



Dennis Richardson - Harmony with Difference

By David Wick, March 11, 2019

Dennis Richardson is a call to action. He was while physically living, and he is now that he has passed on as his "Having been given much, what will you give in return?" stays with us. Since his death many people have commented on his being an example of integrity, devotion, hard work, genuine care, and public service. I will add, as a peacebuilder.

Irene Kai and I worked closely with Dennis on numerous projects and we experienced his qualities and values first hand. We were not always aligned with his political views and that did not hinder our friendship nor our productive working relationship.

On May 31, 2014 Irene and I organized the "Harmony with Difference: A Local-Global Peace Pole and Flag Ceremony" in which Dennis played a key role and demonstrated his character of crossing the political divide. The Harmony with Difference event took place in Medford at Pear Blossom Park and was the dedication ceremony of the Southern Oregon Regional Peace Pole which now stands in US Cellular Park in Medford.

This was a historic, multi-cultural event bringing friendship and goodwill within the Rogue Valley, and with Oregon cultures and China. This was co-sponsored by Medford/Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, and United Way of Jackson County, Oregon. This was a first.

The speakers included:

- Representative Dennis Richardson – Oregon Legislator, candidate for Oregon Governor
- Representative Peter Buckley – Oregon Legislator
- Agnes Baker Pilgrim – Chairwoman of International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers and oldest living member of her tribe the Takelma.
- Ambassador Fang Maotian, from the Chinese Embassy in Washington D.C. and the Education Minister of China
- Lilia Caballero – Cultural Liaison Coordinator, Medford Police Department

- Art Lumley, Ret. Navy Commander, Chair of the Jacksonville/Applegate Rotary Club Peace Committee

During his speech Dennis Richardson said, "What we must remember when we seek to enhance the world and the standard of living, is that it is the humanitarian part of us that we must also develop. It is compassion that must be developed. It is love for one another, regardless of race, regardless of national origin or patriotic feelings. We are all brothers and sisters; we are all part of the human family.

And for us to obtain peace, as nations, requires that we first have peace as families and as individuals. May we each seek to use this stage to recommit ourselves to having greater compassion for our fellow men and women, greater love and concern for those around us, for those that are not as blessed as we are. May we care for the poor, not because the government tells us to, but because our heart tells us to. Then we shall have peace. Peace begins with me. Peace begins with you. And only by us changing our hearts will we gain greater peace throughout the world.

That is the challenge that I have, it is the challenge that we all have. May we embrace it with love, happiness and with compassion for one another. Thank you."

This was Dennis speaking from his heart as we grew to know him over time. We certainly found harmony with difference in Dennis.

Participants were truly moved by what was said, and by the four languages on the Peace Pole, English, Chinese, Spanish and Lakota which expressed the universal message May Peace Prevail on Earth – transcending religion, politics, ethnicity, and all other differences. The International symbol dedicated to Peace, friendship and goodwill, serves as an inspiration and source of pride for generations to come.

This dedicated and honored Peace Pole was then placed as a permanent regional monument in the main walkway in the US Cellular Community Park in Medford. It is a shared inspiration for many thousands of young people and families from Oregon, and many surrounding states, who come to this well-known facility. Dennis was very happy that young people and their families would be touched by this monument to peace.

Dennis Richardson was a very fine man with true care and integrity as his hallmarks. In many ways, he was a bridge-builder of peace. May the Southern Oregon Regional Peace Pole be a welcoming site to remember Dennis Richardson, and that, "We are all brothers and sisters; we are all part of the human family."

Additional information can be found on:

Regional Peace Pole short story -

<http://www.worldpeace.org/2014/07/harmony-with-difference-a-local-global-peace-pole-and-flag-ceremony-medford-oregon-usa/>

KDRV TV Channel 12 News, May 31, 2014 - <https://youtu.be/4E8vycmeK9Q>

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