

# Introduction to the Scholarship Fund



This scholarship honors the memory of Roberta M. Wilson (Oglala/Cheyenne) for her life-long personal and professional dedication to Indian education. Roberta M. Wilson's legacy of unwavering commitment lives on in the hearts, minds, and spirits of her students, and in the many lives she touched throughout her life. Roberta M. Wilson's contributions to the advancement of students in higher education continue to inspire, ignite, and motivate those whom had the privilege to experience her leadership, wisdom, and guidance. Roberta M. Wilson embodied Lakota virtues and values, exemplifying cultural integrity in all her endeavors. This scholarship recognizes honorable scholars pursuing higher education while upholding their service commitment to their respective tribal community.

## Roberta M. Wilson Biography



Roberta (Oglala/Cheyenne) dedicated her adult life to Indian education, including k-12, and higher education. She was instrumental in the passage of the 1975 Federal Tribal College Act, a critical turning point in establishing funding for tribal colleges across the country. Roberta M. Wilson was an unrelenting proponent of Intellectual engagement, Roberta encouraged her students to engage in critical thinking skills, and approach learning as a life-long process. Roberta was a sought-after presenter and speaker for her depth and breadth of knowledge as well as her unique ability to enthrall audiences with her eloquent and often humor-infused delivery. She traveled extensively, always seeking and finding students to inspire, from Alaska to Southwest, from East Coast, across the Great Plains, and back to the Pacific Northwest. A true educator, she taught and counseled with love, humor and grace. Her passion for education inspired scores of her students to succeed in their educational and service goals. Much of Roberta Wilson's academic career at the university level focused on tribal government and tribal administration. She was a strong advocate for tribal sovereignty, tribal responsibility, and cultural integrity in higher education. She served as the first Director of the Tribal Administration Program at the University of Washington Graduate School of Public Affairs. Roberta's influence on and through education has impacted generations of students, the tribes that they serve as tribal leaders, tribal citizens, and tribal employees. The Roberta M. Wilson scholarship will serve as a powerful gift to support student success.

Roberta M. Wilson was born in 1940 in Pine Ridge, South Dakota on the Oglala Sioux reservation. Then and now reservation life was one of financial poverty, but she was rich in a family tradition of learning. This is a passion that she passed onto her own children, family, and extended family of the many students she cherished. In her childhood year's her family moved first to Seattle and again relocated to Bremerton, WA. where she graduated from East Bremerton H.S. in 1958. After high school graduation Roberta attended Olympic College, Western Washington University and the University of Washington where she earned her bachelor's degree in psychology. Roberta expanded on her undergraduate education through graduate courses at the University of Washington. Roberta also completed the Summer Law Program at the University of New Mexico and one year of law school at the University of Denver. Her professional highlights underscored her immense capacity to elevate Native students through leadership, advocacy, empowerment, and activism. She role modeled for students the power of using voice to overcome oppressive tactics of educational institutions. Her personal and professional sacrifices reflected her unyielding indomitable spirit. Many people remember Roberta for her sharp intellect, beauty, generosity, passion, strength, and high moral character. Roberta M. Wilson's legacy of generosity, courage, leadership, and education continues through the Roberta M. Wilson Scholarship.