

George McCauley



George McCauley is a citizen of the Omaha Nation in Macy, Neb. He graduated from Flandreau Indian School in 1971 and that summer worked for the U.S. Forest Service at Hungry Horse, Mont., in Glacier National Park. He came to Minneapolis at the end of that summer and was preparing to attend Bacone College in Muskogee, Okla. George's best friend, Johnny, committed suicide right before the semester ended; on the way home for school break, George decided to not go back to the reservation. While having a layover in Kansas City in December 1971, he exchanged his bus ticket for one to Minneapolis, and he has lived in the Twin Cities ever since. It took many years before someone accidentally saw him in Minneapolis and let his relatives know that he was still alive.

In the cities George worked in a mailroom in downtown Minneapolis at Piper Jaffray & Hopwood stock brokerage and learned how to run a printing press. He lost his job and started drinking heavily at this time. Eventually, after multiple arrests, he ended up before a judge who told him that, in order to stay out of jail, he needed to go to treatment, enter a halfway house, attend three 12-step meetings a week and stay sober for a year. He, in true George fashion, thought to himself, "I can do that! It's only a year." He has been sober these last 47 years. In his early sobriety he got a job in the graphics department at the Red School House, which was an American Indian Movement survival school in St. Paul, Minn.

After running the Food Shelf at the Division of Indian Work for 11 years, he took a job at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, where he worked with a team in the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program to design and implement the first web-based case management system and court monitoring system for ICWA tribal workers and ICWA social workers across the nation to collect data on ICWA compliance. That program never sought funding, and the system was ahead of its time. It has never been duplicated but is so needed today to help our families caught in the web of the court system and ICWA compliance.

In and around all this activity George found a passion for acting. He has done some voice-over work and appeared in interactive education videos, a couple of independent films, several plays and a small part in a show on the History Channel. He fulfilled his last goal, of being in a major motion picture, when he worked as an extra in Martin Scorsese's film *Killers of the Flower Moon*. The national release of this film is October 20, 2023.

Today George is happily retired and enjoys traveling with his wife when she is doing the work she loves. Recently he was asked to be a Zoom administrator for the Tribal Training and Certification Partnership (TTCP), University of Minnesota Duluth, then to be a trainer for the TTCP, which facilitates trainings for tribal and county social workers on the Indian Child Welfare Act. His goal in life has been to create better outcomes for our Indigenous families and children that have been caught up in the child welfare system, and he is grateful that he can continue this work.

George is happily married, going on 21 years, to Sandy White Hawk. Together they have four children, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. They live in Shakopee, Minn.