

MSU's 125th Anniversary: 125 Extraordinary Ordinary Women

By Betsy Danforth

In Montana State University's 125th year, an ad-hoc committee of the President's Commission on the Status of University Women has taken on a project to honor 125 extraordinary women in our university's history. With the goal of celebrating these women leaders, problem solvers and innovators from today and throughout MSU's history, this endeavor has come to life in the form of a slideshow, a comprehensive library display (be sure to check it out before November 9th), and a celebration luncheon. Almost 400 nominations poured in from across the country, recognizing those who have had an impact on the status of women-- at MSU, in the nation, and around the world.

The relevance of this project is obvious, but after working on numerous profiles, it was amazing to contemplate a time when women wouldn't have considered majoring in STEM fields, or running for political office, or chairing a university department, or serving as a university president, or even employment outside of the home! In our "modern" lives and world, I think we often lack an appreciation for just how different things were a mere 100 years ago.

Imagine the bravery of Frieda Bull, who taught in MSU's (then called Montana Agricultural College) Department of Mathematics from 1907 to 1954, at a time when the field was occupied almost entirely by men. Consider the tenacity of Anna Sherrick, who never actually earned an academic degree in Nursing (because they did not yet exist), to not only see the importance of the field, but to have the incredible vision to start a university College of Nursing because she believed Montana's nurses should have the opportunity to earn college degrees. Ponder Betty Coffey's success as the first woman tenured in MSU's

College of Engineering as a computer science researcher and professor from 1977-1984. Picture Ellen Kreighbaum and Ginny Hunt, upon recognizing that there were few athletic opportunities for women, pressing the powers that be until MSU agreed to fund a women's athletic program -- a program they worked tirelessly to build and make successful. Or imagine a young Henrietta Mann (Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma), the first Katz Endowed Chair in Native American Studies and a founding and active member of MSU's Council of Elders. Mann is such a rock star; she was featured in *Rolling Stone* magazine as one of 10 leading professors in the nation in 1991! Think about Dorothy Bradley, elected to the Montana Legislature in 1971, at the age of 23, as the only woman in the House of Representatives who ran because she felt so strongly about serving her fellow Montanans. Consider the lifelong commitment to education that motivated Sharon Stands Overbull, who was been a pioneer in the public education field for over 50 years and brought reform to the educational system on Indian reservations by increasing the retention rate of graduates and academic scores.

From Montana State College's earliest days to the present, many women have held pivotal roles in the university's transformation, growth and modernization. These 125 women have inspired others through their leadership, mentorship, brilliance and bravery. We have a plethora of role models right here in our midst, never to be taken for granted. We are surrounded by the spirits of amazing, accomplished women, both deceased and living, who are breaking through barriers every day, raising the bar, taking on the status quo, asking the tough questions, and finding great answers. We are profoundly lucky to live amongst these beauties, and now, thanks largely to the hard work

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of Nika Stoop in MSU's CFE, we have a bit of an

opportunity to celebrate each and every one of them!

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Rewriting an Entire History-- Problematic Ways of Knowing

By Andrea Lawrence

When reading about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), it shocks me to learn that these people are missing for entirely too long and most are never found. Why does it take so long? Native attorney, activist and author Professor Sarah Deer, who spoke at MSU this Fall for the Women's Center's Shannon Weatherly Memorial Lecture, explains that "Native women have long been seen as disposable and that's made us more of a target." This made me consider how this attitude of "disposable" Native women developed.

Growing up and educated in Montana, a state with deep Indigenous roots, I know this should be a place of thoughtful appreciation for Native culture. However, when learning about the people and cultures who occupied this land before us, there was a noticeable lack of Native voices in the chosen texts and narratives. Our academic curriculum designers replaced the existence of, and appreciation for, Native culture with their own interpretation of "our" (Euro- as opposed to "their"- Native) heritage and history. For example, as a grade schooler in Missoula, it was typical to learn about Montana history which includes the many tribes that inhabit this state; however, when learning of these tribes, rarely do I remember walking away with an understanding of Indigenous values or traditions. Instead, we learned a filtered version of how European white settlers obliterated tribes. We would take field trips to places such as Custer's Last Stand or the Little Bighorn Battlefield, where the emphasis was on the white "heroes" rather than the people they were trying to rob, conquer and control. Obviously, this is typical in

world history, the narratives are provided by the conquerors. I can remember as a high schooler, learning about how my Catholic school was founded by "taking" (stealing) Native land and subsequently declaring Jesus as "Lord of the Valley" – land that was now holy and saved from the "savages."

