

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 227 998

RC 013 956

AUTHOR Verble, Sedelta, Ed.  
 TITLE Ohoyo Makachi: Words of Today's American Indian Women. A First Collection of Oratory by American Indian/Alaska Native Women.  
 INSTITUTION OHOYO Resource Center, Wichita Falls, TX.  
 SPONS AGENCY Women's Educational Equity Act Program (ED), Washington, DC.  
 PUB DATE 81  
 GRANT OE-G008006076  
 NOTE 191p.; Addresses from the Ohoyo Resource Center Conference on Educational Equity Awareness (Tahlequah, Oklahoma, April 3-5, 1981) and other selected conference speeches.  
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Alaska Natives; American Indian Education; American Indian History; \*American Indians; Civil Rights; Employment; \*Equal Education; \*Females; Feminism; Futures (of Society); Humor; Leadership; \*Management Development; Networks; \*Role Models; Speeches  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Oratory

ABSTRACT

The volume presents a collection of 39 conference speeches symbolizing an effort by American Indian and Alaska Native women to speak for themselves, about themselves and to each other. Topics of speeches presented at Tahlequah consist of: past positives and present problems of Indian women; squaw image stereotyping; status of Indian women in Federal employment; cross cultural networking; how the Equal Rights Amendment relates to Indians; how educational equity can make a difference; contemporary Indian humor; networking in Indian country; accessing Indian education; leadership development; Indian women administrators as role models; educational equity insight; and impacting curriculum. Other speech topics presented outside the Tahlequah conference, but included for their significance are: changing times and changing roles of Alaska Native women; steps toward Native leadership; Indian women as change agents for Indian policy; historical perspective of the Dakota woman; Indian women's challenge in the 80's; Indian women and feminism; and retrospect and prospect of the past, present, and future of Indian women. (ERB)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

WORDS OF TODAY'S  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN WOMEN

ED227998

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

RC 01 3956

WORDS OF TODAY'S AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN: OHOYO MAKACHI



Arikara - Sápát  
Potawatomi - Kwié  
Ojibwa - Yákwawé  
Ojibwa - Ikwé  
Aleut - Ártáqáshíng  
Chinook - Kíedáki  
Cherokee - Dlué  
Dakota - Winyáw  
Papago - Jwé  
Chickasaw - Fló  
Natchez - Táná  
Seneca - Ogyóshíshásh  
Navajo - Áshé  
Onondaga - Hóóná  
Osage - Wák  
Choctaw - Chóyá  
Menominee - Méhámé  
Mobilian - Teyí  
Biloxi & Ojibwa - Áshé  
Cheyenne - Háshé  
Hopí - Wúhí  
Yakima - Áshé  
Shawnee - Hókwáshóh  
Blackfeet - Áh Kí



OHOYO MAKACHI

COVER CREDITS: The cover design incorporates contributions from artist Gabrielle Wynde Tateyuskanskan (Dakota) and Bacone College linguist Dr. Charles Van Tuyl (Cherokee), who helped to develop a typewriter element utilizing Cherokee alphabet. Dr. Van Tuyl generously translated the word "woman" into the various Indian languages blended onto the cover design. Artist Tateyuskanskan, designer of the Ohoyo logo, embodied the artwork with symbolic meaning through the use of a tipi representing the home, the ear of corn representing sustenance, herbs representing healing and the pipe as a symbol of spiritual growth. The four symbols encircle three figures personifying unification of Indian generations: youth, adult and elder.

Discrimination Prohibited — No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or be so treated on the basis of sex under most education programs or activities receiving Federal assistance.

WORDS OF TODAY'S AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN:  
OHOYO MAKACHI

A first collection of Oratory by American Indian/Alaska Native Women.

Addresses from the 1981 Ohoyo Resource Center Conference on Educational Equity Awareness in Tahlequah, Okla.; and other selected conference speeches.

COMPILED BY:  
Ohoyo Resource Center Staff  
Owanah Anderson, Director  
Sedelta Verble, Editor



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
T. H. Bell, Secretary

iii

4

The activity which is the subject of this report was produced under a grant (No. OE-G008006076) from the U.S. Department of Education, under the auspices of the Women's Educational Equity Act. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Prepared and distributed by:

OHOYO, Inc.

Ohoyo Resource Center  
2301 Midwestern Parkway, Suite 214  
Wichita Falls, Texas 76308  
(817) 692-3841

## Preface

This volume represents more than a collection of conference speeches, more than a year of planning, coordinating and strategizing for the Ohoyo Resource Center staff, facilitators and on-site coordinators.

What this volume symbolizes is an effort by American Indian and Alaska Native women to speak for themselves, about themselves and to each other in past, present and future perspectives on a wide range of topics. The three hundred participants attending the conference at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Okla., came from 11 states and numerous tribes though they primarily hailed from Oklahoma, to listen, react and interact to the conference theme, "Indian Women at the Crossroads: Identifying Guideposts." The speakers were just as diverse and yet it was hoped that amid the diversity we could identify similarities and common goals for the Indian women who share common experiences as they seek to attain educational equity and lead their families, tribes and personal careers to more productive levels.

The conference was viewed as a regional effort, but it is hoped that with this volume more Indian and Native women can share the conference goals and findings and that a larger audience will be able to experience the mood and objectives explored by 300 Indian women amid the beauty of the historic capital of the Cherokee Nation in the Cookson hills of Oklahoma early one spring weekend in April, 1981.

Through funding from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program in Washington, D.C., Ohoyo Resource Center adds this volume to a series of materials which seek to fill a void, to acquaint our country's policymakers and educators with the accomplishments, diversities and roles of today's Indian and Native women. Past and forthcoming Ohoyo products include *NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: A BIBLIOGRAPHY*, compiled by Dr. Rayna Green, addressing 300 years of textbook neglect; *1980 RESOURCE GUIDE OF AMERICAN INDIAN-ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN*, a directory of 630 Indian women's achievements and expertise in 82 professional categories; a *BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CULTURE-BASED CURRICULUM MATERIALS*, compiled by Dr. Margaret Nelson; and the ongoing quarterly news bulletin, *OHOYO*.

The name of the volume reflects the Resource Center's efforts toward promoting cross-cultural awareness. The word "Ohoyo" has achieved a high level of recognition among our readership as the Choctaw word for "woman." *OHOYO MAKACHI*, translated

WOMEN SPEAK (SAY THAT), seems a natural choice for a volume that seeks to present the many voices of Indian women.

It is doubtful that this volume could have come about or that the conference would have been as successful without the dedication and work of many people. Special thanks must go to Wathene Young, Tahlequah on-site coordinator and the Northeastern Oklahoma chapter of the North American Indian Women's Association, and to Dr. Ruth Arrington who invited the conference to follow her outstanding Symposium on the American Indian, an annual academic gathering for Indian scholars at Northeastern State University. Northeastern currently houses the highest per capita enrollment of Indian students for any state-operated university and offered an ideal location for the conference. For the three dozen facilitators and speakers who responded to Ohoyo's call for papers, and especially to Dr. Leslie Wolfe for her enduring dedication to Indian women, thanks are in order. The volume has been a cooperative effort of the entire Ohoyo staff which includes Noalene Clanton, Kim Rankins and Fran Walton. The most heartfelt thanks must go to the participants themselves who traveled long distances to bring forth urban and rural perspectives and to act as catalysts in an atmosphere of learning and sharing.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### American Indian Women's Educational Equity Awareness CONFERENCE

April 3-5, 1981  
Tahlequah, Okla.

Presented by:  
Ohoyo Resource Center  
Wichita Falls, Tex.

Funded by:  
Women's Educational  
Equity Act Program

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

#### OPENING SESSION

- Welcome: Octa Keen (Omaha), President, Northeastern  
Oklahoma Chapter, North American Indian  
Women's Association; Tahlequah, Okla. .... 1
- Greetings: "National Advisory Council on Women's  
Educational Programs: An Indian Perspective,"  
Carolyn Attneave (Delaware/Cherokee), Member,  
National Advisory Council on Women's  
Educational Programs; Seattle, Wash. .... 2
- Keynote: "Charting New Directions," Owanah Anderson  
(Choctaw), Founder and Director, Ohoyo  
Resource Center; Wichita Falls, Tex. .... 5

#### TAKING STOCK OF WHERE WE'VE BEEN . . . AND WHERE WE'RE AT

- "Past Positives and Present Problems," Shirley Hill Witt  
(Akwesasne Mohawk), Director, Rocky Mountain  
Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil  
Rights; Denver, Colo. .... 11
- "Squaw Image Stereotyping," Nancy Butterfield (Red Lake  
Chippewa), former Assistant Editor, INDIAN  
VOICE; Tacoma, Wash. .... 20
- "Status of Indian Women in Federal Employment," Mary  
Natani (Winnebago), Chair, Federal Inter-  
Agency Task Force on Indian Women;  
Washington, D.C. .... 25

#### DEPENDABLE DIRECTION FINDERS

- "Cross Cultural Networking," Ruth Dial Woods (Lumbee),  
Organizer, Urban and Rural Non-reservation  
Caucus; Pembroke, N.C. .... 29

"Equal Rights Amendment: How Does it Relate to Indians?" Ethel Krepps (Kiowa/Miami), Practicing Attorney; Tulsa, Okla. ....	35
"Educational Equity - It <b>Can</b> Make a Difference," Leslie Wolfe, Director, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, U.S. Department of Education; Washington, D.C. ....	39

TRADITIONAL CHEROKEE SUPPER

Hosted by members of Northeastern Oklahoma Chapter, NAIWA; prepared by ladies of D.D. Etchison Church, Tahlequah Community Center.

Presiding:	Mary Natani (Winnebago), National President, North American Indian Women's Association; Washington, D.C. ....	42
------------	---	----

Entertainment:	Mary Kay Harshaw (Cherokee), Reigning Miss Cherokee; Tahlequah, Okla.
----------------	--

Indian Fashions:	Phyllis Fife (Creek), Co-owner, Fife Collection, Indian custom apparel; Henryetta, Okla.
---------------------	--

Recognition to Women Serving on Tribal Councils:  
Ohio is proud of our women who are serving on tribal councils. We recognize that many of you have experienced certain difficulties in seeking office. We hope our workshops in this conference will encourage others to run.

Each councilwoman who is presently serving or has served in the past will be asked to stand and introduce herself.

Response:	Harriet Wright James (Choctaw), first woman elected to Choctaw Tribal Council; McAlester, Okla. ....	45
-----------	--	----

After Feast Speech: "Contemporary Indian Humor," Rayna Green (Cherokee), Author, Scholar, Visiting Professor, Dartmouth College; Hanover, N.H. ....	48
--	----

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

NETWORKING IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- Moderator: Ruth Dial Woods (Lumbree); Pembroke, N.C.
- "How to Impact the National Scene," Bette Crouse Mele  
(Seneca), immediate past President, Indian  
Rights Association; Princeton, N.J. . . . . 55
- "Networking in Urban Communities," Deanna Cheshewalla (Osage),  
Vice President, Inter-tribal Center,  
Dallas, Tex. . . . . 59
- "Impacting Existing Indian Coalitions," Viola G. Peterson  
(Miami), Chair, Governors' Interstate Indian  
Council and past Chair, National Indian  
Education Association; Flint, Mich. . . . . 63

ACCESSING INDIAN EDUCATION

- Moderator: Yvonne Wynde (Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux),  
Indian Educator and doctoral student,  
Harvard University; Cambridge, Mass.
- "Overview: Indian Community Colleges," Carol Cross Juneau  
(Mandan-Hidatsa), President, Blackfeet  
Community College; Browning, Mont. . . . . 66
- "BIA Education Update," Carol Allen-Weston (Quapaw/Euchee/  
Cherokee), Education Program Administrator,  
Muskogee Area Office, Bureau of Indian  
Affairs; Muskogee, Okla. . . . . 74
- "Services of Indian Education Act Centers," Mary Ann Brittan  
(Choctaw), Staff, Native American Research  
Institute; Norman, Okla. . . . . 77
- "Title IV at the Delivery Level," Delores Twohatchet  
(Kiowa/Comanche), former Director, Indian  
Student Services, Title IV-A, Lawton  
Public Schools; Lawton, Okla. . . . . 83

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Moderator: Ada Deer (Menominee), Lecturer, School of Social Work and Office of Native American Programs, University of Wisconsin; Madison, Wis.

Facilitator: Carol Young (Pawnee/Kiowa), Coordinator, BIA Counseling, Northeastern State University; Tahlequah, Okla.

"Mobilizing to Win," Ada Deer ..... 86

"Leadership Development," Billie Nave Masters (Cherokee), Supervisor, Teacher Education, University of California; Irvine, Calif. .... 90

## ROLE MODEL ADMINISTRATORS: INDIAN WOMEN WHO ARE ADMINISTRATORS

Moderator: Shirley Hill Witt (Akwesasne Mohawk); Denver, Colo.

"Social Program Administration," Leah Harjo (Creek/Euchee), Director, Indian Women's Alcoholism Program; Dallas, Tex. .... 96

"Urban Health Administration," Pamela Iron (Laguna Pueblo), Director, Indian Health Care Resource Center; Tulsa, Okla. .... 98

"State Level Program Administration," Elma R. Patterson (Tuscarora), Indian Affairs Specialist, New York State Department of Social Services; Lewiston, N.Y. .... 101

"Experiences of a Tribal Head Start Director," Yvonne Bushyhead (Eastern Cherokee), Head Start Director and Chair, National Indian Head Start Directors Association; Tahlequah, Okla. .... 107

"Directing Tribal Education," Mary Jo Cole (Cherokee), Director, Education Department, Cherokee Nation; Tahlequah, Okla. .... 111

## EDUCATIONAL EQUITY INSIGHT

- Moderator: Carolyn Attneave (Delaware/Cherokee);  
Seattle, Wash.
- "Racism-Sexism Characteristics," Ramona T. Sandoval  
(Winnebago/Sac & Fox), former Assistant  
Supervisor, Indian Education, State of  
Wisconsin; Madison, Wis. .... 114
- "Indian Women and Textbook Omission," Rayna Green (Cherokee),  
Dartmouth College; Hanover, N.H. .... 117
- "What's WEEA?" Panel:
- "WEEA - An Overview," Leslie Wolfe, WEEA Director;  
Washington, D.C. .... 121
- "Prospective of the WEEA Proposal Reader," Ruth Arrington  
(Creek), Coordinator of Native American  
Programs and Professor of Speech, Northeastern  
State University; Tahlequah, Okla. .... 122
- "Evaluating the Equity Product," Nancy Butterfield (Red Lake  
Chippewa); Tacoma, Wash. .... 125

## LUNCHEON SEMINAR

- Presiding: Margaret Nelson (Cherokee), Professor, Oklahoma  
State University and Coordinator, Ohio's  
forthcoming BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CULTURE-BASED  
CURRICULUM; Stillwater, Okla.
- "Impacting Curriculum," Joann Morris (Cayuga/Chippewa), former Director,  
American Indian Education Commission, Los Angeles  
Unified School District; Los Angeles, Calif. .... 127

## ADDENDUM

The following speeches, presented outside the Tahlequah conference forum, are included here for the significance of their approach and content.

