

Daniel F. Jérôme. (b. 1930)

Dan Jerome was born January 13, 1930 at Belcourt, North Dakota (ND). He is the son of Ferdinand and Emilie Laframboise Jerome, the fourth oldest of twelve children. He took his grade school education at St. Anne's Mission and the Turtle Mountain Community School. He served in the U.S. Navy for four years during the Korean War. From 1954 to 1959, he attended North Dakota State University and upon completion of his degree taught school at Caron, Fortuna and Halliday, ND. He then taught at the BIA school in White Shield, ND. He became social worker in Belcourt in 1964 and in 1967 was appointed Administrative Assistant for the Belcourt High School. In 1969 he became the first Métis/Ojibwa school superintendent of the district, and served in this capacity for 21 years.

Dan was elected to the North Dakota State Legislature in 1990, the first Native American ever elected to the State Senate. He served until 1994. He was the master in the North Dakota Council on the Arts' Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program numerous times. The United Tribes Intertribal Council of North Dakota presented him an award for outstanding leadership and lifelong commitment. He is the author of *The Trail of Misgivings: A Scourging Journey* (2007), his study of education at Turtle Mountain Band from 1800-2006. He became a master flute maker and always had a deep appreciation of his Métis and Ojibwa heritage. In this regard, in 2010 Dan was the recipient of a \$50,000 Bush Foundation Fellowship Grant in the Art category.

In 2012, Dan published "Hands On A Legacy" and creation this book was featured in a local newspaper article.

Belcourt Man Publishes Book On Chippewa Culture

By Caitlin Johnson, For The Star

Turtle Mountain Star of Rolla, North Dakota

Tribal elder Dan Jerome is a walking book of knowledge. Some of the amazing wealth of knowledge he carries in his mind and soul was recently put out for viewing with the publication of his second book that is entitled, "Hands On A Legacy."

The book consists of 125 pages full of Native American crafts and stories of the Chippewa people. Jerome stated that he has been gathering the information needed and making the crafts for his book over the last 3 years. The Belcourt man worked alongside members of his family to get the pictures needed for the book that is described as a "Pictorial Journey Honoring Our Ancestors." Jerome is blessed with an amazing amount of patience and artistic vision. Whatever the talented Turtle Mountain tribal member (whether that is a pair of Ojibway snowshoes or a book), he spends an incredible amount of time [at it] "If I had pictures of all the things I have made over the years, the book would have been twice as long. I gave a lot of the things away though." stated Jerome. He wants the book to help preserve the culture of the Chippewa people for generations to come. Jerome said he firmly believes that this is a major motivation for getting the book printed. In his book he slates, "My endeavor is to do whatever I can to

enrich and to preserve this culture. There must be something in my DNA that compels me."

Over the past few years, Jerome and his family have been working together on the book. He stated that a major portion of the photographs were actually taken by his son, Owen Jerome.

"We didn't have any professional photographers at all helping us," says Jerome.

Jerome went into great detail explaining how his family was so essential to the book project, which is why the cover specifies the authorship as "Dan F. Jerome & Family." Jerome also emphasized that the writing wasn't the difficult part of making the book. The real difficulty was actually in the laying out and designing "Hands On A Legacy."

Jerome's book was published this past August and was funded by the Bush Foundation. The foundation funded the printing of 500 books, most of which have already been given away by the author. Jerome added that although he has given most of the copies away, some can be found at the Skydancer Hotel & Casino, the Heritage Center, or you can contact him or his wife Bridget at home.

Jerome is also planning on going on a book tour in the near future where he plans on visiting other Native American reservations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He wants to visit mostly sister tribes of the Chippewa people where he can promote native culture preservation among those fellow Chippewa. He noted that part of the Bush Foundation fellowship provided \$2,000 as communication funds for this purpose, but he will also have to use some of his own money to complete the road trip to the Chippewa tribal reservations and communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Jerome says that he is excited for the opportunity to get out and talk with other people about his new book.

Another statement Jerome makes in his book is. "One of the most memorable times I recall was at a nursing home in Bottineau. I played 'Amazing Grace' on my flute and the residents seemed to brighten up and hummed along with me. That was a touching and rewarding experience. It is just another reason why I do these things."

Jerome made it very clear that he did not write the book for recognition or financial gain, but rather to "keep the richness of our culture going."

With the help of his son, wife and family, Jerome is certainly on the road to that vision.

Original publication date: March 12, 2012.

On July 30, 2016, Dr. Nicholas Vrooman, Émilie Pigeon and I had an opportunity to visit with Dan and his wife Bridget at their home in Belcourt. While there he showed us many of the crafts he has created and played us flute songs on a generations-old Chippewa flute. We also had an opportunity to view the Red River Cart he donated to the St. Anne's Mission. He constructed this with the assistance of his sons. He is a noted cart maker as is his cousin Armand Jerome who lives in Manitoba. He also showed us his recent project, a series of 14 children's books, written and illustrated by Dan. These books are written around Chippewa-Michif cultural themes.

Reference:

Ceecy Nucker, "Belcourt Man Tapped for Bush Fellowship," *Minot Daily News*, July 22, 2010.



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