



MHA Women's History Month

2019

Arvella White

Arvella's given name is "Awa-Igubagida-Nuwish", which means "Turns and Walks with Earth", is the daughter of Anna Smith Lone Bear and Ben Lone Bear, and the granddaughter of Chief Dragswolf, who named her. Her Maternal grandparents are the late Grace Bull Snake and Chester Smith. Her paternal grandparents are the late Florance Jones Lone Bear and Fred G. Lone Bear. She belongs to the Mecii-Rooga "Flint Knife" clan and is a child of the Ciicga "Prairie Chicken" clan. She was born in Elbowoods and raised in Shell Creek, attending the Charging Eagle School. Her memories of her time growing up in our ancestral bottomlands are vibrant and joyful. She has often shared these memories with her family. Her husband is Wendell White, and her children Anna F. (Buffy), Theodore Robert, and Wendellyn M. (Wendy), and her adopted daughters Vernell Buckman, Donilee Bird Bear, and Brenda White Bull. Through the Hiráaca language, she has not only taught her family, but also our community. She taught Hiráaca at the Mandaree School for four years, and graduated with her degree in Early Childhood Education from the Fort Berthold Community College (Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College). Arvella's family was joined by the linguist Indrek Park in 2008, where they met in their homes and worked to continue documenting the Hiráaca language. Among the resources they utilized were none other than the Hidatsa-English Word List compiled by A. Wesley Jones through the North Dakota Indian Languages Program, Mary College, in Bismarck, ND in 1979. Arvella continues to work on language preservation at the Hiráaca Language Preservation program in the Mandaree Elder Center.

