

# Wilson makes a difference now while continuing toward doctorate degree

**"No matter what I personally gain from this degree, the empowerment will grow exponential with every life I can touch and make a difference"**

By Natasha Kavanaugh

Racheal Wilson currently attends the Human Development Family Studies (HDFS) Ph.D. graduate program at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore.

She is interested in researching aging from the psychosocial perspective and developing technologies to help older adults maintain independence. Another interest includes American Indian research in family and development.

Wilson is the daughter of Bekki Lundy-Ramsey and Bret Croucher Sr. and the granddaughter of Dan and LaRita Lundy.

She is a psychology graduate experienced in day care and mentoring at-risk youth, skilled in American Sign Language and psychological development, and a Dean's List student whose ambition is lifelong education and applying her knowledge to promote healthy lifestyles within Tribal communities, as stated in her résumé.

Wilson graduated from Siletz Valley Early College Academy, where she was salutatorian and received two scholarships.

She then attended Western Oregon University (WOU) and graduated in June with a bachelor's of arts degree in psychology with a minor in special education/rehabilitation counseling.

After taking the first developmental course, she knew it was something she

loved so she sought out all developmental classes offered at WOU.

"I graduated cum laude (3.5 or better) with Psi Chi (National Honor Society in psychology) honors and an Outstanding Senior Award," said a smiling Wilson. "This is impressive to me, my biggest accomplishment. Every term my grades improved until the last year I had a 4.0 all year and I was just so proud of that."

Also during this time, she married Sam Wilson.

Racheal Wilson also mentors at Talmadge Middle School in Independence, Ore.; has been an assistant teacher at Tenas Illahee Child Care Center in Siletz, Ore.; volunteer coordinator at M-I Chamber of Commerce in Independence, Ore.; and a member of Circle K International and the Western Oregon University Psychology Student Association (WOUPSA), both in Monmouth, Ore.

Most recently she was awarded the IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training) Traineeship, a grant for students pursuing their doctorates. The National Science Foundation (NSF) gives a \$30,000 stipend per year for two years of its doctoral program, along with tuition remission, support for research costs and health insurance coverage.

"So I'll get my master's and just continue with my Ph.D. with a minor in healthy aging, which is the big scholarship I got through the NSF," said Wilson. "The reason the stipend is so much is because they expect you to be a full-time student. My school is completely paid for, which is a really good thing."

Problem-based learning is an integral part of the IGERT program and will prepare Wilson for a career that focuses on research and teaching, innovative



Photo by Natasha Kavanaugh

Racheal Wilson

training in theory, empirical research and methods for studying individuals, families and communities.

"I want to give back to Tribal communities by implementing programs for Tribal members that promote healthy lifestyles and integrate Tribal Elders into family-based programs," she said. "I want to make a mentoring program especially for ICW, but I think it would probably be for the whole Tribe – Tribal youth, kids in need of a cultural mentor and have an aunties and uncles cultural thing. I think we need one. I think the hard part of that is funding, so we'll have to get into grants."

At her last job for a while, Wilson worked this summer in the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) program as a project specialist through the Tribe's College Internship Program. She did job shadowing with Shawna Henarie, ICW case manager 2.

"She job shadowed me a few times on the road and really helped me talk things through, enabling me to keep things in perspective. (She) also helped me with coming to some difficult but necessary decisions," said Henarie. "Racheal was an absolute joy to have around ICW during her internship. She contributed a thoughtful and insightful voice during our staffings and case reviews," said Henarie.

The most important project she worked on, said Wilson, entailed a lot of research to see if there is any link between generations of generational trauma in abuse cases.

"Current cases I'm looking at to see if there is something else we can do more, preventative methods. For instance, if there was an obvious physical abuse case from father to son and then that child has a child – to see if there is something we can do to prevent him from having any sort of abuse towards his child. So then there is, just from looking at it, there is some sort of link," explained Wilson.

