

# Hatfield Fellow to be in Washington, D.C.

*Tribal member Francene Ambrose picked to work in Sen. Ron Wyden's office*

By Ron Karten

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Tribal member Francene Ambrose, 28, recipient of the 2008-09 Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, is excited about when she will be in Washington, D.C.

"I'll be there for the election and the inauguration," Ambrose said. "I will have a front-row seat. This is the one thing I've been very excited about."

Ambrose will work in the Washington office of Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden from November through July 2009.

Originally from White Swan, Wash., on the Yakama Reservation, Ambrose was raised by her grandfather Corky Ambrose and aunt Margaret Ambrose, who are both enrolled Yakama Tribal members. Corky, now retired, was a wildland firefighter. Because of this, her aunts and uncles stepped in to help raise her when he was working. She is very close to them and her cousins.

Her Grand Ronde Tribal roots come through her great-grandmother, Tribal Elder Grace Wheeler Ambrose, who was Corky's mother, from Grand Ronde.

Today, she lives in Portland and is finishing a master's degree in Public Administration, focusing on Tribal Governance, at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash.

She attended the University of Washington in Seattle as an undergraduate and graduated with a bachelor of science degree from Portland State University in 2003.

Using the Hatfield Fellowship experiences to fill some of her elective credits, she plans to graduate next year. "I'm planning to go to law school, possibly at Lewis and Clark" she said, "and focus on Tribal law."

Her Tribal experience is not so much with Grand Ronde as with Yakama, where she grew up. "I have lots of family from Yakama," she said. "I was raised with the Yakama Warriors Association. I traveled with them growing up."

Her grandfather ran the local Johnson-O'Malley program and she

## Hatfield Fellow reception scheduled

Spirit Mountain Community Fund and the Tribal Council will hold a farewell reception for 2007-08 Hatfield Fellowship recipient Rebecca Knight at 11 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 14, in the Governance Building Atrium. Incoming Hatfield Fellow Francene Ambrose also will be there.

No RSVP is necessary to attend.

For more information, contact Jilene Mercier at 503-879-1637.

attended meetings with him. The federal Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 was created to meet needs of American Indian students. Through the Oklahoma-based National Johnson-O'Malley Association, it has since spread to Native reservations across the country. It operates with a combination of federal grants and locally raised funds.

"Like Title VII in Portland Public Schools, it raises money for Native students," Ambrose said. "We did fundraisers to help pay for school credits and the cost of athletics, like basketball shoes."

"My grandfather raised us to be very community-oriented," she added. "We used to put on a Thanksgiving dinner every year for the Elders, and play bingo. He'd always make sure we gave back to the community."

While in school, she worked for the National Indian Child Welfare Association and now works part-time for Eugene-based Oregon Social Learning Center. She conducts research that helps assess a mentoring program for another organization.

"I used to be grant writer," she said.

With this background in mind, Ambrose has been researching fellowships during her years in college and said she is pleased that her first choice came through. She learned about the Hatfield Fellowship a



Tribal member Francene Ambrose

few years ago and made sure she had the appropriate prerequisites. Then, she said, "It was an honor to even be a finalist."

"I cried at the interview and I cried on the phone," she said about receiving the news. "I'm so excited. I think it's going to be a wonderful, wonderful experience. Being there will be such a great time, especially with the upcoming elections."

"I knew I wanted to do something like this."

Ambrose said she intends to use the experience to learn.

"I've been reading and writing about public policy, but my goal is to see it in action, how it's created. I'm hoping to get the hands-on learning experience."

Previously, Ambrose visited the nation's capital in conjunction with a visit for the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. She went to take pictures of the Yakama Warriors Group marching in the parade.

While there, she said, "I went to see the different memorials. My grandfather was in the Korean War, so we made a point to see the Korean War Memorial."

"I really liked Washington, D.C. At first, it was overwhelming. I don't think I'd ever seen that many people in one place. Unfortunately, when we were there, the terror threat had moved up, and it was a little threatening with the amount

of police that were there. But I'm excited to be going back."

In 1998, Ambrose was part of the group organizing voters against Initiative 200 in Washington state. The initiative passed and prohibited the state from using race or ethnicity in deciding student admissions, employment or contract awards.

She also "helped organize a rally, brought in Tribal leaders, informed them, and then had them speak out on the importance of getting (former Washington Senator) Slade Gorton out of office. I think that's what guided me down this track."

While attending Portland State, she also helped with the dream of a Native American center becoming a reality. She aided the school in securing funding and communicating with local Tribes about the importance of having a home away from home for students. She spoke at the groundbreaking and opening ceremonies of the Native American Student and Community Center and was one of the first staff to work there.

Portland State President Daniel O. Bernstine said on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2003 that "Dr. King's legacy lives on in Francine [sic] Ambrose, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Francine is a leader in Native American student organizations and was key to developing the PSU Native American Student and Community Center."

She currently is treasurer of the Bow and Arrow Culture Club in Portland, and helps plan the annual City of Roses Delta Park Powwow. "It's like a full-time job in itself," she said.

At the end of August, she will marry Jerald Harris, a Yakama descendant who is also studying Public Administration at Evergreen. They will move to Washington, D.C., together and he will continue his search for a similar internship.

"When we tell people the news about moving to D.C., everyone says it's going to be like having an extended honeymoon," she said. "We'll have to wait and see about that!" ■

## Gorge games



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Members of the Grand Ronde Veterans' Honor Guard and Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy lead the parade in the opening ceremonies of the Gorge Games in Hood River on Friday, July 18.

## Black performs



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Country artist Clint Black performs at the Spirit Mountain Casino's Events and Entertainment Center on Friday, July 25.