

*By News-Review Staff*



Ernest "Nick" Hockings, known in the Eagle River area for entertaining thousands of spectators during the annual Klondike Days as part of the former Waswagoning Dance Theatre, died Nov. 30, 2012, at the age of 70.

Hockings, a tribal member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe Indians, founded the dance theatre group to deliver presentations about his tribe's history and culture. The past five years, the dance theatre group has been known as Blue Winds Dancing.

Christine Schilling, executive director of Klondike Days, said Hockings was a popular entertainer and educator at the annual event.

"It is very sad to hear of the passing of a great educator and a wonderful entertainer such as Nick Hockings," said Schilling. "Klon-dike Days has been very proud to be able to bring Nick's high caliber of Native American storytelling to the North Woods every year for more than two decades."

Schilling said the Waswa-goning Dance Theatre has been a featured event Saturdays at Klondike Days, boasting standing-room-only audiences in the two performances normally scheduled.

"Nick's artistic talent lent to a great way to educate and entertain the public about the Ojibwe Nation and all of our connections with our earthly surroundings," said Schilling. "We will be ever thankful for his contributions to our event and his impact will live on in the Ojibwe Village he

established in Lac du Flambeau and the Waswagoning Dance Theatre.”

Sources say that Hockings died following a battle with cancer.

Hockings also owned and operated Waswagoning, an Ojibwe Village in Lac du Flambeau that is recognized as a historical landmark. He also built the Woodland Village at the Indian Summer Fest in Milwaukee.

Hockings received two Emmy Awards as artistic director for the four-part PBS series titled, “Wasaa Inaabidaa,” which was filmed at Waswagoning.

One of Hockings’ passions was giving cultural presentations for schools, churches, universities and communities, including Klondike Days.

He also was a member of the Wisconsin Legislative Council that passed Act 31, which mandated that every student should be taught correct and unbiased knowledge about the history and culture of the state’s native tribes.

Hockings is survived by his wife of 27 years, Charlotte; one daughter, Nicole Larson of Lac du Flambeau; two sisters, Jeaninne Bru-guier and Carla (George) Clements, and four brothers, David Valliere, James Valliere and Donnie Valliere, all of Lac du Flambeau, and Jerry (Karol) Austin of Michigan; and five grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Evangeline Valliere; his father, Ernest Hockings, stepfather, Lauren Valliere; two brothers, Lauren Valliere and Gene Hockings; one sister, Evangeline Beson; and one daughter, Estelle Jeannie Hockings. \_\_PUBLIC\_\_