

Hi everyone! My name is Peter “Tony” Zitko but I have also been called Zeke from one of my old Sensei’s who could never quite pronounce my last name. Or maybe there was another reason...hmm. My father was from Europe and my mother was from Oklahoma. For many years I grew up proud of my Cherokee and Choctaw heritage...well that was until I took a genealogy test and found out that didn’t have an ounce of Native American in me. That was a rough day.



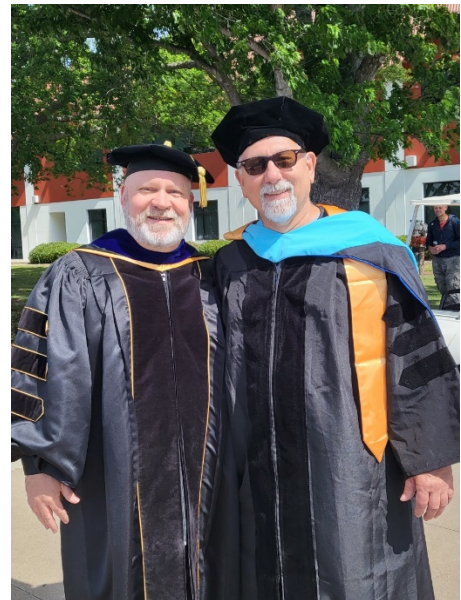
This picture actually had nothing to do with my failure to live up to my Native American expectations. Rather, this photo accurately depicts my emotion after the 256th re-writing of my dissertation only to have a know-it-all professor ask for yet another revision. Ya, that professor wanted it the way I had it in revision 254. Ok, well maybe I am exaggerating the number of revisions, but that is sure what it felt like. Nonetheless, they eventually accepted my highly modified treatise.

As a young adult I worked in construction as a contractor and raised two girls who believe themselves to be much smarter than their dad. Well...they are probably right. In fact, my oldest daughter graduated from U.C. Davis before I had even earned my associate's degree. Academically I was a late bloomer, but to this day my associate's degree was the degree I am most proud of.

My academic life includes many years of teaching political science courses, which I enjoyed immensely. I am very proud of the work that I have done with incarcerated students. For six years I taught classes inside California State Prison Solano and just a little less than three years ago took up the role of Dean of External Programs at Solano College. This new role allows me to focus on justice-impacted communities and serving disadvantaged high school students.

At Solano College, we currently have over 700 incarcerated students as well as many formerly incarcerated students. At present, we have issued about 40 associate degrees to incarcerated students and we expect this number to grow exponentially over the coming years.

(Image: V.P. David Williams and Tony Zitko at SCC graduation)



While my academic life is extremely important to me, my interests are wide and varied. I recently purchased a house in the country and spend much of my time working on the property, watching the wildlife, and enjoying the night sky with my companion. One of our most recent fascinations is sitting on the back porch at twilight and watching bats dance across the skyline. I also enjoy landscaping, nature, kayaking, and watching my grandkids grow up.



Perhaps my greatest life passion outside of family and work has been a lifelong commitment to the martial arts. Since 1977 I have been involved in martial arts and competed in tournaments until I turned 40.

During my time in the martial arts, I have been lucky to train with and get to know some of the best martial artists in the world.

In this picture is Gary Toppins, Bok-Fu Master extraordinaire, the legendary Al Tracy and their humble student...me.

If you are a martial arts enthusiast there is more information on my website <https://www.zitko.net/>



Photos: (Zitko with incarcerated students, staring down a fish in Oregon, I love good food, Tony and Nancy, Z's grandkids...my how they have grown, keynote speech at California Nevada PTK conference)

