



Photo by Ron Katten

Family Practice — (above) Kathryn and daughter, Patsy Pullin, right, at the Molalla Area Historical Society.

The Beginning — (right) Kathryn at the Grand Ronde cemetery, which at one time, was the only building the Tribe had for use as an office. Today, Tribal buildings include housing and facilities for education, medical and social services reaching thousands of Tribal and non-Tribal members.



Smoke Signals File Photo

Instead, he found signs on stores and movie houses in the West warning: "No Indians or Dogs."

By 1970, Kathryn was desperate enough to step out on her own with the five children still in her care. She divorced Harrison and from time to time had to hide from him when he would track her down at the home of one friend or another relative. But she went back to school at the age of 50 and in 1972, she was the first Indian to graduate from Lane Community College with a degree in Nursing.

In 1975, following efforts to raise funds for federal restoration of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Kathryn ran for and won a seat on the Siletz Tribal Council. She served then with Siletz's current Chairwoman, Dee Pigsley.

In 1977, the Siletz achieved Restoration, and in the years following, some Siletz Tribal members indicated that Kathryn was not welcome among them. Her parents had died young and many did not remember them.

In 1978, Kathryn left Siletz for Springfield, where she worked with Elders through the federal Indian Education Act.

By 1980, she had decided on a move back to Grand Ronde, where her father had lived. The Olson biography reports that her father had driven the Catholic Sisters who ran St. Michael Church here crazy.

In 1981, she returned to Grand Ronde to live, and worked for the Tribe as an Enrollment Clerk.

In 1982, Kathryn and

her son, Frankie, were elected to the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, and continued to work for Restoration.

She recently said: "I would walk a little taller when walking by the cemetery after receiving a letter of support."

Kathryn was re-elected many times and served on Tribal Council through 2001, when she retired, and became a public spokeswoman for the Tribe, a post she continues to hold to this day.

She ran on platforms that put money into long term benefits, including health benefits, a retirement plan, job training, housing assistance for Elders, child care for students and workers, and eventually, per capita distribu-

tions coupled with investment counseling.

She specifically opposed the idea of large per capita distributions to Tribal members in favor of the long term strategy of investing in the Tribe's future.

Along the way, Kathryn suffered the greatest losses a parent can endure when Frankie died in a hiking accident in 1991 and his brother, Tommy, died as a result of an automobile accident in 1995.

Of course, 1995 also marked the opening of the Spirit Mountain Casino that Kathryn had worked hard for. As early as 1983, she and son, Frankie, and daughter, Karen, testified before Congress in support of Restoration, a 29-year-old dream that was fulfilled that year.

In 1986, she negotiated with the Bureau of Land Management for return of Indian lands. In 1988, the Grand Ronde Reservation Act gave the Tribe back nearly 10,000 acres of timber land.

Today, she says: "What happened to spirituality? We used to go up to Spirit Mountain to find spirituality. We need that today. We're all brothers and sisters," she said, "and we all need to look out for one another."

And that comes from somebody who has played both roles fully in her life: she has cared for others even when she had little or nothing for herself; and she has been cared for by others, by family, friends and Tribe, as she has served and aged among her Grand Ronde family. ■



Photo by Peta Tinda

Reflections in Time — Kathryn and at right, late Tribal Elder Merle Holmes, look at baskets at the Hallie Ford Museum in Salem.