Discussion Questions

1. What was unique about Ella Deloria's training that allowed her to write so comprehensively and with such authority about kinship relationships of the Dakota Sioux people?

2. Why is Deloria a true South Dakotan?

3. Why are the combination of crisp, scientific anthropological observations and the writing of a fascinating novel like *Waterlily* such a powerful vehicle for understanding? Is this literature a kind of new literary genre? Do you know of other texts like this?

4. Write a character sketch of Waterlily herself. What kind of woman was she? Who were the most influential people in her life? Why were they so important to her development?

5. Good writers of novels create engaging characters who are multi-dimensional or "round" versus uni-dimensional or "flat." How would you describe the characters in *Waterlily*? Are they round or flat? Does Deloria do a good job in characterization? What other aspects of her writing do you like? What are some of the weaknesses in her writing?

6. As you proceed through the book, list various kinship rules when they are encountered. Do we in our white society have comparable kinship rules? Are there qualitative differences between those of the Dakota Sioux and white society? Which of the kinship rules make the most sense to you and why?

7. Do you think the world in general could ever get to the point where we as a global society could adopt the practices such as the incredibly powerful "kinship appeal"? Why or why not?

8. In your mind, what is the overall value of *Waterlily*? Would you recommend this text to your family or friends? Why or why not? Does *Waterlily* provide an accurate representation of Dakota Sioux in the nineteenth century in South Dakota?