



Academically i was not exceptional by any means, and in retrospect, while believing in public education as one of the great gifts of the United States to the world, our failure as a culture to “Speak Truth to Power” has led to our present ideologically-driven predicament today. There is no reason, for example, why our high school history and civics courses could not include the role of Indigenous Cultures on the United States Constitution, as the U.S. Congress itself acknowledged in 1988, or how the unanimous decision of the John Marshall Supreme Court —John Marshall! of all folk— in Johnson vs. McIntosh (1823) allowed codification into U.S. law of the infamous “Doctrine of Discovery,” a 1493 Papal Bull where the Roman Catholic Church declared the rights of European cultures to subdue the Aborigines of the South and North Americas by force of arms and conquest. Even in 2016, so many aspects of Euro-American and world cultures are left out of our K-12 educational curricula, including comprehensive sex education (proving our fear of sexual pleasure and the responsibility that goes with it Trumps the actualities of war) that the lie in what we have become today often exceeds the promise of what we were told, as each generations discovers this and rebels, correctly in principle but often foolishly in practice.

By my last semester at ERHS, the Spring of 1967, i was caught up in the cultural and political changes of that time. As the Seniors had done for me four winters earlier i took a Frosh protégée—a girl from the History Club who later became the club’s President and who happened to be a Mormon (i was literally the first boy to take her out)—on a date to Cal Poly to hear the Jefferson Airplane. i also cut 21 days (i was in love) by forging my step-grandfather’s signature on typewritten excuses and never got caught, but *did* get caught foolishly doing so with the then-JSA faculty sponsor’s signature (Mr. McClean) on a Daily Bulletin form, thereby receiving my eighth “unsatisfactory citizenship” mark in four winters, and was replaced in speaking at graduation but allowed to walk across the stage. During one of those cuts i was on campus at Stanford University when i learned that Dr.

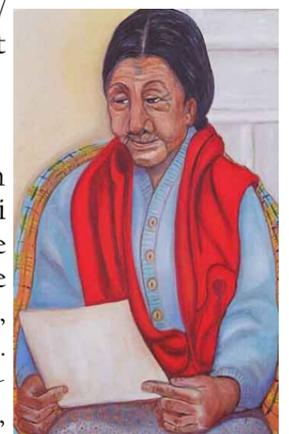


Cartoon by Andy Singer, 2016

King was speaking in 45 minutes at the Memorial Chapel. So i rushed over hoping to make it in time, and climbed the stairs waaaaay up to the balcony where, with standing room only, i heard him give his West Coast version of “Beyond Vietnam,” the speech i believe ultimately led to his death. While it took sometime for me to absorb all of what he had said that day, i was already transitioning from the AuH20/Reaganite as brought up to be by my natal family to the man i was to become. Substitute Afghanistan, Iraq or the faux War on Terror for Vietnam, and we have the same military entanglements today, first established through the Permanent War Economy promulgated with bipartisan passage by a U.S. Congress through the National Security Act of 1947.

Since a half-century ago i’ve led a most interesting life of sacrifice and service, and personal growth and transcendence. My five winters in California after graduation led me to see the relationship between geographic place and climate, and how this influences both the settlement of varied plant and animal species as well as the Human Race. My 15 winters in New York City opened up the world, where the mingling of varied peoples and ideas showed me how “Through Diversity, There Is Strength.” And with more than a quarter-century residency on a

Native tribal Reservation, this unique experience gives me an understanding of the centuries through the eyes of a thousand winters-plus old culture, and the recognition that once we journey, our energy (spirit), as i say in my poem, *Neither Jesu nor Peyote*; “...There is no need for/ Middleman Jesus/as the seen and unseen/are interchangeable/and spirit/indestructible....” It jus’ goes off, somewhere. For me, it is obvious that the Creator’s hand is present in everything around us, for “We Are All Related.”



