

## PROFILE OF TEWATENNIHEH - JEAN F. HERNE

A Tribute to Tewatenniheh-Jean F. Herne, October 24, 1933 – April 16, 2011

Written by one of her dearest friends: Florence Patterson

We want to share with you today that which you may or may not know about our beloved **Tewatenniheh (Jean F. Herne)**. Tewatenniheh served in the capacity of the **Mohawk Culture Director** since 1992. She became totally committed to the promotion of the Mohawk Culture for PICEI when PICEI presented The Festival of the Drums at Massena H. S. in 1994. From that time, forward Tewatenniheh worked on many projects that help to make her community aware of PICEI and what it stands for. In our small way of acknowledging Tewatenniheh, PICEI dedicated our new annex office building on the temporary site in Brasher Falls to her on Friday, August 26, 2011, and later will acknowledge her at the Cultural Center in Potsdam that will be built in the near future.

After 25 years of teaching, Tewatenniheh retired only to begin to work even harder promoting the Mohawk language with PICEI without salary, as our entire staff do. She was "always giving" as her Mohawk name means. She did her giving from her heart. Hundreds of people in the Mohawk community can attest to that to this very day.

In her travels around the world with PICEI, Tewatenniheh was a great ambassador for her culture. So many people she encountered have learned that the Mohawk Nation and other indigenous cultures have their own language. Unfortunately, our educational systems restrict much of which she wanted the children of the Mohawk Nation to know. She felt it was important that the children be proud of who they are. Tewatenniheh embraced PICEI because of its mission which is a belief in the truth and beauty of each culture on earth. The fact that we can be united, but distinct, resonated with her deeply. She loved that PICEI gave her an opportunity to teach around the world with autonomy and to serve as an ambassador for her nation.

She traveled on PICEI Cultural Seminar Cruises around the world to places such as Italy, Spain, France, Gibraltar, Morocco, Canary Islands, Barbados, Dominica and Brazil. She also made the journey on the Mosaic Family Reunion Cruise in 2007 to St. John and Halifax, Canada, and a trip by train to Washington D.C with the youth. She was able to share her knowledge with the elders too. We all found out how difficult the making of bookmarks from sweet grass can be, which Tewatenniheh demonstrated with such ease on the Three Continent Cultural Cruise in 2009.

Preparing so many projects with other members of PICEI for the youth in the after school programs which covered a span of five years, was another highlight of her life.

Tewatenniheh, taught native dance, culinary arts and, of course, language. Culinary Arts was one of her favorite things in her life. As a hotel owner, she would decorate cakes and prepare all kinds of foods; she would prepare several of the wildlife foods. She loved wild turkey and deer (venison). Her canning and pickling was always a part of her, which she taught her grandchildren, and we can see that in Herbi as she carries on her grandmother's will. We will truly miss her sugar-free fruit and whipped cream cake that no one could ever tell it was sugar free. She liked doing things that made people happy.



Jean Herne, as many of the community members knew her, should now realize her desire to no longer have to suffer the use of a name not originally given her by her parents. She felt that no one, no country has the right to take away that which is given by the parents through the Creator. She often cried as she shared her story of her life as a little girl having to not speak her language, to not be native during her school hours then returning home to become native again. If she spoke her language the sisters would beat her hands for it.

On Monday, April 25, 2011, at the traditional Feast for Tewatenniheh, her family member, Sue shared with all of us the importance of the dash (-) in our lives that many of us call the journey. What we do with it, is up to us. Jean's **dash** of life was one to be proud of by both family and friends.

Should we not realize that each of us has a journey here on earth to fulfill the dash (-) in our lives with an understanding of who we are? We believe that Jean would want us to.

Yes, we remember, Tewatenniheh, who worked with us, walked with us, talked with us, and of course the Jean that played Bingo with many of us.

And, Tewatenniheh will always be with us...

For anyone who would like to continue with Tewatenniheh's (Jean Herne) legacy and journey with PICEI, please feel free to contact us for more information at 518 358 9942.

***Tewatenniheh, we love you.***