

## **M.G. Whiting Center Sponsors Walkabout Session**

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The Walkabout Session was a unique feature of the Indigenous Knowledges Conference, providing an opportunity for participants to visit different learning stations featuring demonstrations and presentations that involved audience interaction. Seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting were all part of a learning environment enriched through the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, whose support enabled Inuit artist Annie Cookie to share her knowledge of the traditional skill of Sanikiluaq basketmaking. The Marjorie Grant Whiting Center for Humanity, Arts, and the Environment was pleased to sponsor the Walkabout Session to honor the illustrious career of this well-known nutritional anthropologist. The Center was represented at the Conference by President Debbie Dillon-Adams and her husband, Warren Adams. As Marjorie would have done, Debbie and Warren took an active part in every aspect of the Conference, and to the delight of the participants, they organized a Walkabout Raffle that allowed everyone who attended to leave with a memento of time spent together learning about basket weaving, the intricate designs in Andean cloth, the visual art of Native Americans, and much more.

Trained as both a cultural anthropologist and a community nutritionist, Marjorie Whiting learned first-hand about the traditional farming, hunting and fishing, as well as the food gathering, preserving and preparation practices of her own family members from rural New York and North Carolina. During her career, she studied the foods and medicinal plants of the Kung Bushmen of Botswana and of indigenous cultures in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as about those of Native Americans and Hawaiians. Studying local foods, toxic plants, and traditional medicines, and their importance to the cultures that use them, was Marjorie's life work. Her carefully recorded observations helped unravel the mystery of a strange neuromuscular disease affecting the Chamorros of Guam, who traditionally consume the tuber of the ancient cycad plant.\* But it was Marjorie's incredible ability to effortlessly inspire, connect, and stimulate others that endeared her to all who knew her.

The Walkabout Session was carried out in the true spirit of this amazing woman, whose modest estate supports the Marjorie Grant Whiting Center for Humanity, Arts, and the Environment, with its mission to continue her work. For more information, contact the M.G. Whiting Center, P.O. Box 8617, Woodland, CA 95776 (USA).

\*Whiting, Marjorie Grant, 1989. *Neurotoxicity of Cycads: An Annotated Bibliography for the Years 1829-1989* (Honolulu, HI: Lyon Arboretum, University of Hawaii).

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