

Summer 2010 Edition

HEEF Helps Fund Historic Graduation: Hopi Teachers Earn Master's Degrees from the University of Arizona

By: Patty Talahongva

Decades of work, education and hands-on experience has led to an historic first for the Hopi Education Endowment Fund and the Hopilavayi Program with the graduation of Ada Curtis and Bernita Duwahoyeoma. On May 14, 2010 the two ladies earned their Masters degree in Language, Reading and Culture from the University of Arizona, in Tucson, through a unique partnership between the Hopi tribe and the UA with additional funding provided by the HEEF.

For Curtis, whose first language is Hopi, the achievement brings her full circle. Instead of being punished for speaking her language she is now teaching Hopi to her students. "Now I am saying, 'put away your English and let's use Hopi!'"

For Duwahoyeoma, who is 61-years-old and has taught for 39 years, earning a Masters in Education gave her pride in knowing she's making a positive impact on Hopi students.

"I am like a mother," says Sheilah Nicholas, Ph.D. and head of the Hopilavayi Program. "I feel like, wow! I am so proud of them!"

The program started in 2004 as a summer institute through the tribes' Cultural Preservation Office. Its purpose is to provide training to Hopi teachers, teacher assistants and community members who are responsible for teaching Hopi language and culture in the schools.

Each summer participants took a four week course in language revitalization, literacy and curriculum development. The students earned six credits. Eventually Hopi Day School became the main site as Nicholas had been hired as a consultant there. Thus the partnership was formed. "The University of Arizona is to be commended for offering such a unique academic program that will benefit the Hopi people," says LuAnn Leonard, HEEF executive director.



HEEF Board Member & UA Professor Dr. Sheilah Nicholas with graduates Ada Curtis & Bernita Duwahoyeoma

Photo Courtesy Patty Talahongva 2010

In 2008 Nicholas learned the regular participants had maxed out the accumulation of university course credits under summer only course work. They had to make a decision to apply to a degree program otherwise they could no longer get university credit. "So, I proposed that to the participants," she says.

"Ada and Bernita were very strong candidates in my eyes." But it wasn't easy to convince them. "They were very hesitant," she says. "Sheilah smacked us in the face," jokes Duwahoyeoma remembering how Nicholas had to make them understand they had already earned many credits which they could apply to a Masters program. "'Look at this!'" she says Nicholas told them and urged them to apply for a Masters program. "Then she twisted our arms," Duwahoyeoma gently laughs.



HEEF Board Member & UA Professor Dr. Sheilah Nicholas with graduates Ada Curtis & Bernita Duwahoyeoma

Photo Courtesy Patty Talahongva 2010

The two ladies agreed and spent the summer of 2009 on the campus of UA taking their final course work with far younger students. “They thought we were old school, didn’t have anything to contribute,” says Duwahoyeoma. “They found out real fast, they could only talk textbook, we had hard experience.”

They were able to attend the summer institute thanks to funding provided by the HEEF’s Community Development grants. “The funds that have supported the Hopi Institute demonstrates the strong commitment from the HEEF to Hopi language,” Nicholas says, “and now the Institute has reciprocated with its first two graduates with specialized degrees.

“Congratulations to the new graduates and many thanks to our generous donors who support our efforts,” echoes LuAnn Leonard, HEEF executive director.

Curtis has one wish for her students, “Hopefully they too will someday be inviting me to their graduation,” she smiles.

Save the Date – HEEF to Celebrate 10th Anniversary in November

Ten years ago a special team was formed by Tribal Chairman Wayne Taylor, Jr. to explore the possibility of creating a segregated fund specifically for education. At the time, the major source of income for the Tribe which provides funding for grants & scholarships for Hopi students was derived from the Hopi’s natural resources. As such, funding was precarious from year-to-year. There were many stories of Hopi college students who had to drop classes because the operating budget hadn’t passed.

Although education was highly valued, a stable funding source was not available. There was a need to seek alternative ways to ensure that a source for funding was always available while building & safeguarding tribal assets.

After months of research, the team comprised of then Hopi Tribal Treasurer Nada Talayumptewa, Tribal Finance Director John Carpenter, Tribal Assistant General Counsel Lynelle Hartway, Hopi Tribal Council Representative Marvin Yoyokie, local nonprofit leaders Barbara Poley & Loris Taylor and Chairman Taylor’s Staff Assistant, LuAnn Leonard developed Ordinance #54 to create the tribally-chartered nonprofit, the Hopi Education Endowment Fund.

On November 20, 2000, the Team presented Ordinance #54 to the Hopi Tribal Council for approval and to request seed

money for the endowment. After an intensive two-hour presentation, the Hopi Tribal Council, approved Ordinance #54 and allocated \$10 million! The news was historic, especially for a non-gaming tribe, to be forward looking and make an investment in its Hopi people’s future.