This warped perception of history indeed creates a problematic way of studying and appreciating people and their cultures. In relation to Professor Deer's work on sexual violence, this deliberate attempt to whitewash a traumatic history has a lasting impact on how tribes are seen today. Colonialism has replaced autonomy, and Indigenous people have lost much of their legal and political power and voice. Professor Deer, in addition to many activists, has spent much of her career trying to litigate and raise awareness around these issues. Most interpersonal violence and sexual crimes committed against tribal citizens are perpetrated by non-Indians and the majority of these go unreported and are never litigated. For much of the last century this lack of investigations, prosecutions, and trials, in addition to the complexities of tribal vs. federal jurisdiction, has caused indigenous victims of sexual crimes to rightly feel "disposable" and unheard. More recently, this problem has been addressed by activists like Professor Deer, The Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program, and even the ACLU. The international attention to the horrifying tragedies of the MMIW has also highlighted the severe consequences of colonialism as it relates to Indigenous populations. We clearly need deliberate, positive, and effective exchange, and

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collaboration
between,
tribal and
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governments

if we are to
truly remedy
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At What Price?: The Slave Labor Trade

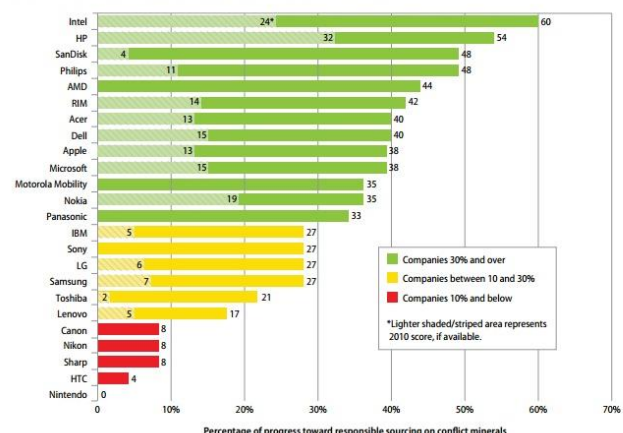
By Andrea Lawrence and Betsy Danforth

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), *an estimated 24.9 million people are victims of forced labor around the world.* (International Labour Organization.)

That latte you are sipping as you type on your laptop and slip on a comfy pair of Adidas shoes are likely all consumables that are supporting an active slave labor trade. If you attended the recent HEART Initiative's Sack Lunch Seminar on Human Trafficking and Labor Slavery, this statistic may not surprise you as much as it may have before we learned about slave and forced labor around the world.

Forced and child labor have become a more visible and highlighted topic in the news lately. Companies such as Apple were exposed and widely criticized for using forced slaves or children to work at gunpoint to mine the minerals necessary in making the electronic devices we use daily. Apple has subsequently initiated changes, and other companies have followed suit. The chart to the right shows which companies are sourcing their minerals more responsibly in the tech industry. The companies at the top include: Intel, HP, SanDisk, Phillips, and Apple, while some of the worst offenders are: Canon, Nikon, Sharp, HTC, and Nintendo.

Electronics companies ranked by progress on conflict minerals



Similarly, coffee is a major import that supports a very active slave and child labor force. As a result, a Fair Trade initiative has made an effort to track safe working conditions, fair pay, and fair compensation for companies and their products. However, becoming a recognized Fair Trade certified coffee grower is challenging for many small farmers who cannot afford to buy the certification sticker or produce enough beans to export. While Fair Trade certification should acknowledge our “go to” products at this time, we, as consumers, need to be more aware of how our vast entitlement affects millions of humans around the world.

As Americans, it is difficult to imagine letting go of products we consume and use daily such as coffee & devices. However, it is necessary to reduce the amount of devastating consumption. When buying new products we need to do research and consume responsibly. Slaveryfootprint.org and knowthechain.org are terrific resources to help us understand how our actions in Bozeman relate to slave labor around the world. The websites give detailed information about the production of technology, etc. and let us come from and how many given time. The disturbing is not comforting.



clothing, food, furniture, know where our products “slaves” work for us at any reality of mass consumption

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