

Tribal members Evey Gauna, Grand Ronde Princess (left and right) and Nakoosa Moreland, Jr. Miss Grand Ronde, (center) really stand out in this montage photographed during the Veterans' Pow-wow.

Photos by Brent Merrill/Graphics by George Valdez

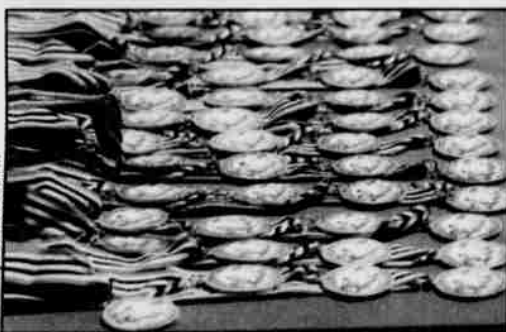


Photo by Brent Merrill



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Showcase — As many as 150 dancers, most in regalia (at right) participated in this year's Veterans' Pow-wow to show respect and honor all Veterans past and present.



Photo by Brent Merrill

"Thank You For Your Service" — It was an emotional time when as many as 275 Veterans were honored with the Warriors' Medal of Valor on Saturday after Grand Entry.



Photo by Toby McClary

Veterans' Advocate Diane Cilenti Honored By Local Heroes, Husband Tom Accepts

By Ron Karten

Diane Cilenti, local Vets advocate who passed on recently at 56, also was honored at the pow-wow. Her husband, Tom, received her honors.

A group of motorcyclists gave \$600 for 60 Medals of Valor in her name.

"It's not over till the paperwork is done," said Jim Willis, state Director of Veterans Services, "and Diane made sure that the paperwork always got done."

"She was my secretary when we started the Veterans' Memorial," said Tribal Elder Marce Norwest. "She had a day job, but like my wife says, her job didn't end at 5 o'clock. You couldn't find a more dedicated person."

"Her success rate was phenomenal when it came to getting vets benefits," said Billie LaBonte. "Headstones are there today because of her."

Gene and Billie told a story of a Vet coming to a Veterans Administration hospital in a substandard wheelchair. The paperwork said he could walk but he had no legs. Cilenti made sure he left with a regulation wheelchair.

"Diane loved chocolate," said Billie. "So Gene gave her this cup filled with chocolate." She held up the cup. "She made Gene look so good, and you know how she did it? It's on this cup." The words on the cup read, "Nag Nag Nag."

Tom Cilenti, Diane's husband, brought the cup back. "He can't sleep at home since she's been gone," said Billie.

"At Diane's funeral, Gene took an eagle feather from his beret and put it in her coffin," said Billie.

At the pow-wow, Gene said, "We ended up with an eagle feather. It floated up to the announcer's stand

and we don't know where it come from. We couldn't account for it."

"We know where it came from,"

said Billie.

"It wasn't the same feather," said Gene.

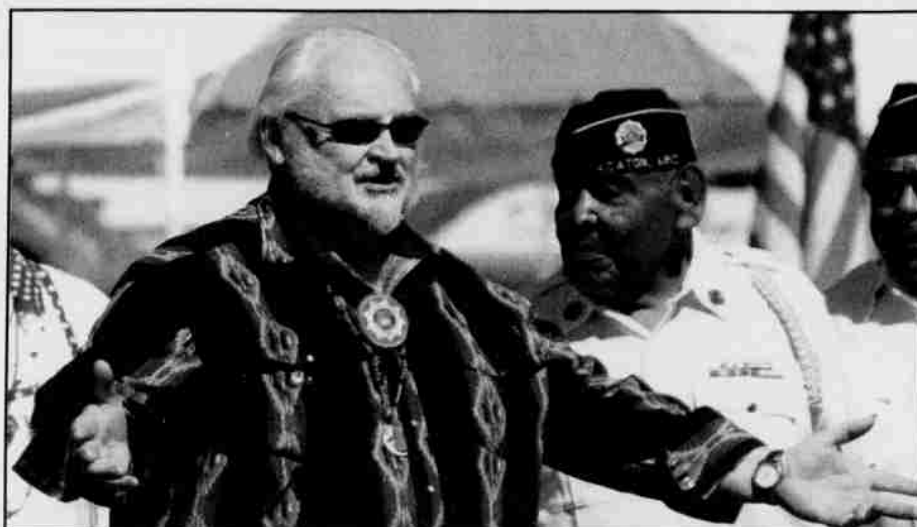


Photo by Brent Merrill

We Remember Her — Tom Cilenti accepts honors on behalf of his wife, Diane, during a presentation by Oregon Veterans Affairs Director Jim Willis. Cilenti was honored for her tireless efforts on behalf of all local Veterans.