

Strong Uses Early Experiences as Springboard for Career as a Chef

Grandmother's influence creates honest, hard working detail person

By Brent Merrill

Becoming an accomplished and recognized chef started at an early age for Siletz Tribal member Jack Strong. He remembers cooking and baking for his grandfather when he was young.

"I first got into cooking at a very young age," said Chef Strong in a telephone interview from the Salish Lodge in Snoqualmie, Wash., where he is the chef de cuisine. "In high school, they had a career class that allowed you to work in your field of choice."

Strong used that class to get a job at the Embarcadero in Newport, Ore., and he also had been cooking at McIvars Landing, where he worked throughout his four years in high school.

Strong was born in Portland and raised in Siletz by his grandparents – the late Stanley Strong and Wilma Strong. His mother – Rowenda Strong – walked on when he was just 4 years old.

An only child for his grandparents, Strong said he spent time with his cousins and extended family growing up. He said his grandmother kept him in line with a balance of discipline and dignity.

"I was very active, but my grandmother kept me out of trouble and provided me discipline," said Strong. "I enjoyed growing up in a small town and being raised by my grandmother gave me a drive to succeed. Like my grandmother, I'm a hard worker, I'm honest and I'm a detail person."

Despite losing his mother at an early age, Strong said his grandmother comforted him by keeping her memory alive for him.

"She told me stories of my mother and that made me realize that I inherited a lot of her traits," explained Strong.

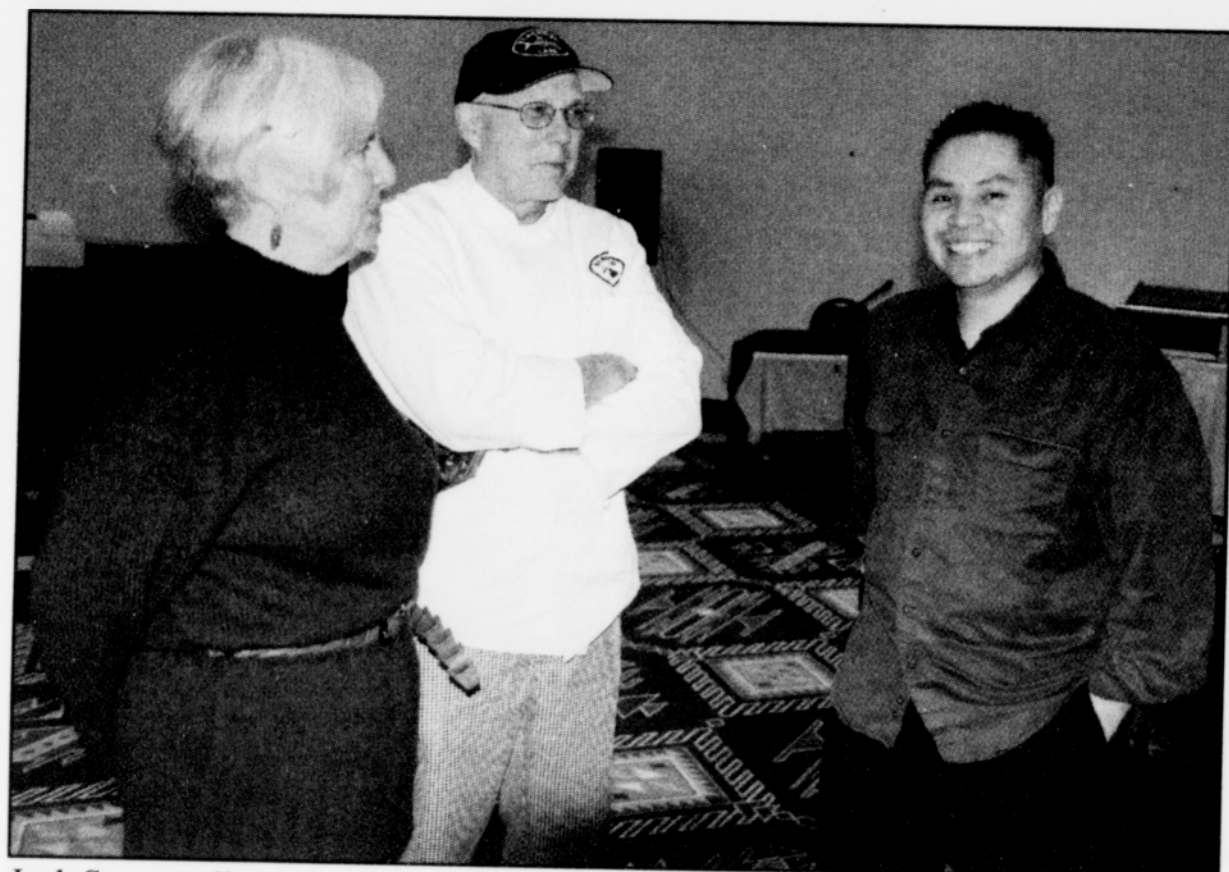
From Siletz, Strong made his way to Eugene to attend the Culinary Arts School at Lane Community College. While attending culinary arts school, Strong received a number of honors for achievement.

"I received student of the quarter and student of the year awards," said Strong in an e-mail response to several questions. "I also received the distinguished alumni award for my 10 years of work in the Eugene community."

