Shooting for the Stars

Commander John Herrington, Chickasaw, is the first American Indian to fly in space. He spoke to students and community members at the Ned Hatathli Center. “...Never accept less than you are capable of,” said Herrington.

The 2013 Summer Math camp successfully concluded with a treat last Friday with a special presentation by Commander John Herrington, the first American Indian Astronaut to fly in outer space.

During NASA flight STS-113 aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavor in November 2002, Mission Specialist 2 Harrington docked the space shuttle to the International Space Station and became the first American Indian to walk in space during the space mission.

During his presentation Commander Herrington shared photos and life experiences that led him to become and astronaut. He grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Riverton, Wyoming, and Plano, Texas. He enjoys flying, rock climbing, snow skiing, running, and cycling. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. James E. Herrington, reside in Spicewood, Texas.

Selected by NASA in April 1996, Herrington reported to the Johnson Space Center in August 1996. A distinguished Naval Graduate from Aviation Officer Candidate School, Herrington was awarded the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, NASA Spaceflight Medal, Navy Commendation Medal and numerous service awards.

Commander Herrington is a founder and current Chairman of the Board for the American Indian Institute for Innovation.

President’s Corner

Yá’át’ééh,

As we near the 2013 fall semester I’m pleased to acknowledge some recent events that have taken place across our college community.

The Summer Research Enhancement Program (SREP) will be concluding their 10-week program this Friday August 2, 2013. The students were actively involved in public health and research with local communities. The students will be presenting their research on Friday, August 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the NHC Room 199. I encourage you to support our future Public Health constituents.

This past weekend the 26th Annual Eastern Navajo Agency Fair was held in Crownpoint, NM and Diné College participated in the parade. I thank everyone who helped and made Diné College visible at this event, most especially the Crownpoint, Center staff.

At the Shiprock Campus the Learning Center Staff have officially relocated to the new South Campus offices. Students can now take their Accuplacer tests in the new state of the art building. The student success center at the Shiprock South Campus was completed this spring and will be fully operational this fall.
Beloved Educator Grace McNeley Remembered

In the year 1864, thousands of Navajos were forced to leave their homelands and were relocated to a place called Bosque Redondo. Some of them had to travel more than 450 miles by foot, many perished along the way from exposure, starvation, or murder. This forced march came to be known as "The Long Walk." This painting located in the inner circle hogan of the Ned A. Hatathli Center on the Tsaili Campus, depicts Navajos passing Church Rock, near present day Gallup, New Mexico.

The Diné College float entered in this year’s Eastern Navajo Parade last Saturday. The event was a huge success with lots of work from the Crownpoint Campus Staff and Students.

Diné College hired Grace McNeley during the second year of its inception when it was still named Navajo Community College. It was the beginning of a long, influential career she consistently cultivated while taking graduate courses at the University of New Mexico and other higher learning institutions.

Grace continued teaching English and Philosophy at Diné College as highly regarded professor and colleague for more than thirty years.

Jim and Grace raised their son, Glen, surrounded by their pursuit of education and the engaging presence of students and faculty in their home. “She was a compassionate teacher, so vivacious,” he said.

“The Catholic Church took her in when she was a little girl, encouraged her, nurtured her intellect and gave her the opportunities she needed to become an educator and mentor to so many people, and still always teach from a traditional Navajo point of view. She was a traditional Navajo woman and mother,” Glen concluded.

In 2009, the graduating class at Diné College asked Grace to deliver their commencement address at the Shiprock Campus. She told the graduates; “The seeds of the tribal college movement are sacred seeds, for they are the thoughts of the holy people in the very beginning as they planned our lives on earth’s surface.”

A Mass was held in Grace’s honor at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, Cortez, on Monday, July 29. The Mass was followed by a memorial service at the Shiprock Campus.