



THE KLAMATH TRIBES

KLAMATH-MODOC-YAHOOSKIN

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Class of 2023 Tribal High School Students Attend ‘Honor Dinner and Recognition’ Hosted by Klamath Tribes

CHILOQUIN, Ore. – The Class of 2023 tribal high school seniors were honored last Thursday, May 25, at the Ninth Avenue Venue downtown Klamath Falls for the Klamath Tribes “Honor Dinner and Recognition.” The event included guest speakers: Klamath County Ninth Circuit Court Judge Alycia Kersey and Klamath Tribes Chairman Clay Dumont Jr., who provided opening remarks, and featured guest speaker Richard J. Bailey Jr., President of Southern Oregon University.

The 23 graduating students lined up and were presented with a Certificate of Graduation Recognition and offered brief statements of their plans after graduating, and then a group photo was taken.

During interviews prior to the start of the event students talked about their future plans. Kayla Cook, a student at Mazama and Klamath Tribe member, said she will attend Lane Community College in Eugene. “I’m really excited, really excited to be here,” she said. “I’m going there to study psychology and hopefully I’ll transfer to a university and get my degree.”

When asked about the impact of the two pandemic years, prior to 2023, Cook admitted that she struggled academically during that period of time, a sentiment expressed by many of the students. Cook said returning to school and in-classroom learning really helped her to get back on track, and she said community college is also a way for her to prepare for the next step in her education. “I think it will be a lot easier than going to a university to start-off.” After community college, she plans to attend either Oregon State University or the University of Oregon.

Nobalie Snow, a tribal member of the Habematolel of Pomo Upper Lake in California, attends Henley High School. She was accepted to the University of Oregon, her number one choice. She will be majoring in education. “For a very long time, I’ve worked with kids,” she said. “So, it was something that came naturally to me. So, I just want to try it out, and see if I like it, and if not, I can always pick a different major. She said she wants focus on special education, which she also currently does as a tutor for students with learning challenges. “It’s something I’ve noticed I’m pretty good at,” she said. Snow, like many other tribal students, received financial aid. In her case, the American Indian College Fund and Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and she received a couple of scholarships from writing essays, all of which will go toward covering most of her annual costs of college.

CJ Robinson, a member of the Yahooskin Tribe and Mazama High School student, said he's excited to graduate but admitted he feels mentally exhausted due to the return to school and adjustment from the pandemic time of learning. "I definitely have less time to do stuff," he said, "just because everything is going back to its normal pace. It's not just -- do it whenever, and you'll be fine. It's now like deadlines are actually starting to take effect." Robinson will be going to Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to study to be a medical assistant, and after that, he said he will determine whether he wants to become a registered nurse or doctor but leaves the door open to pursue other opportunities. He said he participated in the "On Track" program through OHSU. "They're trying to get more ethnicities involved in the medical field, so it's easier for people of that ethnicity to get into the medical field." He said the university provided him with a full scholarship, and he will continue to receive it throughout his college studies.

Desmond Jackson of Chiloquin High School and a Klamath Tribe member, said he will work for the tribe this summer with hopes of saving enough money to attend Southern Oregon University to study sports medicine in a four-year program. "I just like being in the gym, and I like sports, so I looked it up, and sports medicine was the first thing I saw."

Shaylee Batten attends Henley High School and a Klamath Tribe member. She will be attending Klamath Community College and then plans to transfer to Southern Oregon University to study to be an elementary school teacher. Batten said she has a learning disability and is in special education, and said that inspired her to want to teach. "I want to be able to see other kids learning disabilities sooner, so they can get help when their younger." She also said the pandemic made things difficult for her, learning outside the classroom setting. "A lot of kids had a hard time during COVID in school," she said. "Not being in school, and not having the support they needed." Batten said she received assistance from the school during the pandemic, which was extremely helpful. "We went in once a week, and we actually got in-school learning during COVID."



The Tribal students of Class of 2023. (photo by Ken Smith/Klamath Tribes)