

2007 Keynote Speaker



Photo by Matum Cultural Center, Venezuela

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, of Cherokee, Creek and Huron lineage, learned at an early age to use words that “have movement and dance within them ... words to breathe.” In *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer: A Story of Survival*, the award-winning author has written a powerful memoir that breathes and moves “fluidly across boundaries between prose and poetry, dream and reality, myth and history, animal and human, the personal and political,” as one book reviewer put it. *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer* is a narrative of her life as a mixed-blood woman coming of age off reservation; her schizophrenic mother and the abuse that often overshadowed her childhood; the torments visited upon her; the rape and physical violence; and the violence she inflicted on herself. The memoir became a book-of-the-month selection for Native America Calling and AIROS.

Hedge Coke’s writing has been published in many journals, magazines and anthologies, including *Speaking for the Generations and the Lands* (Univ. of Arizona Press, 1998) and *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language* (W.W. Norton, 1997). She is currently a professor of creative writing at the Institute of American Indian Arts, teaching nonfiction writing, poetry, script, literature and theory. She edited or co-edited five anthologies, including *Voices of Thunder* and *It’s Not Quiet Anymore* for the Institute for American Indian Arts, and is currently editing two new anthologies - *Working Clans*, a collection of writing representing Native work ethic and contemporary labors, and *Radio Wave Mama*, a collection of work from writers whose parents suffer mental illness. Recently she spoke at the United Nations on the subject of how publishing affects indigenous communities.

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