

Dr. Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon (1899 – 2005)

Dr. Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon was a Mohegan medicine woman, tribal elder, and anthropologist whose passion for understanding plants helped to preserve and promote Mohegan tribal traditions. Tantaquidgeon studied at the University of Pennsylvania and conducted extensive research on traditional Mohegan medicinal plants as well as herbal medicine used by related east coast tribes, including the Delaware, Nanticoke, Cayuga, and Wampanoag. She authored *Folk Medicine of the Delaware and Related Algonkian Indians* based on this work.



In addition to her scholarly achievements, Tantaquidgeon was a key figure in the cultural revitalization of the Mohegan Tribe and is credited with preserving Mohegan tribal language and customs. In 1931, with her father and brother, she co-founded the Tantaquidgeon Museum, the oldest Native American-owned and operated museum in the United States, in Uncasville, CT. Built on her father's belief that "it is harder to hate someone that you know a lot about," the museum invites visitors to learn about Mohegan culture from a Mohegan perspective through tours and talks. Tantaquidgeon worked as curator of the museum, but not before spending over a decade among northwestern tribes supporting economic development through the Federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

Tantaquidgeon was recognized with honorary degrees from the University of Connecticut and Yale, inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, and celebrated with numerous Native American honors. Her legacy continues to inspire and educate people about indigenous culture and traditional medicine today.

ABOUT THE ARTIST | Mia Frattura

Mia Frattura is a pyrography (wood-burning) artist based in Westford, MA. She took an interest in drawing and painting portraits from a very young age, and that has remained a constant throughout her life. Mia has always been inspired by the beauty of people, the human form, and of nature—animals, flowers, plants, and landscapes. She is best known for her portraiture, and when she was introduced to pyrography in 2012, she knew that she had found her niche. Her artwork, created by hand on wood, derives an organic connection to its natural subjects. This portrait is created on basswood, a sacred wood to the Mohegan tribe, to showcase the connection to Tantaquidgeon.

Spanish translation coming soon.