



Dancers take part in a Welcome dance during the 36th annual Restoration Celebration held in the Tribal gym on Friday, Nov. 22.



Layla Harmon (Eastern Shoshone), 13, joins in an interTribal dance.

‘I am so proud of all the accomplishments

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toration. They are Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Vice Chair Chris Mercier, George, Lisa Leno, Kathleen George, Jack Giffen Jr., Steve Bobb Sr., Michael Langley and Denise Harvey.

“Today is a good day,” Kennedy said. “One of the things we must impart to our younger generation is gratefulness for the sacrifices of their Elders so we could sit in a gym today, eat together and celebrate. I am so thankful for that.”

After the Tribe was Terminated by the federal government in 1954, a majority of Tribal members were forced to relocate from Grand Ronde to survive.

On Nov. 22, 1983, everything changed when President Ronald Reagan signed the Tribe’s Restoration bill into law.

Kennedy acknowledged longtime Tribal Council chairwoman and key Restoration figure Kathryn Harrison, who attended Friday’s event. At 95, Harrison is now the third eldest Elder in the Tribe.

Kennedy also recognized past



Tribal Council members in attendance including former longtime chairman Reyn Leno, Brenda Tuomi, Angie Blackwell, Candy Robertson, Henry Petite, Tonya Gleason-Shepek and Ed Larsen.

Kennedy also thanked former Tribal Council Chairman Mark Mercier, who was instrumental in the passage of the Grand Ronde Reservation Act.

“I am so proud of all the accomplishments that have gone on at the leadership table,” Kennedy said. “There are now more opportunities for Tribal members to participate in the process.”

She also noted that throughout its 36-year history, there have only been six Tribal Council chairs, including herself, which indicates stability. The other Tribal chairs were Harrison, Petite, Mark Mercier, Reyn Leno and Chris Mercier.

At the 35th anniversary event in 2018, Kennedy issued a challenge for all Tribal members in attendance: Find out which Tribal Chief you are descended from. A few in the audience shouted out different names at this year’s celebration.

“Next year, I will ask the same question,” she said. “It’s a part of knowing your history and culture.”

A poignant moment came when Kennedy asked those who had gone through Termination to stand. Of the approximately 200 gathered, only a handful stood.

“(Restoration) is an effort that began with three people,” Kennedy

said. “We are here because of Margaret Provost, Marvin Kimsey and Merle Holmes.”

The three key Restoration Elders have since walked on. Earlier this summer, a life-sized bronze sculpture of Provost, Kimsey and Holmes, designed by Steve Bobb Sr., was erected at the entrance to the Governance Center as a permanent reminder of their life’s work.

“Now, I get to enjoy seeing them every day,” Kennedy said.

She also thanked Grand Ronde and Veterans Royalty members for all of their hard work representing the Tribe at various



Arianne Sheka (Ho-Chunk/Dine) participates in an interTribal dance during the 36th annual Restoration celebration.



Dancers make their way on to the dance area during the Grand Entry.