

# Tribal Elder Merle Holmes Walks On

■ Death of highly regarded Elder and Tribal historian is one of many in the community in recent weeks.

By Brent Merrill

Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Merle Holmes, one of the most universally respected Native American leaders in the Northwest, passed away in his sleep at home on Monday, May 17.

Holmes, 70, was highly regarded as a Tribal leader and historian — fluent in Tribal history, traditions and lore.

Along with fellow Tribal Elders Marvin Kimsey and Margaret Provost, Holmes began the process known today as Tribal Restoration. The work begun by the three Elders led to the federal recognition of the people of the Tribes that made up the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde by



Merle Holmes

then President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Holmes served the Tribe as an elected official and sat on several Tribal committees and boards. Most recently, Holmes was appointed to the Grand Ronde Community Resources Food Bank Board of Directors.

Holmes was a proud Veteran, and held a place

of honor in the Grand Ronde community where his service is commemorated on the Army pillar of the West Valley Veterans' Memorial.

Before achieving the status of

Tribal leader, Holmes worked as a log truck driver living in Salem.

Holmes is survived by his two sons — James of Seattle and David of Los Angeles — and a large, loving family.

Holmes was a proud member of the Warm Springs Medicine Society for the last 12 years of his life.

Services, as per Holmes' wishes, were private and held in Grand Ronde at the family's traditional cemetery at the base of Spirit Mountain on Monday, May 24.

"Our family would like to thank

the community for honoring his wishes," said Tim Holmes, nephew of Merle, about the respect shown by the community during the private services.

Holmes' death was latest in a series of deaths that have left the Grand Ronde Tribal community in mourning for the last month and a half.

The recent passings of respected Tribal Elders Merle Leno, Orville Leno and Verna Larsen have been among the losses that have devastated the community of families.



Verna Larsen



Merle Leno



Orville Leno

## Tribe's Mental Health Unit Gets 3-Year Letter Of Approval

By Ron Karten

A State of Oregon Alcohol & Drug Program site review team came by the Tribe's Health Clinic last month to look over the operation.

The result: the CTGR-Behavioral Health program "is in substantial compliance with no violations of confidentiality," according to program Manager and Clinical Supervisor Joseph B. Stone, Licensed Psychologist and Certified Addiction Professional.

The Letter of Approval sanctions the program for continued operations for another three years. As a

sovereign nation, the Tribe does not need a Letter of Approval from the state to continue operations, but it is a sign that the program is as professional as other programs across the state, said Stone. In more concrete terms, it means that the Tribal program is credentialed for insurance reimbursement.

The Letter also is confirmation for the Tribal program efforts to bring together alcohol



Joseph B. Stone

Photo by Ron Karten

and drug treatment with general mental health treatment.

"The hope is that there be an integration of A&D services and mental health services and Grand Ronde is certainly doing that, mak-

ing it more holistic for clients, which of course is a benefit to the clients, according to Ron Fisher, Regional Coordinator for the Office of Mental Health Services.

"It takes time," said Fisher. "It takes patience. It takes trial and error. It's a process, not an event," made difficult because mental health is on "the emotional side with more shades of gray," while alcohol and drug treatment is "more concrete."

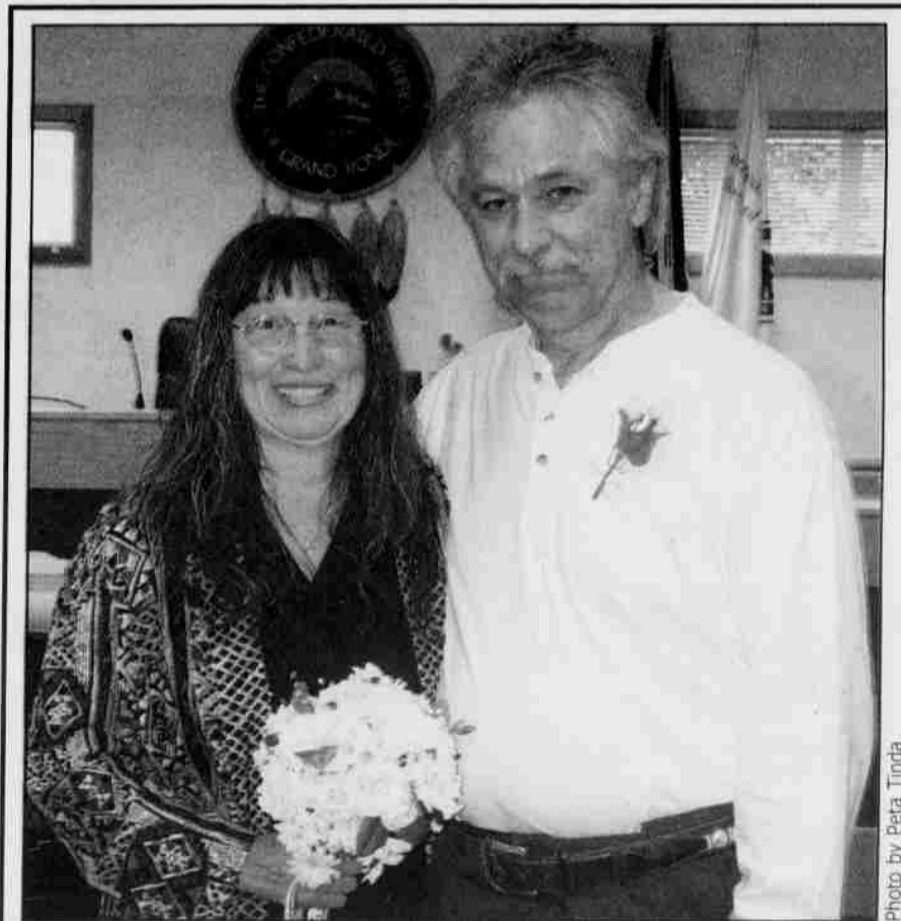
"Blending those philosophies is sometimes tasking," said Fisher.



**Doctor of Poetry** — Former Western Oregon State University College professor Dr. Joe Soldati visited Grand Ronde on Tuesday, May 25 to catch up with the staff of *Smoke Signals*. Soldati talked about the importance of accuracy and integrity in journalism. Soldati talked about the spiritualism of journalism and approaching it with a sense of justice and of journalistic responsibility. Soldati lives in Portland and his poetry and essays have been published in many well-known publications around the world.



Photos by Peta Tinda



**New Life Together** — Tribal members Susie Mooney (Brandon) and Jack Lash were married in Tribal Court on Wednesday, May 12, 2004.

Photo by Peta Tinda