



Red Cloud Indian School

Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Summer, 2002

Dreams of Achievement come true for Red Cloud Graduates

The unexpected snow and morning chill dampened spirits little. Graduates past and new, with happy friends and proud family members, crowded into the Dizzy Trout Field House on May 24, 2002. Always a bright festival of star quilts, banners and smiles, Red Cloud High School's 110th graduating class marked the school's long tradition of excellence among the Lakota.

To the traditional refrain of Edward Elgar's "Pomp & Circumstance", capped and robed, the seniors processed to the front. Then, after his invocation and brief opening remarks, and after the Lakota Flag Song was performed by the Sons of the Oglala, Fr. Tom Simonds, Red Cloud High School Principal, presented the co-valedictorians.

At the top, this year brought a first: a tie. High

school guidance counselor Lenny Clifford said it was novel to his 24 years at Red Cloud, and, so far as he knew, had never happened. Announcement of the honorees was delayed until just days before the ceremony while final tabulation of grade point averages went into a third decimal point. At the last, there were two.

Thus, this year's honorees, Ms. Bordeaux and Ms. White Face, had the difficult task of preparing speeches they might not give. But, a happy ending: two valedictory addresses were heard in alphabetical order. Up first, Ms. Bordeaux started with Dr. Seuss: **Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the THINKS you can think up if only you try.**

It was a playful start, and vintage Bordeaux. Then Bordeaux segued into honoring a fallen friend. Out of respect for



(continued from page 1)

the memory of Cassandra, a classmate who died in their Freshman year, the graduating class voted to keep an empty chair among them on the dais. It was for Cassandra. In her speech, Minnie remembered, "Cassandra was not just a classmate, she was a friend, a teammate, and a sister. It was a blow to all of us, and it is still hard to understand now. But as freshman we pulled together, and have since pulled together as a class."

Ms. White Face began her valedictory with the Lakota tradition of acknowledging elders. In her case, parents and teachers. "We owe all that we have accomplished to those of you with us today. You have supported us and helped us along our journey through high school, and we appreciate and are grateful for you more than you will ever know."

As if to underscore Ms. White Face's acknowledgement of support, there followed the two traditional spirit awards of Red Cloud. The highly coveted Brother Dennis Ryan, SJ Award went to Mr. Renteria. Immediately after, the prestigious Bob Clifford Scholar/Athlete Award was presented to Ms. White Face. Both awards carried scholarship prizes with them. The support continued. Other awards went to these young Lakota men and women to support their future academic efforts. Notable were Cassandra's parents, who gave fourteen individual scholarships of \$100.00 each to assist some of the graduates.

Such efforts have paid off handsomely in the past. Last year's valedictorian and the recipient of an Eleanor Mardell/Andrew

Caldwell 4-year scholarship, Ms. Yellow Boy, just successfully completed her first year at Notre Dame. Also, just a week earlier, 1998 Red Cloud graduate Nakina Mills received her BA in Sociology at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Somewhat more spectacular, with her mother and father in the audience, Mills was surprised with the announcement that she had been awarded the Spirit of Creighton Award, the highest honor conferred by the university annually.

According to university officials, the awards are given each year to a man and woman who represent the best qualities of the university's founding family, brothers Edward and John Creighton and Edward's wife, Mary Lucretia Creighton.

Asked about the award, Mills said, "I knew that I had been nominated but I definitely didn't expect to win it. I knew there were other people more important that did a lot more than I did." Pressed a little, Mills allowed, "When I first got to Creighton there weren't too many Native Americans. So I did a lot of recruitment through the years. I was president of the Native American Association for two years and other groups. But mostly what I did was a lot of visiting schools and asking questions and promoting Creighton." Mills will return to Omaha in the fall to attend graduate courses toward a Masters in Criminal Justice. Nakina hasn't ruled out the possibility of a law degree in the future.

With the conferring of the diplomas, and after a final honoring song by the Sons of the



Ms. Bordeaux encourages her peers to continue their educational journey during her valedictorian address.



The two beautiful young ladies congratulate one another in making history at Red Cloud as Co-Valedictorians.



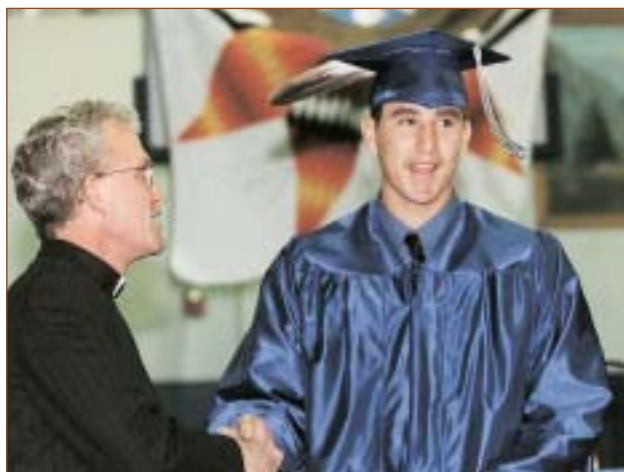
Ms. White Face looks to the future with ambition. She will continue to carry with her The Dream.

