



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2016
Photos Supplied Upon Request

Contact:
Steve Sharp
760.833.8167
ssharp@accmuseum.org

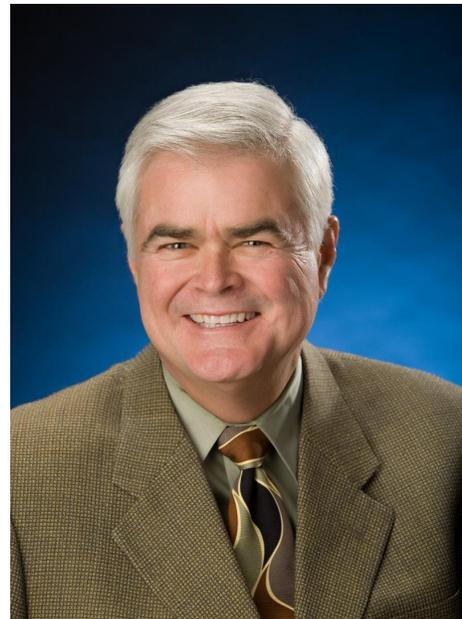
Executive Director of Agua Caliente Cultural Museum Announces His Retirement

Palm Springs, CA, April 25, 2016 – **Michael Hammond, Ph.D.**, Executive Director of Agua Caliente Cultural Museum for the past 17 years, announced his retirement effective July 31, 2016. He has agreed to remain on a month-to-month basis if a successor has not been found by the end of July.

"I've accomplished everything I set out to do when I was hired, except build a new Agua Caliente Cultural Museum," said Hammond. "I am retiring partly for reasons of health and partly because of age, having recently turned 74. If Tribal Council were to say tomorrow, 'Yes, we're going to go ahead with the project,' we're still looking at redesign considerations, upgrading systems, and construction. I don't think I want to be doing this in my 80s."

Hammond looks forward to spending time writing, traveling, gardening, and enjoying more time at home with his family.

Under his watch, the Museum was the first Native American museum to be part of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program. The exhibition *Cahuilla Cowboys – Making Our Marks*, received the Charles Redd Award for "best exhibition west of the Rockies." More recently, the exhibition *Section 14 – The Other Palm Springs* was selected to be shown at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC in 2018 – the first community tribal museum to be so honored. Hammond founded and directed *Native FilmFest* for 15 seasons, firmly establishing the event as one the most highly regarded festivals of its kind – showcasing the best in films by, about, and starring Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples.



"He's been at the front and taken us to the right position and the right place," commented Chairwoman **Mildred L. Browne**. "This has become just as much his museum as it is our museum. He's been very involved in the Western Museum

Association. He has won award after award from his colleagues; and the good news is he's going to help us find somebody that he thinks will be a good fit for us."

###

About Agua Caliente Cultural Museum

In 1991, a modest museum of less than 1,600 square feet was founded to collect and preserve stories and artifacts of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and share them with local residents and visitors alike. Today, Museum programming provides a thriving resource for Native and non-Native people and a dynamic forum for permanent residents and visitors of all ages.

Museum offerings that serve over 28,000 adults and children each year include: quality exhibitions at the Museum, at off-site locations, and online; stimulating and enlightening lectures; classes and demonstrations that feature hands-on experiences with Native skills and crafts; a six-day Native film festival and other cultural special events; library and archives research opportunities; Museum tours; guided cultural hikes; and presentations for students in schools.

For teachers, students, artists, scholars, and collectors the Museum's holdings provide unique research and archival resources -- from recordings of a tribal *net* (ceremonial and political leader) to the documentation of ongoing challenges made to tribal land and water rights. Free online resources are available on the Museum Web site at www.accmuseum.org.

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit institution. In keeping with its mission, the Museum inspires people to learn about the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and other Native cultures through exhibitions, collections, research, and educational programs.

In recognition of its role as a regional and national resource, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum was the first Native American museum to be part of the prestigious Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program. The association with Smithsonian Institution provides opportunities for a mutual sharing of resources in collections, scholarship, programming, and technical expertise, and entitles the Museum to bring world-acclaimed Smithsonian exhibitions to the Coachella Valley.

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum is located at 219 South Palm Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs. The Museum is open September through May on Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and June through August on Friday through Sunday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission to the Museum is free.

Administration Offices of the Museum are located at 901 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite C-204, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Additional information is available at 760.778.1079 or visit www.accmuseum.org.

###