- "Changing Times and Changing Roles of Alaska Native Women,"  
Rosita Worl (Tlingit), Harvard Traveling  
Scholar-Assistant Professor of Anthropology,  
Arctic Environmental Information and Data  
Center, University of Alaska; Anchorage,  
Alaska .... 134

"Steps Toward Native Leadership," Shirley Hill Witt (Akwasasne Mohawk), Director, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; Denver, Colo. ....	139
"Indian Women as Change Agents for Indian Policy," Ethel Krepps (Kiowa/Miami), Practicing Attorney; Tulsa, Okla. ....	146
"Historical Perspectives: The Dakota Woman," Yvonne June Wynde (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota), Indian Educator and doctoral student, Harvard University; Cambridge, Mass. ....	151
"Indian Women Challenge the '80s," Lenore Sweet (Winnebago), former Director of Education, Wisconsin Winnebago Tribe; Grand Marsh, Wis. ....	156
"Indian Women and Feminism," Leslie Wolfe, Director, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, U.S. Department of Education; Washington, D.C. ....	160
"Retrospect and Prospect: The Past, Present and Future of Indian Women," Helen M. Scheirbeck (Lumbee), Educational Consultant and Education Administrator; Fairfax, Va. ....	171
INDEX .....	178

## Welcome

Octa Keen (Omaha)

*President, Northeastern Oklahoma Chapter, North American Indian Women's Association; registered nurse.*

Throughout the centuries, Indian women have made their contributions to mankind as mothers, wives, and homemakers.

Now, in addition to those traditional roles, many of us find ourselves, either by choice or by necessity, taking a more active role by assuming new careers.

These careers not only provide us with additional responsibilities and rewards, but also present us with many new and perplexing problems that we must solve if we are to make sound decisions and thereby derive the most benefits for ourselves and our families.

*Indian women are now at the crossroads:* before we go off in a rush, we must have an idea of where we are going — we must identify *our guideposts*.

It is our hope that each of you present today will leave this conference with a clearer vision of which path you must follow in order for you to arrive at your destination.

The Northeastern Oklahoma Chapter of the North American Indian Women's Association is honored and privileged to co-host this conference, along with the Ohoyo Resource Center and Northeastern State University.

As President of the Northeastern Oklahoma Chapter of NAIWA I would like to extend to you a very warm welcome to Tahlequah, and to this conference, and to offer any assistance that we can in making your stay here both pleasant and productive.

## National Advisory Council On Women's Educational Programs: An Indian Perspective

Carolyn Attneave (*Delaware/Cherokee*)

*Presidential Appointee, National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs; Professor of Psychology and Adjunct Professor, Psychiatry-Behavioral Sciences, University of Washington. Ph.D., Stanford University, 1952.*

I'm here to welcome all of you and to try to share with you a bit about the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs. It was started about 1975 as a specially charged council to advise the president and, at that point, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, on problems of women, particularly involving either their acquiring education or their need for education or their inter-relationship in any way with education and training.

As you know, the Council has gotten itself some interesting publicity. Any of you who have women athletes in your family, or aspiring ones, know that one of the things the Council did was to insist that all schools, including universities, give equal, or proportional, depending on what kind of enrollment there was, support to women's athletics as they did for men. And, of course, when you start figuring what proportion of funding goes to football teams and say "women want their share, they want an equal amount," it's kind of shocking to alumni and college presidents and everybody else. On the other hand, it has been working, as far as I know. No university, no college, has had it's funds taken away because it refused to do this. Some have complained a little bit louder and women are claiming that they aren't getting adequate coaching, adequate training, adequate opportunities to express themselves in that field.

There have been efforts also to address other inequitable issues and to hold hearings to listen to women all over the country in terms of their problems and their needs in the vocational educational area. The voc-ed act is up for funding again and in order that

it isn't decided that the only vocational need for women is home economics and if you put all the money into that you don't have to worry about women learning anything else this process is necessary. We find that there has been an improvement in attitude of a lot of the women to secure the kind of training which will develop each of us in our own ways, in our own talents, rather than presuming that there are only a few things they can do. Not that we all couldn't learn some homemaking skills to add to what we have as knowledge; not that we couldn't all learn to type and maybe be a little better off — but that this is not all we do. There are women in every vocation, in every occupation. We have potential and we need to have the opportunities to develop our talents. These are only two examples.

The work in the Council is divided among its 25 members according to three main committees. One committee has to do with funding programs which will allow for the development of materials, expertise and training, the WEEA programs that many of you here have been involved in and know about.

I'm involved with federal policies and procedures committee. It's kind of a natural for an Indian because we've been living with the federal government for a long time. I find that a lot of the people on the committee are learning things about the federal government that you and I probably learned when we were in grade school — about how it works and how it doesn't work.

There needs to be a maintained Indian voice in NACWEP because issues come up very often that affect us in a different way than they might affect other women. We have many things in common. Like, for instance, enforcing this equity in athletics. But, there also needs to be an Indian presence on NACWEP who will focus on, for instance, BIA schools and say "Get your act together and be more equitable and honest about the way in which you are educating Indian women and girls . . . be more fair and hire professional Indian women as well as dormitory aides who are Indian women." Somebody has to be at the level where policy is being discussed to speak to these issues and to say, "Yes, that's fine, but before you make that move, let's be sure how it is going to affect Indian women. Is it going to help them; is it going to hurt them?"

I think we're all facing, in whatever line of activity we are, changes, cutting off of funds we've been counting on, changes of emphasis in priorities and philosophies. I had one young woman call me just within the last week who had a fellowship, she thought, to graduate school, and had been accepted to four graduate schools and expected to be able to choose which one she would go to. Except that all four wrote her and said, "We are delighted — you are superbly qualified; we admire your dedication

to learn and be able to go back to your own people and put your training to work, but we have no more funds for training. We hope you will come, but we cannot promise you a job, we cannot give you a scholarship, because the federal funds have been cut off." As she put it, she had knocked on some doors and she was so overjoyed when she thought they were being opened except that somebody kicked her in the belly when the door got open. We can't allow that to happen to us and to our young people. We have to put our wits to work here and everywhere we are to sort out the priorities and the ways of doing things and some of you are going to have to come along—my gray hair tells you I can have some time to do this, but I'm not going to be there forever. Somebody has got to be on councils like this who can persist in that ever continuous fight.

It's a joy to come to a meeting like this. It's like the one I attended in the Southwest last spring when we all got together to talk about the strengths of the American Indian family. We had a wonderful time talking to each other because we didn't have to explain things to each other. We didn't have to talk about all of our problems—we could talk about our strengths. We need to talk with each other, to sort out the important priorities, to learn from each other how problems are solved. But we aren't going to get anywhere if we don't explain on the outside (to dominant culture) in words they can understand and help frame the policy that will get us the things we need.

As you go out, look at the geometric patterns that are around Tsa-la-gi Lodge, where many of us are staying, and you will notice that they are all rectangles surrounded by other rectangles. Every once in a while there is one that breaks through the boundaries and links things together. What I'm pleading for you to do, as well as all the other things on your agenda, is to be thinking, whether it's your job or somebody else's job, to come join, not only the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, but in other instances where there is an interface and where the Indian voice needs to be heard. In this particular time, a time of transition, I hope you will find people to do that and to keep that Indian voice being heard and it's in that spirit that the National Council wants to hear from you and to encourage you.

## Keynote: Charting New Directions

Owanah Anderson (*Choctaw*)

*Founder and Director, Ohoyo Resource Center; Recipient, Anne Roe Award, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 1981. Texas resident.*

Many years ago, when I was a child, my grandmother used to say to me, "If anyone asks you if you are Indian . . . you tell them no. You tell them you're Choctaw."

Almost 300 of us Indian women are together today, and each of us is keenly aware of our right to be identified as a distinct tribal person. Our right to be identified as a member of a sovereign nation. We each subscribe to that right. But, haven't we now traveled beyond that narrow and constraining requirement to identify ourselves solely as a Choctaw . . . solely as a Pawnee, Menominee, Chippewa, Seneca or Alabama-Coushatta?

As we consider charting new directions — directions to survive against a new national course — must we not first consider the necessity to think of ourselves as one people? We all share a certain commonality — our commonality as the continent's original people. We all share a similar heritage — a proud heritage and a sad one. Time has come when we must recognize that we cannot cope as islands, for we each are part of the main — the main body moving in a rapid and changing course.

A distinct new national course was charted in November, 1980, and as a people economically deprived, by all existing criteria, we Indian people must once again figure out how we are going to survive.

We now have Reagan Administration budget recommendations, and we find Indians bear a disproportionate share of cut-backs. Indian housing recommendations: zero. Yet, we are the most poorly housed of any of the nation's people. CETA programs: in dire jeopardy. Yet, Indians have highest employment of any of the nation's people. Education funds: drastic cuts recommended. Yet, we have the dubious distinction of poorest educational attainment

of all this nation's people. Social welfare programs: across-the-board cuts and this will disproportionately impact Indians because we are poorest. In 1980, 19 percent of Indian people needed public assistance compared to 5 percent of the U.S. total. Indian Health Service was solemnly guaranteed in dozens of treaties in exchange for the heart of a continent. Now, we learn that the Administration recommends a \$136.9 million IHS reduction. Yet, we are the least healthy of all the nation's people — with the shortest life span, highest infant mortality and most sickness. In brief, we die youngest of all this nation's people.

How do we cope against those odds?

I suggest that we first take stock of the fact that we *are* at the crossroads. We *must* chart new courses. We *must* explore alternatives. We *must* cope with the reality that after half a century the nation has pivoted sharply away from policies to "affect social change." This is reality, and naught can come from lamentations. Too long we have wrung our hands and lamented—lamented loss of our lands, lamented encroachment on our heritage, lamented our physical defeat. And, we women have borne the brutal brunt.

I submit to you three pathways — pathways which can lead us once again through hardships ahead. First, let us examine the roads other minority groups have traveled. Second, let us learn how to impact political power. Third, let us re-examine the scope, the total scope, of the women's movement.

In my state, as in the states of many of you, there is an ever-growing Hispanic population. Our Hispanic sisters also come from diverse backgrounds as do we. The Mexican-American most frequently differs in priorities, goals and thrust from the Puerto Rican; the Chicana differs from the Cuban; the California Hispanic differs from the Texas Hispanic. Yet, from community level to the national level, I have observed that our Hispanic neighbors can generally coalesce and come out eventually in the political arena with a position to positively impact the general Hispanic community. Take, for instance, bilingual education. Two months ago, an Administration policy was announced which would have dismantled bilingual ed. Reaction rippled clear across the Hispanic community; forces went into immediate action; lobbying was leveled from every angle. The most recent word is: bilingual ed. will survive.

Let us learn from the Hispanics. Let us learn how to maintain our tribal distinctiveness but keep it internal, and how to present an external coalition to the common good of us all. How hard this is for us. How deep are our divisions. How long has the U.S. government pitted us one against the other. How conditioned we are to turf-protection. To turn this around we have to begin within our

own selves, our own attitudes. How guilty we are of knocking each other.

I stole this story from a California friend. It illustrates my point so well — and so painfully. An Indian and a White man went fishing together. They were using live crab for bait. The lid on the White man's bait bucket kept coming off — the crabs kept climbing up and pushing the lid off. Finally, the White man had to get a rock and put it on the lid of his bait bucket. Off the lid came again, and the White man had to get a bigger rock to hold down the lid. Finally, he had three or four big rocks stacked on top of his lid. The White man said to the Indian man, "How come you're having no trouble keeping your bait in the bucket?" The Indian man said, "I've got Indian crabs." "What do you mean 'Indian crabs'?" The Indian man replied, "Every time one of my crabs starts climbing up the side of my bucket, the rest of them pull him back down again."

We do this to each other. Let one Indian surface in any sort of visibility — and the rest of us immediately start pot-shooting . . . detracting . . . diminishing . . . criticizing, and before it's all said and done, somebody pops up with the unkindest cut of all: "She (or he) *really* isn't Indian."

Where this all leads is to an awesome fact: we don't have a voice in the political arena, the arena where policy is made, policy that determines our life-style. Policy that determines whether a hospital will be completed, whether a sanitation system will be finished, a school kept open, a scholarship funded. We are politically powerless — yet no people's lives are as inextricably entwined under the federal thumb as are we. We must learn how to participate in shaping policies . . . not merely wail and lament inequities after the fact. We must learn how to act; not merely re-act.

We will remain powerless until we quit cutting each other down . . . until we recognize that what happens to the Crow in Montana does, in fact, impact the Choctaw of Oklahoma . . . until we come to grips with the fact fishing rights in western Washington is an issue about which the land-locked Cherokee of Oklahoma must needfully be concerned.

We will remain powerless until leadership of our national Indian organizations enter into real dialogue with each other. It isn't that we don't have national organizations but it's too infrequently we hear of them coming up with common priorities . . . with a unified voice . . . with a solid position. Let us hope that the coming convocation of our leadership, next month in Washington, may bring a new beginning. This meeting of vast numbers of our leadership is set for early May. I think it significant to point out that the effort is being orchestrated by a woman, our Menominee colleague, Ada Deer.

We will remain powerless until we learn to seize power. Seizing power begins at your own ballot box. Far too many Indians don't vote. Too many of us don't participate — participate in the process of choosing our Congressman or our tribal council. Much emphasis of the conference will be on leadership development and on impacting the political process, and how to impact it from the grassroots up.

So, let us now turn to the much maligned topic of the women's movement. I ask that we re-assess its scope. Let us look at it to determine what is — and what is not — applicable to Indian women. Much has been written about how and why Indian women haven't flocked in droves to join the women's movement. Some say that Indian women are — or were — equal within our own cultures. Some say the women's movement is simply a whim of upper middle class White women. Some say Indian women have been too busy simply surviving to take part in movements, generally. Some have been side-tracked on certain controversial bits and pieces.

I say to you the heart and soul of women's movement is sheer economics. It will continue to be an economic issue for so long as there remain those awful inequities in the pay check. For as long as a woman draws 59¢ for every dollar a man draws. For so long as a woman is the last hired and first fired. For so long as this nation is willing to accept as a matter of course that a woman is automatically worth less at the payroll office simply because she was born female. And, what happens at the payroll office *is* an Indian woman's issue. More than one-third of our women are in the work force and ours remains the lowest median annual income of all the nation's ethnic women. For those working outside the home: \$1,695 is a yearly average, according to the latest available statistics. Employer of the greatest number of Indian women is Uncle Sam himself — but our grade levels are way below the national average. Our Indian women who work at BIA are at an average of GS 4; at IHS at an average of 5.19. The overall average at BIA is 7; and at IHS 6.

There's an ever-increasing number of Indian women who work because we have to. We're the head of the family. Our children must be fed and child support can't be counted on. Last summer we heard from Reuben Snake, chairman of Nebraska Winnebagoes, that 67 percent of the households on his reservation were headed by women. The same pattern is emerging in urban areas. It's merely another myth — that the Indian woman sticks to the house and minds the kids. Such is a luxury that fewer and fewer can afford. And, in the spirit of sisterly concern, we must respond to the needs of the Indian woman who is required to play the dual role of wage earner and full-time mother, and is oft ill-prepared for the wage earner role.

During the past three years I served on President Carter's Advisory Committee for Women, and in that capacity I sat in public hearings across the United States. I listened carefully as women in North Carolina, in Florida, and in Denver related their problems. I heard the recommendations — recommendations for federal initiatives to alleviate the problems. I observed there wasn't a great deal of difference between the problems of Indian women and the problems of the rest of the women. Ours were just more so.

The President's Advisory Committee for Women developed a final report and presented it to the President in the Cabinet Room of the White House on December 17 (1980). The report spoke to housing — and Indian people are the poorest housed. The report spoke to child care — and we heard Indian women's testimony across the country on this problem. The report spoke to domestic violence — and this, too, is surfacing as a painful problem for Indian women. The report spoke to women's education needs and opposition to sex discrimination and sex bias and stereotyping in our children's school books. This, truly, is an Indian woman's problem. We're all weary of being depicted solely as squaws, and we're galled that the textbooks of our children, by and large, reveal that no more than two American Indian women have ever graced this continent: Pocahontas and Sacajawea.

I challenge you to look again at the women's movement. To review the blueprint for change. I challenge you to pick out those issues with which you can relate: like employment, like affirmative action, like vocational choices for our Indian girls. Give your support to those you can relate to, that you agree with. Bypass the rest. I did. Link with organizations which have already done the groundwork; you need not reinvent the wheel.

