

# Howlak tichum

**Charlotte Agnes Pitt**, Keemsah and Sugar, May 21, 1941-October 1, 2015

Charlotte Agnes Pitt, also known as Keemsah and Sugar, passed away on October 1, 2015.

Charlotte passed away from an aggressive form of metastatic cancer. She was in Warm Springs en route to High Lookee. She had been at the Madras St. Charles hospital awaiting a hospice room for two days, as the family did not have medical equipment to treat her comfortably in the final days at home.

While in the hospital she received the wonderful services of friends and family who came to comfort her with the traditions she loved.

The drums resounded from her room clear to the emergency entrance. Staff said it brought comfort to all. They were beautiful services.

Charlotte was born in Portland, Oregon on May 21, 1941 to Lewis Edwards Pitt (Warm Springs/Yakama or Wasco/WishXam/Watlala) and Elizabeth Thompson Pitt (Warm Springs or Mileethlama/Wyampum).

Siblings who survive Charlotte were born in Warm Springs. They are Lillian Pitt and Louie Pitt Jr.

Charlotte grew up in a section of housing located at the Warm Springs Agency called Hollywood.

In fishing season her family lived at Celilo Village where her father and uncle George "Bunky" Pitt II fished.

Many fond memories of Celilo and Hollywood were the source of her wit, physical strength, and baseline of her familial traditional wisdom.

"Once you walked outside your door, you were everyone's child." For example there was an elder that the children tried to stay out of line of sight. If spotted, you hauled her wood, packed her water, emptied her latrine pot, and swept her floors.

She would line up the children who helped and tap her cane on the ground and sing for them. She would say, "Dance! Dance harder!" This was a duty not a chore.

She received her nickname Sugar after Sugar Ray Robinson, the "pound for pound" boxer. Sugar Pitt was a fighter. Tussles went on between Columbia River villages and on the streets of Portland Skid Row. Charlotte was a tough fighter and she kept standing no matter how many jumped her. Many think, as an elder, she

made any scolding seem sweet, thus Sugar made sense.

She eventually lived in Madras, and went to Madras High School and on to Mt. Angel Academy, where she met her eldest daughter, Elizabeth Woody's father, Guy Woody (Navajo), a railroad worker and welder. She met Lester LaBonte (Clatsop/Tillamook) in the mid-sixties. He is the father of her youngest daughter Jolene Pitt. He was a logger and laborer. Both daughters survive her.

In the 1970s Charlotte sobered up during the most tumultuous and amazing times of civil rights and Native rights. She met a group of social activists who formed the first free clinic in Skid Row, supported the United Farm Workers, and various other groups in the early coalitions on the West Coast civil rights and radical social activist movement, to protest and work for change.

This includes the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, who formed the first spiritual walk from Seattle to Alcatraz. The "Movement" also took over the military facility now called the Daybreak Star Cultural Center.

She knew first hand the people who were involved in the fishing rights struggle. They were people who made change happen and created organizations we now consider standard, but did not exist prior to the actions of brave persons who faced jail, beatings, nerve gas and brutality.

For example, the first AIM house in Portland was her home. The FBI parked outside 24/7. Also, during this time, when Charlotte showed up in the mayor's office, he would say, "Give her whatever she wants. Get her out of here." She was the tenacious go-to person, obtained funding, and spoke out against injustice. All without needing glory or recognition for it.

The most notable activity in Charlotte's life was becoming the first Native woman counselor at NARA at its start. She also served on its board, and was the only woman on the founding board of the Urban Indian Center. This was one of the first Urban Indian Centers in the country.

She also wrote a grant for the Sweathouse Lodge of CISCO located at Corvallis.

It was the first ever treatment center that proposed traditional Native healing practices for treatment of American Indian peoples. In this grant, she wrote in a paid position for a traditional Native practitioner/healer. This was in concert with many people now considered elders in American Indian mental health treatment.

In this period she also worked with Al Smith, along with many other activists, to

push for the American Indian Religious Freedom act that we enjoy today.

Charlotte believed in American Indian religious freedom. She came home to her family who lived at Dry Creek, and started the personal spiritual journey within the practices of her mother's lineage.

This provided solace during the difficult years, such as the years of incarceration for DUIs due to periodic bouts of alcoholism. She faced a hard set of circumstances upon release. She lost her house and car, and her daughters were distressed. Personal healing became a priority to set right her children's future health.

Many times she fell, and still got up. She made efforts others would have avoided. She eventually attained a Bachelor of Science degree from Portland State University.

Charlotte initially supported her studies with Pell grants, selling plasma, and bingo.

At her graduation, she groused about President Clinton ruining it as commencement speaker because of security. She jiggled after receiving her diploma and local news aired her dance that evening.

She continued work as an alcohol and drug counselor, level II. She worked for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and for other drug treatment clinics in Portland. Eventually, Charlotte returned to NARA as a counselor.

