

"The League Looks at the Myaamia: Miami's Daryl Baldwin Receives MacArthur 'Genius Grant.' " Toni Saldivar. *The Oxford Press*. 6 Nov. 2016: A3.

The news of Daryl Baldwin's MacArthur Fellow award in September of this year has been a cause for celebration at the Myaamia Center, the research institute Baldwin helped found and which he directs at Miami University. The joy was felt by his colleagues throughout the university, by friends in Oxford, Ohio, and Liberty, Indiana, throughout the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and across the nation. The award, often referred to as "the Genius Grant," recognizes Baldwin's accomplishments in revitalizing the Miami language, history and culture through his scholarship and leadership, and the promise of his work to continue to expand and deepen the self-identity of the Miami people and to educate all of us.

Among the many projects connected to the Myaamia Center is a crop of corn at the university's ecology center farm. It grew from seeds of Miami tribal corn, as noted by journalist Michael Clark in a recent article for the *Hamilton Journal News* (1 October 2016: B1,5). In his interview with Clark, Baldwin "compared the crops' flourishing to the flowering of awareness of his and other Miami descendants about their ancestral roots." As Baldwin put it, "The corn is coming back, and the [Miami] language is coming back ... the work [of the Myaamia Center] is about moving the language and culture into our lives today."

In the summer of 2014, Oxford artist and League of Women Voters of Oxford member Marcia Waller traveled to Miami, Oklahoma, to attend the annual powwow of the Miami Tribe at its national headquarters. Inspired by the gathering of Miami people from around the country to celebrate their heritage, Waller began a series of watercolor paintings that capture the spirit of the event. Twelve of Waller's paintings are being exhibited at the Oxford Community Arts Center in the South Parlor. This exhibit, which is free and open to the public, will be up through the month of November.

Central to the tribal gathering is dancing, which Waller describes as both "dignified and fun; both a competition and a ceremony." It involves participants of all ages. Waller responded to the vibrant colors and intricate designs of dancers' regalia with paintings that celebrate their



Image: Watercolor titled "In Motion" by Marcia Waller.

artistry. Some of Waller's paintings show dancers in motion; others, dancers at rest; and some show the variety of Miami people attending this annual event, men, women and children, in traditional clothing of exquisite design. One painting celebrates Miami tribe members who are U.S. military veterans. Waller's exhibit honors the Miami Tribe with images of many distinct individuals, each experiencing the pride of their shared history, language and culture.

The purpose of the Myaamia Center at Miami University has been to revitalize that history, language and culture through scholarship and teaching with the goal of empowering the Miami tribal community. The MacArthur Award recognizes the brilliance the Center's director Daryl Baldwin in his work to fulfill that goal. The Award also reflects the success of the collaboration between the Miami Tribe and the university that bears its name. As noted on the Myaamia Center's website, "Compassion and respect have been at the heart of this healing effort since its inception." This academic year, thirty-two Miami tribal members are students at Miami University.