

Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Battle to Reclaim Native America's Culture

Friday, March 30

3:30 - 5:00 pm

NEEB 105

Free and open to the public

With Dr. Chip Colwell

Who owns the past? Museums that care for the objects of history or the communities whose ancestors made them?

Five decades ago, Native American leaders launched a crusade against museums to reclaim their sacred objects and to rebury their kin. This controversy has exploded in recent years as hundreds of tribes have used a landmark federal law to recover their heritage from more than one thousand museums across America. Many still question how to balance the religious freedoms of Native Americans with the academic freedoms of American scientists, and the arguments continue on about whether the emptying of museum shelves elevates human rights or destroys humanity's common heritage.

This talk presents a new book, *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture*, a personal journey that illuminates how repatriation has transformed both American museums and Native communities. This story reveals why repatriation law has become an imperfect but necessary tool to resolve the collision of worldviews between scientists and Native Americans—to decide the nature of the sacred and the destiny of souls.



Dr. Chip Colwell is Senior Curator of Anthropology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. He has published 10 books and is the founding Editor-in-Chief of *Sapiens.org*, a digital magazine about anthropological thinking and discoveries of the Wenner-Gren Foundation.