And, remember, too: The Census Bureau has just released figures which inform there's now 1,418,195 of us counted. We grew 71 percent—more than any other ethnic group in the land. I like to say that there's more of us now than any time since the buffalo went: my anthropologist friends like to point out there's more of us now than there's probably ever been. We survived manifest destiny; we survived White men's diseases; we survived the Trail of Tears which was trod by the foremothers of many of us here today. We survived corrupt Indian agents and insensitive White school teachers. We've survived poverty and pestilence and federal bureaucracy.

We not only survived; but we now no longer think of ourselves as a defeated people. Instead, a rejuvenated spirit prevails across the length and breadth of Indian country; a contagious resurgence that combines the best of the old and the best of the new.

We women shall prevail. We shall prevail as Indian women. We'll move together to new horizons. Through coalition building, through participating in the political process, through expending our energies within the political parties of our choice, through getting behind our elected leaders (or, if we can't get behind them . . . get them out). Through linkage with in-place organizations focused on *our* priorities: we will be a force to be reckoned with.

# Taking Stock Of Where We've Been . . . And Where We're At

## PAST POSITIVES/PRESENT PROBLEMS

Shirley Hill Witt (*Akwesasne Mohawk*)

*Director, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; Consultantships for UNESCO, USICA, HSS, DOL, OCR; International Lecturer for the State Department; widely published author. Ph.D., Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 1969. Colorado resident.*

## LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

There is no Native person in North America who is untouched by the Anglo world, the White man's world, the American way. Nor are any of us immune to its infectiousness. Yet few self-identifying American Indians live exclusively in the non-Indian world. To be "Indian" carries for many a sense of homeland (reservation, tribe, community) and duty to one's people, no matter where one currently resides . . . or whether one ever returns . . . or whether those duties are ever discharged. Thus Native peoples are aware of and practice to varying degrees two, often widely contrasting, life-styles. To move between these two worlds can be a feast of appreciation for human ingenuity, or it can be the bitterest trap.

Whether they live in an apartment in Minneapolis or attend the Bureau of Indian Affairs School on the San Juan Pueblo in New Mexico, Indian children typically learn two sets of ways — neither of them perfectly. No human knows his or her own culture perfectly, but what one culture has created is certainly learnable by members of another and is limited only by our intelligence and our opportunity to learn. And so, most Native people nowadays grow up with a two-track cultural background and find themselves participating to greater or lesser extent both in the Indian world as defined by their tribal affiliation, and in the White man's world. This term, "The White man's world," by the way, is not to be taken as a quaint archaic phrase: the world of the White *woman* is, for the

most part, invisible to Indians. Even if it weren't invisible, it is irrelevant, since the White *man's* world is the one making an impact upon Indian life and Indian individuals. It is still the Great White Father (sic), who determines the quality of life for Native people as well as all other Americans, male and female.

## FROM STRENGTH BEFORE COLUMBUS

As many as 280 distinct aboriginal societies existed in North America prior to Columbus. *Not* suprisingly, some tribes practiced the oppression of women by men. But, in several, the roles of Native women stand in stark contrast to those of Europeans. These societies were matriarchal, matrilineal, and matrilineal — which is to say that women largely controlled family matters, inheritance passed through the female lines and upon marriage the bride usually brought her groom into her mother's household.

In a matrilineal household, all the women were blood relatives and all the males were outsiders. This sort of residence pattern was frequently seen among agricultural societies in which women bore the responsibility for farming while the men went off to do the hunting. It guaranteed a close-knit working force of women who had grown up with each other and with the land.

Although the lives of Native American women differed greatly from tribe to tribe, oftentimes their life-styles exhibited a great deal more independence and security than those of the European women who came to these shores. Indian women, in many cases, had individual freedom within tribal life that women in so-called "advanced" societies were not to experience for generations. Furthermore — and in contrast — Native women *increased* in value in the estimation of their society as they grew older. Their cumulative wisdom was considered one of society's most valuable resources.

## NEW NATIVE WOMEN SPEAK: PAST POSITIVES/ PRESENT PROBLEMS

In recent years I have sought out successful Native women to find out how they have achieved their current levels of success in the Indian world, or the Anglo world, or both. I have asked them about how things were for women in their grandmother's lives and in their own. And, finally, I have asked them to tell me about themselves today, about the problems and the victories they have experienced.

What I will be sharing with you for the remainder of my talk will be the words and thoughts of these women, as best as I could capture their ideas on paper.

## TRADITIONAL VS. MODERN ROLES

What were the joys and the conflicts between traditional vs. modern roles? Options for women in the past have been limited for *all* cultures, given the reality of women's biology and the limited control women have had over determining pregnancy. Thelma Stiffarm (Gros Ventre/Cree) observed that, "In my mother's generation it was expected that the women would stay home and raise the children. My generation has conflict when remembering how nice it was growing up with my mother always there. I don't know if it was *Indian* culture or *White* culture, since *all* women stayed home then." Rain Parrish (Navajo) said, "Traditionally, every woman should have a child. Females were to give birth, to give life." But Bella McCabe, also a Navajo, feels that whereas not all sheep and goats are good mothers, not all *women* are made to be mothers. There are other important roles for them to play instead. The traditional roles of Native women often extended far beyond the hogan or tipi door. "In my tribe," says Stiffarm, "Indian women were always given the opportunity to do whatever they wanted and were always encouraged to do so. We've always had Indian tribal councilwomen. We had women warriors." McCabe reports that in Navajo life, "It's a woman's land and everything is centered around the woman. If anyone is oppressed, it's the Navajo men." Parrish describes a major transition for Navajo women from owners and controllers of their homesteads and flocks to a modern, less secure way of life. She says, "Traditionally, women's work was in the home. After losing her sheep in the sheep reduction program (in the '30s), she had to go *outside* the home for work. There had to be a whole re-establishment of roles." Speaking about today she observes that, "Often these days the men aren't working and *they* are in the homes. Now the BIA is starting a new sheep reduction program. I think there will *continue* to be a breakdown in the family, a real fragmentation. I don't know who'll come through it." McCabe says, "Indian men recognize the necessity for some wives to work: it's no problem, and anyone who knows how to should handle the money. I do it all in my family. Most of the women in Navajo families handle the money. My grandmother always had her purse with the family money on a string under her skirt."

While the traditional cultures viewed women's roles as primarily being involved in family and household needs, many tribal groups expected women to play key roles in the political and religious areas of Native life. As Stiffarm indicated, some even had women warriors such as those known as the "brave-hearted women" among the Dakota, one reincarnate today being an organization called W.A.R.N. (Women of All Red Nations) to serve the needs of their people. Movement into the Anglo world of work and education is seen as necessary, or an opportunity. It is not *necessar-*

ily seen as a major threat to traditional concepts of women's behavior.

## PERCEPTIONS OF ANGLO MEN AND WOMEN

But what are their perceptions of Anglo men and women? The White world into which Indian women foray for training and work is an often hostile, always confusing universe. Connie Uri (Choctaw/Cherokee) is frank about her perception of that world. She says that:

"Racism has stood in my way in my career. To be female and Indian gives you a double bind. In medical school, the first day of anatomy the teacher told me I wasn't worth teaching and he wouldn't do it. The medical school was segregated, two blacks, two Jews, two women, and we were all put at one end of the laboratory to work on cadavers. The lab assistants had to help us since the teacher refused to."

Rayna Green (Cherokee) sees the *stereotype* as standing in the way. "What needs to be changed in non-Indian culture," she feels, "is the image of Indian women as dupes and drudges and dumb squaws. As they really are, as superstars, is how they *should* be seen." McCabe also recognizes that the dumb-Indian-squaw-drudge stereotype exists:

"I've served on committees with Anglo groups and it always surprises me that I've always been introduced as an Indian or a Navajo, and then I think people give each other the nod which means, 'There's a dumb person.'"

Green observes that, "In the White world, being *poor* and *female* more than being an *Indian* has been the burden to attaining success." Uri has found the generalized Indian noncompetitiveness as a handicap. Yet, she says, "I've learned to be more aggressive through the years — but I've got a long way to go to catch up with these punks I'm going to law school with." Bernice Moffett (Nez Perce) remarked that, "It is in the Anglo world that I am walking two paces behind men." Stiffarm, when asked what *White males* need to learn about Indian women to make this a better world, responded, "I'd educate them to learn that women, Indian and non-Indian, are *not* a threat: that there are *plenty* of opportunities around and that there are *enough* to go around."

Ramona Bennett (Puyallup) feels that, "White men are paranoid. The White man has built his strength on an imaginary supremacy and knows it. He drinks and pushes and competes and destroys a lot of lives keeping up this supremacy pretense. I should

pray," she said, "that someday they would rest better and feel better. It would be wonderful if they built a higher regard for women of their race and other races. They have a strong anger, fearing someone will get in front of them."

Anne Marr Medicine (Seneca/Mohawk) essentially agrees. She said, "I've had the good fortune of knowing a number of fine White males, but arrogance is the big problem. They're afraid. If we could erase the fear they have of women and other races I think we could go a long way toward solving problems."

Uri expressed sadness over the lack of communication between Indian and White women. She said:

"I had a lot of hope a few years ago about White women: they were asserting themselves against male dominance and I *thought* they'd look upon Indian women as their sisters. But after Wounded Knee II, talking with White women, I came away with a bad feeling that they couldn't comprehend the needs of the Indian people. Their total ignorance of the problem was bad: they judged Indian people by their own standards. I told some NOW women that it took 200 years for them to get rid of bras which *we* weren't wearing when *they* arrived here."

Mary White Eagle Natani (Winnebago) feels that, "They *try* to relate to Indian women, but because of their own upbringing it's hard for them." She said that, "Their concern with outward things, clothes, etc., needs to be changed."

Bennett expressed this opinion more forcefully:

"White women, I would hope, would reinstitute the values that they traditionally had. The women of all races have that strong family and community sense, but White women are too competitive. They compare their children to others' children, their heritage to others, their values are based on how jealous others are of them instead of having things to share. Their children are put in little boxes and are raised in isolation. They grow up so alone, so lost, and their boys become very aggressive and girls become gossipy and cloistered and they never get away from that. It affects how they treat us."

Fern Eastman Mathias (Dakota) also sees this insularity. "They aren't thinking about other kinds of women," she observes, "the wide range of women. They're only thinking about their own selves and their own culture. They have life too easy. Put them on the

reservations for a while and see how they do."

Anne Marr Medicine is more optimistic, however. "I'm feeling a little bit better about White women. I'm meeting some very good people. I'm getting an affinity for some and I hope it grows. Even shopping in a supermarket, though, there is so much hostility in South Dakota I just want to shake some of those White women."

Stiffarm, while sympathetic to the women's movement in this country, nonetheless agreed with Uri and feels her priorities lie elsewhere:

"White women have a mistaken idea that all minorities have the same problems. If I have to choose between an Indian problem or a woman's problem, I'll always choose the Indian problem to work on. Indians have priority for me. There are plenty more *women* attorneys than *Indian* attorneys, *male* or *female*."

### OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS

Adequate preparation for life in the Anglo world is a necessity that severely strains the ability of many Indian families. Those who are on the reservations must rely for the most part on the BIA to teach the children skills they will need to know if they leave the economic desert of reservations for greater opportunities elsewhere. But the task is too rarely accomplished in a full and adequate way. "When reservation families move to Phoenix in hopes of finding employment," said Phyllis Bigpond, an Oklahoma Yuchi who is assistant director of Phoenix Indian Center, "It is usually the wife-mother who becomes the wage earner and head of the household. She works for sheer necessity because her husband can't get a job. Some who come to the city go right to work — no problems, no help needed," she said. "But many are completely devoid of city survival skills. They lack job training, transportation, telephones, housing, reading and language skills, child care, food. Talk about frustrated people!"

Grace McCullah (Navajo) feels that:

"Indian women, in general, are more aggressive than Indian men — certainly more aggressive at finding and holding jobs. When the family comes to the city, *somebody* has to do something. So the mother goes to work. She flat *can't* be intimidated by discrimination. She's got to put the bread on the family table for survival. Tribal roles used to be clearly defined, but with the erosion of tribalism and with shepherding, for instance, diminished as a way of life, the man has nothing in the con-

temporary sense to replace those strong structural roles. For him, the role is *gone*; for the woman, the role is not so eroded. She can get *some* kind of job, usually, and the job and her children become her discipline and her reinforcement. In the city it's the *women* who deal with the money, the government, the salesmen. Yet, in the Anglo-dominated city, the White society says the father should be the primary wage earner and head of the household."

Natani placed blame for her past career difficulties on the shoulders of the educators:

"What stood in *my* way was a lack of direction early on, people at various schools who tracked me into home economics could have helped me find what I really wanted to do. I went to the mission boarding schools and BIA schools. It took me 15 years of working to find out what I really wanted to do: what to take in school, how to go about it. I was a file clerk for the BIA. I wanted to work with *people* but I didn't know how or who."

Self-consciousness *haunts* Native women when they penetrate new zones or new heights in the Anglo world. McCabe expresses a common exasperation:

"I'm always seen as being the 'Indian.' Always the *representative*. Especially with ultra-liberals. But I'm not a representative: I only represent *myself* but I guess we're *always* a representative whether we like it or not. I'm conscious of being *watched* a lot. I guess I *am* being an ambassador because I'm educating the non-Navajo people about my people."

Green confesses that, "I don't find myself being schizophrenic except when I'm being pressed to act more 'Indian' by others, usually Anglo. It's also discomfoting to be asked to plan for whole Indian groups." Yet she sees one clear advantage. "Being an educated Indian woman who interfaces with the non-Indian world, I am so unique that I *can* have an impact on aiding Indian people to become what they *want* to become." Mathias finds that, "*Male dominance* in organizations has stood in my way. They just don't look at females as leaders. I'm talking about *both* White men and Indian men."

## SUCCESS IN TWO WORLDS

When the discussion turns to the lives of the Native women and

their opportunities, what can be the *assessment* and *measure* of one's "success" when it must span two worlds which do not often *mesh* well with one another? Stiffarm counsels us that:

"You should learn to take the best from both cultures, living an Indian life is a very different way of life. You have to *share* things, you must learn to give away everything you have, to learn not to be materialistic, to be kind, to show deference, to take care of old people, and to treat children with respect as individuals. You have to be very strong to do all those things. Taking the best of the White world is a lot easier than Indian ways."

She then told a story.

"I had a white shawl that I loved very much. My mother recognized that I was getting too attached to it and made me give it away — to someone I didn't even know. Whites feel that if you *work* for something, you *keep* it. In the Indian world you have to give it away. So when I hear young Indian people say, 'I want to go back to the old way,' I say, 'It's hard: it's hard to be nice to people all the time!'"

She feels that, "Success for an Indian woman today is to learn how to take the best of both worlds. Each culture has good things to learn. For example, the White world has good schools. The Indian world has sharing and caring. A successful Indian woman can put together a good life taking the best from the White world and the Indian world." Bennett sees a successful woman as "a person taking part in the traditional culture but also being involved in the national movement for Indian survival, and being able to function realistically in both cultures."

Natani also recognizes this need for a "two-world" competency for successful functioning. She feels that the successful Indian woman is the one who is able to live in both worlds. It's not degrees or money that make a person a success.

The present-day Indian woman who pursues an education and a career outside the home and "off-res" sometimes has much to contend with. Green observes that, "My having gotten a Ph.D. is not well thought of at all. It is seen as dangerous, threatening, and non-Indian. My status in the non-Indian world, although good, is inherently threatening. It threatens my credibility as an *Indian* person." Stiffarm notes that, "My being an attorney *does not* impress my people. They never ask me how my job is going — they

judge me on how I treat my mother and how I participate in the Sun Dance."

