

2009 Alice BigPond Roach Memorial Award

Myrle Thompson

*Ho-Chunk Nation
Black River Falls, Wisconsin*



As Airman Second Class (E3) in the US Air Force, Ms. Thompson served during the Korean War as a cryptographic operator and received the National Defense Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and an Honorable Discharge. After her military service, she worked in the Neillsville School District as a Library Assistant/School Aide, then went on to pursue a degree in American Indian Studies at Mount Scenario College in Ladysmith, Wisconsin. In 1988 she received an award for “Outstanding Family in Education” from the Neillsville Education Association. Today Ms. Thompson is a Certified Literary Volunteer and Ho-Chunk Language Instructor of the Ho-Chunk Language Division of Mauston, Wisconsin. As a veteran, she belongs to American Legion Post 73 of Neillsville. When she’s called on, she assists with the Ho-Chunk Legion Post.

Ms. Thompson has always supported education efforts by participating in various American Indian Awareness programs and efforts in Wisconsin: promoting diversity between tribal youth and their non-Native peers in the school district, and at events conducted by the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts; teaching arts and crafts, language, and history for the Wisconsin Winnebago Youth

Leadership Conference; preparing exhibitions and displays for the history shows at Wisconsin’s pow wows, Indian Summer in Milwaukee, and Native American Awareness Week at local school districts and universities; and making the beadwork for the old Winnebago children’s home known as “Sunburst” near Neillsville, Wisconsin.

Besides her contributions to education, from 1985 through 1997, Ms. Thompson worked at the Tribal Aging Unit to deliver meals to home-bound elders and provided transportation to medical appointments. In 1993, she worked as a Tribal Courier for the Ho-Chunk Nation. From 2004 until 2006 she participated in the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Senior Companion Program. To this day, Ms. Thompson works at the Puzaki Pei Cinak Headstart Center helping the children learn their language.

Ms. Thompson is an elder member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe.