

Native OSU professor walks on

Deanna Kingston helped Grand Ronde with repatriation of Horner Collection

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Deanna Kingston, an Oregon State University professor who helped the Grand Ronde Tribe with the repatriation of the Horner Collection in 2008, walked on at the age of 46 on Friday, Dec. 2, after a long battle with breast cancer.

Kingston, a native Inupiat from King Island, Alaska, studied the culture of her ancestors, including their rich traditional ecological knowledge. She was an associate professor of anthropology at Oregon State and received a master of arts in interdisciplinary studies from Oregon State in 1993 and a doctorate from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks in 1999.

Her work included research on traditional kinship patterns, songs and hunting dances. She interned at the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies



Photo courtesy of Oregon State University
Deanna Kingston

Center, and worked on a film collection of last-century King Island life, now housed at the National Museum of Natural History.

In 2003, she received a National Science Foundation grant to document and compare scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge

of King Island, which sits in the Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia.

Tribal member David Lewis, who manages the Tribe's Cultural Resources Department, said Kingston was on the Oregon State Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Committee, which oversaw the return of the Horner Collection to the Tribe.

Lewis also co-wrote a chapter in the book "Teaching Oregon Native Languages" with Kingston. She also served on Lewis' dissertation committee and on Tribal member Eirik Thorsgard's master's committee.

"She was one of the very few Native professors in the Willamette Valley and probably worked with many Grand Ronde students who attended Oregon State," Lewis said.

In 2010, Kingston received the Phyllis S. Lee Award from Oregon State for her dedication to social justice. In a nominating letter, her department chair, David McMurray,

highlighted the many ways that Kingston fought to make the voices of indigenous people heard.

"Because of her unique status as a Native person and academic-research community member, Professor Kingston can clearly see the way groups with vastly different worldviews fail to communicate even when they are speaking directly to each other and she struggles to find ways to bridge that chasm," McMurray said.

When Angelo Gomez, interim director of the Oregon State Office of Equity and Inclusion, was charged with transferring Native American items from the Horner Collection back to their Tribes of origin, he turned to Kingston for advice on the delicate process.

"Deanna was such a peaceful, kind and thoughtful person," Gomez said. "I could always trust her judgment about what I should be doing in my work with Tribes. She was deeply dedicated to the welfare of Native people." ■

Elders' garage sale seeking donations

Tribal Elders are regularly seeking donations for their fundraising garage sales. To donate an item or items, call Tribal Elder Linda Brandon at 971-267-0918. ■

Recycle Center moved

The Recycle Center has been moved temporarily to 9675 Grand Ronde Road. For more information, contact Tribal Facilities Manager Michael J. Larsen at 503-879-2407. ■

'The book is written in Native voice'

BOOK continued
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and reading firsthand accounts of our people in old journals, I became convinced the life experiences of some of our grandfathers and grandmothers had to be written," Olson said.

So she embarked on a multi-year project that just this year has been completed.

In summary, Olson said, "In 2005, I began writing a Native American directory or Who's Who that would describe every known Native family on the Grand Ronde Reservation."

She included descriptions of historic events "from the memories of our own people."

"For instance," she said, "Wagayuhlen Gwayakiti, a busy medicine doctor and the first wife of the Mollalla chief, remembered the day of removal as beginning in the usual way. Unaware of the advancing military, on that particular morning she packed a horse with food for her relatives. Riding one horse and leading the other, she rode into Oregon City just as the military arrived to take the people away. Stopped by the soldiers, she was forced to leave her horses where they stood and join the people being taken by riverboat."

"The book is written in Native voice and from a Native perspective," Olson said. "Scenes and images are threaded throughout to demonstrate the deep emotional impact Native people endured as their culture was shattered by