Medicine says, "I've had to make some trade-offs. You can't have an Iroquois longhouse in the middle of the urban area. But in order to do my thing I have to move away from home. I'm caught adrift because I have to move physically farther and farther away."

"I'm sure my reservation sisters think I have achieved success simply because I directed an agency with a \$2 million budget — but I am uncomfortable in the role of primary breadwinner for my children and myself. Is it success to struggle — maybe until I die — for our basic comforts? Like the divorced White women around me who are heads of households, I'd like to marry a man who would help support the family, help share the struggle. That, now, would be 'success.'"

But another Navajo, Carol Kirk, has a different view: "For me success will be the day I can return home. I don't think of myself as an urban Indian woman. I regard Phoenix as a necessary stopover, strictly temporary. I get through each day by dreaming of the beautiful tomorrow when I can go home again."

Bennett believes that while "success must be defined as competency in both the Anglo and Indian worlds, the *ultimate* success is to be found at home. As a chairwoman of the Puyallup Nation, there is no greater honor possible. There is nothing better for me later . . . being a governor or a judge or a senator. No other honor or glory could be greater than being honored by my people."

An assessment by Green perhaps best sums up the issues explored here today.

"A good indicator of success for an Indian woman is when a woman has reached the place where she can work for and with her own people, where she has influence enough to be effective. For some it's educational attainment in the non-Indian world which is very useful, or it can be traditional wisdom in the Indian world. A Ph.D. is not very useful on the reservation. It would be best to get the credentials in *whatever sphere* you operate, to have attained credentials in *both* worlds would be ideal, but the *ultimate* sense of success for me would be *verification* and *validation* in the Indian world."

I fully and firmly believe that to the extent that the world of the Great White Father is willing to open itself to Native Americans, Indian women have a unique vision and contribution to bring to

this nation, now as in the past. As Rain Parrish hopes, it may be that for Native women:

It is time to ascend to the  
mountain tops  
To begin to chant the  
music of our visions.

## Squaw Image Stereotyping

Nancy Butterfield (*Red Lake Chippewa*)

*Formerly Assistant Editor, THE INDIAN VOICE, publication of Small Tribes of Western Washington. Authored articles concerning Indian civil rights complaints, Indian women's stereotypes, battered women and women leadership.*

The subject that I'm going to be speaking on today, "Squaw Image Stereotyping," is something that was kind of mulling around in my mind for about the last five years and finally, after going through some processes and talking to a lot of other people, I started to put these things down on paper.

In 1976 and 1977 I lived here in Oklahoma, in Shawnee, and was working for Central Tribes of the Shawnee area. At that time I had an opportunity to get acquainted with a lot of really great Indian women around the Shawnee area who were also interested in women's issues. One of the things that we were able to do was pull together a group of Indian women and form the Shawnee Women's Political Caucus. We were affiliated as a chapter with the National Women's Political Caucus. Kaye Warren of the Sac and Fox tribe, who's here today, and also Wanda Peltier, who was wife of the late Potawatomi chairman, Gerald Peltier, were very active in forming the organization. We held a lot of discussions about the status of Indian women today and how that's changed over the years. We

started questioning things like the policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (which are unwritten policies but they still exist) of putting women at the bottom of the career ladder in clerk-typist positions. While there is an Indian preference policy, there is no policy which enables women to ascend the career ladder the same way men do. Another thing we looked at was the practice of Indian Health Service of enabling the non-Indian spouse of a male tribal member to have all and full health care benefits of tribal members, but the non-Indian spouse of a female tribal member gets nothing. So, in other words, a woman who marries outside the tribe is, in the eyes of Indian Health Service, waiving her rights as a tribal member for her family.

In talking about these things I decided to find out more about how we got to where we are now. I talked to a lot of people, I read a lot of articles. The paper that I'm presenting I feel like I really can't take credit for myself. Most of the information I have taken from other sources — from talking to other women, from my own up-bringing and just from a number of different places. So, I feel that I have taken all these ideas, these concepts, and set them in writing.

At the time I first wrote the article Wanda Peltier was involved with a newspaper published in Norman called THE SISTER ADVOCATE. If it weren't for Wanda, I probably would never have written this because she kept bugging me and bugging me, saying, "You know, nothing's really ever been written by Indian women about the situation and we really would like to have something." So she gave me a deadline: we're going to press next Wednesday, we need to have something from you to put in there. So, I got everything together that I had gathered from all these sources and put it down on paper. The article was later picked up by OHOYO and reprinted in their newsletter. The response that I had was really surprising. It alerted me to the fact that there is such a hunger among Indian women to read and see and experience more information about ourselves—more positive things about ourselves. Because those images just don't exist in the media.

You all know how Indian women have been portrayed in the media. It has not been a positive image so I hope that in sharing with you today the things that I have gathered from you—from Indian women as a whole—that we can start within our own minds to turn the tide of being a part of that negative self-image. I want to start out with a quote that is an anonymous quote. It's something that's been kicking around for a long time and I'm sure that even if you haven't heard the quote before that it's ring will be familiar. You will have heard the theme before.

*"Pity the poor squaw, Beast of burden, slave;  
Chained under female law from puberty to grave."*

Is that really the way it's been? The anonymous author of these lines displayed a misconception about the lives of Indian women which is not only prevalent in non-Indian society today, but which has also had a destructive influence on the contemporary roles and aspirations of Indian women themselves.

The familiar image of the Indian woman as a sullen drudge who lives out her days in powerless and subordinate existence, is one which was first fostered by White male historians and missionaries, who interpreted what they saw in Indian society from their own framework of male superiority. This image was perpetuated by careless observers and uninformed persons and has made its way intact into the twentieth century. It has had a profound personal effect on the lives of Indian women in the way we are seen by the rest of the world and in the way we see ourselves. Many Indian women of my generation have grown up believing the Hollywood version of male-female relationships among Indian people: that the woman walked three paces behind her man to show deference to him and to acknowledge his superiority. When in actuality, the reason the Indian male preceded the female was to protect her from unexpected danger in the wilderness. It was, as the elders put it, "to make the way safe for her."

The other less common, but every bit as persistent, myth surrounding the American Indian woman is the view of her as a mysterious, wild, untamed, intriguing creature who possessed a kind of unearthly quality. This fairy tale is usually applied only to Indian women who lived in the past, of course, none of us who exist today, and is largely the result of the nineteenth century romanticism of poets and writers. People like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the Poem of "Hiawatha," you know, all of those kinds of images. While this vision of Indian women is more appealing, it still prevents us from being acknowledged and taken seriously as full and complete human beings. If there is any doubt that the myth or the desire to identify with it still exists, we need only to consider the numbers of times we have all heard a Caucasian person assert that his or her bloodline is graced by the presence of a Cherokee great-grandmother (who was often also a princess). In reality, most Indian women led neither inferior nor privileged existence, but were an important and integral part of the life and direction of the tribe. Many of the largest and most highly developed Indian tribes were matrilineal societies; women of these tribes were the Iroquois and Delaware in the east, the Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole in the south, the Pawnee, Otoe, Missouri and Crow in the Great Plains and the Navajo and the numerous Pueblo tribes in the southwest.

In matrilineal societies, membership in the tribe or clan, ownership and inheritance of property, or hereditary right to public

office, developed through the female line.

With regard to the tribe's property, weapons and ceremonial articles usually belonged to men, but instruments for cultivating the soil, preparing foods, cleaning skins, making clothes and tipis and other household articles belonged to women. A woman could build and own a house and in most tribes the dwelling in which a family lived belonged to the mother.

In most tribes the woman could under no conditions be deprived of her belongings by her husband, even if their marriage was dissolved. Divorce was a simple matter which could be initiated either by the wife or the husband. In tribes where women owned the home and its contents the woman could divorce her husband by placing his belongings outside the door and he had no choice but to comply. Following such a divorce, the man or woman was free to remarry.

In her book, *FOUNDING MOTHERS*, written about colonial women, Linda Grant DePaw states that Indian women at that time had a greater economic, social and political status than their White counterparts in colonial society. The mothers of the tribe often had the final say when the warrior's council disagreed and they could stop the tribe from going to war by refusing to provide trail rations and moccasins. They also had the final say in the fate of captives taken during war in many tribes. Native American women were also less economically dependent on their husbands. The economic security of the tribe, important male relatives to help the woman if something happened to her husband, and the freedom to divorce, helped the Indian woman to maintain a strong and independent status.

Going back into history to the different tribal stories of creation, women played key roles. Joan LaFrance, who is a Chippewa tribal member, and is with the Seattle American Friends Service Committee office, has written that "the female person is usually the primary force in the creation of the living world. Earth Mother brings forth life. She often works along with male forces, but according to the creation myths, she is never inferior to male forces and often she appears as the strongest force." This is a sharp contrast to the Christian story of creation, where the creating force is given a male identity and creates woman from man. Indian women need not struggle with the question of whether God is male or female. Indian women and the female image have always been a part of the creation.

Within traditional religious ceremonies and healing rituals, Indian women still have major roles. However, so much of the operation of tribes today has been drastically altered and influenced by the domination of European political and social systems,

that in areas relating to employment and education, even within her own tribe, an Indian woman faces the same obstacles and difficulties confronted by non-Indian women. The structure of Indian economic and social service programs, most of which are federally funded and often developed by non-Indian planners, is based on the usual vertical hierarchy of responsibility, which exists in all other American corporations and institutions, with executives at the top who are always male and secretaries and clerk/typists at the bottom who are always female. This is in direct contrast to the way in which tribes historically functioned, with authority and responsibility shared cooperatively and with individual roles and positions of authority often determined by age rather than by sex. The composition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs demonstrates clearly that Indian women have in some areas been deprived of their traditional equal status. Even with its recently professed commitment to Indian self-determination and preference given to Indian people for employment, BIA executive and supervisory personnel are overwhelmingly male with most female employees at the bottom of the ladder in clerical jobs.

Indian Affairs Commissioner, William Hallett, has recently issued a directive to superintendents of Bureau of Indian Affairs Area offices directing that affirmative action programs intent on bringing more Indian women into executive level jobs be implemented. This is too new to see any results yet but we're all watching.

Though the life of a Native American woman has changed with the necessity to survive in today's technological society, and though some of her important roles have been misplaced in this transition, she will always exist as the center of her family, the strength of her tribe, and as life-bringer and sustainer of her people. These qualities, along with her unwaivering spirit of determination, equip her to face the contemporary challenges of health care, employment and educational needs of her people and to insure for her an important part in their solution.

## Status Of Indian Women In Federal Employment

Mary Natani (*Winnebago*)

*President, North American Indian Women's Association; Chair, Federal Interagency Task Force on Indian Women; Member, U.S. Delegation to Mid-Decade Conference held in Copenhagen, 1980; Equal Opportunity Specialist, Women's Bureau, Department of Labor. Washington, D.C. resident.*

I've had a real concern about the situation of Indian people and especially since we depend, to a large extent, on federal programs. I often wonder why, though we get these programs every year, nothing really comes of them. It seems that by now, with all of the training programs and all the employment programs, there should have been some substantial improvements in our communities. That doesn't seem to be the case.

I've been with the Women's Bureau since 1970. My early years with the Women's Bureau involved educating the staff about working with Indian people and that took quite some time. In 1976 we decided to call together representatives of federal agencies that have major program responsibilities for Indian people — BIA, IHS, HUD, OIE, LEA and all the others. We had them answer two questions: (1) How their programs impact on the lives of Indian women, and (2) Their staffing patterns: how many Indian women were on their various staffs and at what levels. To the first question all of the agency representatives responded that the programs that were intended for Indian people were available for all the Indian community and there was no discrimination as to whether they were meant for Indian men or Indian women. And, they felt that Indian women were being serviced equally. To the second question they said the usual thing: "We can't find any qualified Indian women; otherwise, we'd hire them." We decided that was not a good enough answer and we thought the next best thing to do would be to call Indian women to Washington and let them respond to these responses.

In 1977, we invited 23 Indian women who were running programs to Washington to discuss federal programs. It was felt by a

majority of these Indian women that the federal programs were not as effective as they could be. There were still the problems of training programs which were pushing women into very low-paying jobs like a nurse's aide, teacher's aide, and those kinds of jobs. And, they were the first to be fired when there was a reduction in programs. The bottom line of all this was that if federal programs were not effective, why were they not effective as far as the needs of Indian women were concerned? It occurred to us that one of the reasons no programs were answering the needs of Indian women was because there were no Indian women at the decision-making levels in the federal system.

The NAIWA chapters in Maryland and Washington, D.C., which had been supporting these meetings, asked the Women's Bureau if they would have a conference of the federally-employed Indian women in the D.C. area. That we did in 1978. Right from the start we were threatened. Some of the union people told us we had to be very careful in how we advertised the conference because if we said it was just for Indian women, we were going to be subject to suit. We tried to get administrative leave for the Indian women in IHS and BIA. That was quite a task. We had to pull strings in order to get administrative leave for the Indian women in BIA. And even after we got administrative leave, a lot of them didn't feel free to come because they were afraid of retaliation. However, we had about 100 Indian women come to that first conference. In your packets you have a copy of the report which was published, NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: HOW TO GET AHEAD IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. I was glad to see Shirley Hill Witt here — she was the keynoter. In the back of the book are twelve recommendations that came out of that conference. Presently we are following through on those recommendations.

One issue which surfaced at this 1978 conference was that Indian women were operating in a vacuum. We have EEO programs, the Federal Women's Program, which is supposed to be doing something about the situation of women in the federal system. But when you look at Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs, where we have Indian preference, that's the opposite of EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity). And yet, if EEO can't work in the Bureau and they're not enforcing Indian preference, what do Indian women do? There's no grievance procedure. Do we give up and say, "Well, we can't do anything about it. If EEO is not going to work and if the FWP is useless in both agencies and there's no mechanism for implementing and enforcing Indian preference, then there's really nothing."

But the law is the law. So we decided that there has to be some mechanism to enforce Indian preference. As most of you know,

Indian preference also exists in Section 7B of PL96-638, the Indian Self-Determination Act. It also exists in Indian Health Care Improvement Act. And 638 contracts and grants made by other federal agencies have to give preference to Indians. But even for 7B of 638 there is no mechanism to enforce Indian preference.

The Interagency Task Force on American Indian women, which I chair, is not a formal task force. The Women's Bureau set up the task force and since nobody is concerning themselves with the status of Indian women in the federal system, it is supporting the program to do something. So we strategized and decided that the only way to get anything done would be to meet with top level people at Interior and HHS and we've been doing that since 1978. It's been a very long, hopeless looking effort. We haven't accomplished very much at Interior because there's been a great deal of change-over in the staff. However, in the HHS, the Department has set up an Indian Employment Committee to follow through on the recommendations that came out of the 1978 conference. And we found that one of the drawbacks to the whole Indian preference area was the lack of information, lack of knowledge among our own Indian people, whether you're out here worrying about 7B or whether you're working for the government, worrying about section 12, Indian preference.

So, we decided that there needs to be, in one place, all of the solicitor's opinions, all of the court decisions, all of the laws which are the basis for Indian preference. The Administration for Native Americans, which contracts with the Native American Rights Fund, has arranged with NARF to hire Karl Funke, who is known as one of the leading experts on Indian preference, to draft a handbook on Indian preference. Our task force came up with an outline of what we would like to see in this handbook — something that will be factual and informative. Some of the ingredients that will be going into this handbook are in your packets in draft form.

