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Affirmative action, racial politics and student activism

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Affirmative action, racial politics and student activism

By Daniel Sturm

If you are interested in the issue of affirmative action, you should not miss the following event. On Nov. 12, at 7:30 p.m., the American Indian and activist Ward Churchill will discuss "Affirmative Action, Racial Politics, and Student Activism" at Michigan State University. The event, which is co-sponsored by MSU's North American Indigenous Faculty and Staff Association, the North American Indian Student Organization, and its American Indian Studies Program, is in room B-104 of Wells Hall.

This summer, the Supreme Court defended the University of Michigan's use of affirmative action, arguing that, in order to create a diverse student body, the university may treat race as a "plus" factor in its admissions policy.

Challenging this decision, Ward Connerly, the Californian organizer of a group calling itself the American Civil Rights Coalition, announced he would lead a ballot referendum effort in Michigan to ban state-mandated affirmative action. Connerly was able to successfully complete referenda in California and Washington state.

Churchill, a Keetoowah Band Cherokee, is a longtime Native-rights activist, acclaimed public speaker and award-winning writer.

A member of the Governing Council of the American Indian Movement within the Colorado chapter of the American Indian Movement, he also serves as a professor of ethnic studies and coordinator of American Indian Studies at the University of Colorado. He is a past national spokesman for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee and has served as a delegate to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. He's also a prosecutor of the First Nations International Tribunal for the Chiefs of Ontario.

Churchill has published several books, including "Indians Are Us?," "Fantasies of the Master Race," "Since Predator Came," and "A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas."

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