

2020 Award for Excellence | Cowlitz Indian Tribe

PHILIP HARJU: [SPEAKING COWLITZ]. This is Philip Harju, Tribal chairman for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. I want to virtually be with you at this virtual dinner. I can't be there but I do know that Tanna Engdahl our spiritual leader is there and along with Dr. Edwards, I guess at the president's table. I first want to thank and congratulate Dr. Edwards. I have not met you yet but congratulations on your appointment as the president there at Clark College.

I am a proud Penguin alumni, class of 74. And I am proud to say that I grew up in Clark County, Washington. I have, as I said, I attended Clark College, my family has also dedicated one of my most precious resources. My daughter, Dr. Ellen Harju has worked at Clark College as the MESA director in the past.

We are honored and grateful to partner with Clark College in support of your work to empower student veterans to receive the education they need to build successful and prosperous lives for their families and communities. The land that is now Clark County has always been a part of Cowlitz Tribe's ancestral homeland. And giving back to our community and looking after our neighbors continues to be central to our Tribal cultural values. We are honored to support our local academic community with grant dollars that benefit programs and empower students.

We consider this the first of many opportunities to partner with Clark College to build a strong and lasting relationship with Clark College and its students. On behalf of the Cowlitz Tribe, thank you for this award and opportunity. Go Penguins.

TANNA ENGDAHL: Greetings. I'm Tanna Engdahl, spiritual leader of the Cowlitz Tribe. So, wherever you are, this is to invite you to join me in a few minutes of quiet time. As we settle ourselves, we are reminded that we Cowlitz are descendants of survivors of a distant pandemic that nearly rendered us extinct. But as a people we are still here in this modern age on Cowlitz Aboriginal lands.

In this we thank the creator for keeping those memories fresh. In keeping with the here and now we thank the creator for the avenues of knowledge offered by this college. We ask all who are attending this excellence gathering be showered with the grace of success in advancing education under the most trying times. Our linkage here together means we all have an investment in this process. We pray our combined energies will propel us forward to advance education to all communities in an equitable manner. We ask this in the name of the high God. [SPEAKING COWLITZ].