Umo'ho' Wau (Omaha Woman) 2002 Coffey

With these perspectives i retain a wide and varied interest centered on the Humanities and Social Sciences, especially so in that “Art Saves Lives,” while appreciative of the hard sciences, the role of technology, and our ethical and spiritual challenges. i am grateful for having engaged with the world, despite its many setbacks and frustrations, and to truly have made a difference in scores, if not hundreds of those lives. It was fortunate for us all to have been born at a point of time to have experienced the 1960’s—one of the truly great upheavals of freedom for Humanity in the history of our species—and to have lived long enough, 50 winters later, to see its reprise, if however in a different way (and with the stakes much higher) among today’s Millennials. From the people i’ve met, gotten to know and love—including co-founding a local arts group in 1982 in our Chelsea, Manhattan neighborhood with Eve Ensler—yes, THAT Eve Ensler—to those whom i admire and take interest in for who they are, what they’ve done, and what they continue to do or can do in the future, i share in their collective vision premised on the actualities of who we are as a nonviolent primate, and remain a perennial optimist. Even with our capacity to commit individual or collective evil, we can at any time, and often do, chose a different way. Love does indeed, Trump Hate, but not “that woman!”



Having met her at a poetry reading of mine and other poets in New York City, my companion of more than 30 winters, Dr. Margery Coffey—a visual artist and scholar—and i for the last 16 winters have worked alongside Dr. Dennis Hastings (Omaha), a “Nelson Mandela” of his Omaha People, and one of the original Indigenous occupiers of Alcatraz Island (1969-71), where he served on the Council of Seven, the Governing Body of that occupation. Later, the future Dr. Hastings smuggled food—and Angela Davis—into the Aboriginal occupation of Wounded Knee (1973), among numerous other Native occupations. Hastings and i actually met three decades before our present collaboration in the 21st Century, a fact we both realized once he had approached me after several winters of residency on his home Reservation. His organization, the Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project (OTHRP), is likely the most successful and dynamic grassroots-based, tribally-derived and directed group in the United States, with nearly 50 major projects, including award-winning books, films and initiatives (including the return of both human remains and sacred objects from Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution, among others); responsible for ground-breaking state and national legislation (including the Congressionally-passed 1990 Native Graves and Repatriation Act, NAGPRA); design of a world-class museum that has yet to be built; and providing key passages from a forthcoming book modeled after the late Howard Zinn’s work, that aced the Federal judicial system, culminating in a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision handed down in Nebraska vs. Parker on March 22, 2016, *all with an unfunded tribal mandate*, and accomplished by sheer tenacity, courage and vision.

OTHRP is assisting in this Political Revolution of the Omaha by offering for free to the tribal community, while retaining copyright, three publications, including two bi-lingual (Omaha/English) Comic Books – <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/07/13/coyote-gray-fox-s-m-snake/> - featuring traditional three stories, puzzles and vocabulary builder, <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/07/22/color-coyote-and-the-buffaloes/>, presenting another traditional Omaha story, both 24 pages in length, and a 26 page *Dancing Our Way to Peace*, <http://www.pdf-archive.com/2016/08/04/color-dancing-the-way-to-peace/>, the last segment of a forthcoming 256 page book, *Umo'ho' Cultural Anthology*. All are examples of the curricula being developed by OTHR’s “Grandfather Remembers Curricula Project.” <http://www.nativevillage.org/Archives/2009%20Archives/NOV%20News/Grandfather%20Remember%20Curriculum%20Proposal.htm> which is drawn from the 1,500 page forthcoming book, *The Completely Illustrated Grandfather Remembers Broken Treaties/Stolen Lands The Omaha Land Theft*, noted earlier as the work that helped ace the Federal court system. Examples of OTHR’s presence in the media include foster child advocacy [www.manataka.org/page1849.html](http://www.manataka.org/page1849.html) the Omaha Tribal Interpretive Center Museum <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/10/11/ambitious-museum-use-past-preserve-omaha-history-and-brighten-its-future-56496> ; and regarding Nebraska vs. Parker <http://www.redlakenationnews.com/story/2016/04/04/news/key-passages-from-forthcoming-book-helps-wins-us-supreme-court-case/45477.html> A Federally-registered, 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural and educational organization, OTHR welcomes tax deductible contributions, with checks made out to the “Omaha Tribal Historical Research Project” or “OTHRP,” P.O. Box 279 Rosalie Nebraska 68055 or contact OTHR@yahoo.com or check out and “like” OTHR’s own Facebook page or visit the OTHR section of [www.jackalopearts.org](http://www.jackalopearts.org). richard chilton.