

Steele Nominated for "Mother of the Year" Award

by Kathryn Dick

Kathleen Danielle Orton-Steele was nominated as "Mother of the Year" for American Merit Mothers, Inc. AMI is an interfaith, non-political, non-profit organization for women and men who identify with its purpose of strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of the family and the home.

AMI is dedicated to continuing its 68-year pledge to promote these age-old values and principles upon which America was founded. The nominees are recognized by Gov. John Kitzhaber with a Governor's Citation. Manor Management Services sponsored the nomination for Kathleen, also known as Kay.

Kay married her high school sweetheart 39 years ago. She has four children – Sandi, Danielle, Michelle, and Ralph Jr. She also is a grandmother of eight.

Kay is 60 years old and has lived in Portland for the past 50 years. She was involved in the restoration of our tribe and has worked as a transporter in the Portland area. She tutors children who need help with their studies at the Portland area office. She's also involved with culture classes at the office. She has served as secretary of the Elder Council for the past four years.

Working as a small business owner, Kay also has a BA in liberal arts and worked as a nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital. She also is a volunteer for Easter Seals and started a support group for people with post-polio. In addition to working with many other projects and activities, she enjoys beading, making baskets, hunting, fishing, making regalia, and just plain talking and visiting with people.

In Kay's portion of her entry, she wrote about her philosophy on parenting:

Parenting is something that doesn't come with an instruction manual. It should, but if it did, with my luck it would be in a foreign language and I couldn't read it anyway. I can only say that my Dad gave me most of my parenting skills.

Since I was born of American Indian ancestry when it was something to be ashamed of, I had to learn to live with prejudice. My Dad always said, "Be proud of who you are, you have the best of both worlds."

I stress with my children that we are all the same and that we should be judged by our inner qualities. I try to instill in my children their cultural heritage and to educate others. My children were taught to accept everyone as their friend and if they don't like you, it is their problem and not yours.

I let my children be individuals and give support when needed, giving them suggestions and trying to direct them on the right path. I know there will be obstacles in their way and I won't be able to remove them all, but I will always be there to pick them up.

Anyone who knows Kay knows she is a hard worker and is always there to help. She has great enthusiasm and support. She has a heart for elders and children alike.



Ralph and Kay Steele



Elders Attend Coos-Coquille Gathering

by Kathryn Dick

On March 15-16, 29 Siletz elders attended an Elder Honor Day hosted by the Coquille and Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw tribes.

The event started with a cooking demonstration and luncheon at the Mill Casino in Coos Bay. Our own Kay Steele (from Portland) was crowned queen of the gathering. She received many gifts, including a Pendleton blanket. This was a great honor not only for her, but also for all of our elders.

A dinner was served that evening at the Coos Bay Armory, with storytelling and music. Our own Snoball Butler sang and performed his music during dinner. Each woman received a beaded necklace and the men received a whistle flashlight. Tribal feather dancers performed cultural dances.

On March 16, we woke up to snow and sleet. We attended a breakfast at the Coos Bay tribal office. It was a wonderful breakfast and we saw many friends that we haven't seen for a long time. It was a good time to visit and socialize with our fellow elders.

We appreciate the prayers that were said as we left for home. We traveled in snow, sleet, rain, and strong winds, but all the elders made it home safely.



Top photo: Sandy and Lee Smith enjoy themselves at the Coos-Coquille gathering.

Above: Kay Steele is named queen of the gathering.

Thank You!

A special thank you to each and every one of you who donated items for our Circle of Wisdom gathering. All your work and help made for a very successful gathering.

Kathryn

Editor's note: Photos and a recap of the event will appear in the next issue of Siletz News.

Elders Meeting
May 11, 2002

Chinook Winds Casino
2 p.m. – 5 p.m.