Since 2000, over \$6 million dollars has been granted to more than 900 students in the form of scholarship & grant awards. There have been approximately 200 degrees earned from the AA’s to the PhD’s. In fact, two JD were earned last semester (spring 2010). The HEEF has also funded more than a dozen community grants in the areas of language retention, cultural arts and leadership for students across the reservation.

The HEEF will celebrate its achievements, relationships and its students on **November 4, 2010 in Flagstaff**. Please mark your calendars for this ticketed event as we take a look back at ten years and look forward with hope to another 10 years. For further information, please feel free to contact HEEF staff and look out for more information as details become available on the HEEF website, Facebook and Twitter.

Matching Gifts

Did you know you could possibly double or triple your contribution to the HEEF?

Many employers participate in matching gift programs that enable employees to leverage their gifts to make a greater impact, some companies match 1:1 or 2:1.

Visit www.matchinggifts.com to see if your employer participates in a matching-gift program or contact your Human Resources

Representative or Charitable Giving/Grants Department.

If eligible, request a matching gift form from your employer and send the completed form along with your gift to the HEEF and we will do the rest.

You may also be eligible if you serve on a board or if your spouse is employed by a company that participates in a matching-gift program.

Melinda “Mindy” Secakuku: My Path to Teaching

Melinda “Mindy” Secakuku has had many different aspirations on what she wanted to do in life from being a veterinarian, pediatrician, athletic trainer to teacher. As she left the home for Ft. Lewis College in Durango, CO, Mindy shared, “My intended major was Athletic Training, but when I started the program I realized it wasn’t for me. I then changed my major to Elementary Education after my freshman year, realizing it is a field that I know that I could use when I returned to Hopi as education is always a great benefit to anyone.”

During her childhood years, education was emphasized by family members as a tool that would provide for a future for her and others. Through the encouragement and support from her family Mindy said, “My family always told me to do my best and told me to keep going. There were times when I did want to come home because I thought I was too far away, but they always told me things will still be here when you get back. That’s what really kept me going as I always wanted to make them proud and see how much I’ve accomplished while I was gone.”

After her graduation from Ft. Lewis with a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education, Mindy became employed as a Teacher Assistant at Second Mesa Day School. Knowing the importance of education and its impact Mindy stated, “Education is always important, especially here on Hopi. We have such a low rate of students continuing their education beyond high school and I always saw myself as being a teacher and I could show my students that it can be done. Just because we live on the reservation does not mean we can’t leave and become successful.”



Through funding from the HEEF and HTGSP, she realized the impact on her educational opportunities stating, “The funding from HTGSP has made a huge impact on my education. If it wasn’t for them and their supporters I don’t think I would have had this opportunity to further my education. I might still have been able to go to school but having to pay for the full costs would have been a different experience.” Mindy also acknowledged the support of donors to the HEEF expressing her gratitude by saying, “I would like to personally thank them. Without their generous donations, others and I would not be at the place we are now. I encourage them to keep donating because there are more students like myself that want to continue our education but don’t have the ability to do it ourselves.”

Mindy is from the Village of Tewa and is member of the Sand Clan. She is the daughter of Camelia Dewakuku and Scott Secakuku. Mindy is currently working towards her Arizona Certification to gain a full time teaching position, with plans to attain her Master’s degree in Curriculum & Instruction with an emphasis on Indian Education from Arizona State University.

Congratulations Graduates!

Through the financial support from the HEEF and the HTGSP, **27** Hopi students were able to complete their college education during the 2009-10 academic year. "CONGRATULATIONS" to all the students on their accomplishments. We wish them the best in their future endeavors. *Spring 2010 Graduates listed below*

Alyssa Dennison

Northern Arizona University - BS in
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Rebecca Fred

Northern Arizona University - MED
in Elementary Education, Continuing
Professional

Diane Lomahaftewa-Albert

Northern Arizona University - BSED in
Elementary Education

Gladys Lomayestewa

Northern Arizona University - MED
in Elementary Education, Continuing
Professional

Bernita Duwahoyeoma

University of Arizona - MA in Language,
Reading and Culture

Carlene Tenakhongva

University of Arizona
Juris Doctorate - Law

Bradley Martin

Arizona State University
Juris Doctorate - Law

Chelsea Tyler

Arizona State University - BSN, Nursing

Kim Zahne

Arizona State University - BS, Nursing

Lorraine Martinez

Arizona State University - BA in Sociology

Jenna Hines

Mesa Community College - AA in
Elementary Education

Angela Delgarito

Dine College - AAS in Social and
Behavioral Sciences

Thomas Reed

University of California Santa Barbara - MS
in Electrical Engineering

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- Sikyaqa'ö (Yellow Corn) donor \$1 - \$249
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Kwakwhá/Askwali (Thank You) for your generous support.

JUNE2010 NL