Oglala, all stood for a final prayer by former Principal and now Campus Minister Bob Brave Heart. Surrounded by friends and family, this year's graduates basked in an unexpected light. Far more than Ms. White Face knew, the larger Red Cloud Family of support was blessing this Graduation Day.

A few weeks earlier, Red Cloud President, Fr. Peter Klink, SJ, had mailed out a letter to the school system's supporters and wrote: "Enclosed is a card of congratulations. Please sign it and send it back. The cards will be presented at the graduation ceremony. I cannot tell you how much it will mean to our graduates to know how many people have walked with them and cared for them so generously through the years to this great day."

Four thousand cards were returned, four thousand lights of continued hope for Red Cloud and its children.

Perhaps with that reality in mind, Ms. Bordeaux said quite movingly in her address: "...if there is one thing I learned ...it is to have hope and a positive attitude. When we do not let ourselves hope, we do not allow ourselves purpose. And without purpose, life is dark."



***We know how special it is for
graduating seniors to have their family
and friends share in the joy of one of the
most important events in their lives.***

***So, no matter how far away you may be,
we bring you these photos so that you can
be part of Graduation 2002.***



Student Production Earns Plaudits

In the films opening shot, we move with the camera like a gladiator entering an arena. Starting in a dark hallway, seconds later a square of light approaches. Suddenly, we're bathed in the bright expanse of center court at Rapid City's Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. It is an equivalent to ancient Rome's Coliseum, and winter site of the annual boys and girls Lakota Nation Invitational Tournaments (LNI).

So begins an award winning short video production written, performed, shot and edited by Red Cloud High School students. The first prize award is from participation in Panasonic Corporation's national "Kid Witness News" program. Red Cloud students Mr. Janis, Mr. Cummings, Mr. LaPointe, Ms. Ross and Mr. Weston shared duties like editing, writing, formulating on-air questions, writing the script and operating the camera. Appearing on camera and narrating throughout was sophomore Leroy Janis.

First prize included an all expense paid trip for two students to New York City from May 11-14. Red Cloud Multimedia teacher, Guerin Gray, accompanied sophomores Janis and Cummings on the trip. Gray credited Janis and Cummings with contributing the most individually to the project, though he added there was strong participation from the whole group. The award ceremony, called the New Vision Awards, included a simultaneous webcast.

The twice-annual Lakota Nation Invitational Tournament is a fitting subject for a short documentary produced by Lakota students. A contemporary success story, the tournament was founded by Red Cloud High School assistant principal Brian Brewer along with Red Cloud alumnus Dave Archambault and former principal Chuck Cuny. In the video, Brewer explains the original reason for starting the basketball tournament. "The idea started in 1976. It was right after the Wounded Knee conflict and the Indian schools couldn't get teams to come to the reservation to play us. So, initially, it was just a way to add games to our schedule."

But as on camera reporter Ms. Janis explains in the video: "From a small eight team basketball tournament in a local gym at the beginning, the LNI has expanded in magnitude to a cultural event. Besides basketball, other events include: volleyball, wrestling, boxing, traditional Lakota hand games, an art show, knowledge bowl and Lakota language bowl." Underscoring the regional importance of the tournament, Janis adds: "Not only that, the tournament has expanded to include many non-Native American schools in the Native American tournament."

The multimedia tag-team teachers—Jerry Swope and Guerin Gray couldn't be more proud. "Our goal is to provide students with the opportunity to tell their own

stories, to give them the tools that they need to do that," said Swope. The teachers explained that the Panasonic contest included over 200 hundred schools from across the country, and that Red Cloud was the first South Dakota school to win. Red Cloud learned of their first place finish when Panasonic Corporation's Naomi Pagidas contacted the school on April 10.

"It was great, she called during class," said Gray, "And I took the call and I got to say to the class 'Hey guys, we won!' And she got to hear everyone cheering," said Gray. The teachers say planning is already underway to come up with a subject for next year's entry, though he said a final decision won't be made until the next school year.



Reversing the roles, a Red Cloud student is interviewed at the Panasonic Awards Banquet.



Gray with students accept the First Place Award.

As part of the program, the Panasonic Corporation donated a video camera and tripod, microphone, video editing machine, VCR, and two editing monitors along with several video and digital tapes to Red Cloud's multimedia lab. "Basically, it was everything we needed to get started," said Gray.

