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I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ada Deer, a prominent Native American leader in Wisconsin and nationwide. Ada was a trailblazer and an advocate for Indigenous communities. Ada called Fitchburg home.

Included among Ada's lifetime accomplishments, she was the first Menominee citizen to graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and went on to become the first Native American to earn a master's degree from Columbia University. Ada was the first woman to head the Bureau of Indian Affairs, appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1993. She assisted in setting policies for more than 550 recognized tribes. In 2019, Ada was inducted into the Native American Hall of Fame. In 2020, she was one of two recipients of the City-County Humanitarian Award from Dane County and the city of Madison. In 2021, Ada was highlighted on the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs website in honor of Women's History Month.

Just 8 days ago, Ada celebrated her 88th birthday, surrounded by friends and family. I had the honor to meet her in person, and she was inspirational. Ada will be remembered for her remarkable life of advocacy and dedication to others. Her legacy will never be forgotten.

I send my deepest condolences to her Menominee relatives and all who called her a friend.

Mayor Julia Arata-Fratta