



Ginger Sykes Torres Biography:

Ginger Sykes Torres is Diné (Navajo), Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan) born for Bilagáana. She was born on the Navajo Nation in Tuba City, raised in Mesa, and now lives in central Phoenix. As a high school student, Ginger was the first female to win a world title at the Heard Museum's World Championship Hoop Dance Contest in 1997. Ginger's groundbreaking hoop dance style was the first to incorporate modern dance and gymnastics elements into the hoop dance, and her victory paved the way for female hoop dancers of all ages.

Ginger went on to graduate from Stanford University with a degree in the Earth Systems Science Program. She is now a certified environmental consultant for tribal and environmental issues, such as renewable energy and climate change. She helps government agencies and utilities develop strategic, efficient, and common-sense solutions to environmental issues and implement sound environmental policies, with a focus on land use, renewable energy, sustainability, and climate resilience. Ginger has recently started her own small business, Shikeyah LLC, for her environmental consulting work. Ginger plays an important role in developing innovative community-driven strategies to prepare Phoenix neighborhoods for the impacts of a changing climate. As Vice-Chair of the City of Phoenix Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission and a member of the Mayor's Rio Salado Advisory Committee

Ginger advocates for policies that aim to make the city an epicenter of sustainable development. As Chair of the Commission's Urban Heat Island and Trees & Shade Subcommittee, and Leader of Valley Leadership's Tree and Shade Impact Team, she spearheads initiatives to expand the city's shade capacity, reduce the urban heat island phenomenon, and advocates for heat relief projects to be implemented in an equitable manner.

Ginger is also a leader in Arizona's prominent non-profit community and arts organizations and is a passionate advocate for issues affecting Native Americans in Arizona. Ginger is a trustee at the Heard Museum, where she serves as the Board Secretary and on the American Indian Advisory Committee. She was instrumental in the creation of Ballet Arizona's Tribal Nations Advisory Council--which aims to explore ways to engage local Native American communities in Native dance and ballet. In a unique partnership with Ballet Arizona, she founded and teaches the hoop dance to Native students via Zoom classes. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central and Northern Arizona (RMHC) Ginger serves as an advocate for Native American families needing a "home-

away-from-home” while their children receive treatment at pediatric centers in metropolitan Phoenix. Ginger also serves on the Advisory Board for the Southwest Shakespeare Company and she is a Girl Scout Troop Leader.

Ginger is a passionate advocate for issues affecting Native American communities throughout Arizona. In March of 2020, Ginger co-founded the COVID relief group PPE for Navajo First Responders to deliver critical PPE and sanitization supplies directly to frontline workers on the Navajo Nation. Recently, Ginger has partnered with the Navajo Hopi Covid -19 Relief group to develop a campaign to encourage Navajo and Hopi community members to get COVID-19 vaccinations. Because of this work, Ginger was named to Valley Leadership’s Ready Together Program to help find innovative ways to make an impact in Arizonas response to COVID-19. In the 2020 election, Ginger formed a grassroots initiative called Diné4Biden (Diné is the Navajo word for Navajo people) to help boost Native American enthusiasm for the Biden/Harris and Mark Kelly coordinated campaign in Arizona. The goal was to get Natives, both on reservations and in urban areas, excited about the election and their power to make change. Ginger worked closely with the Biden/Harris campaign, local government officials, and Navajo politicians and community leaders on social media outreach and to organize a series of car parades to the polls in Phoenix and throughout the Navajo Nation. Ginger continues to engage with state and national political organizations to find ways to keep Native voters engaged all the time and to make sure that there are resources at the local level to make sure that happens. She also served on the Maricopa County Democratic Party’s Education Committee.

This year (in January 2022), Ginger was named one of the 48 Most Intriguing Women of Arizona by 48 Women and Arizona Historical Society, an honor that recognizes the state’s most remarkable women having a remarkable impact in their communities with a mission to transform lives, build stronger communities and help positively shape Arizona and the nation.

In 2020, Ginger was selected as one of 31 honorees for “Phoenix Herstories” by the Phoenix Arts & Culture and Women’s Commissions. Phoenix Herstories is a 2020 centennial celebration of a woman’s right to vote, and includes video installations, online photography exhibits, and curricular guides for schools.

Ginger and her husband, Javier Torres, live in Phoenix. They have three small kids, two small dogs, and one small cat.