

Clarence Lee: Gallup, New Mexico

Navajo

Story Teller Jewelry



Clarence Lee was born in Ft. Defiance, Arizona and raised in Twin Lakes, New Mexico. Clarence learned his craft from his late father, Tom Lee, who owned a trading post in Twin Lakes and later became New Mexico's first Native American State Senator. Clarence's mother, Emma, was recognized as the maker of the first Navajo Nation Flag.

Clarence has been well known for his Story Teller Jewelry for over 30 years. His inspiration comes from daily life on the reservation and from his father's stories about the depression days. Many ideas for his work come from childhood memories of summers spent with his great grandmother at her summer home in the mountains. Encouraged by his teachers to pursue a career in the arts, Clarence's first pieces of silverwork were traditional hammering and stamp work set with stones. However, he developed his own unique style almost by accident when he shaped a piece of silver resembling a dog. Today, many of the techniques used to create Clarence's jewelry are developed to suit his unique style. As Clarence creates more images, he designs new tools and develops new methods so his craft continues to evolve. His materials include silver, copper, brass and gold.

Clarence has received awards and honors at numerous shows and his work is displayed at the San Diego Museum of Man, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians, the Museum of Western Art in Indianapolis and at the British Museum in London. In 2006 he received 1st Place from the San Diego Museum of Man, the Purchase Award from the Arizona State Museum and the Eiteljorg Museum, and Best of Division at the Cherokee Art Market. Clarence was awarded Best of Show and 1st Place - Jewelry in 2005 and 3rd Place - Jewelry in 2007 at Tesoro's annual Indian Market & Powwow.