"Our end was that we commit to producing one video per year using some or all of this equipment and enter it in their annual contest," said Gray, "The video can be anywhere from thirty seconds to ten minutes. The Lakota Invitational Tournament video runs about 4 and 1/2 minutes."

For Gray and Swope, the award is additional proof – though they say proof is hardly needed – that Red Cloud's commitment to a cutting edge education for its Lakota students is paying off. Asked about the quality of video production equipment in Red Cloud's multimedia lab, second year volunteer Gray, an English and Irish studies graduate of Notre Dame, said, "Our students do all their video editing on the computers. We use them for photo manipulation and digital imaging in

the photography classes I teach. The whole yearbook was made on the computers, including layout and design."

Though you'd think such equipment would intimidate any high school student, Gray said, the learning curve is short. "It's pretty interesting to watch them be a little nervous at the start. But by the end they're doing amazing things. It's hard to see that step in between. It seems like all of a sudden it clicks for them and they understand how to manipulate the computer and make it do what they want it to do."

"I think they're pretty enthusiastic about these classes," said Swope, "The best comments we've had on our class evaluations have been about getting to see the kinds of things you can do on a computer." So, perhaps, begins the start of a promising generation of Native American filmmakers, courtesy of Red Cloud Indian School.

National Symphony comes to Red Cloud

March 15 dawned snowy and gloomy. Red Cloud Schools Superintendent Fr. Tom Merkel's immediate priority was safety. The school system's buses travel hundreds of miles daily to safely deliver and return its Lakota students. In March, ice, snowdrifts and freezing temperatures are a frequent concern.

Should he call off school? What to do? It would be a judgment call. Weather forecast and road reports put the problem in a gray area. After 7 years at the helm of the Pine Ridge Reservation's largest school system, Fr. Merkel knew that accurately predicting local weather was often little more than a gamble. Then, an hour before school started, the weather broke.

For more than the standard reasons, Fr. Tom breathed a sigh of relief. "When they get here, we'll have students for them," he thought. The "they" were select members of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C. Bad weather notwithstanding, the contingent of the Orchestra had called earlier and said they were driving down from Rapid City, SD, 120 miles to the north.

The members of the Orchestra making the trip were Dotian Levialer, harp; Thomas Perazolli, flute; William Wielgus, oboe; Glenn Donnellan, violinist and violist; and Richard Barber, bassist. The program consisted of two separate performances, said Fr. Merkel, and members of the National Symphony performed two pieces. Both performances were held in the Holy Rosary Church on the main campus. Advance team members had said earlier that the church would be ideal for their program.

Both performances were held to the delight of all. One was titled "Fiddling Around," which was a violin and a bass performance attended by grades 5 through 8 from Our Lady of Lourdes and grades 9 through 12 from Red Cloud High School. The second performance was called "Unlikely Trio" and was performed for kindergarten through eighth grade. "That one was electric," said Fr. Merkel, "I was seated on the side and the musicians were in front of me. I could see our whole student body there. When they played, the kids were really tuned in, sitting on the edges of their pews. They were engaged by the humor that was a part of this performance."

"Fiddling Around" was designed to introduce the audience to the works of Beethoven, Bach and Brahms. The performers paced the presentation to introduce Red Cloud's students to classical music. "When they were doing something about Beethoven, the woman (Dotian Levialer) who was the harpist snuck up on the oboist (William Wielgus) with a big stuffed dog," said the Superintendent. "The kids who were watching - loved it". As the performances drew to a close, another surprise

was in store for the students, said Merkel. As a Superintendent, he had concerns about how to get the whole high school over to lunch, plus grades 5 through 8 from Our Lady of Lourdes. It was a larger than average lunch crowd - all going at the same time.

"I wanted to stagger their departure, so I said to the musicians: What we need now, while some of our students are leaving, is lunch music," said Fr. Tom. Spontaneously, they played a melody from "Fiddler on the Roof". I was able to say: Would the seniors please be dismissed to go to lunch. Then I asked if they would play a little something different for the juniors. On the spot they moved into something special for the juniors. And so it went for every class. It really came alive at dismissal time.

"That's where our students recognized that these weren't people coming in to do a canned program. These were people who could create on the spot. They had a repertoire that went well beyond the set parameters of their program. They did a great job." Merkel added that the National Symphony's program was designed to teach concepts of music and sound while at the same time make a performance.

Planning for the visit began over two years ago and was part of a systematic outreach program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Every year the Symphony sends members of its orchestra to a pre-selected state for what it calls a residency. "This was our good fortune. The residency this year was from March 14 to 23. The National Symphony Orchestra does one per year. This was just South Dakota's year," said Fr. Merkel.

"These people are serious, they sent advance teams and it took some time to bring this about. They could have chosen other places in South Dakota, but they chose to come here. When the advance team saw the church, they said, 'this would be a wonderful place for our musicians to play.' Of course, they were thinking acoustically, but I think they were also thinking of the spiritual properties of music.

