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American Indian Mothers Presents Order of the Medicine Wheel Awards

by Dr. Ruth Dial Woods

As a part of the Annual Millennium Warrior Awards Program, American Indian Mothers, Inc. established the Order of the Medicine Wheel Awards to honor and recognize the outstanding lives, accomplishments, and service of five Lumbee Indian health professionals. Three awards were presented posthumously and two awards were presented to living health professionals.

Dr. Ruth Dial Woods introduced the use of life stories as biography and autobiography that express culture. The life stories of the honorees were expressions of Lumbee Indian culture. Dr. Woods identified eight values that are characteristic of Lumbee culture - motivation, determination, perseverance, ability to dream and to achieve a dream, compassion and service, responsibility, an ethic of work, and a sense of community. According to Dr. Woods, "When we tell our life stories, we reconstruct and rediscover our culture and we can more appropriately interpret and define our reality. In the one hundred and thirty-four years of life stories represented in our honorees, there are stories of bounds and chains, hardships, struggles, and racism, but they are also stories of family, support, religious beliefs, dreams and realities, academic ability, competence, dedication, commitment, and service. In a different time and a different place, these honorees were our "pathmakers and pacesetters." They have given us a past, a present, and a future and we stand proudly on their shoulders - Lumbee Indians in Medicine."

The Medicine Wheel Awards were designed by James Locklear especially for American Indian Mothers. The Order of the Medicine Wheel was an idea of Beverly Collins-Hall, Executive Director of the organization. "The awards are symbols of Lumbee Pride in the accomplishments and contributions and our great appreciation for the lives of our honorees and what their lives have meant to generations past, present and future," said Ms. Collins-Hall.

John Albert Burchard Lowry
June 28, 1890-February 4, 1958

John Albert Burchard Lowry was born the son of Henry H. Lowry and Julia Lowry in the Elrod Community of Robeson County, North Carolina. He was educated in public schools and at the University of Maryland School of Medicine from which he graduated in 1915 with a Doctor of Medicine Degree. After serving one year as an intern in the University of Maryland Hospital, Dr. Lowry moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where he joined the staff of the Tuberculosis Division of the Pennsylvania State Department of Health.

The entry of the United States into World War I on April 6, 1917 created a quick demand for physicians and Dr. Lowry was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the United States Army on June 27,

Five weeks later on August 2, 1917, he was called up for active duty and after a brief period of training in the United States Army, he was shipped to England. Gassed and wounded in the Somme Offensive in France on April 22, 1918, he was awarded the Purple Heart. When he became sufficiently well to be released from the hospital, Dr. Lowry was assigned to duty on hospital trains in Europe, was promoted to rank of Captain in February 1919, and honorably discharged from active duty on May 1, 1919.

Once back on American soil, and desiring to become a "Family Doctor" in Virginia, he established his practice in Crewe, Virginia, a railroad town that had been incorporated in 1888, two years before he was born. It was this place that he would spend the remainder of a dedicated and useful life.

After opening his office in Crewe, Virginia on July 1, 1919, he left his practice at summer's end to return to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to claim in marriage the hand of Mabel Coulson Johnson whom he married on September 3, 1919. A son died in infancy and a daughter, Jane died in 1937 at the age of 14.

Dr. Lowry was associated with causes and interests concerned with the welfare of his community, the development of his profession, and the promotion of the common good. He was a charter member and past commander of the Leon A. Harper Post of the American Legion, a charter member and past president of the Crewe Kiwanis Club, served as president of the Crewe Young Men's Christian Association of 25 years, was vice-president of the Bank of Crewe, and for 9 years a member of the Nottoway County School Board. He was also a faithful member of the Order of Masons and Worshipful Master of Crewe Lodge Number 123 and Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

A continuing interest in his profession was manifested in his active relationships with the American Medical Association, the Virginia State Medical Society, the Fourth District of Virginia Medical Society, and the American Academy of General Practice and its Virginia Chapter. He kept abreast of new developments in the field of medicine, pursued graduate studies at the New York Post-Graduate School, attended seminars in Pediatrics at Salada, North Carolina, and was a member of the Duke University Medical Cruise to the Scandinavian Countries in 1957.

Dr. Lowry's special interest in young people led to the establishment of the Crewe Community Center and the improvement of the Athletic Field in Crewe. While Dr. Lowry had a large and extensive medical practice, he found time to faithfully serve as a member and responsible leader in the Crewe Methodist Church where he was for 37 years a Steward and for 17 year chairman of the Official Board. He also taught the Men's Bible Class, was especially interested in missions, and served on the local church Commission on Missions, the Farmville District Board of Missions, the Virginia Methodist Conference Board of Missions, and the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church.

