
“We’ve made the decision to not only rebrand our museum but start the rebranding of an entire race of people by using the term ‘First American’. And that's very powerful as well. A lot of other organizations are now using the term ‘First American’. And I remember having an argument with one of the state legislators. When we proposed changing our name to ‘First American’ and he said, “Well, you're not the first Americans, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington and John Adams, they were the first Americans.” And I said, no, they were the first US citizens. And we're not talking about citizenship, we're talking about geography. And there's no common term among indigenous peoples for what we call this hemisphere. And we have adopted the term America even though it's named after Amerigo Vespucci. And so, I tried to explain this to him that we're not talking about the first US citizens, we're talking about the first Americans, the first people of this hemisphere. And I reminded him that, in fact, American Indians, First Americans, are the last people to have our citizenship in this country. We didn't have our citizenship until 1924. We did not have universal voting rights in this country until 1965. That was one year before I was born. We did not have universal voting rights in this country. So in a lot of ways, we are the last Americans when you think of it from that context, but we are the first peoples of this continent of this of the contiguous United States. And so I think that makes a very powerful statement too as people start to think about this and think about developing these land acknowledgments.”