Strong worked for the Gila River Tribe in Arizona at its Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa and really got to showcase his love of his Native heritage while working there. Strong said he developed a menu for the Gila River Tribe that featured traditional Native ingredients from the area incorporated into his dishes.

"I looked at it as a way to pay homage to the past and to their traditions in a modern and personalized way," said Strong.

While at Wild Horse Pass, Strong was invited to participate in his first ever cookbook – he was the co-author. The book – *The New Native American Cuisine: Five-Star Recipes from the Chefs of Arizona's Kai Restaurant* – explores and brings much-deserved attention to what



Jack Strong talks with Mary and Rob Pounding during the Rez Kitchen Tour at Chinook Winds in November. Jack and Rob both served as judges at the event.

many feel is the last unexplored examples of cuisine in this country, if not the world. Strong's book is available through Amazon.com for \$24.95.

The cookbook has garnered national attention for bringing to life an ancient cuisine, putting a modern spotlight on the classical techniques used to create the unique menu.

Kai Restaurant was one of only six restaurants in the entire country to achieve the AAA five-diamond rating and the only Native American restaurant to earn that recognition.

Strong said one of the unique things about the cookbook is that it brings an opportunity to everyone everywhere to try these dishes.

The book also features many color photographs of the Kai restaurant, the resort and many of the dishes offered.

While at Kai, Strong's work benefited many people in the surrounding Tribal community by cooking and preparing foods for youth activities and giving talks to young people about how to get into a career in culinary arts.

New Year's Resolutions – What's Yours? How Will You Reach It?

By Lindy Taylor, MD

We all know how much easier it is to make resolutions than to keep them. The benefit of making a New Year's resolution is that it gives us a date or trigger in our head to mentally prepare for and to start something new.

More than 50 percent of people think they will be successful with their resolutions, but only 12 percent actually achieved their goals.

Men are more likely to be successful when they set goals that are measurable, like losing a pound a week instead of saying "lose weight." Women are more likely to succeed if they make their goals public and get support from their friends.

Another successful strategy that works for men and women is finding a partner with whom to work toward a goal for added support.

Here is a list of the Top 10 New Year's Resolutions and some suggestions on how you can make and maintain your goals.

Top 10 New Year's Resolutions

1. Spend more time with loved ones – Long-distance phone bills aren't what they used to be with cell phone plans and e-mail. Stamps are more expensive than they used to be, but there is nothing better than receiving a good old-fashioned letter on paper.
2. More Exercise – There aren't a lot of excuses when you have access to a free or low-price membership and to

a new state-of-the-art fitness center down the street. Although showing up to a gym for the first time can be scary, the staff at the Tillicum Fitness Center can show you around and help you feel comfortable using the gym. For those who feel self-conscious about wearing gym clothes or exercising in front of others, be assured that this gym is very user-friendly with non-judgmental staff and patrons. You also can get helpful suggestions from the staff about hours when there are less likely to be a lot of other members there. Finding someone to exercise with is a great way to have a teammate to encourage you on days you have trouble finding motivation. The Tribal website has additional information for you or you can call 541-444-9656 or 800-648-0449, ext. 1656, for more details. Be on the lookout for more information on scheduling time with a personal trainer at the gym.

3. Lose Weight – In addition to the gym information above, we have a registered dietician who can work with you to set healthy goals and help with meal plans to get you to your goals. As with exercise, many people are more successful if they are working on the same goal, i.e., it's very difficult to lose weight yourself when you are serving your family fried chicken and mashed potatoes with gravy. Making healthy choices

and eating in moderation makes good sense for the entire family, not just for the person trying to lose weight. If you are interested in having a one-on-one diet consultation to help you meet your goals, please call the clinic to schedule.

4. Quit Smoking – It's difficult to say what the best way to quit smoking is because everyone who has successfully quit has their own story of what works. So don't give up until you find what works for you. The most difficult part of quitting smoking for many people is being around other smokers. Again, the team approach here can be useful. Spouses who quit together are much more likely to be successful in the long run. Our clinic providers can help if you are interested in trying a medication by mouth to help with the smoking urges or using some sort of nicotine replacement to help with the withdrawal feeling. Additionally, you can call the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line at 877-270-STOP (7867). They can help you make a plan to quit smoking and can give you one-on-one counseling on an ongoing basis. They also can suggest nicotine replacement options and give you free nicotine patches if you don't have medical insurance to pay for it.
5. Lower Stress – Face it, there is stress in everything we do. There is no magic way to make it go away, but

there are a lot of strategies to help you find your piece of Zen. Take time to relax and breathe. Whether you need music, yoga, meditation, a hot bath, a long jog or a book to get you back to your center, find what works for you. Have realistic goals and keep in mind the things you can and can't change and spend your stressed time wisely on things that can be improved. If your stress levels are preventing you from enjoying your life around you, our clinic providers can help address your issues and decide if a medication might be right for you.

6. Quit Drinking – This often can be a difficult thing for people to tackle alone and our A&D program can offer you support in a number of ways to achieve your goals. They host women's groups and relapse prevention groups as well as individual counseling. You can learn more about their services by visiting the Tribal website or by calling 541-444-8286 or 800-600-5599. Additionally, AA meetings take place all over the county that are available every day and the local AA office can be reached at 265-1953.
7. Get out of Debt – You are not alone. Millions of Americans are over their heads in debt, feeling like there is no solution. There has never been a better time than now to tackle your

Resolutions, con't on next page