



## National Leadership in Action Award

Presented to

### *American India Foundation*

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This award recognizes, celebrates and promotes outstanding philanthropic and nonprofit organizations. It honors innovative approaches to connecting resources of time, money, and know-how to the philanthropic work of communities of color.

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In Hopi culture giving isn't charity; giving and helping are embedded in spiritual and cultural ceremonies as well as the normal routine of life. Hopi people share with others because it makes the community stronger. Hopi pottery is one of the oldest art forms in the American Southwest. Originally made as utilitarian wares for cooking and storage, Hopi pottery is now sought by collectors from around the world.

Hopi pottery is still made the same way it has been for centuries. Clays found near the villages are prepared and formed using the traditional coil method. Smooth river rocks are used to polish and burnish the molded piece. Paint made from native plants and hematite is used to decorate the pot with traditional designs. Delicate paint brushes are made from the yucca plant. Ancient designs representing birds, clouds, rain, lightning, and other forms found in the natural environment adorn the pots. Different shades come from the type and color of clay used. During firing, yellow clay turns reddish copper, while grey clay turns light beige.

The last and most risky step in the process is the traditional firing. Wood, coal, and sheep dung are used to fire the formed and decorated pots. During the entirely traditional process used to make Hopi pottery there is always the possibility of a pot bursting during the firing stage. If all is done right, the end result is beautiful Hopi pottery.

#### **About this artwork:**

The vase-shaped pots, with narrow necks are used for the storage of seeds. Pots with wider mouth openings are used for carrying and storing water. The designs on this pot are thunderbirds reflecting on rain clouds, and eagle feathers. The design symbolizes a prayer of prosperity for all of humanity and earthly creatures.

#### **About the artist:**

Ramona Ami is a 76-year-old Hopi from the Butterfly and Badger Clan of Shichomovi Village on First Mesa, Polacca, Arizona. Ramona has been creating traditional Hopi Pottery for more than 20 years. She learned the skills from her sister Marcella Kahe and her late mother-in-law.

