

SCR 4002 Poet Laureate Resolution

January 15, 2023

Senator Mathern and other members of the North Dakota legislature: Boozhoo! Noodin Adizokaan indizhinkaaz. Hello! My name is Jacqueline Frederick and I am an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe in Belcourt, North Dakota. I am writing in support of the resolution to name Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere, Poet Laureate of North Dakota.

I have known Dr. Lajimodiere for about thirty years. I met her as an instructor at Turtle Mountain Community College when I took an elective class over the summer. Then in 2002, she was the Principal at Turtle Mountain Elementary School when I started my first teaching job. Later, I moved up to Turtle Mountain Community High School as the librarian, and continued a working relationship with Dr. Lajimodiere as she led the Turtle Mountain Art and Writers workshop for the students of Turtle Mountain Middle School and Turtle Mountain High School.

In my personal experience, I have known Dr. Lajimodiere to be one of those individuals that improves the integrity of the room by her passion about the issues she cares about. She works very hard in everything she does, and has high expectations of herself. She also sets the necessary boundaries she would need to give her 'labors of love' the full attention they deserve.

I had the unique pleasure of attending a field trip she hosted for some of the seniors at my school. We attended the Fort Totten State Historic Site that was once a military post, then eventually, a boarding school. A guide was arranged to take the group on a tour, but at several stops, Dr. Lajimodiere addressed the students and offered some context of the place we were standing, and shared poetry from her book, Bitter Tears. I distinctly remember a poem of an old pot-bellied stove she read while we were touring the boys' dormitory. There was one heat source for 3 or 4 floors of students, and we all know how cold North Dakota weather is in the winter months. In other words, the students on the field trip were able to have a tangible experience of her written words and were given a chance to 'see' how poetry can serve as a catalyst to heal.

As the librarian at the high school from where Dr. Lajimodiere resides, I feel the need support her if ever and whenever I can. It is my opinion that Dr. Lajimodiere's work in poetry and her efforts at bringing light to the boarding school issues, has made all of us better human beings.

Miigwech (thank you) for hearing my testimony.

In the Spirit of the Anishinaabe,


Jacqueline M. Frederick