Another problem is that Indian preference is talked about like it was just one isolated item. But, Indian preference ties in with treaty rights and sovereignty. In the recent case of Morton vs. Mancari, that's the one where Indian Health Service said that Indian preference does not apply to IHS. The court in describing Indian preference said that the purpose of Indian preference was "... to give Indians a greater participation in their own self-government; to further the government's trust obligation toward the Indian tribes; and to reduce the negative effect of having non-Indians administer matters that affect Indian tribal life." The outline references all the major court decisions regarding tribal sovereignty, the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and statutes dating back from 1834, which give preference to Indians. So, it's not a recent thing. It dates way back to 1834.

I can't report any progress we've made since Shirley Witt came and told us, in 1978, that Indian women in federal employment held a GS 4.88 level on the average. Most of our efforts have been to try to change policy and to set up a mechanism within those agencies (BIA, IHS) so that Indian women would have some way to improve their own situation. Generally, there has been no movement of Indian women to higher paying positions in either agency. One of my favorite publications by the Bureau is the INDIAN RECORD, dated April 1979. This special issue is "Senior Executives Conference-Albuquerque." The pamphlet revealed that all of these senior executives are men, except for one Shirley Plume, superintendent of Standing Rock Agency, the lone woman in this whole book. That has not changed.

So, I guess what I'm saying is, if we're going to continue to have the Bureau and we're going to continue to depend on services that the Bureau is supposed to provide for us, and if we expect them to be meaningful to our people, I think that those of us who work for the federal agencies and those of you who hope to work for the federal government at some point, need to do something. Everybody's talking about "doing things for ourselves." While we've been working at the policy level through the task force, trying to get policies changed and some mechanism put in place, what is lacking are those Indian women in lower paying jobs being able to get together and speak up. But we should not limit ourselves to opportunities in the Bureau and in IHS because there are only a certain number of jobs there. We need to be in other agencies. Out of 17.5 thousand Indians in federal employment at the time we had the 1978 conference, only 4,000 of us were working outside of BIA and Indian Health Service. We need to take advantage of programs that are being offered by other agencies. But until we inform ourselves on what our own rights are and inform ourselves on how we can improve our own situation and go after training and educational opportunities, it's going to be very difficult. It's real difficult right now for us to try to do anything about our own situation, but I think we'll do it. I don't think we're going to let this kind of situation stay the way it is. I really have a lot of hope. I think that we're on the right track and we're still going to keep going until we accomplish something.

## Dependable Direction Finders

### CROSS-CULTURAL NETWORKING

Ruth Dial Woods (*Lumbee*)

*Director, Indian Education, Robeson County (N.C.) Board of Education; leadership to Equal Rights Amendment efforts in state; Co-chair, North Carolina IWY delegation to Houston Women's Conference.*

Regardless of where we live, we are no longer isolated cultures because science and technology have effectively seen to that. As much as we work for the goal of self-sufficiency, modern society and today's culture will never again allow us to become isolated peoples and isolated communities. Regardless of the extent to which we practice tribalism and traditionalism, there are few American Indians today who do not walk between two worlds. Although many Indian teachers have now become available, they have been exposed to the other cultures, to other curriculum, and to the impact of television and books which perpetuate the myth of the melting pot. Church ministries in recent years have developed a new social conscience which leads and guides us toward global ministries and our responsibilities to the world's peoples. While Indian employment has increased in business as well as in BIA agencies, in tribal programs, and in the American workplace, most of our interaction takes place with non-Indian minds and mentalities.

It has only been in recent years that we as Indian people have been willing to accept our own Indian leadership and that we have accepted the fact that we can successfully manage our own affairs. If we look no later than the early 1960s, there were few Indian tribal planners and even less Indian directors of community-based programs across the country. In our daily lives, few of us make loans from Indian-owned businesses and Indian loan companies. We pay our bills to non-Indian power companies, we conduct our banking at non-Indian banks, and we work in non-Indian businesses and industries. And, more often than not, we work for

non-Indian bosses. And while we live in our Indian communities, we spend most of our time outside of that community. The list could go on and on and on, but the point is that the majority of us today exist in a cross-cultural society.

Some of us have been born and reared between those two worlds; others of us have made the transition. The challenge and the task to us as Indian people, and particularly to American Indian women, because of the time-honored responsibilities placed upon us for guiding our children, is to seek the best of these two worlds in which we walk by using the wisdom of our grandfathers and our grandmothers and combining our newfound knowledge, skills and abilities for moving our generation and the generations who will follow, onward and upward in the ever-changing society.

We have successfully demonstrated that we can walk between two worlds. We have survived, and in the last few years, we have built networks which have brought us closer together and which have helped us to overcome the results of many of the federal policies which separated and isolated us from each other. We talk about our dependency on other institutions and other agencies, and particularly our federal relationships. We have to recognize that dependency is not a sign of weakness. What is wrong with these relationships is that we have not sufficiently seized the opportunities to learn from these relationships and the potential opportunity for the power that we can develop to make these systems become our system and to make them more responsive to us. For that is the way in which we shall gain that opportunity and the control of those systems and thereby ensure self-determination. But at the same time that we are working to protect that which we already have, we must allow for individual growth and development as well as the growth and development of our Indian people.

I think that for too long we have expected opportunity to be brought to us. It is now time from us to assert ourselves. Assertiveness costs money — costs time, and costs energy. To those of you who come from rural communities as I do, it means driving 150 to 200 miles into an urban setting because it seems that everything takes place and happens around the cities. Unfortunately, this occurs at our expense. It takes away from us the valuable time that those of us who work have left to spend with our families. It also calls upon us to go through the stress and strain of all too often being the token Indian representative in addition to all of the other stress that is involved in making the transition. It behooves those of us who have been involved over the recent years to provide successful role modeling and effective mentor relationships to other young Indian women, as well as to young Indian men. We must remember that we do not exist only as women — men are very

much a part of our lives, and it has been said by others that, "there is no organization of American Indian women without the organization of American Indian men." We have to do that if we intend to develop Indian leadership. If we continue to let the same faces and the same people appear time and time again, we have only confined our leadership — we have not developed our leadership.

The other thing we need to look at is what it is we do at the local level — what we do in our own communities. Are we satisfied with taking those issues that are hitting us over the head, or are we doing some real strong planning — some long-range planning? Where do we go beyond our communities? How do we hook up our networks that we already have to mesh them with state, regional and national networks? There are commonalities among networks. While it is our responsibility to pursue our own special interests, we should also mobilize the resources of other groups and other people who have mutual concerns, interests and resources. That is exactly the way the larger society works — by force, by numbers, and by the loudest voice. We need to keep our efforts issue-oriented, but at the same time consider the commonalities in issues. Housing, child care, employment, education, health care, and legislation, are all issues and concerns which cross cultural barriers.

Cross-cultural networking focuses on our special interests, but at the same time it calls upon the forces of the predominant culture to engage in our issues. In North Carolina, we have established a statewide consortium of Title IV Indian Education projects. We now have an avenue that we can address issues without jeopardizing those resources that we already have in our public schools. The consortium represents 25 Title IV projects across the state and it represents Indian parents, Indian educators, and Indian students who serve on Title IV Advisory Committees. To the structure it represents numbers, cooperation, crossing tribal lines, and crossing geographical locations. It has been effective, so effective that someone has questioned why we need state representatives involved in education in North Carolina. Furthermore, it gets the job done because it isn't a project director or coordinator talking, rather, it is issue oriented. It isn't a matter of saving project funds for one particular tribe or one particular school district. Just as we have done in North Carolina, there have been other consortia and other organizations formed in many states across the nation. From such organizations has been birthed the urban and rural non-reservation caucus, a network of some 15 states and some 300 projects to serve the interests of the 80 percent of Indian students who attend public schools. We have established a national network that goes beyond our state, beyond our region, and across the nation, including Alaska. It is a very informal network and there is

no one person at the helm. The network builds upon the resources of information that are obtained from other organizations and networks involved in Indian education. It is a network that is not something that has to have quarterly meetings or yearly meetings; it can just as well be handled by telephone or by mail.

It is my personal philosophy that informal and unstructured networks can be more effective. For example, some three years ago in North Carolina, the state legislature repealed all state legislation in the general statutes related to Indians. Supposedly, the purpose of this action was to transfer the North Carolina State Commission on Indian Affairs from an autonomous agency to a state agency status. It took us a year and a half to decide whether or not we wanted the legislation reinstated, and once we did decide that for Indian people who had no special trust relationship with the federal government and had to depend upon state relationships, that the legislation should be reinstated, it was not Indian people who won the reinstatement. We amassed an effort across the state with each and every individual who had some contact with men, women, organizations, civil rights groups, professional groups, women's groups, and whatever we could tap. State legislators started receiving telephone calls and letters from their own constituents which did not even have Indian populations. We called upon friends, our co-workers, and all the resources we could identify and muster, and as a result, the legislation was reinstated by a vote of 50-0. This was definitely an Indian issue, but it called into play the resources of both Indian and non-Indian people.

As I said earlier, the role of Indian women is well-founded in our traditions and time-honored customs. The labeling of "carriers of the culture" is appropriate. We must now accept those changes demanded of us in expanding our roles and responsibilities. We have successfully demonstrated our ability to ensure that the culture survives, and while we have a long way to go in terms of becoming economically independent, women can take greater risks than men and we have to start doing just that. It's extremely difficult for men who have been cast by the dominant society as the "breadwinner" to take such risks. We have also experienced problems with our own stereotyping of our men as being non-vocal and non-advocates on issues which affect our communities. Women can be active and effective, and so, I think, we have to accept that responsibility. In doing this, it does not mean that we look at our men any less or that we hold them in lower esteem. Rather, it means that we are fulfilling a role which we can do better than they can and under different circumstances.

We have to seize all of the opportunities and resources at our disposal. Again, in rural communities our churches are prime sources for organizing women and focusing on issues through wo-

men's societies and organizations. What we must do is realize that every organization and every network does not necessarily have to be structured. The organizational patterns of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer or chairperson and vice chairperson are not necessary to the success of either a network or an effort. What is needed in developing networks is caution to avoid barriers which result in failure of the network. First of all, we must accept the fact that cross-cultural networking is both necessary and effective. It is particularly necessary for us as Indian people because we have so few Indian people in positions of decision-making who can influence change.

In view of the changes, not only in society but in many of those agencies upon which we depend, cross-cultural networking becomes a way for us to continue survival. It is also a process whereby we protect what is ours as well as get what is best for us out of all resources. Some of the cautions we need to exercise as we develop networks, and as we continue to strengthen the networks which we already have, is to look at some of the weaknesses in our networks.

Too often our networks are built upon friendships and status. We have a tendency to network with those with whom we share close friendship and who have similar status. In developing networks, we must look at exactly what we expect the network to achieve; we must identify those individuals who we can bring into the network with the highest level of expertise and skills and include both Indian and non-Indian. When we develop in this manner, we have an opportunity to observe more, to look closer, and to pick up the skills which we do not possess.

A second caution is to consider the type of information which we want to transmit through networks. First of all, we need complete information and secondly, we need specific information directly related to a particular issue. Without consideration of these two factors, networks become overloaded and provide too many issues at the same time. A result of network overloading is lack of action and an ineffective network.

One final caution concerns those individuals who manage networks. Research has shown that the people who transmit information through networks often rise in stature while the people who receive the information have a tendency to fall by the wayside. I would hope that as Indian women build networks we would ensure that this is avoided. The story about the Indian crab bucket and the White crab bucket is relevant for us and we should ensure that our networks are developed and designed to uplift Indian people rather than to jointly pull them down.

Networks can help us or they can hurt us. I hope that as we develop networks we will allow more meaningful involvement and

quality participation with the people in the network so that we can avoid that pitfall of *confining leadership rather than developing leadership*. And before we can go too far with cross-cultural networking, we must look into the mirrors of ourselves. We have some homework yet to be done. We, as Indian people, must learn to cross the barriers of age, class, tribal affiliation, status and territoriality. Until we can effectively resolve these issues which pit and divide Indian people across this country, we will be totally ineffective in impacting networks for either Indians or with cross-cultural networking.

In summary, we cannot expect opportunity to come to us. We must commit our time, our already limited resources, and our effort. We must exert the initiative and identify the potential resources and the potential leadership. If we are to take control of our lives, then we must do the planning with a commitment to each other and with a collective purpose for each other. When we can accomplish this task, our goal will be in keeping with our values of self-actualization and self-determination.

As American Indian women, this is our task — it is our continuing responsibility, and it is our challenge for the survival of our American Indian people.

## **Equal Rights Amendment: How Does It Relate To Indians?**

Ethel Krepps (*Kiowa/Miami*)

*Practicing Attorney for Native American Coalition;  
formerly served as Kiowa Tribal Secretary; au-  
thored A STRONG MEDICINE WIND, Western  
Publications. J.D., University of Tulsa College of  
Law, 1979. Oklahoma resident.*

*Equality of Rights Under the Law shall not be denied or abridged  
by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*

This is the proposed 27th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. And to quote Erma Bombeck, "No words have been so misunderstood since 'one size fits all'."

### **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ERA:**

I want to share a brief overview of the ERA with you. This brief historical account of the ERA was taken from the 1975 Report of the Interdepartmental Task Force for International Women's Year. That report states that ERA was a natural outgrowth of the struggle for the women's suffrage amendment which was adopted in 1920. For 72 years women's efforts were directed at trying to get women's voting rights implemented on a state-by-state basis. This struggle demonstrates the impossibility of trying to gain equal rights for women utilizing a step-by-step approach. It is, therefore, evident that an overall Constitutional amendment ensuring women equality of rights under the law throughout this nation is necessary. Back in the year 1923, a lady by the name of Alice Paul, a member of the National Women's Party, wrote the Equal Rights Amendment. The 24 words which I quoted to you. The ERA was subsequently introduced in Congress and finally, on October 12, 1971, the ERA was voted and passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 354 to 23. The Senate vote, March 22, 1972, was 84-4.

Within hours of the final senate vote, Hawaii became the first state to ratify the Amendment. Twenty-one additional states

ratified in 1972, with eight the following year (1973). Then three more states in 1974. Only one, North Dakota, was ratified in 1975, and in 1977 Indiana became the 35th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The 95th Congress extended the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to June 30, 1982. Thirty-five of the necessary thirty-eight states have ratified. Those states not yet ratified are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah and Virginia. Three of these states just named must ratify the ERA by the June 30, 1982 deadline if it is to become an amendment to the Constitution. Two states have attempted to rescind their ratification. Idaho rescinded by a vote of both Houses of the Legislature, declaring that state's ratification revoked. Another state, South Dakota, passed a null and void bill. However, an opinion issued by the Justice Department in February 1979, declared that both "rescission" and "null and void" resolutions are held to be unconstitutional.

#### ISSUES OF ERA:

Let's discuss the basic issues which ERA is all about. The basic intents of ERA are these:

- ERA will ensure that all states and the federal government review and revise any laws or practice to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex.
- ERA will ensure that discrimination laws are not enacted in the future.
- ERA will enforce the principle that the homemaker's role in the marriage contract is given full economic value and full partnership status under the law.
- ERA will ensure equal opportunity, privileges and benefits in all aspects of government employment.
- ERA will ensure equality of opportunity in public schools and colleges; in "manpower" training programs of all federal, state and local governments, and in governmental recreational programs.
- ERA will ensure that the families of women workers receive the same benefits as families of men workers under the social security laws and under pension plans run by the government at any level, and also under worker's compensation laws.
- ERA will ensure that married women can engage in business as freely as married men and that they can dispose of separate or community property on the same basis as married men.
- ERA will require that married women be permitted to maintain a separate legal domicile from their husband's domicile.

- ERA will require that women prisoners be given the same opportunities and privileges as men prisoners and that sentences be arrived at and administered under the same law for both sexes.

