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to self-sufficiency for the Tribe. In fact, the casino gave reason and opportunity for many Tribal members to return home to Grand Ronde.

"After the casino opened, my mom and dad separated and my mom moved back here to be with her family. I followed about a year later. I called human resources and said I'm a Tribal member and I really want to move back into the area. I applied for a job, and got the job all in the same day. So the transition was really fast and I started three days later," said April Campbell, Chinook and Kalapuya Tribal member.

"We had orientation at the casino, and Kathryn Harrison told her story about the Trail of Tears and I cried. You know you're a Tribal member; your mom tells you you're Tribal; your grandma tells you you're a Tribal member, but when you don't live on the reservation it's hard to have an understanding of what that really means... But when I heard the Trail of Tears, something clicked and I cried," said Campbell.

"When I first came down here I really wanted to go into business. I wanted to do international business, and I wanted to make a lot of money and be successful monetarily. After Kathryn gave her speech, I started to realize that I was just a small piece of a bigger picture and eventually I got involved with the education division. I got involved with the Tribal piece versus the economic piece. So when the job came open for a higher education specialist I was so excited; I felt

like it was a good fit for me. The impact that working for the Tribe has on somebody is immense and you can't know that unless you actually come back here and experience it."

The Tribe values education and is constantly looking for ways to assist Tribal members with employment and educational opportunities. "In 2002, the Tribe established a Mentorship Program, which was designed to train and develop Tribal members so they could obtain key positions within the Tribe and casino. This program gives Tribal members an opportunity to get additional training and work experience that they may not be able to obtain without such a program, said Denise Harvey, Umpqua Tribal member.

"In 2003, I realized that we had a gap in the organization for assisting Tribal members with internal and external employment. I started assisting them with job opportunities, resume writing and interview skills, and before I knew it I had a lot of Tribal members coming to me for assistance. So we created a new program and called it the Workforce Development Program. With this new added responsibility I began over seeing the Tribal preference protocol on all Tribal and Casino construction projects. The Workforce Development Program has assisted more than 100 Tribal Members, Native Americans and people from the local community with employment," said Harvey.

Today, the casino employs more than 1,500 people, and is constantly expanding to meet the needs of guests. The Tribe employs 339



Tribal member Mark Mercier

people and has a membership of more than 5,000.

The Tribe provides its membership with programs such as Elder housing, adult foster care, family housing, education financing and assistance, cultural programs, disability services, Elder pension, health and wellness services and much, much more.

"We are very progressive as far as Tribal governments go. That's something that we should be very proud of. Termination definitely took its toll on us, but I think it also made us more business savvy in a lot of ways. I don't think we have quite the sense of entitlement that members of other Tribes might

have. As far as the government providing assistance, we have self-sufficiency," said Barbra Mercier, Rogue River and Umpqua Tribal member. "It wasn't long ago that if your folks didn't have good health insurance, you suffered a little bit. We don't have to suffer anymore. We give insurance to our membership no matter where they live. It really is a benefit. I think there's only about five or six other Tribes in the nation that offer that same benefit. For most Tribes IHS is the only health benefit they have. I think we have a real extra benefit that we give to our membership."

The Tribe has worked long and hard to get where it is today, and the Tribal membership receives benefits that were just a dream some 23-years ago. It is because of the efforts of so many people who wanted a better life for their families and for the Grand Ronde people that there are Tribal members today who have survived serious illness due to the medical attention that the Tribe provided. And it is because of those same efforts that there are so many Tribal students receiving a college degree due to the support and assistance they received from the Tribe.

"I think you're lucky if you can get one to three things done while in office, but I can count 50 things that we've accomplished; so I think that's a great achievement," said Kathleen Tom, Kalapuya and Umpqua Tribal member. "One of the issues we face, is we don't always give praise where praise is needed. I would like to see a memorial for the founders of restoration... something to tell their story. We need to remember these people and what they did for the Tribe." ■

Val Grout — Umpqua, Kalapuya, Chasta, and Rogue River Tribal member

I was here when we were terminated. My parents were DeWalt and Arvella Houck. We moved away during the termination era. We moved away; my dad and my husband, we went where the work was. We moved to the southern Oregon coast in Brookings. But I always came home twice a year during Memorial Day and Christmas.

In 1974 we moved to Tillamook, Oregon. Then in 1987 I was elected to Tribal Council and drove back-and-forth between Grand Ronde and Tillamook for seven years.

In 1998 we moved back to Grand Ronde and I bought a manufactured home in Grand Meadows. My husband passed away before I moved in. He was diabetic and it just ravished his body. He's across the road now in the cemetery, so I go out and give him heck every once in awhile for leaving me. But I have my kids; my youngest son, his wife, and their baby live with me.

When I started on Council my biggest goal was to see that our Tribal members could get as many benefits as possible. Back then there wasn't a lot of money. But that was the main

thing; I wanted to see the Tribe grow. Education, health, and endowments, those were three of the things I was most interested in.

I think the Tribe expanded a little each year. We set up an Elder pension plan. We couldn't agree on an appropriate age for the benefits, so we took it to the Elders and asked them what they wanted. The Elders chose the age of 55, and that's how the age for the Elder's pension got to be.

For me, the pension was a big achievement. When we first started we could only afford about \$50. But it eventually progressed from \$50 to \$100 and continued up the line until it finally reached \$1000, and that's where we decided to stop it. (That was after the casino was built.)

I think our biggest achievement was setting up endowments. The endowments are funds that were set aside to fund Tribal programs in the event that something happened and we lost our main source of funding. With the endowments, the Tribe would still have money to support those purposes for the Tribal member-



Tribal Elder Val Grout

ship. It wouldn't be the kind of money we're used to now, but it would be enough to get us by on the bare essentials.

So we set up endowments for programs such as health, education, Elder's pensions, funeral funds, etc. Some of those programs are probably getting close to being fully funded by now. Once a program is fully funded,

the interest from that program can go into other programs.

A good thing about the endowment funds is that it takes a full vote of Tribal Council (all nine members) to touch that money for any other purpose than it was intended for. So we know that money will be there if it's ever needed.

When the idea of the casino was first brought up council decided not to get involved. Then about a year later we looked into the casino some more and learned what we could do ... well then council decided to go ahead and do it. So that was a big achievement for the Tribe too. I know it does a lot for our Tribe.

I think the endowments and the casino are the things I'm most proud of. Actually, I'm most proud of the endowments; the casino comes second.

I really enjoyed every year I sat on Council. I worked with so many neat people like Ray McKnight, Henry Petite, Margaret Provost, Ed Pearsall, Eddie Larsen, Mark Mercier, and Kathryn Harrison.

I worked with a lot of great Tribal leaders. We made a lot of accomplishments and we made a few mistakes along the way, but I'm just really proud to have worked with so many good people.