

Walkingstick, Ernestine ^[1]

Walkingstick, Ernestine Sharon

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11 May 1937- 11 Jul 1999

Ernestine Sharon Walkingstick was a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and was inspired to nursing in by Nurse Lula Owl Gloyne.

Like most registered nurses, Ernestine Walkingstick had worked in several capacities before settling into the position of the Director of Community Health Nursing for the Cherokee Indian Reservation. She was an ideal community health nurse. She knew the reservation well – she knew the families from the babies to the elderly. She was instrumental in establishing and assisting in the clinic for the Indian population in the Robbinsville area. She also initiated, coordinated and operated the eye clinics and ENT clinics at the Cherokee Indian Hospital. She was a “nurse” in the purest sense – dedicated to the health and welfare of “her people. Her volunteer activities were legendary. She raised countless dollars for the Cherokee Children’s Home and was an active member of the North American Indian Women’s Association, Eastern Band of Cherokee Community Foundation, Western North Carolina Community Development and the Qualla SAFE House

Ernestine Sharon Walkingstick was born May 11, 1937, in the small town of Charleston, North Carolina in the Snowbird section of the [Qualla Boundary](#). ^[3] Her parents were William and Mary Walkingstick and she had one brother, Wayne born in 1939.

Walkingstick graduated from Northwestern State School of Nursing in Louisiana in 1961 and returned to the Qualla Boundary to become the Director of Community Health Nursing there. In that capacity she established the first clinic for the Cherokee population in Robbinsville, North Carolina, a remote village in the mountains where travel is difficult in the winter months. Walkingstick also initiated, coordinated, and operated the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat clinics at the Cherokee Indian Hospital in Cherokee.

Walkingstick followed Lula Owl Gloyne's example of tireless community service. In addition to her paid employment, she was actively involved in numerous professional and community volunteer activities. She was instrumental in founding the first domestic violence shelter in the region, which is now named in her honor. She raised money for the Cherokee Children's Home, was an officer in the Cherokee Lions Club, chaired the Cherokee Fall Festival in 1978, served as board chairman of the Cherokee Center for Family Services and was named "Woman of the Year" for community development by the area North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Walkingstick was also a member of the health advisory committee for the local Head Start program and served on the EBCI Tribal Health Board. Additionally she actively participated in the Tribal Grand Council Committee, was a district officer of Western District Homemakers, was active in the Cooperative Extension Area Painttown Community Club, was an officer of the Reservation American Red Cross Chapter and coordinator of the local blood drive, and was an officer of Reservation Cancer Society Chapter and served as president of the Native American Indian Women's Association.

She passed away on July 11, 1999 at Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina.

References:

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Subjects:

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Years:

1937 - 1999

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