

Family and Tribe Say Goodbye to Laura W. Spurr, Tribal Chair of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi

Laura W. Spurr, Tribal Chair of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, died February 19 at the Rancho Springs Medical Center in Murrieta, California after suffering a massive cardio pulmonary arrest. Spurr, 64, was instrumental in developing and expanding the facilities of the Huron Potawatomi reservation in Athens Township, Michigan, arranging the transfer of the Huron Band's land into federal trust status, and leading a ten-year campaign to establish the FireKeepers Casino near Battle Creek. Spurr was in California to make a presentation on the construction and design of the FireKeepers Casino at a conference at the Pechanga Resort & Casino. Shortly after completing her presentation, Spurr collapsed.

Chairwoman Spurr served on the Tribal Council since May 1999. During this time, she served as Chair from 2000-2001, Treasurer from 2001-2003, and had been Chair from 2003 to the present. She also served as Chair of the Education Committee and Health Committee, and worked with the elders group. Spurr also represented the tribe as one of two EPA Region 5 Representatives to the National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC).

"On behalf of the entire Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi community, the Tribal Council extends its deepest condolences to the family of Laura Wesley Spurr," said Homer A. Mandoka, Vice Chair of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, upon learning of the passing of Tribal Chair Laura Spurr. "Laura was a tremendous leader with great vision who led our tribe during a period of growth and development. Her legacy will be with us for generations. She will be greatly missed." Fellow Council Members RoAnn Beebe-Mohr, Jamie Stuck and Henry Bush, Jr. respected Laura's dedicated service to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi and its neighbors.

On February 10, 2009, Laura was honored as one of two "Tribal Leaders of the Year" by the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) for her efforts to develop FireKeepers Casino. The Tribal Leader of the



Year award is bestowed upon two individuals who have made a difference in their community through perseverance, creativity, and outstanding public service. Laura worked for nearly 10 years to place the Huron Band's land into federal trust and to develop FireKeepers Casino.

Chairwoman Spurr always believed it was important to contribute to the community where she lived. After graduating from Athens High School, she enrolled in the University of Michigan on an academic scholarship, and was awarded a B.S. in Nursing in 1967. She began her nursing career at the

University of Michigan hospital. For more than 40 years, she worked as a nurse in different practice settings in the cities of New York, Washington, D.C, Chicago, and Grosse Pointe. In these hospitals she practiced at different levels of administration with the responsibility for supervision and directing patient care.

She also taught nursing at different times in her career, and while working in Chicago she completed the course work for a master's degree from DePaul University with a double major in nursing administration and education. While living in Washington, she served as Chair of the Personnel Committee for Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, was on the D.C. Government Committee of the League of Women Voters, and was active in the Metropolitan Hospital Organization.

She was also always involved in the schools of her children, serving on parents' boards, mothers' clubs, and in other volunteer positions. The Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church played a major role in her life also. For about ten years she took a youth group from the church on Sunday to the Coalition on Temporary Shelters, a homeless shelter in Detroit.

Laura Spurr's husband, Stephen, son Nathaniel and Tribal Council Secretary Ro-Ann Beebe Mohr were at her side when she crossed over to be with the Great Spirit. Spurr is survived by her husband Stephen, and two sons Nathaniel and Josiah.