

OFFICE OF AL GORE

February 25, 2026

Greetings,

I write to wholeheartedly support the development of the Oren Lyons Archive and Research Project at Syracuse University. Oren is one of the most important mentors and guides I have encountered in my lifetime. I am continually humbled by the gift of his knowledge, leadership, and friendship. Preserving and spotlighting Oren Lyons' speeches, writings, media, and correspondence is not only important to establishing his legacy in the broader environmental movement, but also to developing the next generation of leaders in shaping our society at large.

People from all walks of life – scholars, students, activists, and concerned citizens – should have access to the phenomenal insight and remarkable life's work Oren has shared as a representative of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Haudenosaunee's guiding tradition, known as Gayanesshagowa or the "Great Law of Peace," was established thousands of years ago at Onondaga Lake (near Syracuse, NY), and holds an extremely influential and tragically underappreciated role in the world today.

The Haudenosaunee are an ancient and venerable nation of people whose matrilineal Clan representational form of democracy and way of life predate European contact. Oren is a central figure in modern Haudenosaunee leadership, holding the title of "faithkeeper" for the Onondaga Turtle Clan. He sits on the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy which convenes regularly at the Onondaga Nation – the Confederacy's "Central Fire" or capital.

Oren's influence reaches much farther throughout the world. Since 1977, Oren has been a leading and widely respected voice for Indigenous peoples at the United Nations. I first met Oren in 1988 at the U.N. Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival, a convening of religious and political leaders focused on addressing the existential environmental threats facing humanity. Over the course of six years, Oren helped shape a series of global Forum conversations around his clarion call of "value change for survival" – the need for a fundamental shift in humanity's relationship with the natural world – a message that we both continue to spread.

In the United States and around the world, Indigenous leadership and knowledge are integral to the struggle we face today in trying to build a sustainable future. For generations, Indigenous Peoples have served as essential guardians of our shared home, leading efforts to protect the Earth and all its inhabitants – not only human, but animals and nature itself. Their profound understanding and insight that peace and wellness can only be attained when human beings are in proper relationship with the natural world has deeply shaped my own work as an environmental activist and continues to inspire me today. Oren's wisdom and leadership in environmental movement has awakened generations to the threats we face and should be shared with generations to come.

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Oren's work for Indigenous civil rights and environmental justice has many powerful touchpoints to the ongoing, intertwined struggles to protect democracy and solve the climate crisis. This year, as the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence it is important to honor the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) influence on the birth of American Democracy. I had the honor of voting to recognize the "contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution" when I served in the U.S. Senate. Now, nearly forty years later, it is my honor to strongly support the development of the Oren Lyons Archive and Research Project to further advance the justly deserved recognition of the Haudenosaunee Peoples.

I hope you will join me in supporting the Indigenous Values Initiative and Syracuse University in establishing the Oren Lyons Archive and Research Project – an immensely valuable undertaking. Together, we can safeguard Faithkeeper Oren Lyon's legacy and that of the Haudenosaunee to ensure that their wisdom reaches the next generation of leaders who will guide us toward a sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Gore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Al" and last name "Gore" clearly distinguishable.

Al Gore

Former U.S. Vice President