CELEBRATE
NATIVE
AMERICAN
HERITAGE

NOVEMBER

Russell & Tatanka Means

Born on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Russell Means (1939–2012) began his journey in activism in 1964. Of Oglala Lakota descent, Means founded the Cleveland American Indian Center in an effort to help Indigenous people adapt to city life after relocation. While Means was not a founder of the grassroots American Indian Movement, he would become one of its most famous leaders. During the 1970s, he helped organize and lead several high-profile AIM protests including the Thanksgiving Day takeover of a replica of the Mayflower, a prayer vigil atop Mount Rushmore, and the 71-day occupation of the town of Wounded Knee. Means was also one of the first activists to speak out against the use of Native American-themed mascots in sports. An author, musician and actor, Means had 10 children, including well-known actor Tatanka Means.

Tatanka Means (Oglala Lakota, Omaha and Navajo) has made a name for himself as an actor, stand-up comedian, entrepreneur and motivational speaker. He has appeared in more than 15 films, including the critically acclaimed "Killers of the Flower Moon," and has a more than 20-year career in television. His activism can be seen in the complex way he portrays Native characters, but also in his comedy and dedication to being a positive role model and sober living advocate.

Portrait Of Russell Means by Chris Felver and Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

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