, travels throughout American West.
1951-1953	Joined U.S. Air Force and stationed in Korea.
1953-1957	Long line truck driver while attending San Jose State University.
1958	Awarded Bachelor of Arts degree in fine arts and physical education from San Jose State University.
1958-1960	Art teacher, Campbell School District, Campbell, California.
1960	Research student at Meiji University in Tokyo. Trained in judo for preparation of 1964 Olympics. English teacher in Japanese language school district, Tokyo 1960-1964.
1961	U.S. Judo Champion, Pan-American Games, Gold Medalist.
1963	U.S. Olympic Team, Captain of Judo team.
1965-1968	Handicapped physical education specialist, San Juan School District, Carmichael, California. President's Council on Physical Fitness, Washington, D.C.
1966	Married Linda Price.
1971-1976	Teacher of fitness and mounted patrol officer, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, Sacramento, California.
1971	Art and Physical Education Teacher, Colorado Western College, Montrose.
1972	Teacher of shop, arts and crafts in Indian Program for Elk Grove School District Elk Grove, California.
1973	Entered first jewelry/art competition with a necklace he made. California State Art Show at the California Exposition. Took first place in a field of 3,600 entries.
1975	Received award in the Experimental Metal Division at the Heard Museum in Phoenix. Started an Indian jewelry school in Sacramento; expanded into the public schools, training over 100 students.
1976	Accepted as a member of Northern Cheyenne tribe; Receives the name Nighthorse in memory of his great-grandfather, Black Horse, who fought Custer in the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Presents the Cheyennes with a buffalo skull inlaid with coral, jet and turquoise.
1977	Moved to Ignacio, Colorado.
1979	Arizona Highways article identified him as one of 10 Native Americans under taking new forms of jewelry making.
1980-1981	Ben Campbell begins to teach jewelry making for the Art Department at Fort Lewis College in Durango.
1982	Campbell, a Democrat, runs for a seat in the Colorado house and wins, beginning a 22-year career in public service. Exhibits his jewelry at the "Night of the American Indian" at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.
1983	Decided to concentrate on a totally new style of jewelry titled "Painted Mesa." Entered a concha belt in the 1983 Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial and won First Place, Best of Division, and the coveted Handy and Harmon "Most Creative Metalsmith" award.
1985	At the Sundance Grounds in Bimex, Montana he was inducted into the Council 44 Chiefs on August 7.
1986	Elected to U.S. House of Representatives to represent Colorado's vast 3rd Congressional district; reelected to the House in 1988 and again in 1990. House sponsor for creating the National Museum of the American Indian.
1992	Persuaded Congress to rename the Custer Battlefield the Little Bighorn Battlefield and to add a monument to the site in honor of the Indians who died there. Grand Marshal of the Rose Bowl Parade. Elected to the U.S. Senate as a Democrat but switches to the Republican Party in 1995.
1998	Reelected to the U.S. Senate. Becomes the first Native American to chair the Indian Affairs Committee. Also chairs the Senate Sub-Committee on Appropriations and the Helsinki Commission.
2004	To be with his family and to renew his art, decides to retire from national politics at 71. Helps to open the National Museum of the American Indian of the Smithsonian Institution where he has been a founding supporter.

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Leon Hodges
Dr. Conrad Jensen
Kathy L'Amour
Sam Maynes
Pat and Joe Mollo
Herb and Peggy Puffer
Sheila Swift
Marjorie Lord
Healy Family
Estate of Sam Maynes
Anna Kato
Shanan Campbell
Sorrel Sky Gallery



Far Left Interns Scott Dye and Victor Pascual examine jewelry

Left Assistants Terra Plank and Tina Pusley identify jewelry

Above Native American sculpture located by Reed Library

"Our Sacred Trust" at Fort Lewis College

Located in Durango, Colorado in the Four Corners region of the Southwest, Fort Lewis College is a four-year, public liberal arts college that offers free tuition for federally recognized Native American students as well as Native Alaskans. Begun as a military post in 1880, Fort Lewis evolved into an Indian boarding school, then a public high school, a two-year college, and finally a four-year college. In 1910 U.S. Senator Henry M. Teller sponsored a Congressional bill to turn the federal land and buildings of Fort Lewis over to the state of Colorado with the proviso that "Indian pupils shall at all times be admitted to such school, free of charge for tuition, and on terms of equality with white pupils." This is our sacred trust, and that tradition continues today. Students come to us from over fifty different Indian nations and numerous Alaskan villages.



THE JEWELRY OF BEN NIGHTHORSE

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