



Photo provided by Erin Dunnagan

Chief Frances Ann “Pozequah” Dunnagan

Wabash, Wabash County

September 15, 1935 – November 3, 1998

Frances Dunnagan was born in 1935 in Wabash County, Indiana and died in 1998. She married Willis Dunnagan in 1954 and raised six children in their Wabash, Indiana home. Frances spent many of her adult years dedicating service to her tribal community, the Miami Nation of Indians of Indiana. She was a member of the tribal council and served as the tribal chief from 1994-1998, becoming the first woman to serve in that position. During her tenure as chief, cultural preservation was the forefront of tribal business. In the 1990's, she supported a strong push for language revitalization. In 1995, under Chief Dunnagan's leadership, the tribe sponsored the first "Homecoming" celebration in which Miami people from all over the world came together to learn the myaamia language and celebrate cultural practice. During this time, Chief Dunnagan signed a joint compact with Chief Floyd Leonard of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to encourage cooperative efforts at language education.

As the Principle Chief of the Miami Nation of Indiana, Frances was instrumental in establishing a democratic election process which resulted the first general election in 1998. In addition to serving the people of her own nation, Frances also served the state's Native American population as a member of the Governor's Native American Council. The goal of this council was to address the many needs of the Native people living throughout the State of Indiana. Chief Dunnagan also developed numerous relationship across the state, most notably with the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art. She was dedicated to the success of the museum and supported the development of the museum's 1997's *In the Presence of the Past: The Miami Nation of Indiana* exhibit.

Frances knew that the future and hope of the Miami people resided with the nation's children. She visited and provided materials to schools across the state; most importantly, to those schools Miami children attended. She believe this would allow tribal children and their peers to learn about Miami history and culture, and hoped it might also spark cultural pride, self-respect, and confidence within the Miami youth. Chief Dunnagan's legacy lives on through her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and broader tribal community.

- Chief Dunnagan's bio provided to ICW by her granddaughter Erin Dunnagan Oliver, JD.
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month

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