

centrated on his newly built family and how he would provide for them. And although his career path had changed direction, Tom's legend in the wide world of sports lives on.

FAMILY & OCCUPATION

When Tom was about 18, he married Marianne Kent who was also attending Willamina High School at the time. Kent's parents owned and operated a popular gas station in Willamina.

In 1948, Chips and Marianne gave birth to their first child, Victoria. Tom then began working in the timber industry so he could support his family.

"We had a child so I had to go to work," said Tom. "I began logging here in Grand Ronde. Logging probably wasn't the best choice but what else can you do but that or dig ditches if you don't go to school and complete your education," he said.

Tom then offered a bit of advice to those who are currently in school.

"That's one thing I would like to emphasize to anyone and especially our kids here," he said, "continue your education. I would really like to see a tutor in each of the classrooms for our children. Motivation is what they need."

Over the course of the next five years, Chips and Marianne had three more children; Patricia, Michael and current Tribal Council member Kathleen.

Kathleen remembers what it was like growing up with a father in the timber industry.

"My dad was a logger," said Kathleen, "so he would move around with the logging business."

Tom traveled around the Pacific Northwest to various logging camps. He said that he would spend up to three months in each camp before moving to the next site.

Maybe Tom had a true passion for logging or maybe it was because he did it for 45 years, but when he would talk about it, he would go on about his many experiences and give detailed descriptions of how the operation worked and the many "characters" he would run into along the way.

He remembered a particular Sunday evening that he and good friend Pete Aldridge were heading back to camp after a weekend in town. They stopped off at a café to get a bite to eat when he recalled Aldridge ordering the "Cannibal." The "Cannibal" is a hamburger with all of the fixings

but the meat is raw. Tom began laughing while telling the story and said that everyone in the café was just looking at Aldridge with disgust.

Tom also remembered some good times he had with now deceased Siletz Tribal Elder and coworker Gilbert "Gib" Baker.

Chips and Marianne parted ways. Marianne moved to Salem and Chips continued working in the logging circuit. Still in the timber industry, Tom also spent 12 years working with plywood at mills in Corvallis and Independence.

Although her parents were divorced, Kathleen recalls the good

remained on council for three terms.

"When dad got on council, I was extremely proud of him," said Kathleen. "He always voted the way he thought was right and I always admired that about him."

Tom sat on council when Spirit Mountain Casino opened and played an influential role in the creation of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund. A lot like his athletic career and his career in the woods, Tom was admired and acknowledged by his peers.

"I thought he did a good job representing us," said Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison who served on council with Tom. "He had the courage to be involved. And I always thought he had the best interest of the Tribe."

When Tom's time was up on council, it was not because he didn't receive enough votes for another term, but because he chose not to run again.

"We were all surprised when he said he wasn't going to run again," said Harrison. "I remember him saying that it just wasn't fun anymore."

Tom is currently serving on Grand Ronde's Timber Committee. Since Tom's stint on council, he likes to spend his free time fishing and spending time with his family. His children and grandchildren seem very important to him.

"I am very proud of what my kids have become," said Tom.

Tom's oldest daughter Victoria lives with her husband in Salem and "doing very well" Tom said.

Patricia worked for the Tribe for many years and currently serves on Grand Ronde's Health Committee.

Michael is retired, due to an injury, from the iron business and currently resides in Idaho.

Kathleen is currently serving on Tribal Council and explains that she is a third generation council member which she feels makes her father very proud.

Although fishing is now Tom's true passion, he jokes about his most recent hobby, a sport called golf.

"I carry a bag around the course," he said. "I'm no Arnold Palmer, I'll tell you that much."

Despite the fact that Tom would have made different choices if given the opportunity to do it all over again, he is content with the paths his life had lead him.

"When I look back on my life," said Tom, "I can see everything that I should have done. But I am thankful for all of my life experiences." ■



Chips Tom's Family during 2006 Thanksgiving.

"It must have been in the early fifties," said Tom, "Gib and I and his brothers had gone down to Newport. I was still a minor yet and the police picked us up for fighting. I still owe the city of Newport \$5. If they read this story," he continued with a chuckle, "they might come and get me."

Tom had a reputation of being a great logger. Kathleen explained that throughout her life, she has always heard stories about her father's expertise as a woodsman.

"He was really in his own element in the woods," she said. "He was

memories she had with her dad.

"Spending time with dad was some of the best times of my childhood," Kathleen said. "I was about eight or nine and I remember we were staying in Mill City because that's where dad was working. Michael and I would fish all day every day. When staying with mom in the city, we didn't get to do that."

Kathleen then spoke of her father, as a father.

"All of us kids had a great deal of respect for him," she said. "He never had to lick us. All he had to do was look at us and we knew. It



Tribal Council members in the mid-1990's posed where Spirit Mountain Casino now stands. Kathryn Harrison (l to r), Leon "Chips" Tom, Mark Mercier, Ed Larsen, Merle Holmes, Candy Robertson and Val Grout.

like a legend out there. No matter where I go or who I speak to, they always have something good to say about him."

Thirteen years after being wed,

was kind of a silent language. His silence spoke volumes to us."

Chips retired from the logging industry in 1990. In the mid 1990's, he began serving on Tribal Council and