

Delores Pigsley: Longtime leader sees multitude of changes

Delores Pigsley was born in Toledo, Ore., to Alfred and Maude Lane. The youngest of eight Chetco children, she lived at Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Ore., where her parents were employed.

She was married to Donald Pigsley (Yankton Sioux Tribe of Wagner, S.D.). She has three children – Timothy, Troy and Quanna, and seven grandchildren. Don, Troy and Quanna are deceased.

Delores worked in various jobs throughout her career. She eventually retired after 24 years with the Social Security Administration, where she started as a receptionist and finished as an operations supervisor in Oregon.

As an advocate for the Siletz Tribe, she was elected to the Siletz Tribal Council in September 1975 and served until November 1979, when the Tribe sought to reverse federal termination.

“I have always been proud to be a Tribal member. I grew up in an Indian community at Chemawa Indian School. I only live a mile from the school today. The campus was a very diverse Indian community with students from all over the country,” said Delores. “There wasn’t a time while living there that me or our family ever felt that we were not part of the greater Indian community or that we were terminated Indians, even though that was a part of our history in the ’50s. My dad, brother and sister proudly served on the Siletz Council in those days. Lots of Tribal members from Siletz visited our home as well as all of our family attending Tribal Council meetings in Siletz.”



Courtesy photo by Frank Miller, Willamette University

Delores Pigsley addresses the crowd after receiving an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Willamette University on May 14.

She has been continuously re-elected from February 1983 to the present, a total of 38 years on the council, and she has been Tribal chairman for more than 31 years.

“I’ve devoted most of my adult life to serving on the Tribal Council with the intent of creating beneficial programs, assisting those in need and recognizing that the Tribe would need an endless stream of revenue to address all of the needs,” she said. “My family played a huge

role in allowing my time (to be) given to the Tribe and I hope that I was able to give to them as much as I received from them.”

She currently is a Tribal delegate to the National Congress of American Indians, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and the National Indian Gaming Association; chairman of the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services; and the chief Tribal spokesman.

The history of the Tribe since termination in 1954 to restoration in 1977 has

been one of growth and prosperity. Delores served on the Restoration Committee and the Gaming Committee, both landmarks in the Tribe’s successful operation.

“Immediately after Restoration, the Tribe entered into self-determination contracts with the BIA and IHS. This led to compacting programs as a self-governance Tribe,” she said. “It allowed us to contract all the money available from Tribal programs, hire our own staff (mostly Tribal) and manage the programs ourselves, making the most of our funds and employing Tribal members instead of having BIA and IHS employees run our programs. We have been very successful doing this.”

For the last 21 years, another Tribal success has hugged the ocean in Lincoln City – Chinook Winds Casino Resort, which includes a hotel and golf course.

“The most major labor of love was building and managing Chinook Winds Casino Resort. It was a most difficult project, took several years of work but turned out to be the most rewarding,” said Delores. “As a direct result of the casino, the Tribe is able to provide scholarships, provide elder benefits, fund cultural activities, supplement housing programs, develop infrastructure and provide benefits to charitable organizations that help large and small communities like ours.

“The Tribe has played a significant role in Lincoln County, with the State of Oregon and with other Tribes. I am happy that I was able to play a small part in our Tribe’s success.”

For more information about the Siletz Tribe, please visit ctsi.nsn.us.



Courtesy photo

Siletz Royalty and others represent the Siletz Tribe at the Loyalty Days Parade in Newport, Ore., on May 6, including Tiffany Stuart, Nayson Tooya Ben Warren, Tye Yanez, Little Miss Siletz Halli Lane-Skauge, Allivea Hernandez, Sahaylee Mason, Isabella Yanez, Tamiya Yanez and Junior Miss Siletz Jocelyn Hernandez.

Loyalty Days Parade • May 6, 2017 • Newport, Oregon

Photos by Andrea Taylor

Drummers (top left) join the group, including Ron Butler, Connor Mason, Carter Mason and Nayson Tooya Ben Warren.

Little Miss Siletz Halli Lane-Skauge, Junior Miss Siletz Jocelyn Hernandez and Rachelle Endres (front seat) ride in an ATV (left) driven by Ashton Retherford.

