



Plenary Speaker
Saturday, Nov. 10
3:30 – 4:45 p.m.
Room: Denver Ballroom

Harlan Pruden

Two-Spirit Gifts & Medicines: Dreams, hopes & healing

Many cultural traditions and practices of the peoples of Turtle Island have often been misrepresented or suppressed. The misrepresentation mainly occurred because the colonizers did not have a context to frame, understand and value these ways and the suppression, primarily, occurred because these ways went against the colonizer's christian doctrine, a doctrine that righteously justify the subjugation of indigenous bodies and lands and was one of the underlying tenets of the residential/boarding schools. This especially holds true for indigenous notions and practices of sex, gender, gender-roles and sexuality. This presentation explores these concepts by featuring some of the sociohistorical documentation from a nation-specific standpoint while supplementing these records and narratives with deconstructed colonial narratives and/or accounts. A brief overview is offered on how this burgeoning body of knowledge is used to (re)claim and restore respect, honor and dignity for today's Two-Spirit individuals and communities as they navigate and negotiate Native and LGBTQI+ spaces, places and communities. Finally, a discussion is taken up on the (re)positioning of 'Two-Spirit' as this work and discussion(s) significantly differs from that of the (non-Native) LGBTQI+ movement(s) putting forth a critique of the 'western' framing of sex, gender, gender-roles, and sexuality; thus opening up a space that transcends and challenges the binary; thereby, creating a space to dream of a rich, complex and diverse world that acknowledges 'other' while honoring, celebrating and valuing the gifts and medicines the 'other' has to offer thus creating a sacred (and safe) place and space that calls everyone home.