While it is true that both Congress and state legislatures have passed specific laws prohibiting discrimination against women in the areas of employment, credit and education, there has to be a Constitutional guarantee of equality or legislatures, both federal and state, will be free to revoke these laws they have passed. It is also true that most employment practices are already provided for under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Another factor to consider with the passage of ERA will be within the judicial system — judges will be able to look at cases involving Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment cases which now only apply to race and religion. Women have attempted to use the Fourteenth Amendment to gain equality with men. That Amendment which prohibits any state action which denies to any person "the equal protection of the laws" was aimed at preventing states from passing laws against Blacks after the Civil War. Now the Supreme Court refuses to consider the status of women (sex) as it considers the status of race and religion. However, with the passage of the ERA "sex" status would become a suspect category for discrimination.

Basically the intent of ERA is simply stated: passage of ERA requires that the federal government, and all state and local governments, treat each person, male or female, as an individual. The amendment applies only to governmental action and it does not affect private actions or purely social relationships between men and women. Confusion about the difference between Right of Equality and Right of Privacy must be defined. The Right of Privacy is in no way affected by the Right of Equality. Private relationships and family matters remain protected by the Right of Privacy. Community privacy standards would also be protected. The laws would continue to permit separation of the sexes in such matters as public restrooms, sleeping quarters in public institutions, etc. Other laws that deal with physical characteristics or physical attributes of one sex or the other would not be prohibited as such laws could not by their very nature deny equal rights to the opposite sex.

Evidence shows that in those states that have passed their own Equal Rights Amendments women's experiences have all been positive. For example, Pennsylvania has an equal rights provision, and women there are now in a stronger position, particularly in the area of domestic relations, as a result. As to child custody and child support, in the state of Washington, Dan Evans, former

Washington Governor, states: "I am aware of no classification privileges that a woman has lost because of adoption of the ERA . . . adoption of ERA and the implementation dissolution law merely make it clear that either spouse may sue for support. A woman has not lost her right to be supported by her husband; rather, she never had such a right. Support within marriage has been a matter of custom and has never been guaranteed by law. Child support and child custody would be determined on the individual parent capabilities rather than on the basis of sex."

The passage of Equal Rights Amendment would be commitment to the right of equal treatment for all citizens.

#### THE ERA AND INDIAN WOMEN:

Indian women hold a unique position in relation to ERA because Indian women have two unique relationships which other non-Indian women do not have. Indian women are citizens of their respective states, as are other non-Indian women; however, they are also members of their respective tribes and they also have a trust responsibility or a guardian-ward relationship with the federal government. What is the legal consequence of ERA on Indian women? As members of tribes, Indian women's lives are actually controlled by a three-tier governmental system. Her tribe has the authority to pass laws which would govern her actions. This power to pass laws by tribal governments comes from the inherent ability of tribal people to govern themselves. The ERA will have absolutely no effect on the ability of her tribe to pass laws and govern its own tribal members. The areas where ERA could affect the Indian woman is in the area where the federal government has a special relationship with Indian people. This is in the area of employment. The term "Indian preference" means that if two people apply for the job, everything else being equal, except that one of the applicants is Indian and the other non-Indian, the Indian applicant will get the job. Indian preference is practiced in two institutions that deal with Indian people. The IHS and the BIA. Passage of the ERA would mean a stricter enforcement of equality of the sexes in these two federal agencies. Indian preference would be applied evenly to Indian men and Indian women alike. ERA would have no other effect on Indian preference.

The effect of ERA on tribal judicial systems would be nil. The Supreme Court has already determined in the Martinez decision that any alleged violations of the 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act must be heard and decided only in the tribal court. The Martinez decision is often misunderstood because the case began as an attempt by Mrs. Martinez to use the equal protection clause of the Indian Civil Rights Act to invalidate her tribal enrollment procedure which she contended discriminated against women. The Su-

preme Court didn't reach that issue, however, as they decided Indian tribes could not be sued in federal court under the Indian Civil Rights Act in the first place.

## **Educational Equity — It Can Make A Difference**

Leslie R. Wolfe

*Director, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, U.S.  
Department of Education, Washington, D.C. Ph.D., En-  
glish, University of Florida, 1970.*

I feel very honored and pleased to be here — the only person listed on the agenda who does not have “parentheses” and tribal affiliation after her name. Ada Deer describes me as a member of the “lost tribe”; I must tell you something I had forgotten until Ada said that. In 1974, I called Shirley Hill Witt in her office at Colorado College. I said, “May I speak to Dr. Witt?” A male voice said, “She's not in, may I take a message?” I said, “This is Leslie Wolfe.” He said, “Oh, are you a Mohawk?” I said, “No, Jewish.” He was stunned.

I think what I would like to mention about stereotypes is something positive — we have here some of our current images of the brave-hearted women and the future of Indian women; you are the role models for the next generation. We have Ada Deer, the woman warrior who defeated the mugger on the streets of Washington, D.C.; I hope he has repented of his evil ways. You have some wonderful scholars, activists, lawyers, medical personnel; this is a very distinguished and exciting group.

This morning as Shirley Witt talked she said something that taught me something new, as she always does. When she started talking about our responsibility to the next seven generations I started thinking, “What are we doing now?” And I started looking back to what we have been doing and thought about what we still must do.

I think it is important and cathartic to go through a depression

about the apparent shift in attitude of the American people. I think we all knew that we would face opposition to many of the changes which we have pressed for in the past fifteen years, particularly in the status of women. But we did not expect a "backlash." So, I think it is useful to be a bit depressed and confused. But then we are cheered at gatherings such as this one, at the persistence of the brave-hearted women; then we become angry at the thought that our hard won rights will be threatened, that women's selfhood, freedom and equality will be attacked.

Throughout this day, as I have watched all of you, I have been thinking about where Ohoyo has been, how it started and grew, and where it is going. I remember that this kind of gathering had not happened before, that three years ago it was just a thought, a vision; then it was written, typed, mailed, and lo and behold, the Ohoyo Center and this "network," this sisterhood of women, became this strong, living entity. It has been created and nurtured by all of us, and it will not die. And that is a very powerful thing.

Indian women have been brought together through these Ohoyo conferences; I remember the first one in New Mexico — an exhilarating experience for all of us. Indian women who might never have met each other now are friends and colleagues because of Ohoyo. It has broken the isolation that we didn't even recognize. Haven't you all met women here whom you will never stop seeing? And won't we all be able to band together to fight for what we need and what we are and for survival?

As a "direction finder," I feel I must say something about what educational equity is. I can give you a concrete, immediate example. I have just been to the Cherokee Museum; we looked at all the pictures of the women participating in education at every level and I said to myself that I would feel almost as if my job were finished if we could convey to the leaders of the dominant American culture the essence of the traditional, pre-contamination Cherokee commitment to educating women and men, girls and boys. If we could somehow restore some of the traditional ways, some of the matriarchal valuing of women, we would achieve a certain kind of educational equity that we have never had in this country.

Education is one of the beginning places. We send our children to school and they learn that if they are female, if they are Indian, if they are Black, if they are Hispanic, if they are Asian, if they are Jewish, they are inferior. They learn that they do not really belong. They look in their little books and they see blonde people with blue eyes and they cannot identify with these "models." They also see that, as female children, they are not expected to do very much. They are supposed to be quiet and watch boys being active. This has a powerful negative influence on every single child and we

know that we must struggle to change that; and that is what we have been doing and what we must continue to do.

You will have to work very hard at the local level, to let your school boards and textbook selection committees know what you want for your children. The federal government will no longer be as strong a force for social change. But you will continue as leaders in trying to eliminate patriarchal laws and attitudes and all vestiges of bias and stereotyping based on sex and race. So I think we must stop awhile, again, and think about why there is so much hostility, even hatred, focused on all these efforts to just ensure simple freedom and equality for all women. I do think we have to look squarely at the enemies of change, to understand that freedom for women means the end of the status quo which restricts women to a few, subordinate roles.

Women will not turn back and will not let it happen to our sisters and daughters and granddaughters.

I would like to speak briefly about the importance of coalition building. For all of us, particularly majority women in the feminist movement, coalition building means spending a lot of time learning about other people, other cultures, other ideas and ways of living. We must all do our homework and learn the wisdom and beauty of other ways. We must strive for unity in diversity. We do not believe in the melting pot; we never did, because we were the ones who were expected to melt and we always knew that was destruction. If we think in these terms we can unite with diverse groups to achieve the same goals.

And at this point I think we know very clearly that our goals are the same. We are fighting against racism and sexism, threats to tribal sovereignty and destruction of our Native languages. We are fighting poverty, which has as its basic cause various forms of discrimination, and we are fighting every form of bias and stereotyping which oppresses women and minority people. We cannot sacrifice one group for another, one goal for another, one program for another.

Even though none of us has the strength to fight every battle, we must avoid any efforts to divide and splinter us. We must be united and, thereby, strong. We are all survivors. All of us in this room are survivors. We can all tell our stories — personal ones, cultural ones, historical ones — and in many cases, in most cases, we are all survivors of attempts at basic, simple genocide. So it seems to me that we cannot be destroyed; we are invincible and we will prevail.

So you see that I must end on an optimistic note. Susan B. Anthony, one of our foremothers, said — in the darkest days of the struggle for the vote — “Failure is impossible.” That is the motto I would leave you.

## Traditional Cherokee Supper

Mary Natani (*Winnebago*), *Presiding*

*President, North American Indian Women's Association; Chair, Federal Interagency Task Force on Indian Women; Member, U.S. Delegation to Mid-Decade Conference held in Copenhagen, 1980; Equal Opportunity Specialist, Women's Bureau, Department of Labor. Washington, D.C. resident.*

NATANI: All day today we've been hearing about Indian women needing to assert themselves and be heard, and I'm sure you're as amazed as I am to see so much talent, so much leadership developing. You just have to present the opportunity for these things to take place. They say there's a time and place for everything. Our Indian people, I guess I have to speak for myself, but when I was growing up I was told that nothing happens by chance. We talk about the circle of life. We were taught that life begins at one point, you make a complete circle, and you come back to where you started. They tell us that everything we do is already a part of a pattern . . . a pattern of the creation so that everything that happens was already written someplace and we're just filling in the pieces.

Our North American Indian Women's Association sign is a very beautiful emblem. The circle represents eternity. In the middle is the basket weave. This basket weave represents all of the interaction, the interchange that takes place from day to day. The bird, as most of you know, is used in the Indian religions; we use a lot of the feathers. The four directions, the four seasons, have a lot of meaning.

Today, I had my hopes built up and then I'd hear something and my hopes would go back down. I was kind of up and down, you know, wondering how we are ever going to pull things together because, as we heard evidence today, things don't look too good for the future. But that's just by way of saying I really feel proud of our Indian women because as someone this afternoon said, we're survivors. We've survived several hundred years of all kinds of things. When you see us with our sense of humor, the ability to laugh, to

tell stories, to sing, to dance, when we can still do those things, you know, it really lifts up my hopes for our future.

*[Mary Kay Harshaw (Cherokee), reigning Miss Cherokee, sang two selections and Phyllis Fife (Creek), presented a showing of Indian custom apparel.]*

NATANI: The next part of our program is something that is very near and dear to my heart. I want to ask all of the Indian women, who are presently now serving or who have in the past served on tribal governing bodies, to stand over here so that everybody can see you. Wow! How about this!

I'm sure you want to know who all these women are. I'm going to start with those who are presently on the tribal council and ask them to come up to the mike and introduce themselves, please. We'll start on this end.

VIOLA PETERSON: Flint, Mich. Tribal Council of Miami Indians of Indiana.

JUANITA PIPER: Caddo Tribal Council; also chairman of WDCE Enterprises.

PATSY LYNN MORTON: Cherokee Tribal Council, second year of a four-year term.

BETTY SMITH: Hulbert, Okla. Tribal Council for next four years—this is my first year as tribal councilwoman.

KAYE WARREN: I presently hold the position of Secretary/Treasurer for the Sac and Fox of Oklahoma.

MINNIE JOHNSON: I have fourteen years of the BIA and seven years for the Cherokee tribe.

IRENE JACOBS CLEGHORN: I am a member of the Creek Tribal Council and I am from Tulsa, Okla.

HELEN CHUPCO: Member of the Creek Tribal Council, from Muskogee, Okla.

HARRIET JAMES: Member of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. I'm from McAlester, Okla.

ANNA MITCHELL: From Vinita; I have served as a former representative from our county.

BONNIE STEPHENSON: Anadarko, Okla. I served on Delaware Tribal Council from 1973.

LINDA POOLAW: I serve on the Delaware of Western Oklahoma Council; I've been on for six years.

AGNES COWEN: I was chairman of the Elective Community Representative, which was a form of government similar to the council, and also the first councilwoman of the Cherokee Nation.

ADA DEER: Former Chair of the Menominee Restoration Committee, Wisconsin.

NATANI: Ada is also the person who put an end to the termination policy. Right?

MARILYN KODASEET BREAD: I served as secretary of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma from 1977-79.

SHIRLEY FRENCH: Caddo Tribe of Anadarko, Okla., and I was the vice-chairman of our tribe.

IRENE HEARD: I have served on the intertribal council in the past, on the tribal council in our Pittsburg County at McAlester, Okla. and other efforts.

SUZANNE HEARD: I'm a member of the Choctaw tribe; I served six years on the intertribal council of the five tribes: Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole, and was elected the second year I served on the council as the first woman sergeant at arms. The next year I was selected as the first woman treasurer of the tribal council, of which I'm real proud. I'm from Muskogee, Okla. and that is my mother. We are the first mother-daughter team that ever served on the Intertribal Council.

BERNADETTE HUBER: I have served as the secretary and councilperson of the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. I come from Perkins, Okla.

JUDITH DeLaROSA: I represent the Delaware tribe. I served as tribal councilwoman in 1973 and am serving as secretary for the ten percent programming of the Delaware tribe.

JUDY DEERE: I was selected councilmember to the Kickapoo tribe of Oklahoma in 1979; I served one year.

NATANI: I served on the Winnebago Business Committee in Wisconsin from 1961-63.

Harriet Wright James is a Choctaw from McAlester, Okla., and an elected member of the Choctaw Tribal Council. She is a retired educator. She has given past service as a curriculum coordinator for the public schools and in university level Indian studies programs; served as language arts consultant for American Book Company, Cincinnati, Ohio; is founder of the children's library indoctrination program; is board member of the Goodland Presbyterian Children's Home; she's the first woman elected to the Choctaw Tribal Council. Please welcome Harriet.

## Response to Recognition of Women Serving on Tribal Councils

Harriet Wright O'Leary James (*Choctaw*)

Madam President of North American Indian Women's Association, Madam Director of Ohio Resource Center, Miss Cherokee, other distinguished guests, conference participants, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Indian women serving on tribal councils, I say "thank you." We appreciate your praise. We need your criticism. Above all, we need your support.

I am a young councilman. All afternoon people have been telling how old they are. But I am a young councilman. I was elected in July of 1979, and seated in September of that year. Our council is the first Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Council since Oklahoma statehood in 1907. There are fifteen members, three of whom are women.

I am a retired educator and some of you may know me as Harriet Wright O'Leary and my latest work in Indian education. I have no trouble with the word "councilman." The dictionary defines it as "a member of a council." Accent the first syllable, put a "shwa" sound in the second and third syllables, roll up your sleeves, ladies, and go to work. As women let's not get so busy trying to change the language that we lose sight of what we're trying to accomplish as we work for the people we represent. Respect, by ourselves and others, for the work we are doing, will bring the recognition for the place of women in society that we seek.

To those of you who are serving on councils or comparable tribal legislative bodies, I applaud you. To those of you who are not, I urge you to become interested in your tribal affairs and participate to the extent possible. If you're like me, I am sure there are times when you say, "What am I doing here?" Then say to yourself, "I'm here to help my people." First comes dedication, followed by patience, perseverance and preparedness, and don't forget to do your homework.

