

THE MEDICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF

# Annie Dodge Wauneka

By Jenna Todd



# Main Themes

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PASSION  
FOR HEALTH  
& MEDICINE



LIFE  
ACHIEVEMENTS  
& LEADERSHIP  
POSITIONS



BUILDING  
TRUSTING  
RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH CITIZENS

# Determination

ANNIE WAUNKA WAS A BRILLIANT ACTIVIST IN NAVAJO MEDICINE AND HEALTH. SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN TO JOIN HER TRIBAL COUNCIL. SHE WAS ALSO THE CHAIR OF THE HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE, BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, AND ALCOHOLISM COMMITTEE. WAUNKA PUSHED GROUPS FROM HER LOCAL TRIBAL COUNCIL TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO RECEIVE FUNDS AND SPREAD AWARENESS TO THE ISSUES DINE' PEOPLE SUFFERED FROM. HER EFFORTS IN STRENGTHENING THE HEALTH OF HER COMMUNITY DESERVE TO BE DISPLAYED SO MORE CAN LEARN ABOUT HER AND BE INSPIRED BY HER WORK.



# Education

Wauneka started boarding school in 1918, during the Spanish Influenza outbreak. She caught the virus and fortunately healed, however many students in her school suffered a different fate. She witnessed many of her peers' deaths. Despite the circumstances, this tragedy allowed Wauneka to assist the school nurse and ended up guiding her path towards healthcare.



In school, Wauneka was banned from speaking her native language.

Because of this, she learned English and was able to translate at her Father's council meetings.

# Leadership

Wauneka followed her Father's footsteps and ran for a representative position on the tribal council. In the same time she won the election, tuberculosis cases were increasing rapidly.

She used her title to promote the building of more hospitals on the reservation and for additional Navajo doctors to be employed.

Wauneka also proposed \$10,000 to be provided for doctors to travel to Navajo Nation to treat tuberculosis.



Annie Dodge Wauneka | 2020

**FIRST WOMAN  
ON NAVAJO  
TRIBAL  
COUNCIL**

# Window Rock Interactive Map

Wauneka worked at the Navajo Tribal Council in Window Rock, Arizona from 1951 to 1978.



## Consoling & Comforting

WAUNKA BECAME CHAIR OF THE HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE. SHE TOOK HER TIME TO LEARN ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS AND ITS EFFECT IN HER SOCIETY.

THERE WERE 1,500 ACTIVE CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS AMONG 75,000 NAVAJOS BUT MOST CITIZENS DID NOT VISIT HOSPITALS. DUE TO UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCES, NATIVE AMERICANS DID NOT TRUST WHITE DOCTOR'S MEDICATIONS.

WAUNKA WAS CONFIDENT IN THE RESEARCH SHE HAD LEARNED ABOUT TB AND DECIDED THAT SHE NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE HOSPITALIZATION. BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS BECAME A NEW PRIORITY AND IN TURN, MADE EURO-AMERICAN MEDICINES MORE APPEALING.



BUILDING  
PERSONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

# Showing Sympathy & Compassion



Wauneka was constantly on the road speaking to families and finding ways to comfort people in sickness.

Because phones were rarely used in Navajo Nation, patients in hospitals were not able to be in contact with their family. To find a way around this issue, Wauneka would record a patient's message to their family in a tape recorder and then would drive to the family's hogan and play the message.

She would repeat this process going back and forth to continually help a family stay in contact and then do the same for many other patients.



# Creating Connections & Starting New Conversations

WAUNKA REACHED NEW HEIGHTS IN HER ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITHIN NAVAJO NATION. SHE USED NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO REACH OUT TO CITIZENS ACROSS THE VAST RESERVATION. THESE WORKS INCLUDED:

- Creating films for preventing Tuberculosis
- Translating a medical dictionary into Navajo language
- Started a weekly radio broadcast on Gallup KGAK to encourage hospitalization for people with diseases



"WE DON'T  
HAVE  
HOUSEWIVES,  
WE HAVE  
SHACKWIVES."

# Supporting Women

WAUNKA WAS APPOINTED TO CHAIR OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE. IN THIS POSITION, SHE WAS ABLE TO RAISE MORE FUNDS TO BUILD CLINICS AND IMPROVE SANITATION. WAUNKA WORKED TO BRING ATTENTION TO UNHYGIENIC HOMES AND HELPED IMPROVE LIVES OF WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES BY:

- Working to receive windows and flooring for hogans
- Inspecting the sanitation of water sources and help move outhouses farther away from homes
- Teaching women how to organize food and clean dishes
- Accompanying doctors to establish a nursing school for women

# Life Achievements



INDIAN COUNCIL FIRE ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD IN 1963

FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN TO  
RECEIVE JOSEPHINE B. HUGHES  
MEMORIAL AWARD IN 1959

ARIZONA WOMAN OF THE YEAR IN  
1976

FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN TO  
RECEIVE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF  
FREEDOM IN 1963

# Institute Exhibit

[CLICK HERE FOR WEBSITE!](#)



**INSTITUTE**

# National Women's History Museum

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Through NWHM's state-of-the-art online presence and future physical museum they educate, inspire, and provide a complete view of American history made by women. Considering these attributes, I believe NWHM would strongly represent Wauneka's efforts.



360-degree octagonal room that resembles the internal part of a traditional Dine' hogan. Walls covered by wood that the hogans are originally built with.



Pictures and signs of what is displayed in powerpoint along walls.



Sheep skins layed on the ground which was traditional for hogans.

# Physical Exhibit

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# Work Cited

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