



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Devon Kelley, Marketing Manager

Phone: (206) 420-7422

Email: marketing@eighthgeneration.com

**TRAILBLAZING CEO AND FOUNDER OF EIGHTH GENERATION,
LOUIE GONG, ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP RETIREMENT; COLLEEN
ECHOHAWK NAMED NEXT CEO OF INFLUENTIAL BRAND**

Echohawk will begin full time CEO duties on February 1, 2022

[SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, January 12, 2022] — Louie Gong (Nooksack), the trailblazing founder and CEO of Native-owned lifestyle brand Eighth Generation has announced his January retirement from leadership duties. “I’m incredibly proud of how successful Eighth Generation has become,” said Gong. “From reclaiming the market for Native-made wool textiles and being the first Native-owned business to sell wool blankets, to partnering with global brands like Starbucks and Brooks to set the gold standard for how big businesses work with cultural artists, we’ve been on the cutting edge of it all.”

“I’m so happy to join the team at Eighth Generation,” said Colleen Echohawk (Pawnee, Athabascan). “It’s exciting to be surrounded by such a motivated team and to get to continue the incredible work Louie has done over the past fourteen years.”

Echohawk has been involved with the Seattle and National Native communities for over two decades. Most recently, she served as Interim CEO for YouthCare Seattle, an organization committed to ending youth homelessness in Seattle. Echohawk previously served as Executive Director at the Chief Seattle Club as well as founded the Coalition to End Urban Native Homelessness. In 2021, she became the first Native American woman to run for mayor of a major metropolitan city. She is well known in the Pacific Northwest for her passionate advocacy work and dedication to community.

“When I sold Eighth Generation to the Snoqualmie Tribe in 2019, we began talks of who would succeed me as the next CEO,” said Gong. “Right from the start, we considered Colleen. Her connection to community and strong drive are a great fit, but it’s her own proven commitment to service that aligns her perfectly with Eighth Generation’s own values. Colleen is the leadership Eighth Generation needs to go global.”

“We are grateful to all of the work Louie has done as Founder and CEO for Eighth Generation since its inception. He has built a remarkable legacy and we hold our hands up to him,” said Snoqualmie Tribal

Chairman Robert de los Angeles. "The Tribe is very excited to have Colleen on board as CEO, and we look forward to working with her on continuing to build and strengthen Eighth Generation as we support inspired Native artists."

Gong began Eighth Generation by customizing shoes in his living room in 2008. Since then, the business has grown to include a catalogue of over 200 products featuring the cultural artwork of over a dozen Native artists. In 2015, Eighth Generation became the first Native-owned business to sell wool blankets in the US and Canada. In 2016, they opened their flagship store in Seattle's historic Pike Place Market. Recent major successes under Gong's leadership include their acquisition by the Snoqualmie Tribe in 2019, the creation of their Gold Label line of in-house made wool textiles in 2020, and their move to a 30,000 square foot headquarters in 2021.

While Gong is retiring from business leadership, he will continue to work with Eighth Generation as an Inspired Natives™ collaborator. Started by Gong in 2014, the Inspired Natives™ Project is a business and educational initiative that increases the capacity of the artists the company works with, expands the regional appeal of the products, and educates the public about the tangible costs of cultural appropriation. "I'm really excited to work with Eighth Generation as an Inspired Natives collaborator," said Gong. "My contract is the exact same as the other artists working with Eighth Generation. When we started the program, it had to be good enough that I would want to join it, and here I am."

More information on Eighth Generation can be found here: <https://eighthgeneration.com/pages/about-us>

More information on Eighth Generation's Inspired Natives™ Project can be found here: <https://eighthgeneration.com/pages/inspired-natives-project>

###

Eighth Generation is a Seattle-based art and lifestyle brand owned by the Snoqualmie Tribe. Founded in 2008, when Louie Gong (Nooksack)—an artist, activist, and educator widely known for merging traditional Coast Salish art with influences from his urban environment to make strong statements about identity—started customizing shoes in his living room. Now the first Native-owned company to ever produce wool blankets—with a flagship retail store in Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market—Eighth Generation is a proud participant in the global economy.

Eighth Generation provides a strong, ethical alternative to "Native-inspired" art and products through its artist-centric approach and 100% Native designed products. Our Inspired Natives™ Project, anchored by the tagline Inspired Natives™, not "Native-inspired," builds business capacity among cultural artists while addressing the economic impact of cultural appropriation.

###

For press inquiries or information about Eighth Generation, please contact Devon Kelley, Marketing Manager at (206) 420-7422 or marketing@eighthgeneration.com.