I'm a councilman because no one else wanted the position. I had been watching the filing procedure with a great deal of interest and no one from my district had filed. I had not planned to file for I had

recently taken an early retirement and was a bit reluctant to relinquish my new found freedom to do all the things I had always wanted to do and had never had time. Perhaps some of you have already experienced that time and thought in your life and some of you are closely approaching it. At one o'clock in the afternoon of the last day to file I learned that no one had filed from District Eleven. I decided that we should be represented, so I got busy. I was in McAlester, the tribal office was in Durant, a distance of 75 miles. I went to the bank and secured the necessary filing fee as a cashier's check, picked up my certificate of degree of Indian blood, called my son to go with me, for I do not yet have the skill to change a tire in a hurry, and got on my way.

We reached the tribal office at four o'clock and found several from other districts filing at the last hour, but no one from District Eleven. I completed my papers a few minutes before the five o'clock deadline. This was a first for me and, I will admit, a bit exciting. I did not have an opponent, but I did campaign. I wanted, above all, a large number of the votes cast as evidence of support. And I have been busy ever since.

Would my work be any different or more significant if I had defeated a man for the position? I don't think so. There was work to be done and I offered to do it. Did I hold back because I thought a man should hold the position? The stereotype that politics is only for men? Politics for women? Of course.

In closing, I want to relate something that has given me a number of chuckles. At the first meeting of the new council a man was elected as speaker and I was elected secretary. You know, the usual occurrence. Man for top position, woman for secretary. I positioned myself near the speaker and prepared to serve as secretary. However, I had stayed up late the night before and had gone into the meeting armed with two resolutions that I thought would really get us off to a good start. Listening carefully to all that was being said, monitoring the tape recorder, and taking notes kept me busy but I was determined to participate in the action of such an historic event. During the course of the day I presented my two resolutions and they were both soundly defeated. The chuckle now comes from the recollection that nearly everytime I made a statement, and I did speak, the tone of voice I heard in reply seemed to say, "Hush, woman."

You can note that I haven't taken it very seriously. I'm still making statements and I'm still doing my homework. I am now able to get resolutions adopted. I've learned a lesson: you win some and you lose some. And when you lose, determine why, regroup and reorganize, if necessary, or dismiss it, and move on. I presented one of the defeated resolutions several months later and it was

adopted. The other I have filed away and plan to present again when I believe it can receive the vote for adoption. I am a novice, but learning fast.

Again, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Indian women serving on tribal councils, I say "thank you"; we appreciate your praise, we need your criticism, and above all, we need your support.

NATANI: Real concerns I have had, especially concerning our young people, is the, it *was*, the lack of role models. As you heard several times today, history books have supposedly given us role models. But anyway, our young people, well, even those of us that are older, when we were growing up and trying to decide what it was that we should do, we couldn't say, "Well, here's this person that made her way up in the world and somebody that we could use as a model." We didn't have that, I know, when I was growing up. It's still pretty much true today. There's few Indian women who have really distinguished themselves and, in many cases, much to my dismay, when some people have climbed the ladder of success, they have sort of forgotten us. I'm sure you know some of those kinds of people.

Being out in Washington for 25 years, I have had a real good opportunity to see our Indian leaders, men and women, come and go. I've seen many of them in 25 years. Just in recent years there's been rapidly increasing numbers of Indian women who have come to Washington to work and out in the Eastern seaboard where all the Ivy League schools are, more and more of our Indian young people are going to school. I really consider it an honor to be associated with the kind of people that our speaker this evening represents. I have known Rayna for quite sometime now. She is really a wonderful person. She is a real human being. I think that is one of her greatest virtues. No matter where you see her, she's got time to talk to you. I suppose many of you know of her many accomplishments. I could stand up here all night and tell you that she is a lecturer and a scholar, but as was said earlier this afternoon, when we can reach the heights that Rayna has reached and still be human in the way she carries herself every day, I think that really says a lot. It gives me great honor to introduce Rayna Green.

## After Feast Speech: Contemporary Indian Humor

Rayna Green (*Cherokee*)

*Distinguished Visiting Professor, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.; Project Director, National Native American Science Resource Center; compiled new scholarly work, NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: A BIBLIOGRAPHY; Special Consultant, National Endowment for the Humanities on Indian Affairs and American Association for the Advancement of Science. Ph.D., Folklore and American Studies, Indiana University, 1973.*

I am humbled before the stature that people like Mary Natani have reached — people who have been my role models and my teachers and after whom I can only hope that I could aspire to some real stature of that kind. There are lots of those people out here and I want to say “thank you” my dear friends: Ruth Arrington, Wathene Young, Carol Young, Nellie Buffalomeat, Wilma Man-killer, Kay Frank, Betty Lombardi, and dear, dear friends and my dear relatives, my dear people. I am truly grateful to be here. One, I’m always grateful to come home and get decent food. As you can see, I’ve been praying to God for years not to take me while I’m in a Taco Bell but at least to let me go eating grape dumplings. A couple of times a year I can come home and do that. I’m really grateful for that.

But I’m always grateful to come home for a number of other reasons. To see friends. I’m glad the business that I’m in gives me a pretense and an excuse to do this. I’m just delighted to be here before you tonight.

Before I start speaking, though, there is one award that has been omitted. I’ve had several discussions with people this afternoon. We really felt that some award was necessary for this distinguished person of great merit. It’s an unusual, unusual kind of merit. I want to speak about this person just briefly. She has done something that by and large we just don’t hear of much in Indian Country. At least, not in the last few years. I believe it is a model we can all aspire to. Many of you heard of Ada Deer’s recent

triumph where she mugged a mugger on the streets of Washington, D.C. and came out smiling. The poor man was taken down to the jail because he made the unfortunate mistake of mugging a Menominee. All I can say is, I'm staying out of Wisconsin from now on. The poor man was taken back to the jail bleeding and his clothes torn. They said it was a canine corps dog but I'll never believe it. The poor fellow is certainly going to give up a life of crime after this.

But we decided, really, that Ada deserved something so that she could mug him more in Indian style. Leslie Wolfe thought of that very thing. If Ada would come forward we want to present her with something so that she can carry on her new found career. Ada, where are you? We felt this deserved a really special weapon so that Ada will not ruin her hands. They've been insured now by Lloyd's of London for millions of dollars and we want to present this to Ada. This is one hatchet we're not going to bury. (Leslie and Rayna present Ada with an enormous stone tomahawk.) We felt it was something to be proud of and it beats Mace. It only weighs eight pounds.

Well, as I said, I'm really grateful to be here. I'm particularly — I always enjoy the food, I know you can tell that. I'm grateful to be away from Hanover, N.H., and the Ivy League where, basically, dinner almost always consists of one chicken breast and a broccoli spear and a glass of sherry. I've really grown tired of it, in addition to freezing to death. So, I'm always glad to get back to Oklahoma.

Owanah Anderson asked me to address something that was relevant to the concerns of the women gathered here and the concerns of the Indian people gathered here. I tried to think what special talent I might have that I could talk to you about that would give you something to carry away with you — that would inspire you and would inspire Indian children. I just searched and searched my mind and I finally hit upon it . . . well, I'm a scholar and that's what I do in this world. I write and I do research. Most often most Indian people don't have much use for scholars, especially the kind I am . . . an anthropologist. I worried and worried. I thought, "Gee, here I am getting up before Indian people again and here I'm an anthropologist and those are the kinds of people that have just ripped us off."

I'm always a little embarrassed about it. I tried to think of some things I can tell you. My family, as you might guess, both my Cherokee and my non-Indian family, are really dubious about my scholarship. When I first started to go off and get a Ph.D., I got a fellowship to go to the Smithsonian and I was going to do a book, or my dissertation, actually. I called my mother, I was so excited and so proud. I called my mother and said — this is my way of saying

how your family keeps you humble — “Oh, Mother, I’ve gotten a fellowship and I’m going off to Smithsonian and I’m going to write a book.” I knew she wouldn’t know what a dissertation was so I didn’t want to go on and explain it. She said, “Oh, that’s wonderful, I’m so proud of you. Everyone in the family will be so proud of you. It’s just marvelous you’re doing it. Now what will you have to do to write this book? Won’t you have to teach or something?” I’d been teaching for years, of course, and working hard and she knew that I’d have to do something — it just didn’t come free. Nothing in our life ever did. So she said, “What do you have to do?” And I said, “I don’t have to do anything, Mama, they’re just going to give me this money and I’m going to go to the Smithsonian and write this book.” There was a long silence and finally she said, “You mean to tell me that someone will pay you just to lay up and write?”

I realized then it was going to be a hard time in the next few years. People were not necessarily going to reward me for having done that. So I tried to think about what use Indian scholars like myself can be to Indian people. And I thought of all kinds of things. You know, we write all the time and do research and I’m grateful that Owanah and Ohoyo gave me the chance to do something that would actually get out to Indian people: the bibliography on Native women. Most of the things I write get published in places that no one will ever read them and so I’m always grateful for the chance to do something that will be useful to Indian people. I want to tell you about a few of those things that scholars, young Indian scholars, like myself, and ones much better than I am, are involved in and there’s some very exciting things. I want to share those with you.

One of those things, for example, we are involved in, a number of us are now consulting for some new TV series. Norman Lear, who has produced SOAP, MAUDE — all these TV situation comedies — now we are producing Indian TV situation comedies. I really am so excited about this. Just think, Indian people will be on television. They won’t be saying, “Um, my people call it Mazola.” We have been changing this to actually produce real Indian commercials. Toni Eagleshield is going to come out and she is going to say, “You people call them mushrooms; my people call them magic.” She’s going to have a little white powder in one spoon and she’s going to say, “My people call it . . .” (Smiling and deeply sniffing.) We’ve been thinking of giving her a glue tube, but we decided that would be tacky. We know you will share in the excitement of these new commercials. We really believe we can sell the products. We’re marketing a commercial fry bread mix very soon. Owanah doesn’t know it yet but she’s going to pose for it. She’s going to be the Indian Aunt Jemima. We knew you’d be happy about that.

But the two things that excite us most are two serials we’re working on. Charlie Hill and some of us are working on a Navajo

soap opera. It's about a modest little Navajo family, a bunch of sheepherders, and it's called YAZZIE AND HARRIET. The most exciting one is an Indian science fiction serial. It's called SKIN TREK. We're very excited about that, too. The computer is an old Indian man that calls everyone "my son" and leads them all astray, regularly. "Yes, my son, go two million miles, turn right . . ." Well, that's one of the things we're involved in doing.

We have an Indian professional series where professional Indians appear and talk about their careers and it's called DOCTORS, LAWYERS, AND, you guessed it, INDIAN CHIEFS. That's a nice one. We're doing a very exciting study now — a group of anthropologists and social scientists are doing a study on the Indian extended family. Basically the theme of it has to do with the alternatives to the nuclear family. One of the scholars that's working with us said that he thinks the Western nuclear family is just like nuclear power — difficult and dangerous. One of the reasons I came here is because I have been commissioned to do an article on the Indian women's movement. Particularly, on the Marxist/Socialist/Leninist/Indian feminist movement. So I'm here interviewing all the Marxist/Socialist/Leninist Indian feminists in Tahlequah. But the town phone booth wasn't big enough so we're doing the interviewing over here in the Community Center tomorrow and I hope I'll see all of you there. Don't mind the photographs and microphones. They're for the permanent record of Uncle Sugar who, of course, wants to know about all these people.

I am presently working on another project, too. Many people want to know why the Indian women's movement didn't really join the majority women's movement in this country. I've come up with a new theory of why they have not joined the women's movement. You've all heard that one of the first things people in the movement did was to burn their bras. I've really decided why Indian women didn't do that. Being the shape most of us are in, we were afraid they'd have to bring the fire trucks in from ten miles around. So you can understand why we were reluctant to join that movement. We figured we stopped air pollution in eastern Oklahoma from not doing that kind of burning.

But the thing I'm most excited about recently is the grand project. This is a multi-million dollar project, it's been funded by all the major foundations in the country. It's very exciting. As you know, all over the country, the Cherokee Nation and many of the Indian nations all over the country have established their own museums. I've done a great deal of museum consulting for the National Endowment and for the tribal museums, for the Indian Museum Association. But I had found a real lack of a particular kind of museum that I really feel we need. And this is going to be a major cultural institution. I want to tell you about it because I am

so thrilled to be part of this. This idea, I have to give credit, was originally hatched up by the ex-chairman of the Winnebago tribe, Louis LaRose, and myself, late one night in a serious scholarly discussion in Albuquerque. Basically what we want to develop is a unique, cultural institution. I know you will be thrilled. This is an institution that is meant for Indian people. It is something we've been needing for a long time. It's something that is particularly needed to meet a very special, critical need. The museum is called **THE MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS WHITE PERSON**. It meets this critical need that I spoke of. It's very serious. You see, we began to be very worried. As you know their (White people's) culture is dying out. Very soon, very soon there will be very few White persons. We worry about this. What will the last surviving White persons do when they have no one to ask what their language was like, what their customs and clothes were like. So, we began to worry about this and we came up with the idea of the **MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS WHITE PERSON**. As I said, it's been met with great reception all over the country. Foundations have rushed to pour money in. Indian people have given money for it. I can't tell you how many shawl and blanket raffles have gone on to pay for this museum. And I want to tell you something about the museum and perhaps this will inspire some of you to go to those few White people that you know are living out there and quickly acquire artifacts from them before they disappear. Because, you know, they don't know how to take care of them. We worry about this. It's quite serious.

The first big collection that we are working on, and this is really inspiring, is the bone collection. As you know, all museums have to have a bone collection. We have begun a national campaign to acquire the bones of famous White people. We want little Indian children to be able to come in and study these and Indian scholars want to pore over them, the different skull shapes and so forth. And, of course, when we do acquire them we will acquire them permanently. As you know, they cannot be given back once they have been handled. We do need to study them for years. And so we are acquiring these. We have just acquired, I think, what is a quite moving find. One of the most important ones. We have just acquired the bones of John Wayne. As you realize what great significance this can have for the scholars, what a study of his bones will tell us about these people and what their lives were like. Well, so that's very important.

There are a number of other famous bones that we want to acquire and I am sure you can begin to guess whose we have our sights on. It's going to be thrilling. The collection will be quite large, of course. We have planned to make the collection as large as it needs to be with as many samples. So, we are going to

begin a massive grave excavation all over the country. We have, through our legal offices, which have become very sophisticated, as you know, acquired clear title to at least 80 percent of all the graves in White cemeteries all over the country. We plan to move in with steam shovels right away. We've acquired Mr. Peabody's big coal shovel which did strip mining up at Northern Cheyenne in order to begin and it's going to be an amazing project.

I'll tell you a few things about some of the other collections that I think are quite exciting. We are going to have collections of their food, for example — their food ways. We are going to reconstruct a McDonald's in its entirety. In that we're going to have true-to-life plastic exhibits of white bread, mayonnaise, iceberg lettuce and peanut butter which will be everywhere — smeared all over everything. Primarily stuck to the roof of everyone's mouth. We are going to have several exhibits about their customs. We want to have some performing arts there and we have found the last of a number of White people who know their dances and songs and who have preserved these intact and we are going to have everyday, living exhibits of the two-step, the fox-trot, the disco and other dances. This is going to be very exciting when children come to visit, particularly.

We have acquired exhibits of their costumes. In fact, in the condominium that we are going to reconstruct in its entirety, inside the museum, there will be a typical little family with the gentleman in the three-piece suit and a briefcase and all the other artifacts of their civilization.

We have found one very unusual thing that I do want to tell you about. It's an archaeological remain that we have found somewhat in the vicinity of what used to be called "Los Angeles." It's very interesting. It proves that their culture was very flighty. They seemed to change rulers quite regularly. It's kind of interesting. In fact, we found an archaeological artifact that indicates that they changed rulers regularly. It's a big thing they used to call a neon sign—and it says "Queen for a Day." We are going to do some more excavation to determine just how they did depose their rulers and how they transferred power.

