



3240 Fort Road • Toppenish, WA 98948
(509) 865-8500

Date: April 27, 2016

Contact: David Mance, Media Relations Coordinator, 509-969-6084 or
mance_d@heritage.edu.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native American Graduates Honored in ceremony at Heritage University

Toppenish, Wash. – On Friday, April 22, 2016, Heritage University held an honoring ceremony for its Native American students who are earning their bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Heritage this year. The ceremony also honored Yakama Nation elders who have contributed greatly to the Yakima Valley community in which Heritage University serves.

The recognition ceremony was held at Smith Family Hall on the Heritage campus with a community meal shared with family, faculty, students, HU board members and tribal leaders. The graduates received honor songs from the Northwest Medicine Horse drummers and were gifted with a sacred eagle feather and a Pendleton sash recognizing their distinctive educational accomplishments. Dr. Celestino Limas, Vice President of Student and Enrollment Services provided the welcome address. Yakama Nation General Council Chairman Davis Washines provided the blessing for the traditional salmon meal, followed by Arlen Washines offering the keynote address to the graduates.

The 2016 Native American graduates are:

Dora Apodaca, Yakama Nation, B.A., elementary education
Andrea Compo, Yakama Nation, B.A., visual arts
Patrick Feller, Klahoose First Nations of Canada, B.A., environmental studies
Mary Gladstone-Big Wolf, Blood Tribe of Canada, B.A. Ed., elementary education
Nathaniel Hill, Yakama Nation, B.A., business administration
Daylen Isaac, Yakama Nation, B.S., environmental science
John Little Wolf, Yakama Nation, B.S.W., social work
Jasper Luna, Yakama Nation, B.S., computer science
Michael Meza, Yakama/Blackfeet Nation, B.A., business administration
Corazon Noyola, Direct Descent of a Spokane Tribal, B.S.W., social work
Cheri Root, Yakama Nation, B.A., criminal justice
Manuela Spencer, Yakama Nation, B.A., English
Bryan Strom, Yakama Nation, B.A. Ed., middle level education
Kami Tailor-Brooks, Choctaw, B.S.W., social work
Lola Wyman, Yakama Nation, B.A., business administration

Included in the evening recognition was SOAR Scholarship recipient from the Yakama Nation Tribal School, Bretagne Aleck. She will receive a full-tuition scholarship to attend Heritage University in the fall of 2016.

During the gathering, Heritage University also honored four Yakama Nation tribal members, Martha Yallup, Virginia Beavert, Tony Washines and Russell Jim, for their contributions as leaders in education, language and cultural preservation and environmental justice. Heritage President Dr. John Bassett and HU board member Kip Ramsey acknowledged these respective elders for their work on behalf of Indigenous people.

Dr. Martha Yallup is a member of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and is a co-founder of Heritage College, which is now Heritage University. While retired, Dr. Yallup has remained vigilant and continues to be instrumental in keeping the early Heritage vision alive today by supporting Native American education at the institution through scholarships.

Professor Virginia Beavert keeps the Yakama - Sahaptin language alive through her teachings to insure the Yakama Nation maintains language preservation for its people and future generations

Tony Washines, a fisherman, is often called upon to share his extensive knowledge of preserving the culture and traditional ways of the people as a member of the Yakama Nation.

As the leader of the Yakama Nation's Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program, Russell Jim actively advocates for the environmental cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear site and the protection of the treaty rights of the Yakama Nation.

Heritage University honored each of these individuals for their contributions to the Yakima Valley and central Washington.

For more information, contact Maxine Janis, President's Liaison for Native American Affairs, (509) 865-0737 or Janis_M@heritage.edu.

#

Heritage University is a non-profit, independent, regionally accredited institution of higher education offering undergraduate and graduate education across the state of Washington. Visit our website, www.heritage.edu.