

Jesse Bruchac

Jesse Bowman Bruchac (born 1972) is a Native American author and language teacher from the Abenaki tribe.^{[1][2]} He has dedicated much of his life to studying the Abenaki language and preserving the Abenaki culture. Jesse has also worked extensively with, and taught other Eastern Algonquian languages including the Lenni Lenape, Unkechaug, Shinnecock, Penobscot, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Mohegan, Munsee and Unami. He is webmaster of WesternAbenaki.com a free online language learning portal. He has worked as composer for the operetta *The Purchase of Manhattan* (2015), a translator for the AMC hit show *TURN* (2014), a short film by Alanis Obomsawin *When All the Leaves Are Gone* (2010) and as translator, dialect/dialogue coach and composer for the National Geographic movie *Saints & Strangers* (2015), a film which includes over an hour of translated dialogue in the Western Abenaki language and two months of on set actor training and filming in South Africa with over two dozen actors.^[3] He has travelled throughout the United States teaching both the Abenaki language and culture.^[4] Abenaki scholar Frederick Matthew Wiseman, author of *The Voice of the Dawn*, calls him an “important contributor to the Abenaki Renaissance.”^[5] He created the first Abenaki language website.^[6] When he is not traveling, he works as the treasurer for The Ndaakina Education Center and teaches wilderness survival classes.^[7] He also is an active martial artist, skilled in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, isshin-ryū, pentjak silat, and taekwondo.^[2]

1 Life and education

Bruchac was born to Joseph Bruchac and Carol Bruchac. He attended Saratoga Springs High School.^[2] He studied at Goddard College in Plainfield, VT, where he was primarily interested in creating a syllabus for teaching the Abenaki language. Since then, Jesse has dedicated his life to the preservation and revitalization of the Abenaki language and culture.^[4] In *The Language of Basketmaking*, Bruchac particularly focuses on revitalizing important writers such as Henry Lorne Masta and Joseph Laurent.^[8] He began teaching conversational Abenaki first at the high school level, and then through the Abenaki Tribal Museum and Cultural Center, until he moved onto other projects in 1999.^[5]

Bruchac lives in his hometown Greenfield Center, New York with his two children, Carolyn Bruchac and Jacob Bruchac.^[8]

2 Martial arts

Bruchac began wrestling at the age of 6. In 1990 he became the team captain and the New York State Class A champion for the Suburban Council Championship team, and was awarded the Steve Rue Memorial Award. As an adult he has competed in six different North American Grappling Association championships. From these he brought home four gold medals and two silver medals. He has also competed as a part of the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation, and from these tournaments has brought home five gold medals.^[2] Jesse co-founded Western New York Mixed Martial Arts (WNYMMA) which has “thrived and helped produce major BJJ competitors and MMA talent.”^[9] In 2011, he joined his brother Jim Bruchac as a martial arts instructor at the Saratoga Kyokushin.^[10]

3 Public appearances

Bruchac appeared in several episodes of a public access television program called *Story By Story*,^[11] which aired out of Proctor’s Theater. In 1993, he co-founded a musical group, the Dawnland Singers, with his father Joseph Bruchac, brother James Bruchac, and aunt Marge Bruchac. John Kirk and Ed Lowman are accompanying instrumentalists.^[12] The group has performed across the United States, Canada, and Europe; it once opened for The Grateful Dead at Woodstock 2 in Highgate, VT.^[13]

In July and August, 2011, Bruchac presented at the Adirondack Center for Writing’s Native American Writers Series, which celebrates a diverse set of writers, including but not limited to the Abenaki and Mohawk tribes.^[14]

4 Books

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- Bruchac, Jesse. *The Woman and the Kiwakw*. N.p.: Lulu.com, 2013. ISBN 978-1300657576
- Bruchac, Joseph, and Jesse Bruchac. *Nisnol Si-boal = Two Rivers: Poems in English and Abenaki*. Greenfield Center, NY: Bowman, 2011. ISBN 978-1257430680
- Wzôkhlain, Pial, and Jesse Bruchac. *The Gospel of Mark Translated into the Abenaki Indian, English and French Languages*. N.p.: Lulu.com, 2011. ISBN 978-1105197055

5 References

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- [8] Bruchac, Jesse (2011). *L8dwaw8gan wji Abaznodakaw8gan: The Language of Basketmaking*. Lulu.com. ISBN 978-0557632107.
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- [13] Lemoine, Noelle. “Williams College to Present Abenaki Storytellers”. *Williams College*.
- [14] “Projects”. *Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership*.

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6.1 Text

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