

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens Canada
Actualité**

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August 10, 2006
The Daily Graphic
Online

Residential school abuse survivor dead at 90

By Leighton Klassen

Portage la Prairie— She was a mother, an adored community member, an activist and a residential school survivor who will live on in the memories of the people she has touched.

Flora Merrick, 90, died on Aug. 4, leaving behind nine children and several grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends.

Ralf Merrick, one of her three sons, is grieving the loss of his mother.

"It will be loneliness for a while," he said from his home in Long Plain First Nation. "It will be quite lonely, but I know that she worked hard all her life ... and she was very successful and accomplished a lot in her life."

His mother always kept busy, Ralf said, and baked and cooked for the community. Her community involvement earned an award of appreciation from Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in 1999.

Her success came from her kindness, which Ralph said was part of her personality.

"She would never accept anything for herself," he explained. "If someone gave something to her, she would pass it onto her children or grandchildren. She just gave a lot of love."

This compassion and generosity were not things she learned while attending Portage Residential School, however. Flora spoke to The Daily Graphic two years ago about her experiences at the school.

"It was wicked I tell you, it was wicked," she told The Graphic. "None of that should have happened to my Indian people."

From about the age of seven or eight until she was 16 or 17, Merrick lived at the school, which is now known as Rufus Prince Building on Crescent Road West, for 10 to 11 months out of the year.

In February of 2005, she fought for the rights of residential school survivors, demanding compensation from the federal government. She travelled to Ottawa and spoke to a committee, which held three days of hearings to study the effectiveness of the federal government's alternative dispute resolution process to resolve residential school survivor's claims.

In November of that year, deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan announced Ottawa was offering more than \$2 billion to compensate former students of native residential schools.

Long Plain Chief Dennis Meeches said Flora Merrick will be missed for her fight for aboriginal rights.

"She gave so much advice throughout her years and she'll be missed in not only Long Plain, but across the country for the work she did for residential school survivors," he

said.

Merrick's activism spanned political lobbying. It also came in the form of emotional healing which she brought to many people including Ralph's wife, Florence. Like Flora, her daughter-in-law is also a residential school survivor, who attended the school from the time she was five until she was 17, in 1972.

"When I got out, I had no inkling how to survive in a family situation," Florence said from her home at Long Plain. "She taught me how to live in a family and that was so important to her."

Flora Merrick's funeral was scheduled for 2 p.m. today at McKenzies Portage Funeral Chapel Ltd.

August 9, 2006
CNW Telbec
Media Advisory

25th anniversary of the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) will be celebrated with book launch at Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference in Edmonton Thursday

The 25th anniversary of the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) is being marked with a book of recollections that will be launched Thursday at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference in Edmonton.

The NNADAP Storybook: Celebrating 25 Years contains stories of recovery and hope drawn from lived experiences of First Nations people and their communities.

"NNADAP created a historic precedent as the first national program to be completely delivered by First Nations. It is because of this control that such strong success has been achieved in helping our people to recover, reclaim their lives, and rebuild their communities," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine. "Many survivors of Residential Schools were only able to break the cycle of addictions and generational abuse through the intervention of NNADAP workers. This storybook demonstrates how far we have traveled - and will continue to travel -- on our healing journeys."

NNADAP was created in 1981 to support First Nations in establishing programs aimed at preventing and intervening in drug, alcohol, and solvent abuse addictions. The program has faced many challenges, with no real increases in annual budgets to meet the needs of a growing population, half of which are under the age of 25. For instance, NNADAP workers are facing the crystal meth epidemic, for which AFN issued a National Call For Action one year ago, and for which no new funding has been announced.

As of April 1, 2007, federal health funding for First Nations funding will be capped at 3% growth. The impact on NNADAP is yet unknown. Impending funding shortfalls could be avoided with honoring of the First Minister Meeting on Aboriginal Issues commitments from November 2005. The First Nations Framework in the Blueprint on Aboriginal Health made several recommendations that take a holistic approach and build on successes of NNADAP, but also provide sustainable funds and remove existing barriers within the system.

The Assembly of First Nations Chief Executive Officer, Richard Jock, was NNADAP's national director and has 25 years of direct and indirect experience with the Program. "... we are all aware that, even with success stories like NNADAP, issues and effects of addiction require continued focus and support from all First Nations citizens and communities," tells Mr. Jock in his published Storybook contribution, **"As First Nations people, we have tremendous potential to contribute to the overall development of Canada, its future economic, health and social evolution."**

August 10, 2006
Williams Lake Tribune
Online

Opening and cleansing ceremony at Xats'ull

Karen Longwell

A ceremony to open and cleanse the Xats'ull Heritage Village started slowly with participants gathering to build a pit for cooking and Soda Creek youth drumming and singing on Wednesday.

Every year since it opened in 1996, the Xats'ull Heritage Village has held an opening and cleansing ceremony. This year, with a little bit of a late start because of management changes, the ceremony got underway on August 9, said organizer Rhonda Shackelly.

Elder Les Peters, who conducted the ceremony, recalled how his grandparents lived and grew a garden in the place that is now a heritage site. He said the ceremony is a way of blessing the ground.

"We as native people do not live on the ground - we never have and we never will, we live with Mother Nature," said Peters.

Peters added that the importance of ceremonies in times when young people spend too much time watching TV or playing video games.

"We have seen the changes from horse and buggy to people landing on the moon," said Peters. "We have to teach our young people - we are not going to live forever."

He added that in gathering for ceremonies like this one, people have a chance to communicate with each other.

Peters cousin Ralph Williams added that the biggest thing lost over the years is respect for one another. Time spent in residential schools and influences from European culture has broken down communities but Peters is optimistic that cultures are coming together again. He said there were conflicts between different nations like Shuswap speaking people and Chilcotin speakers but that is changing.

Peters emphasized the need to have trust in each other to break down the barriers of racism. He welcomes people of all backgrounds to learn more about the Soda Creek community by attending the ceremonies.

After the ceremony there was a lunch and a loonie auction fundraiser for the Xats'ull Powwow.