



# MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

June 23, 2020

San Anselmo Town Council,

## “MAI Board Supports Drake Name Change”

At its Executive Board meeting on June 12, the Board voted unanimously to issue the following declaration: “The Museum of the American Indian in Novato supports changing the name of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and replacing it with a name or names honoring local Indigenous tribes.” In light of the Black Lives Matter movement, the Board feels the need to erase names, monuments, and memorials of racist figures in history.

Drake was a famous sea captain, explorer, pirate, and slave trader. This latter distinction alone is what disqualifies him from being honored. He figures in Marin history because it is believed that he landed at what is now Drake’s Bay where he claimed the land he called Nova Albion for Great Britain and Queen Elizabeth I. Drake’s brutality and disregard for human life of Indigenous peoples gives us enough reason to oppose his name being used, and we demand that it be changed.

The times demand that symbolic changes be made in all matters. Names and statues of historical racists must be removed and reference to them be included only in history books. This action can show to the greater Bay Area and the rest of the country that Marin is capable of positive change and acknowledge that it is not okay to continue to honor these offensive historical figures any longer. This is a chance for all of Marin to collectively show that they recognize the existence of the Coast Miwok tribe in these territories and make visitors aware of the rich Indigenous culture of this land. Marin has the chance to do this for the generations of children who will grow up here to ask “who were the Coast Miwok?” rather than ask about a notorious slave trading pirate named Sir Francis Drake.

Sincerely,

Victoria Canby  
Interim Executive Director

Doug Fryday  
President of the Board