

"Making a Difference Through Education"
by: Diana Thompson, NY

Told through poignant stories and contemporary "proverbs" that show his deep and abundant compassion, Bill Miller has showered people with knowledge and wisdom for years, but only a lucky few have been able to access his lectures in the halls of academia. Recently, Bill addressed members of the student body, faculty, and administration, as well as visiting scholars, at Yale University. His "lesson plan" was a presentation that included live music, and stories from his past and scenes from his present life.

From the way Bill spoke about how "observation, interpretation and application" can be used to improve one's life, to his performance of "Folsom Prison Blues," it was clear to me that his profound statements should be in all introductory Sociology, Psychology and Native Studies courses. I learned so much and therefore am designing an introductory, interdisciplinary course in Native American Studies for a university in New York City.

The curriculum will include Bill's GHOST DANCE and HEAR OUR PRAYER recordings as part of the course's sections on History and Spirituality, respectively; as well as the SONGS OF THE SPIRIT DVD. His stories of how a family used every part of a deer it captured can be used to illustrate the conservation of our precious natural resources and our need to be "green."

As a culture that is hungry for relaxation, motivation and the inspiration to help other people meet the demands of life, Bill's HEAR OUR PRAYER and SPIRIT RAIN recordings on a list of "CDs for Stress Management." The list of 25 recordings will reach into Bills musical journey and will include instrumentals, such as, "Prayer of the Forest".

For untold generations before the radio or computer, wisdom, knowledge and truth was passed down through painting and music. While many things are different now days some things remain the same.

(C) 2004, 2009 by Diana R. Thompson

**

Diana R. Thompson is an educator and poet based in New York City. She hosts two Internet forums -- "Writers, Actors and Artists" and "Educators" -- of Digital Media Network at www.DMNForums.com. You may contact her at DianaT@touro.edu.