Dr. Lowry's Award was accepted by his niece, Julia Lowry Russell, daughter of the late Delton Lowry and Shirley Smith Lowry.

Viola Lowry Armstrong
June 6, 1897-June 16, 1986

Viola Lowry Armstrong was born the daughter of Henry H. Lowry and Julia Lowry in the Elrod community of Robeson County, North Carolina. She was educated in public schools and completed training as a Registered Nurse in Tennessee. According to oral history, she is the first Indian from our community to successfully train and become a registered nurse.

She attended and graduated from Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens, Tennessee from 1915 until 1918. After graduation from Tennessee Wesleyan, she went to nursing school at Knoxville General Hospital and graduated as a Registered Nurse in 1922. In 1923, she married W. Frank Armstrong and remained married for 54 years until his death in 1977.

In 1926, she gave birth to a son, Dr. William F. Armstrong, Jr. who was a practicing dentist for 50 years until his death in 1998. His daughter, Nancy Jane Armstrong is a registered nurse in Knoxville and is a Home Health Care Nurse.

Viola Lowry Armstrong continued her nursing career as a private duty nurse until she was 75 years old. She died in 1986.

Jane Armstrong Farrell, daughter of Viola and William Armstrong, Sr. resides in Knoxville, Tennessee and spend her winters in Riverview, Florida. Her daughter, Jenny Farrell Glenn has a master's degree in Nutrition and is an administrator of a Health Care Facility.

As long as she lived, Viola and her family actively participated in the annual Lowry Family Reunions with her brothers and sisters.

Dr. Telford A. Lowry
Walter A. Lowry, Pharmacist
Viola Lowry Armstrong, Nurse
Dr. John Albert Burchard Lowry
Stella Iota Lowry, Teacher and Homemaker
Bernard Wilborne Lowry, Ordained Minister
Elmer T. Lowry, Teacher and School Administrator
Delton H. Lowry, Teacher

The Lowries have maintained their family ties through annual family reunions throughout the Southeastern for several years and often visit First United Methodist Church, their home church in Pembroke, in honor of the entire Lowry family.

Jane Farrell of Knoxville, Tennessee and Riverview, Florida accepted the award in honor of her mother.

The biographical information on Dr. Lowry was provided by his nephew, Ronald H. Lowry of Richmond, Virginia.

Note: This is the first two of five life stories that will be published on honor of the recipients of the Order of the Medicine Wheel Awards as part of the Millennium Warrior Honoring Ceremony.



Beverly Collins-Hall, Dr. Ruth Dial Woods and Julia Lowry Russell are shown as Russell accepts the Medicine Wheel Award.



Shown left to right by Beverly Collins-Hall, Dr. Ruth Dial Woods and Jane Farrell who accepts the Medicine Wheel Award.



The H.H. Lowry children at homecoming in 1950. Left to right: Telford A., Walter A., Stella, Wilborn, Elmer, and Delton hidden from view in back.



Celebrates 70th birthday

Ms. Shirley Oxendine celebrated her 70th birthday on Monday, Dec. 6, 2004 with Family & Friends. She is the daughter of Duckery & Docia Oxendine.



Celebrates 92nd birthday

On December 01, 2004, Mrs. Gertrude Chavis of the St. Ann community celebrated her 92nd birthday with family and friends. Pictured with Mrs. Chavis (front row) are her son, Larry, her granddaughter Brittney, (back row) John House, her great-great granddaughter, Cassidy, her great-granddaughter Nakia, her daughter, Francine, and her son Harvard. Mrs. Chavis was married to the late Harvard L. Chavis.



Viola Estelle Lowry Armstrong is shown in her graduation picture from Knoxville General Hospital, Nursing School 1922.

New phone numbers for Carolina Indian Voice

Please make a note of the new phone numbers for the Carolina Indian Voice.

910-521-0796

910-521-0992

910-521-9154

And the new fax number:

910-521-7670

Carolina Indian Voice
910-521-0992

Thompson Baptist to present Christmas Play

Thompson Baptist Church will be presenting their Christmas Play, "The Gate of the Inn", on December 19, 2004 at 7:00 PM. The public is invited to attend. For more information or directions, please call Bro. Rudolph Dial at 738-4175.

Concerned Citizens group cancels meetings

Friday 7:30 meetings for the Concerned Citizens for the Children of the Robeson County School System will be canceled until further notice. If you need any other information, contact Glenn T. Hunt at 910-738-2698.



John Albert Burchard Lowry, M.D.