



Rupert Encinas

Native American Elder, O'odham

Arizona

USA

Rupert Encinas, with a spiritual name Ba'ag Da or Wanbli Kinyan (Eagle Flying), comes from a long line of traditional ancestors of his people and grew up knowing his first language and the traditional ways of his ancestors. He is of O'Odham tradition (meaning Human Being), he lives and works for his people in San Xavier reservation, close to S-cuk son (now called Tucson), Arizona.

His grandfather, Harry Ba'ag Encinas survived the boarding school era at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, he was not deterred by the treatment of the boarding school and continued to revive their traditional ceremonies. Already at a young age, Rupert sat with traditional men through all night ceremonies.

His formal education continued Haskell National Indian School Lawrence, Kansas where he started to learn from other tribes. 1975 he met a Lakota Spiritual Man in Oregon Tatanka Ohitika Brave Buffalo (English name Deavir Eastman) who was his mentor to Sweat Lodge and to his first Sundance in Green Grass South Dakota. Since then, Rupert has traveled among different Indian nations and attended Sweat Lodge, Sun Dance and Native American Church ceremonies, in addition to the traditional Ceremonies of his own people.

In addition to helping his people with leading various ceremonies, he worked for long years for the reservation, including being a counselor and teacher to promote community-based well-being and education. He also has a long-time experience in working with children and youth, problems like alcohol-drug abuse, family violence etc.

In 1999 Rupert went with five tribes to Estonia to share his spiritual ways and he is now a long-time friend of Lilleoru community. From this experience, he started presenting workshops on native spiritual teachings. He has traveled to Finland, Norway, Copenhagen, Warsaw and Switzerland and continues to make his pilgrimage every year embracing the traditional way of life he lives to this day.