



LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY BANDS OF ODAWA INDIANS
7500 ODAWA CIRCLE, HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740

TRIBAL COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT NARRATIVE

From: Councilor Winnay Wemigwase

Date: December 20, 2013

Re: University of Michigan Repatriation Signing Ceremony, 2013

I attended a feast and signing ceremony at the Michigan League on the campus of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was part of the final activities attached to the completion of a very, long, but successful, repatriation of Anishinaabek ancestors to the Tribes of Michigan. The reburial of many of those remains took place at the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's cemetery. This particular event commemorated the completion of the project with lunch and a signing ceremony.

During the activities at the feast luncheon, there were several speeches made by individuals who participated in the hours of legwork needed to make the process a success. Some of those in attendance were members of the Advisory Committee on Culturally Unidentifiable Human

Remains (CUHR) for the University of Michigan; Tribal Representatives of MACPRA; Ben Secunda, NAGPRA project manager, Office of the Vice President for Research, and staff; and students of the University. For me, in regards to the University of Michigan students that were in attendance, the most notable was Ms. Veronica Pasfield. She is a Bay Mills Indian Community member and graduate student at the University. She was instrumental in getting the process completed. She presented Dr. Steven Forrest with a basket and gave a teaching about the importance of sweetgrass and the meaning behind the Anishinaabemowin word “weengush.” Veronica did an excellent job in connecting the message of the basket and the sweet grass woven into it with reiterating why we strive to get our ancestors’ remains back home, the vital importance of the U of M process for all involved and our future generations, and, lastly in showing gratitude to Dr. Forrest for his work in making the process happen.

I wanted to ensure that I attended the event for several reasons. At one time, I was LTBB’s Representative on MACPRA and also served as Vice Chair of the Alliance. The U of M project was one of our MAJOR efforts and I am so grateful to have seen the success of it. At times, I really wondered if I would live to see those ancestors back in the ground and back with their families. I wanted to personally thank the individuals that worked so tirelessly on behalf of all Anishinaabek in Michigan; it has been about three years since I have been involved with MACPRA, and I have been unable to attend any of the other events. I also saw that LTBB did not have any “official” representatives attending this event, and I felt it was VITAL that someone go to show our support and gratitude. However, LTBB Tribal Citizen, Andrea Pierce, was in attendance. And, having been a part of the entire process, I have been grateful to her for taking it

upon herself to get involved and for representing our people and her family in such an honorable way. It was wonderful to be able to see her.

I would like to encourage citizens to check out the University of Michigan website, and in particular, the page at <http://research.umich.edu/policies/cuhr/>. This is the web page for Advisory Committee on Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains (CUHR) at U of M. This provides a lot of information on the work done on this project and resulting from this project.

Respectfully submitted by,

Winnay Wemigwase