



Professional Archaeologists of Kansas

Benjamin Banks, President
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November 7, 2022

Statement Concerning the Auction of Culturally Patrimonial and Sacred Objects by Medicine’s Hall of Fame and Museum in Shawnee, Kansas:

The Professional Archaeologists of Kansas, commonly known as PAK, is an organization composed of professional archaeologists and students training in the field. PAK's mission is to encourage and facilitate communication about the cultural heritage of Kansas and the importance of protecting and preserving archaeological resources for future generations. PAK also promotes professional standards in the collection, curation, analysis, and publication of archaeological data and encourages appropriate sensitivity to the concerns of descendant communities.

On November 1, 2022, the PAK Board of Directors became aware that the “Medicine’s Hall of Fame and Museum” in Shawnee, Kansas, had closed and is currently auctioning items. The online auction runs until November 9, 2022. PAK would like to express our serious concerns with the auction because it includes Indigenous North American, South American, and African items, many of which are likely culturally patrimonial or sacred. Unfortunately, State of Kansas laws do not address such a situation, although the Kansas Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Act (Code 75-2741), which prohibits the possession, display, sale, or disposal of human remains or associated grave goods, may apply to some items, but this would be unlikely to stop the auction. At the federal level, this auction may be in violation of Title 18 of the U.S. Code Section 1170 for illegal trafficking of Native American human remains and cultural remains. While the appropriate authorities review potential violation of established laws, the PAK Board of Directors wishes to firmly condemn this auction and the buying or selling of sacred items as well as the owning or displaying of these items based on ethical principles that guide cultural heritage preservation and respect for Indigenous people. Many of the items up for auction are listed as related to specific Tribal Nations, these communities should be contacted to begin the repatriation process and return these items back to their homes.

The PAK Board encourages community members to actively engage in legal and ethical preservation of cultural heritage, such as properly recording archaeological sites, volunteering at an archaeological excavation or museum, or joining one of the local advocational groups such as the Kansas Anthropological Association or the Missouri Archaeological Society. Additional resources can be found at the PAK website: <http://www.ksarchaeo.info>.

Sincerely,



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Laura R. Murphy, PhD, PAK Treasurer



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