

Navajo weaving has long been admired for its technique and craftsmanship, but it is conceptual art as well, with much to say about the people who produce it. Authors Willink and Zolbrod approach these extraordinary textiles as a careful reader would a work of literature, attentive for clues that offer context and reveal meaning. Working with elders on the Navajo Reservation in eastern New Mexico and studying the exemplary textile collection housed in the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, Willink and Zolbrod discover remarkable links between Navajo culture and the symbols and meaningful techniques contained in the textiles. Weaving is a sacred art, embodying prayers and ceremony, the collective creation stories and the mythic and historical past. In weaving, the individual contributes to the whole of her culture, preserving *honzo*, the concept that combines order, beauty, balance, and harmony. A fundamental reality is textured into a Navajo rug. It carries ancient thought and tradition and is an expression of history and poetry carefully structured to express a distinct sense of past, present, and future.

For more than twenty-five years, Roseann S. Willink and Paul G. Zolbrod have worked together on projects to bridge the gap between Navajo culture and non-Navajo society. She was his teacher when, in 1971, he set out to study the Navajo language and she was embarking on



what has become a long and illustrative career as an educator. A native of Pennsylvania, Zolbrod was an English professor at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, for thirty years before relocating to New Mexico. In 1984 he published the monumental work *Diné bahane': The Navajo Creation Story* (University of New Mexico Press), the most complete version to appear in English. Raised in Pueblo Pintado on the Eastern Navajo Agency, Willink has served on the faculty at the University of New Mexico since 1971. She is a member of

Naakaii din'è, the Mexican Clan, and born for Kinyaa'aanii, the Towering House Clan. Her maternal grandfather's clan is Bit'ahnii, the Folded Arms Clan, and her paternal grandparents' clan is Tlaashchi'i, or Red Streak Bottom Clan. Both Willink and Zolbrod have written widely on Navajo language and culture.

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