"From our perspective, it's always great to be able to introduce our students to something more, and we were really fortunate to have had the opportunity. I think also we were able to develop a beautiful relationship with them: We thanked them, we had our students give them gifts, and we gave them a star quilt to have them hang in the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C."

Asked about how the visiting musicians felt about their reception by Red Cloud's students, Fr. Merkel replied: "They were touched. We made friends, we made a relationship with some people who could show our students some very beautiful things."



An elementary student enjoying her experience of playing the harp.



Students listen attentively to the musicians.



Students recognizing the musicians for their efforts.



Fr. Merkel sharing a time-honored tradition of giving gifts to our guests.



Gates Swing Open...

Graduation Day for the Class of 2002 was a truly joyful time. I thought back to the many graduations I have attended and how the atmosphere in the schools continues to grow. For many years, Red Cloud has worked hard to give the students the competence to do well at colleges and universities across the country. Now the students not only have the competence to go further, but they have the confidence to do so. More and more of our graduates are returning to Red Cloud filled with stories of their successes at college. Our younger students listen to them and start to realize that they too, with hard work and determination, can have a brighter future.

The many Red Cloud success stories take dedication and hard work in the schools, but without your help we would not be here to do that. The Class of 2002 is walking into their future with competence and confidence. The success of your giving is clear in the lives and achievements of all of our students and graduates. Our students do not need a hand out, but a hand up. That helping hand comes from you, and we are very grateful.

Our attention now turns to the Class of 2015- the kindergartners who will be starting this fall. In order to assure that they too have the competence and confidence of a Red Cloud education, it will take a continued effort on all our parts. The unstable economy and all the recent events in our country continue to affect our abilities to afford a quality education day in and day out. It is an education that challenges each student to do his/her best and provides each with the tools to meet the challenges of both their past and their future.

Once again I am asking you to consider a gift of a lifetime that will help insure that the Class of 2015 and those that follow have the opportunity for a Red Cloud education. Planned Gifts - Wills, Insurance policies and Retirement Plans, including IRA's, are extremely important to the financial future and stability of Red Cloud. Each gift, no matter the size, means so much to the future of the children at Red Cloud.

Recently a friend of Red Cloud called asking for information on naming Red Cloud on his **Life Insurance Policy**. His family is grown and no longer needs the financial protection of the policy. This gift will help insure the future of Red Cloud without jeopardizing his family's economic situation.

Last month, Red Cloud received proceeds as the named beneficiary of an **IRA** Account. Because Red Cloud is a recognized charity, we received the full value of the account. Had the IRA been left to family members, estate and income taxes would have reduced the value of the IRA account. Thus the gift helped

insure Red Cloud's future while reducing the amount of taxes due by the family and increasing the value of the other assets they did receive. In both these cases, all it took was completing the required beneficiary form.

Will or Trust gifts to Red Cloud are a true blessing to us. Whether the gift is a specific sum or a percentage of the residue, they are a great help to us. Your legal advisor may need some of the following information. Our legal name is Red Cloud Indian School, Inc. Our address is 100 Mission Drive, Pine Ridge, SD 57770-2100. Should it be needed, our Tax Identification Number is 46-0275071. Red Cloud Indian School is a tax-exempt non-profit, religious, educational institution according to a group ruling issued by the IRS to the United States Catholic Conference.

All Planned Gifts -Will and Trust gifts, gifts of retirement plans, naming Red Cloud as a joint owner on a bank account or certificate of deposit, gifts of paid up life insurance policies-help insure a brighter future for the Lakota children of Red Cloud. They are very important to Red Cloud.

Red Cloud Indian School also offers a **Charitable Gift Annuity Program** for those individuals over the age of 50. A Red Cloud Annuity allows you to make a gift to Red Cloud while insuring you a guaranteed income for the rest of your life and the life of any successor beneficiary (also over the age of 50) you may designate. Red Cloud annuities start at \$5000. In addition to the guaranteed payments, you receive an immediate charitable income tax deduction as well as an ongoing charitable income tax deduction for years to come. **All charitable gift annuity payments are guaranteed by all of the assets of Red Cloud Indian School. If your investments in the stock market are not doing well, consider purchasing an annuity with the stock. You will avoid capital gains tax on the appreciated stock value and receive a guaranteed return on your investment. With the stock market so unstable lately, the guaranteed payments of a C.G.A. allows you to plan a consistent income.**

If you need additional information, please let me know by filling out that attached coupon and returning it to me. Please seriously consider a planned gift to Red Cloud - the Class of 2015 is starting their journey to a brighter future and they need you to help light the way. *Lila wopila tanka* - many, many thanks, and may God bless you.

Fr. Peter J. Klink, S.J.

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