



OGLALA LAKOTA COLLEGE

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OLC PRESIDENT TO BE INDUCTED INTO SOUTH DAKOTA HALL OF FAME

Thomas Shortbull, Oglala Lakota College President, will be inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame on September 8-9, 2017 in Chamberlain, South Dakota.

President Shortbull's leadership abilities were first evidenced when he attended the University of South Dakota from 1965-70. He was President of the Indian Club which was first called the Wapaha (War Bonnet) Club and then the Tiyospaye Council. In 1970, he received his BA degree in Government from the University of South Dakota.

In 1970, his employment career started when he taught for one year at Flandreau Indian School as a Native American Studies teacher.

After receiving his Master's Degree in Public Administration from USD in 1973, he was selected as the Coordinator of the Task Force on Indian-State Government Relations that passed progressive legislation allowing for cooperative agreements between Indian tribes and the State of South Dakota.

The Task Force studied the problems of taxation, hunting and fishing rights, law enforcement issues, water rights, and Indian voting rights. The goal of the Task Force was to seek cooperative agreements in the areas studied. In 1974, the Task Force introduced 8 bills into the South Dakota Legislative Session and 7 were passed. The bills that were passed included the authorization of tax collection agreements between Indian tribes and the State of South Dakota for sales on Indian reservations, inclusion of Indian tribes as governmental entities included within the Joint Powers Agreements, tribes being exempted from the state sales and use tax, and tribes having the same authority as state governmental entities have to free license plates.

One of the areas that was studied was a report by President Shortbull that concluded that there was gerrymandering among three counties on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations. His recommendation to the Task Force was to have Todd, Shannon and a portion of Bennett County be included in a new legislative district that would include a majority of Indian people. The Task Force did not approve of the recommendation, but the South Dakota Civil Rights Commission and the US Civil Rights Commission did approve of the recommendation and forwarded this recommendation to the US Justice Department. In 1981, under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, South Dakota was required to create a voting district with a majority of the district being Indian people.

In 1982, the newly created legislative district elected its first representatives, and President Shortbull was the first elected State Senator from this district that included the counties of Todd and Shannon Counties along with a portion of Bennett County. He served three terms as the Legislative District 27 State Senator from 1983-88.

From 1980-1995, he held the following positions: Director of the Rapid City Indian Service Council (1980-81); Coordinator of the Rapid City Johnson O'Malley Program (1992-93); and two summers as the Black Hill Pow Wow Director.

President Shortbull's greatest success came as President of Oglala Lakota College. He was president from 1975-79 and from 1995 to the present.

During his second stint as President of Oglala Lakota College, major improvements have been achieved including infrastructure and buildings, more faculty and staff, and stable and expanded finances. During this second presidency, the College has added 7 new college center buildings on the Pine Ridge Reservation, 1 new college center in Rapid City, a new Science Center, a Multi-Purpose Building housing a collegiate gym, and classrooms for a Lakota Language immersion school, and a new Bookstore building. Employment gains include OLC going from 100 employees in 1995 to having 320 full time employees along with 134 adjunct faculty and part-time employees in 2017. The College's budget has gone from \$6.8 million in 1995 to \$35.5 million this year. Endowments have gone from \$1 million in 1995 to having \$47.5 million in 2017 including \$1.3 in a maintenance endowment, \$25.3 million in faculty endowments, and \$20.8 million in student scholarship endowments. In terms of financial reserves, the College has gone from no reserves in 1995 to a \$4 million in 2017. OLC operates nine college centers on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the Rapid City College Center, and a college center on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

In addition to its higher education programs, OLC administers the Pine Ridge Reservation Head Start Program, a K-5 Lakota Language Immersion School, and General Equivalency Diploma program.

"I believe that the success of Oglala Lakota College was the main reason for my selection as South Dakota Hall of Fame inductee", stated President Shortbull. "I want to thank the past graduates of OLC, the OLC student body, Board of Trustees members, Local Board members, faculty and staff for the work that they have done to make our College very successful", added Shortbull.

In addition to his work with OLC for the last 22 years, President Shortbull has taken an active role in being an advocate for voting rights.

He was one of three minorities featured on videos that urged the reauthorization of the 2005 Voting Rights Act. If you google Voting Rights Act Video Testimonials – Thomas Shortbull, you can view this video. These videos were shown at a National Conference Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on July 25-26, 2005 in Washington, D.C. He was also a speaker at this conference.

In 2005, he was called by the plaintiffs as an expert witness in the *Bone Shirt v Hazeltine* court case that eventually held that South Dakota had to create another legislative voting district in south central South Dakota with a majority of the population in this voting district being Indian people.

He actively opposed the July 25, 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v Holder* that eliminated the preclearance requirement for states who had histories of voter rights violations against minorities. He wrote an op-ed against the Shelby County decision that appeared in the *Rapid City Journal* and expressed his belief that this decision would lead to voter suppression efforts by states against Indian people and other minorities. On May 17, 2004, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle appointed him to the Election Assistance Advisory Commission, and he served 1 term on this Commission due to the new Senate Majority leader Harry Reid wishing to make his own appointment on this commission after the 2006 election.

He was on the Executive Board of South Dakota Legislature for one two year term, a past member of American Indian College Fund Board, past member of the Rapid City Regional Health Board, past member of South Dakota Community Foundation and is now a Board of Director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

Letter of supports on behalf of President Shortbull to the South Dakota Hall of Fame Board of Directors came from Tom Brokaw, Senator Tim Johnson, USD President Jim Abbott, Laurie Bevcar, Crazy Horse Memorial President/CEO, and Carol Axtman, President Shortbull's former assistant when he was the Executive Director of Task Force on Indian-State Government Relations.

He is married to Darlene, his wife of 46 years, whose maiden name is Janis. His three children are Paul, Vanessa, and Frank; and his three grandchildren are Brandon, Sadie, and Jackson.

"I am honored to be recognized as a South Dakota Hall of Fame inductee, and wish to express my appreciation to the SDHOF Board of Directors for this honor," stated OLC President Thomas Shortbull.