
Delores Ann “Dee” Pigsley

Who was Delores Ann “Dee” Pigsley?

Delores Ann Pigsley, often called “Dee” for short, is an important leader of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. She has served on the Tribal Council for more than forty years, including many years as chairman. A Tribal Council is the group of people elected to lead the Tribe. The Tribal Chairman is the person selected by the entire Tribal Council to lead their meetings and take other leadership roles.



Early Life

Delores was born in Toledo, Oregon. Her parents were Alfred and Maude Lane. Her family descends from Joshua, Chetco, and Shasta people from southwestern Oregon and northern California who were removed to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation. She was the youngest of eight children. She grew up at Chemawa Indian School, where her parents worked. She attended Keizer Grade School and graduated from North Salem High School in 1961. When Dee was growing up the U.S. government passed a law that Siletz people call Termination. This law meant that the government no longer recognized Siletz Tribal members as Tribal people.

Adult Life

After she graduated, Dee started out working at an insurance company. Later, she worked for the Social Security Administration (a part of the U.S. government) in Salem, Oregon, for many years. She was first elected to the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in 1975.

At that time, the Tribe was working to get back federal recognition. This work took many years and Dee was an important part of the effort. In 1977, she and other Tribal leaders finally convinced Congress to pass a law restoring the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, an event the Tribe calls Restoration. Restoration means that the U.S. government recognizes that the Siletz people are their own independent nation.

Since Restoration, Dee has continued to serve on Tribal Council, often as Tribal Chairman. As Tribal Chairman, Dee meets with people from different cities, counties, and states. She also meets with U.S. government officials. She also leads the Tribal Council meetings. As part of Tribal Council, Dee works to help her community and makes sure that the Siletz Tribe works as a nation to help members have good houses, schools, jobs, and health care.

Delores Ann “Dee” Pigsley *(Continued)*

Later Life

Dee retired from her job in 1998 but kept working hard for her Tribe. In the 1990s, Dee led the Tribe during the construction of the Chinook Winds Casino and Convention Center in Lincoln City, Oregon. The casino project was a major event in Tribal history and gave the Siletz Tribe a chance to have more jobs and resources.

Thanks to her decades of service, Dee has grown to be a well-known leader in Indian Country across the United States. She often represents Siletz in groups where Tribal governments work together on bigger goals like the National Congress of American Indians, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and many others. Dee has also testified before Congress many times.

Dee married Donald Pigsley and they had three children—Timothy, Troy, and Quanna—as well as several grandchildren and great grandchildren. Today (in 2023), Dee lives in Keizer, Oregon and is still the Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

Sources

Ecotrust. (2011). *2011 Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Award: Delores Ann Pigsley*. http://archive.ecotrust.org/indigenousleaders/2011/dee_pigsley.html

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