There are many people who say Charlotte Pitt saved their lives. One person proclaimed thousands of people benefitted from the tough, loving, and strong personal will of this woman.

They continue her legacy, as do her daughters, believing in the power of love; especially in the ongoing strength of our people that means one must never give up. She came "home to die," as she said, and found people still needed her. She worked until her illness took all of her strength at the Warm Springs Counseling Center. She was 74 years old.

Her family asks if you wish to honor her, promise to live an Indian life, no drugs, alcohol or other harmful behavior, or at least promise to do so. Strive to be happy, look back at your mistakes to learn, laugh and love yourself.

We never know what one given half a chance will be. Charlotte not only loved all children, but also was an avid animal lover. Her fur family, Chong, Kita, Baby Girl and Tippy Tail, also survive her.

## Gardens yield plenty of produce

OSU Extension has been busy this summer, growing a garden and providing educational classes.

Extension employees Scott Duggan and Rosanna Sanders, working with tribal members kept a garden, grew a variety of fruits and vegetables.

This was the OSU demonstration garden and the Warm Springs Community garden. They used raised beds at the demonstration garden.

The raised beds are an advantage, as the soil heats up earlier in the spring, and the ground is easier to weed than traditional garden plots.

In the Warm Springs community garden they grew corn, watermelon, pumpkins and other vegetables.

Edmund Francis manages the Warm Springs community garden, and was helpful in securing a plot for OSU to grow more food than the smaller demonstration garden would allow.

Edmund also handled all the irrigation for the garden, a big help to OSU and the tribal members who have garden plots.

The two gardens were not only used to grow food but functioned as a learning laboratory as well.



Produce from the garden.

Classes subjects included soils, composting, cool and warm season veggies, and container gardening, to name a few. To complement these classes, Extension hosted a lunch and learn series of gardening classes on Tuesdays in August. This was organized by OSU faculty and staff

Bethann Beamer, Sara Rogers, Rosanna Sanders and Andrea Sapuay. The students were pleased with what they learned in these classes, in addition to eating some tasty food grown in the two gardens. At last count the produce from the gardens weighed in at over 200 pounds, and was donated to tribal members.

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## Tribes establishing TERO Commission

The Tribal Council has established the Tribal Employment Rights Office Commission.

The commission will oversee the operation of the tribal TERO office, a branch of Warm Springs Ventures.

This will be a five-member commission, appointed by Tribal Council.

Any Indian 18 years and older who works or resides on the reservation is qualified to be appointed to the commission.

The commission shall elect annually a chairperson from its membership. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the commission, and shall be authorized to sign required documents in accordance with the powers of the commission.

Duties and Powers-The commission shall be responsible for conducting hearings on Tribal Employment Rights matters in accordance with this code. The commission will have duties as set out in

the establishing document, and will meet monthly.

Submit letter of interest and resume, no later than noon, Nov. 13, to:

Glendon Smith, S/T-CEO  
P.O. Box 455  
Warm Springs, OR 97761

For more information contact Lynn Davis:

lynn.davis@wstribes.org

Authorization letter will be mailed to all applicants for a criminal and credit background check to be completed & returned to the S/T's office.

## KNT golf tourney for Buffs

Kah-Nee-Ta hosted the Madras High School White Buffalos football benefit tournament in October. Winner of the tourney was the Tiger VanPelt Team.

The Butch David Team was second, and third-place went to the Sean Cease Team, followed by"

The Mark Simmons Team, the Crarl Lindgren Team, Chief Heath Team, and Chet VanPelt team.

Close to the pin awards were Butch David (hole number 1); Al Estimo (3), Willie Stacona (8), Carl Lindgred (10), and Al Estimate (16).

Long putts went to Teresa Lindgren and Chad Lindgren; long drive to Al Estimo and Teresa Lindgren.

The tournament organizers would like to thank the following sponsors who supported this fundraiser:

Prineville Country Club, Meadow Lakes Golf Course, Desert Peaks Golf Course, Indian Creek Golf Course, Rio Restaurant, Black Bear Diner, Kah-Nee-Ta Resort & Spa, Dancing Beans Coffee, Wild Winds Station, and the Central Oregon Cup n Cake.

## Community notes

The Warm Springs Commodity Food Program is operated under the Warm Springs Social Service Program. If you are denied SNAP, you may qualify for this program. The Commodity Program is open 7am and

through the lunch hour for food pick up. If you have questions or need a delivery done, call them at 541-553-3422.

The Madras Aquatic Center will be hosting Oktoberfest on Saturday October 17 at Sahalee Park.

A Race will start at noon with registration opening at 11 a.m. There will be Football Fames, Hot Dogs, a Bouncy House and fun. MAC Recreation District youth basketball, club volleyball, adult soccer registration is open. Register online macaquatic.com



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