



Cheyenne River
Sioux Tribe

Crow Creek
Sioux Tribe

Flandreau Santee
Sioux Tribe

Lower Brule
Sioux Tribe

Mandan, Hidatsa
& Arikara Nation
(Three Affiliated
Tribes)

Oglala Sioux Tribe

Omaha Tribe
of Nebraska

Ponca Tribe
of Nebraska

Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Sac & Fox Tribe of the
Mississippi Indians in
Iowa/Meskaki
Nation

Santee Sioux Tribe
of Nebraska

Sisseton-Wahpeton
Oyate of the Lake
Traverse Reservation

Spirit Lake Tribe

Standing Rock
Sioux Tribe

Trenton Indian
Service Area

Turtle Mountain
Band of Chippewa
Indians

Winnebago Tribe
of Nebraska

Yankton Sioux Tribe

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GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL CHAIRMEN'S HEALTH BOARD LEADER RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONOR

(Ann Arbor, MI) – Jerilyn Church, MSW 2006, was honored with the University Of Michigan School Of Social Work's Distinguished Alumni Award at a gathering of the School's alumni on Friday, October 27, 2017.

Church was born and raised on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in central South Dakota. At the University Of Michigan School Of Social Work, she received a full fellowship in child welfare with an emphasis in human services management. Upon graduation, Church became Executive Director for the American Indian Health and Family Services center in Detroit, and under her leadership, the organization tripled its budget and doubled its staff.

Accepting her award, Church greeted the audience in her native Lakota language and spoke of the School of Social Work with tremendous gratitude and affection: "The support and encouragement from the school was so much more than I expected," she recalls. "My experience was incredibly nurturing in terms of personal growth. I had professors who continued to be available to me after graduation, especially during my first executive director position. It was a little scary, but I was able to reach out to my University of Michigan mentors as I worked to expand the organization, and it made all the difference in the world." Church especially remembers support from School of Social Work faculty members Kathleen Fallor, and Sandra Momper as well as U of M alumna Elizabeth Chapleski.

With Church's encouragement, the School of Social Work soon made American Indian Health and Family Services the first Native American services site which is still a robust and highly regarded field placement program.

Today Church serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board (GPTCHB) in Rapid City, South Dakota. She joined GPTCHB in 2012 and has led an organizational restructuring to help meet the health priorities of the tribal nations the organization serves, including Church's own Cheyenne River Sioux. GPTCHB provides tribal leadership of the 18 tribal nations in the four-state region of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa with technical assistance, policy analysis, and advocacy, public health and epidemiological support. GPTCHB serves as a liaison between the tribes and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services including the Indian Health Service. For more information about GPTCHB visit our website at www.gptchb.org.

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