

Walking On...

Dennis J. Hemeon

Sept. 4, 1948 – July 10, 2025

Dennis J. Hemeon entered God’s Kingdom on July 10, 2025, at his home in Willamina, surrounded by loved ones. He was 76.

Dennis was born on Sept. 4, 1948, to Stanley and Rita (Mercier) Hemeon in Keene, New Hampshire.

He was married to Tribal Elder Jamie Adams, who works at the Health & Wellness Center in Grand Ronde. They have been together for nearly 20 years.

Dennis was raised on the East Coast and graduated high school in 1966, where he was a star athlete in basketball and set an all-time state scoring record, which lasted 20 years.

Dennis joined the United States Coast Guard immediately after graduation and served a tour of duty in Vietnam. His military service concluded in 1970.

After discharge, Dennis decided he didn’t want to return to the East Coast but remained in the last city he was posted to before his discharge from the military: Astoria. Dennis fell in love with Oregon’s beauty and the casual lifestyle the people of Oregon seemed to enjoy.

After Dennis and Jamie married, they created a home in Willamina, to be near the Tribe and family.

Dennis worked in sales most of his life and since retiring, spent his leisure time gardening, reading, crafting model cars, and playing a friendly game of pool with his friends. He also loved history and learned as much as he could about Grand Ronde Tribal culture and traditions, and Oregon’s unique story.

Dennis believed strangers were just friends he hadn’t met yet and had a natural gift for conversation in any situation. He would often strike up random conversations with people he met out and about in the community. Most of all, he enjoyed visiting with friends and family, and was a regular guest at the Elders Activity Center and other Tribal events and celebrations.

Dennis is survived by his wife, Jamie Adams Hemeon of Willamina; siblings, Robert L. Hemeon of Laconia, New Hampshire, Brenda L. Reed of Franklin, Massachusetts and Jil A. Hemeon of Mansfield, Massachusetts; children, Josie Hansen, Daniel Hemeon, Nicholas Adams, Olivia Adams and Ian Adams, in addition to several grandchildren and many other extended family members.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, Aug. 4, at the Grand Ronde Methodist Church. A meal, hosted by the family, will follow. Dennis’ family invites guests to bring a potluck dessert to share.

Dennis’ family wishes to thank those closest to them for their outpouring of love and support, as well as the hospice workers who cared for him during his illness. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Dennis’ memory to Traditions Hospice.



Brenda Sue Gray

Sept. 7, 1953 – July 12, 2025

Tribal Elder Brenda Sue Gray passed away July 12, 2025, at the age of 71. She was surrounded by many loving family members before she passed.

She was a Kalapuyan descendant of Chief Joseph Sangretta, a proud Elder of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and a member of the Haller-Menard family.

Brenda was born to Claude (Bill) and Delores (Odie) Knight on Sept. 7, 1953, in Stayton, Oregon. She grew up in the Stayton/Turner area in a large extended family with many aunts, uncles and cousins.

After raising three children, Brenda got her associate degree in accounting. She started working at Spirit Mountain Casino in 1999 and retired in 2012. Disneyland and Hawaii were her favorite places to take her family, and her home in Elders housing was full of family photos and memorabilia from places she visited.

Brenda lived a life rooted in faith, devoted to Christ and guided by the teachings of the Bible. She found peace in knowing that she would soon be reunited with many loved ones.

Brenda joins her husband, Charles Gray; her parents and her sister Loretta Sisemore in heaven. She is survived by her sons, James Knight and Charles Gray; her daughter, Tricia Gray; her granddaughter, Gabby Warner; her grandson, Tyee Knight; her sister, Karen Plunges; and her brothers, William Knight, Dennis Knight and Jesse Knight.

2 Timothy 4:7 – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Monday, July 21, at the Tribal Cemetery with a meal afterward at the Tribal Community Center.

Dallas Mortuary Tribute Center assisted the family.

Clinton Maxie Stamps

March 25, 1977 – July 9, 2025

Tribal member Clinton Maxie Stamps passed away July 9, 2025, at the age of 48.

Klein Funeral Homes in Tomball, Texas, is assisting the family.

Corrine Kay Fugate

Sept. 25, 1964 – July 26, 2025

Tribal Elder Corrine Kay Fugate passed away July 26, 2025, at the age of 60.

Wilson’s Chapel of the Roses in Roseburg is assisting the family.

Funeral service details were not available before presstime.

Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2 p.m. every Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■



Watchlist: ‘Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act’

By Kamiah Koch

Social media/digital journalist

In simple terms, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 was established to offer federal support to promote Tribal self-governance and culturally grounded housing solutions.

After visiting several Tribes all across the country, including Grand Ronde’s Tribal Housing and Elder Housing, the National American Indian Housing Council published a video advocating for the reauthorization of NAHASDA since it expired in 2013. Congress has continued to fund the program on an annual basis, but not a long-term basis.

“Every single Tribe will probably tell you that housing is their number one issue,” Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority President and CEO Jacqueline Pata said. “We have a tool, NAHASDA is a tool that we can use if we invest it right and it is fully funded to the level that it is.”

NAIHC’s video shows the wide range of living conditions in Native American Tribes. Local Tribal communities along the Columbia Gorge are shown living in trailers with little infrastructure. Other Tribal communities are shown to offer apartment-style buildings. Grand Ronde’s latest development in Elder Housing can also be seen.

Several people involved in Tribal housing programs all across the country are interviewed about NAHASDA’s significance in their own community.

Douglas Marconi, the executive director for the Nez Perce Tribal Housing Authority, urges Congress to reauthorize the act swiftly to maintain the level of housing necessary.

“We all know communities continue to grow and when you get into overcrowded conditions, it leads to other social ills,” Pueblo Acoma Housing Authority Executive Director Francisco Carr said. “Without NAHASDA being reauthorized, it would be really detrimental to the community.”

You can watch the entire video about NAHASDA at <https://vimeo.com/1098315293/1bc853771b> or find it on the NAIHC’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1425540035261629. ■