



YUHAAVIATAM OF SAN MANUEL NATION

JOESPH MAARANGO

Tribal Council Culture Seat Member
Culture Pillar Co-Lead



Biography

Joseph Maarango, or “Joe”, is the Culture Seat Member of the San Manuel Tribal Council. He was elected in December 2023, to fill this position, which was created in the new Constitution adopted by the Tribe in 2021. The Culture Seat is an officer position of the Tribal Council whose role includes maintaining the integrity of the Tribe's culture, traditions, sovereignty, education, language, unity, and spirituality, and otherwise promoting, protecting, and enhancing Tribal culture.

Joe was an active participant with the Articles of Association Working Group that, over a five-year period, drafted a new Tribal Constitution as the foundational governing document for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. Following adoption of the Constitution, he was appointed to the Interpretation Panel, which is the authority for all matters regarding the intent and meaning of constitutional provisions.

Maarango's first significant experience with the San Manuel tribal government as an intern in the Tribe's Education Department included transcribing audio recordings of the Serrano language spoken by Yuhaaviatam elders. This experience instilled in him a deep appreciation for the power of language and culture for establishing the foundation for a shared cultural identity, history, and outlook. During this same time Joe worked with the Cultural Resources Management Department as an Outreach Specialist and worked on projects documenting the Tribe's history and culture.

He studied anthropology, geology, and linguistics to expand his knowledge of issues affecting Indigenous communities, such as resource extraction and other environmental concerns that negatively impact tribal lands and attendant natural resources. He looks forward to putting his knowledge and commitment into his service on the Tribal Council.

Joe is passionate about cultural learning and wellness. He strongly advocates for the health of San Manuel community members, Indian Country, and the youth of the communities in which he lives. He is an experienced runner who has completed several marathons and outdoor events. He uses running to maintain his mental, spiritual, and physical health. As a youth mentor and backpacking team leader for a non-profit organization, he taught young people how to incorporate these practices into their lives for positive change and, to this day, maintains friendships with his protégés.

In addition to his passion for running and outdoor activities, Joe is also a dedicated community leader. He served as a delegate for the San Bernardino Riverside County Indian Health Inc., advocating for better access to quality healthcare services for Native Americans across Southern California.

In his free time, he cherishes moments with his wife and daughter, nurturing their child with love and intention, guided by the Tribe's holistic and culturally rooted programs and events.

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