

Longtime Indian Services director retiring

Karen Quigley leaving state employment after 28 years

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

SALEM — Karen Quigley has served as the executive director of the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services for nearly a quarter century.

Quigley, 64, officially retired on Saturday, Dec. 1, to pursue other interests with husband Bill Clumper, whom she first met while they were community organizers for the American Friends Service Committee in the early 1970s.

She has worked for the state of Oregon for more than 28 years, serving 25 of those in the legislative branch and almost 24 as executive director of the Indian Services Commission.

“(It has been) an incredible opportunity to work with so many Tribal leaders, representatives, (former governor) Vic Atiyeh and others dedicated to improving state-Tribal relations over the past 25 years,” Quigley said.

Quigley first became involved with improving state-Tribal relations during the 1993 Oregon legislative session, where she served as counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee as it evaluated, and eventually passed, Senate Bill 61. This was considered by many to be a landmark bill as it strengthened state laws protecting Native American burials and other archaeological sites, and cultural items on both state public and private lands.

“In contrast to the archaeologists, university professors and ‘pothunters’ who testified to protect their interests, it made a deep impression to hear the hours of heartfelt testimony by Tribal leaders and other



Smoke Signals file photo

Karen Quigley, longtime executive director of the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services, officially retired on Saturday, Dec. 1.

Tribal members who talked about the importance of their ancestors, these sacred items and culturally significant places,” she said.

The following session, Quigley served as counsel to the Senate Water and Land Use Committee and interacted with Tribal leaders and other representatives as they tried to educate legislators and the public about the importance the lands and waters have had for Tribes since time immemorial.

When Tribal representatives asked her to consider applying for the new position as executive director of the state Legislative Commission on Indian Services in 1995, she was honored.

“I like to think that I may be the only state agency employee ever hired by Tribal leaders and now governor but then-legislator Kate Brown, who were then all members of LCIS,” Quigley said.

Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy said Quigley is the “go to” expert on Oregon Tribal issues

and organizing trainings for state agencies about Tribes and government-to-government consultation.

“There are so many changes that were brought about under Karen’s leadership and I am confident that all nine Oregon Tribes immensely appreciate the work she has done for and with Tribal leaders,” Kennedy said. “Karen is the real deal and I wish her the best.”

Kennedy cited examples of Quigley coordinating legislative action relating to Tribal issues, such as the removal of “squaw”-named places and promoting Tribal involvement in renaming of those areas.

“Karen (also) worked with the police to ensure that Native American remains were returned to their respective Tribal people,” Kennedy said. “Additionally, Karen helped develop a training video to educate the public on how to handle inadvertent discovery of Native remains and artifacts.”

During her opening remarks at the annual Tribal-State Government-to-Government Summit on Tuesday, Nov. 27, Gov. Kate Brown mentioned Quigley’s accomplishments.

“I was on the hiring committee that helped hire Karen,” she said. “She sure has done a phenomenal job and the work we have accomplished was in part due to her.”

Looking back on her career as LCIS director, Quigley said two major highlights are the work on Tribal cultural items and the gov-

ernment-to-government consultation executive order by then Gov. John Kitzhaber. She notes that the 1996 executive order mandating state agencies work with Oregon’s Tribal governments was the first in the nation.

“Perhaps even more important is the ongoing work to keep the relationship strong, and based on mutual trust and respect,” Quigley said.

The second highlight is the work on Tribal culture, getting state agencies, and eventually universities and public schools, to see what items they have on display or in storage that may be associated with Oregon Tribes.

“This should lead to conversations about the most appropriate ‘place’ for each item,” Quigley said.

Before working for the state of Oregon, Quigley held positions as a Peace Corps teacher in East Africa, director of education programs in Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington, and as a foreign legal adviser in Tokyo.

In retirement, she is looking forward to traveling and continuing an active lifestyle.

“Bill and I will be taking walks, kayaking, reading and traveling in the months and years ahead,” she said. “We’re thinking someplace warm for a while in late winter, sailing in Maine this summer and we are already set for a visit again to East Africa this time next year.” ■

‘Without the strength of our ancestors, none of us would be here today’

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saying its meaning was “beyond words.”

“Meteorites, as you know, are not commonplace at all and the significance of Tomanowos is paramount to our people,” she said. “Thank you.”

Restoration closed with a Canoe Family procession of singing, drumming and dancing led by Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier. Approximately 50 Tribal members from infants to adults joined in for “New Beginnings,” “Salmon Song and Dance” and “Traveling With Our Ancestors.”

“Without the strength of our ancestors, none of us would be here today,” Bobby Mercier said. “But generations after us will always know who they are and where they came from.”

After the ceremony concluded, tables and dishes were quickly whisked away for the Restoration Powwow, which attracted so many people that the room dividing panel had to be removed and more seating provided.

The powwow began with host drum Woodsmen providing grand

entry music as the Honor Guard brought in the colors, followed by Tribal Council members and Aucoin, and members of the Culture and Restoration committees, Royalty and Youth Council.

Perry Thompson (Navajo) and Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Director Shawna Tom (Shoshone) served as powwow headman and headwoman. The master of ceremonies was Tribal member Fabian Quenelle.

Specials were held in the Golden Age, Tiny Tot, Royalty Past and Present, and Youth Council Intertribal Spot Check.

Restoration and Culture Committee members who assisted with the 35th anniversary event include Darlene Aaron, Francene Ambrose, Debi Anderson, Lisa Archuleta, Steve Bobb Sr., Joanna Brisbois, Mabel Brisbois, Julie Brown, Chelsea Clark, Sydney Clark, Jon A. George, Kathleen George, Tiny Gibbons, Dorene Gillespie, Rachelle Kellogg, Shannon Ham-Teixeira, Stacia Hernandez, Susie Lash, Jackie LaBonte, Nick LaBonte, Brad Leno, Barbara McKnight Feehan, Toni Mercier, Jordan Mercier, Tracie Meyer, Chris Rempel, Shannon Simi, Faye Smith and Brenda Tuomi. ■

CTGR TERO Announcement

OSHA

10-hour training & certification
Dec. 3 - Dec. 4
7:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
CTGR Employment Service Center
(Building C)

Registration is limited
No cost for CTGR Tribal members and \$75 non-Tribal members
Register with the TERO office by calling 503-879-2188 or
Email - TERO@grandronde.org

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