"Racheal's main project while working here was doing research on generational trauma. I believe knowledge is one step in beginning to heal our families from these traumas that are still being passed from generation to generation and Racheal gave us a big head start in gaining that knowledge," said Teresa Ueland, ICW case manager 4. "I really enjoyed having Racheal interning here, not only because she is such a fun and caring person, but with her education and insight she always had me thinking in ways I wouldn't have before, seeing the bigger picture."

Another project Wilson worked on was the remodel of the visit room in ICW, where her office was located. She was not asked to remodel it, but while sitting in on a visit during her third day on the job, she started looking around. Then she started making a list of possible improvements.

By summer's end, the room had been painted (she even got to pick the color), rearranged for more activity areas, the closets had doors and the clothing was organized.

"I want to come back to Tribal communities, Siletz included, and try to implement some programs," said Wilson. "I haven't really decided my focus yet, but with parenting, I want to incorporate Elders into the family dynamic because there's a lot of programs that have the whole parenting family, but they don't include the grandparents, where around here a lot of times the grandparents play a really key role."

Speaking of grandparents, Dan and LaRita Lundy's relationship (married for 45 years) and their faith in God has been most influential.

"I can always talk to them. In fact, any big decisions in my life I go to my grandparents to see their opinions or just some wisdom," said Wilson.

Memorable moments with her grandma include helping to remodel the kitchen this summer and scrapbooking and card-making, saying she admires "grandma's ability to maintain control of any chaotic family holiday or get-together without breaking a sweat. I get my control freakiness from my grandma."

Memories with grandpa included fishing, tying flies and scouting elk.

"We have discussions about all kinds of things on our drives – life lessons, childhood stories, life to death and anything in between," said Wilson. "She enjoys his sense of humor and ability to see the humor in situations out of his control. She said she shares his quest for knowledge and lifelong learning."

"It has been a joy to watch Racheal grow into the woman she is. Her spiritual and academic accomplishments are many. We are so proud of her in her walk with Creator and her courage in moving into what He has for her," said Dan Lundy. "She has made us proud. I can hardly wait to see what happens next with Racheal. We are looking forward to the day we can address her as Dr. Wilson."

## Chetco, con't from page 1

tors also will see interpretive panels with three educational story lines – the story of the land and the river, the indigenous plants and animals of the Chetco River Valley and how they were used in daily life, and the history of the Chetco people.

According to the group's website (chetcoindianmemorial.com), a water feature at the site "will be a scale representation of each of the microcosms, from the headwaters of the Chetco River, to where it enters the Pacific Ocean, from the springs and upwellings at its source, to the rapids and spawning pool of the mid-river, to the metaphoric return to the ocean. This is an open system that will pump water from the boat basin and be aerated as it enters the top of the cascading pools. It will continue to be aerated as it cascades down into the salmon pool and through the rapids and again as it falls back into the boat basin."

"Our hope is that all people will receive an understanding and appreciation of these early residents and realize that this place, its heritage and resources, belong to all of us and we need to protect it," said Tymeus. "Because Oregon residents value the places that reflect their community's history, public awareness of this site and the importance of its past use will not only educate the community and

visitors on the richness of local history, but it will also assist in ensuring the site will be protected if future development of the area is ever proposed."

The nonprofit Chetco Historical Memorial Committee was established in 2009 by a group of private citizens who are Chetco Indian descendants. During that first year, the group received \$15,000 from the Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund to develop and plan the memorial and also secured the memorial site.

Additional funding has come from the Oregon Cultural Trust, the Curry County Cultural Coalition, the Coquille Tribal Community Fund and several individual donors, including Marion Carrillo's third- and fourth-grade class at Kalmiopsis Primary School in Brookings, which donated \$205.56.

Those donating services to the project include Kevin Sargent of BitWise Computer Services, Roberts & Associates Land Surveying Inc., JC LandClearing Inc. and Sporthaven Inc.

Donations can be sent to Chetco Historical Memorial Project, P.O. Box 132, Brookings, OR 97415 and can be made on the group's website – chetcoindianmemorial.com. If you would like more information, contact Tymeus at 541-661-4178 or Adrienne Crookes at 541-510-0355.