



Washington State University

Dr. Franks Scholarship

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Speech and Hearing Sciences Remembers Visionary Leader

HONORING THE LIFE OF J. RICHARD FRANKS (June 15, 1930 to June 18, 2011)

by Dr. Ella Inglebret

The Washington State University Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences (SHS) is developing a scholarship to honor the life of an influential Professor.

Dr. J. Richard ('Dick') Franks was a visionary. He saw that Native Americans were vastly under-represented in the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology and took action to change this. Dr. Franks first secured U.S. Department of Education funding which established the foundation for WSU's Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences' (SHS) Native American professional preparation program in 1986.

Over a 20-year period Dr. Franks was actively involved with the department's efforts to recruit and graduate Native American students with both Bachelor's and Master's degrees. These efforts were of considerable success: 42% of all nationally-certified (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) Native American speech-language pathologists and audiologists in the Northwest are graduates of the WSU SHS department. However, the recent economic downturn and a drastic decline in available funding resources have resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of Native American students able to enroll in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences.

To honor the life of J. Richard Franks, the department is building the J. Richard Franks Scholarship Endowment for Native American Students in Speech and Hearing Sciences. It is their intention to carry on Dr. Franks' legacy as a leader in the education of Native students.

A former student, A. Noelle (Phillips) Miller, M.A., '07, (*Inupiat*) says of Dr. Franks, "You could tell from the labs how much Dr. Franks loved teaching, and particularly teaching about the ear and things related to audiology The truth of the matter is that Native Americans are not well represented in higher education or in health sciences, and the other truth of the matter is that there is a lot of health care need in various Native American communities. Dr. Franks saw those issues and took steps to do something about it, a fact which directly impacted my life, as well as others."

To contribute to the J. Richard Franks Scholarship Endowment, give at: www.spokane.wsu.edu/shs and click on "I Want To Give."



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