

Heroes & Technology - Donald Montileaux pt 1 OSEU #7

When I left the reservation, it was probably like in the 50s, you know, like 52, 53, 1952, 1953. When you're young, you never see anything. I never knew we were really poor. You know, I just thought, well, we don't have any bread today. You know, no big deal. But I guess we were. You know, as I look back, I know that we were poor and we had a hard time living and stuff like that. But with my education and when I came back, I wanted to be a teacher. I always wanted to be an art teacher. And I always had this one guy that I really admired.

His name was Oscar Howe. He was my hero. He was an art teacher at the University of South Dakota, professor. He had a family, which was really cool. I wanted to have a family. He lived in a real fine house. And he also was an artist. And that was my main thing. And Oscar, he portrayed everything I wanted to be. So he was my hero. And Herman Red Oak, he was my hero, too, because he had all these stories inside of him and everything attached. So I learned those things. I learned it really well. Now I go back to the reservation.

I circle back through organizations that sponsor me and they give me the opportunity to go down and do workshops and classes. And I challenge those kids that are down there just as much as I got challenged up here in high school to be better at what I try to be, to have a dream, to have a goal in life, and to do anything. I tell them, hey, I'm no different than you. I came from Kyle, South Dakota. When I left Kyle, there were probably 150 people. So my family left, so that meant there were 147. But today, there's quite a few more.

But the dream I always had was to be an artist, to be an art teacher, to have a family. And the other dream I always had when I was up here in Rapid City was every time we'd live down by the creek. And we'd go on Halloween and we'd go up to West Boulevard and we'd trick our treat. And we had good candy up there. Man, we'd come back, we'd have candy for weeks. Well, the other goal I had is I was going to live in Rapid City on West Boulevard. And I live in Rapid City on West Boulevard. You know, challenge yourself.

I challenge myself every day to do something better and bigger. But I take that dream and that philosophy down to the reservations, not only on Pine Ridge, but area reservations. And I challenge those people. And I don't care how old they are. I don't care if they're 40 or 50. They still have that desire to be something else. You can walk out, but you're going to be scared as hell, too, because you're leaving an environment that you're comfortable in. You got to leave that environment. But take that culture with you.

Take that dream and take it with you when you go. Don't let it go away. And that's what I live on. I live on that dream. I challenge myself. I dream big. And so far, I'm doing all right.