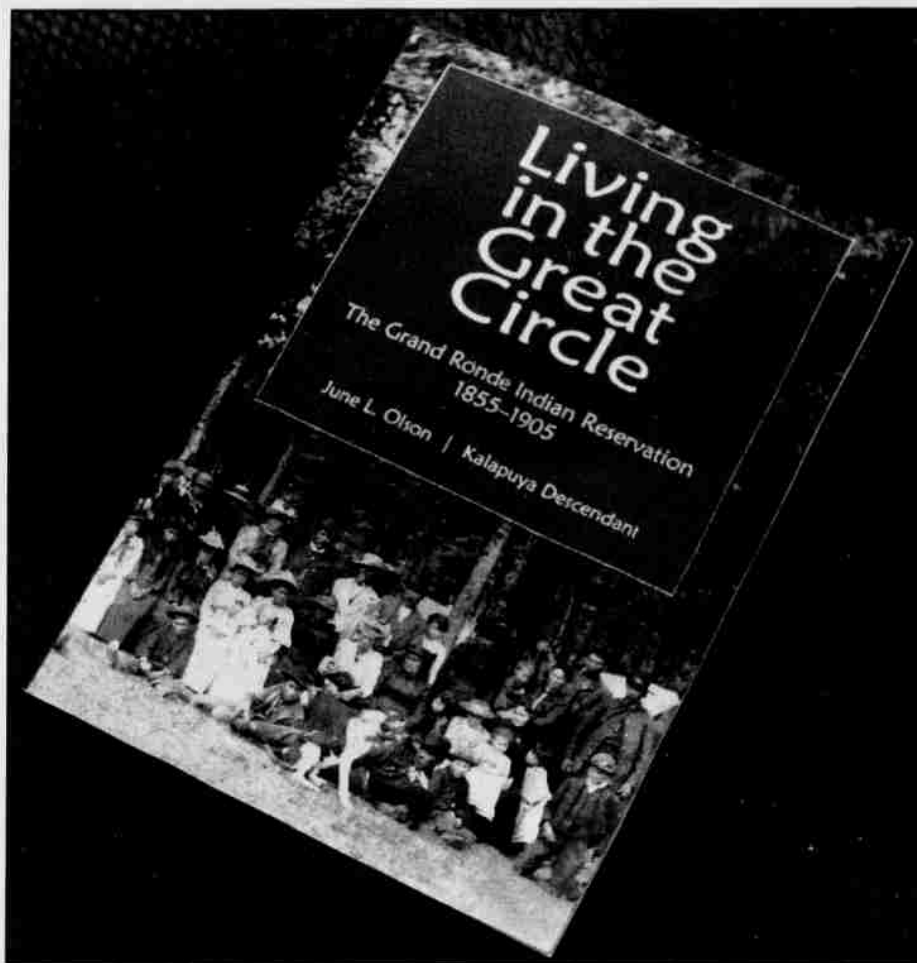


Photo by Michelle Alaimo

government policies."

Olson said indexing families was a challenge.

"Many, if not most, of the first- and second-generation people were known by several English names in addition to their Native names," she said. "Further confusing the situation was the fact that the spelling of some English names changed over time."

She quotes Eustace Howard, "one of our long ago grandfathers," as he

records an ancient panther myth for archeologists: "Whoever talks (reads) what I say maybe he will want to see what kind of person told this. If I live a little longer, if my life is longer, if I live long enough, they will see how my words are."

Her purpose in writing this book was similar. "While Tribal history education was the primary objective behind this book, like Eustace, I hope through my words years

from now others will also come to know me," she said.

"June has worked many hard, long years researching this data," said Tribal Elder and former Tribal Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison. "Through her work, she has thereby created a Tribal family tree. This book is a must read for each and every Tribal member."

Five hundred copies have been published through Olson's newly formed publishing company, A. Menard Publications in Clackamas. Soon the book can be purchased by credit card through PayPal at www.GrandRondebooks.com. However, that site was still under construction in early December. It should be up and running in the next few weeks, but in the meantime Olson wanted to get books out to Tribal members early and at a discounted shipping rate.

The book is \$34.99 plus \$2.65 for shipping. People can fax their order to 503-658-4104. If they need an order form, they can e-mail Olson at junelolson@hotmail.com.

The book also can be special-ordered through most leading book distributors, such as Barnes & Noble, Ingram, Amazon.com, Baker & Taylor and others. The books also will be available for purchase at Grand Ronde Tribal and satellite offices.

"Very few Native American history books are being written by Native people," Olson said. "I am proud to be a Native author and prouder still to be one of the few Tribal members writing the history of my own people. I hope my work will encourage others." ■