



MHA Women's History Month 2019

Martha Fox Baker

Martha Fox Baker is of the Maaxo adi Clan—Alkali Lodge. Her Hidatsa name is Peppermint Blossom. Her mother was Emily Grady and father Charlie Fox. She was the youngest of 13 children. She had 8 children, two sons and six daughters. She has many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She is a Hidatsa speaker and is a certified Native Language teacher. She and her family were part of the revival of the Little Shell Celebration, years ago and which you enjoy today. She has been a longtime supporter of Little Shell. She and her family have held many positions on the Little Shell Committee and, for once, for a period of 16 years, a member of her family was on the Committee. She and her family are also strong supporters, organizers, and fundraisers for the Antelope Society's Mid-Winter Celebration. She is a long-time member of the Antelope Society and held one of the positions as a Woman Singer. She pass this position on to her granddaughter, Martha Phelan in 2017. She has other family members also in the Antelope Society. She is also a medicine keeper, which was handed down to her from the female line of her family.

Martha has been a long time educator. It is estimated that she has taught over a thousand students in her lifetime as a Head Start teacher (38 years) and New Town Public School Hidatsa Language teacher (8 years). She was a teacher for over 46 years. She also teaches and presents in the community on many topics. She shares her knowledge of the Hidatsa language and culture daily with anyone who requests her help.

Martha received an Honorary Bachelors of Art in Native American Studies from the Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College in 2015. She attended the college in the early years when it was the Fort Berthold Community College. She was the first graduate and received a degree in Early Childhood.

Martha is treasured as a mother and as a Magoo—Grandmother. She is affectionately called “Magoo” by all of her past students and many of her colleagues. She is well-respected and known for her generosity, helpfulness, and sharing of the Hidatsa language and cultural knowledge.

Despite being in retirement, Martha is active in the community. She no longer is able to make her beautiful starquilts but she keeps herself busy doing what she can. She provides help to many of the Hidatsa people about her knowledge of the Hidatsa language and culture. She encourages her people to relearn and teach the language so all can be fluent again one day. One of her favorite teachings to her many students and family is “Be good to one another.”

