

NEWS RELEASE

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Donna Loring to deliver keynote at 2025 Robert Talbot Civil Rights Speaker Series

ORONO, Maine — Donna M. Loring, elder of the Penobscot Indian Nation and a distinguished leader, author and advocate for Native sovereignty and justice, will deliver the keynote address at the 2025 Robert Talbot Civil Rights Speaker Series on Thursday, Nov. 6, at Buchanan Alumni House on the University of Maine campus in Orono.

Loring's address is titled "Paper Chains: Breaking Free From Colonial Bonds." The event, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 5:30 p.m. An informal reception will follow the talk. Due to space limitations, attendees are encouraged to pre-register at umainealumni.com/talbot.

The event is co-hosted by the University of Maine Alumni Association and the Greater Bangor Area Branch of the NAACP.

Loring's career reflects a lifetime of service and trailblazing accomplishments. She represented the Penobscot Nation in the Maine State Legislature for 12 years, during which she authored and sponsored the 2001 law requiring the teaching of Maine Native American history and culture in Maine's schools. Loring also conceptualized and advanced the first "State of the Tribes Address," delivered in 2002 by Wabanaki chiefs to a joint session of the Maine Legislature and broadcast statewide.

Beyond her legislative achievements, Loring broke barriers in public service and higher education. She was the first woman graduate of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to become a police chief, leading the Penobscot Nation Police Department from 1984 to 1990. She later became the first woman to serve as director of security at Bowdoin College. A U.S. Army veteran, she served in Vietnam during the 1967-68 Tet Offensive.

Loring is also a respected writer and broadcaster. Her memoir, *In the Shadow of the Eagle: A Tribal Representative in Maine* (2008), chronicles her experiences as a legislative representative. She currently hosts *Wabanaki Windows*, a long-running radio program produced by Maine radio stations WERU in Blue Hill and WMPG in Portland. The program recently received a national award for racial justice and civil rights programming.

Loring's many honors include induction into the Deborah Morton Society at the University of New England, where she was separately recognized with the establishment of the Donna M. Loring Lecture Series. In addition, Loring has received honorary doctorates from the University of Maine and Thomas College, as well as the University of Maine School of Law's Courage is Contagious Award.

In 2017, Loring, a 1986 University of Maine graduate, received the UMaine Alumni Association's highest honor, the Alumni Career Award. Most recently, she received the 2025 Distinguished Achievement Award from the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance.

In 2022, Maine Gov. Janet T. Mills appointed Loring to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees at the recommendation of the Wabanaki chiefs.

The Robert Talbot Civil Rights Speaker Series was established in 2021 by the University of Maine Alumni Association and the Greater Bangor Area Branch of the NAACP to promote dialogue and engagement on issues of equality and justice. It honors Robert "Bob" Talbot, a UMaine alumnus and Bangor native who was the first executive director of the Maine Human Rights Commission and one of the state's foremost leaders in advancing racial equality and nondiscriminatory policies.

For more information or to register, visit umainealumni.com/talbot.