Well, I think you'll agree that this is one of the most exciting things that Indian people have done — one of the most exciting contributions that we could make. As young Indian scholars we are deeply pleased to be able to make this. I should tell you something about the Board of Trustees. It will be composed entirely of distinguished Indian people and one little old White lady from Nebraska who speaks no Indian languages. However, she is going to be the representative for the total culture as we feel that anyone of her age and status would be able to speak for all of them. We know

they'll be pleased to have a representative. We did find her the other day and we plan to spray and fix her permanently so she will remain on the board.

Well, I think you'll agree that this is a very exciting contribution for young scholars to make and I hope you've begun to see the wonderful things that scholars like myself, humble, well-trained in Western ways, can perform for tribes. I was just talking to Chief Swimmer this morning and telling him some of these things. He agreed that this was just marvelous — a great potential — and that we could, in fact, count on the tribe's hiring at least 20 young scholars to help the tribe do some of these projects for economic development and for the betterment of the Nation in the future. One of the things we did help the tribal council understand recently is about this CERT which the tribe has just joined, and that it actually is the Council of Energy Resource Tribes. The council had thought that it was a breath mint and that they were buying stock in it when they joined. But we've straightened that out for them. We were happy and pleased to do that kind of linguistic translation for the tribe.

Well, I don't want to burden your patience with all this scholarly dry dissertation anymore except to thank you and hope that some of you will look forward to hiring some of us someday. We feel we have skills that Indian people can use and, particularly, that Indian women can use as they march forward to take over — and that's what this is all about. And so, we're planning on the takeover right away. But we'll be gentle. I'm pleased that young scholars will be involved in this and I want to thank you for hearing me and hope that we'll be seeing you soon with some more of these exciting projects.

## THE WORKSHOPS

### Networking In Indian Country Workshop

Moderator: Ruth Dial Woods  
Panelists: Bette Crouse Mele  
Deanna Cheshewalla  
Viola G. Peterson

#### IMPACTING THE NATIONAL SCENE IN NETWORKING

Bette Crouse Mele (*Seneca*)

*Immediate past President, Indian Rights Association, national leadership in treaty rights advocacy. Published author. Princeton, N.J. resident.*

When I was given my assignment to address this conference on the subject of impacting the national scene, I felt somewhat intimidated and wondered about my qualifications. I feel that this is a very humbling request. It's very difficult to evaluate our impact. During most of our lives we've been responding to issues rather than creating them and we're frequently consumed by our responsibility to nurture, and to provide, to satisfy our needs moving on from one problem to another without adequate time to assess the results of our efforts. In fact, what I wanted to do was to share some of my efforts, my reasons for making them, and some of my feelings about why we should make them.

As a child and as a young woman I grew up having to make accommodations for racism. But fortunately, I spent most of my young life on the reservation, and I had time to find out who I am. Sometimes I was told what my responsibilities are: to share, to nurture, and that responsibility which Shirley Hill Witt referred to in her address yesterday at the symposium — what we do will affect our people for generations. But mostly I learned from examples. That was to assume responsibility for political issues. I also learned that Seneca men do not question our right to share that

responsibility. And there's a lot of positive things to being a woman. But I also became aware of the negative aspect of reservation life during that period. And that was a pervasive sense of helplessness in opposing outside forces.

When I was young, living on the reservation, I had the counsel of a very dear friend — an older woman — who was a Quaker worker, an Indian field worker from Philadelphia, among the Senecas. She had a patient faith, pride and strength for my people and she especially admired Seneca women.

Quakers have a long history of working among the Senecas. They began working with us in 1790, were very supportive, and ever alert to dangers of termination. So when the Kinzua Dam project came up again she urged me to become involved in opposing it. I hadn't been aware of the Kinzua Dam project. It actually started in the '30s during the depression, when our reservation was surveyed and then the whole project was set aside and became a very definite threat.

At that time I was married and I had children and I was living far from the reservation. I really didn't know what I could do. Communication was very difficult. Preparations for the Dam went relentlessly ahead — the destruction of our reservation was devastating. The Dam took 10,000 acres of a 40,000 acre reservation, our best farm land, destroyed ecology that was essential, part of our culture, and broke the oldest unbroken treaty between the Federal government and an Indian Nation. We were outraged.

The excuse for building the Dam was that it was for flood control. Quakers hired Arthur Morgan who headed the Tennessee Valley Authority and he did studies to prove that flood control could be done more effectively by building the Kinzua Dam elsewhere. Americans in the east were apathetic — they did not respond to our request for support. There was a syndrome at that time in American history when Easterners thought that all Indians lived west of the Mississippi River. Many land claims cases cured them of that problem.

It is difficult to pull out all the stops when there are no stops to pull out. I began to latch on to anything promising. I began addressing church groups, school groups, social organizations and asked people to write letters. It was encouraging to get some response and so I thought I'd try for some of the bigger fish. I wrote to Margaret Mead and got a response. Margaret Mead was an anthropologist of great social conscience. I wrote to David Suskind, who was then the big-deal of or a-man shows. I knew his sister and thought that would help, but I got no response from him. But I did compile an awesome list of correspondents during that time. And at the same time I talked to all of my friends about the issue. One of

them was a man who worked as one of the staff people on a national network. He took the Kinzua Dam issue to the people at the station and this resulted in a TV special on the Kinzua Dam. Nothing really, however, stopped the Kinzua Dam.

I gained some experience from this. All the time I was working on it I wasn't pre-empting anything else the tribe was doing — our president, our councilmen, our tribal members were testifying before congressional committees. It was my independent effort to bring national attention to something that had community consensus — something that was an established, well-defined problem.

But over the years I felt that somehow or other this experience that we went through should be of benefit to other Indian people. I felt this need to share my experience with others hoping that in some way our experience could help others avert the same kind of disaster. And over the years, as Indian nationalism grew, and Indian organizations were founded, I made every effort to keep up with the development and lend support, to share my experience and to share my contacts.

In 1970, I became involved in Indian issues on the national level through the first convocation of American Indian scholars, and became associated with an organization based in California that worked with tribes throughout the United States and also, we had a branch that published. I worked in founding WASSAJA, which was a national Indian newspaper, and worked as a reporter. My number of contacts increased, but networking among organizations remained an on-again/off-again proposition.

In 1976, I was elected president of the Indian Rights Association, based in Philadelphia. That was the year of the great backlash to Indian rights. The Association is the oldest non-Indian advocacy organization for Indian rights in the United States. It was not functioning actively when I took over. I was the first Indian, and the first woman president. The risks were really great for me because of this non-active, nearly defunct organization. In the event the Indian Rights Association didn't survive, my name would be attached to the failure or the downfall of that prestigious old organization. But there was, there still is, and there always has been a great need for the support of non-Indians to help us continue to prevail and to help us in our struggle to prevail.

What was missing in the Indian Rights Association when I took over was the lack of contact within Indian communities and organizations. Networking was a critical need. For many years Indian Rights Association has been a privately supported organization that sent field workers out when Indian communities issued a call for help and support. For 50 years they had served as the only

organization supporting Indian rights in the United States. They are a very important part of our history. It took time to network. It meant a lot of talking and a lot of time getting to talk with people who worked with national Indian organizations, getting in touch with communities to establish needs, their needs and their priorities, but the response was very rewarding. My friends put me in touch with their contacts and the support I received was extremely gratifying.

With the help of Indian communities and the Indian people and national Indian organizations we got Indian Rights Association back on its feet and functioning effectively again. We had a publication, we managed to increase the number of Indian Rights' publications in our effort to educate the American public. We represented a constituency which is a very effective thing to use in lobbying for Indian rights. We also had some very good contacts.

We had a member of our board who was past president of the American Psychiatric Association. We were trying to get new legislation passed for Indian health care. Dan Blain, who was past president of the Association, carried the bill with him to a national meeting of the American Psychiatric Association and lobbied for support of its passage. The American Psychiatric Association has lobbying facilities in every state. This is a very powerful organization to have on your side. When we were working on support for the Indian Child Welfare Act we went directly to Robert Coles, a well-known psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard. He's also an author of a number of books, one of them CHILDREN OF CRISES, and in it he wrote very sensitively about Indian children and how they relate to the non-Indian community. (Coles has appeared at the White House, at the request of the Carters, and made a presentation there.) We approached Coles and asked him if he would give us his support and he was very responsive.

This was the sort of thing that we did and I tried to do through my work with Indian Rights Association and other organizations that I worked with. I found that to work very effectively on swaying consensus, a lot of us had to do this kind of thing to get bills passed. Hopefully, what we did in this networking and approaching people of influence, organizations of influence, was to move the administration, or to move the President, to sign the bill.

One of the things I'd like to emphasize is that all of us are part of a constituency. That fact can be used when you talk to your congressman. It doesn't matter whether or not you voted for him or her. This person won the election and they are your elected representative. It's their responsibility to represent your interests.

There's one thing that I'm very much aware of — we come from a proud heritage. You know where you came from. And you should

never be intimidated by fame, power or money in approaching anybody.

In my experience I found networking with Indian women to be freer and better than it is between Indian men and Indian women. I consider this a challenge to Indian men. We are entering an even more critical period of our history where networking and mutual support are our greatest assets to fighting for our rights. In this American society no one belongs more than you do. Some may prevail for a period of time with their political power, but basically the American society is a society of aliens struggling with each other. And this is not a model that we should follow. We must remember this in the days to come: we are not special interest groups, *we* are nations.

## NETWORKING IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

Deanna Cheshewalla (*Osage*)

*Director, Title IV, Dallas Independent School District; Speaker, Texas Cultural Alliance Conference in Guatemala; Board, Dallas Intertribal Center. Well-known urban Indian affairs speaker and cross-cultural advocate. Texas resident.*

I think the topic of networking in the urban area is really interesting, but I am like the salesman who was one before he knew how to spell it. That's about the way with me. I looked up the definition of "networking." I thought it was very interesting. I'd like to read it to you:

Networking means developing contacts within certain segments of the community; to facilitate or implement objectives toward specific goals.

I'm Title IV director in Dallas and the first year that I was Title IV director, I was budgeted \$40,000. We didn't have any transportation. And, the school system presented a problem.

I worked in the school — I'd been teaching for a long time, so I thought, "Well, phooey with that; I'm going to Indian organizations." We have two Indian centers in Dallas: American Indian Center which has pre-school programs and Dallas Intertribal Center which has the Manpower program, health, and several other programs — arts and crafts — so I went to the Manpower program and I told them, "Look, I need help on some staff, OJTs (on-the-job-training), and work experience . . ." So I got staff persons right away from the Manpower program and I kept hitting on the Indian Centers until I made them help provide transportation.

I was involved in networking before I even realized what I was doing. But I think networking almost comes natural for Indian people because we are a group-oriented type of people — we depend on our family for certain things and just being an Indian, just kind of extended from the Indian community. So networking, for me, was just a natural thing to do.

Two years ago we went to Denver for the National Indian Education Association Conference. We decided we wanted to bring the NIEA convention to Dallas in 1980. We went lobbying till we got the convention to come to Dallas. And that's when I really learned a lot of networking ways because there's a lot of responsibilities that go with planning a big convention. You have to have support of a lot of people.

You have to sell the idea of what's happening. That's also part of networking. Besides making your contacts you have to sell the hometown people. I said, "Look, Indian people, there are going to be 2,000 other Indian people coming here to Dallas and we need to work together."

There are many different tribes in Dallas and in the urban area. In Dallas alone there are 100 different tribes. So, you've got to really go across all those problem areas and just concentrate on Indians. That was what I did in working with United Way. I felt like we'd get together about 20 people and that was really rather small considering how many people we had from all parts of the country.

The difference about really working in urban areas is you have to work with a lot of non-Indian people. Many of the non-Indian people that you work with are ignorant about what it means to be Indian. That's where I try to educate them. I am very proud and have always been very proud of being an Indian. I try to have a little tougher skin about it — not be so sensitive — because I found out a lot of times people will make comments that would be insulting to me but they won't even understand how they've insulted me. If I can make them understand what they're saying is a negative

comment about Indian persons, if I can educate them about what it means to be Indian, then I can maybe turn it around and make them a contact or advocate. And this is something that I have worked for because we are a small people. I think the census said there's a little over a million Indians in the United States. So I think it is wonderful to be here with Indian women — and the men that are here, too. But we have to have non-Indian contacts because we can't do everything ourselves.

So, in an urban area it's especially important that you go out and make an impression on these other organizations, the foundations, or whomever you're working with, to whatever goal you want to reach. Sometimes you have to be a little bit different when you approach some of these organizations. You have to approach them in a way they expect. Then sell your ideas.

I find being in Dallas really a challenge because I don't feel I'm any less Indian living in an urban area. In fact, I see more needs of the children. I work mostly with students, but because of my involvement with the students I have been very much involved with human centers.

I'm not the kind of person that steps forward whenever they ask for a volunteer, but I also don't step backward. Just standing there a lot of times, I've found myself being out front. If I'm asked, then I will do it. I've found that working for the other Indian people there in Dallas, many of them are in the same situation I am. There are a lot of Indian people there but there are just a few that do a lot of the work. I don't get discouraged by it. I spend a lot of time in the community. I've been on both the boards of the national Indian groups and sometimes I feel like the Dallas Indian people get tired of looking at me and hearing me. This morning when I learned there were a lot of Dallas people here in the audience, I was really surprised that they would come to hear a workshop where I was speaking, because I was sure they were sick of me by now.

Dallas people have been very supportive. It's because we have common goals. We're working for the children. Children are very important. They're our future leaders. We're here now but how long are we going to be? Are we going to perpetuate our culture? Do you talk to your children or your grandchildren the way your grandparents talked to you, or your parents? It's very important and in the city it's very easy to lose sight of what is an Indian. It bothers me a lot because, like I said, the Indian student population in Dallas numbers about 1,000 in a school district that has 100,000 students. So many times when I talk to the students and ask them, "What is Indian?" "I don't really know," they respond.

I missed the luncheon so I didn't get to hear what was said about impacting curriculum but I know our kids are not learning about

being Indian. They're not learning positive things as they should. And I think with the networking you could start at home and make your own kids contacts, then have their friends be contacts about Indian goals and objectives — spread it out with your teachers, principals.

Networking, I think, also involves being vocal. That's part of it. Find out what other peoples' talents are. Many of the people I work with need encouragement. The same as I need encouragement. And you need encouragement. When I find out someone has a specific skill or talent, I always build on them and try and put them in contact with others that might need that talent. I think this is a part of networking, too. Some people are just better at some things. They have some natural gifts. If you can help them — put them in the right place at the right time for Indian objectives, or even to better themselves, this is a part of networking. Not just making a contact, but also making a good feeling that goes with it.

I think making contacts within an Indian community is the easiest part. But when we stand out there in front of non-Indian people, that's a little bit more difficult. I think that when we realize that when we are representing Indians in a non-Indian community we need to hold our head up high, we need to dress as well as we can. When I hire people to work for me, I tell them the same thing. School is real bad about this sort of thing. They've got all these negative stereotypes. I say, "Look, I don't care what you do in your private life, but if you're going to represent Indians and Indian education, I want you to look nice. You're a role model for these children. For many of them, it's a new thing for them to see an Indian person as a professional, so make them be proud of you."

## IMPACTING EXISTING INDIAN COALITIONS

Viola Peterson (*Miami of Indiana*)

*Chair, Governors' Interstate Indian Council;  
Board, National Indian Education Association;  
Presidential Appointee and former Chair, National  
Advisory Council on Indian Education. Resident of  
Flint, Mich.*

What I want to present is an outline of what I consider a step-by-step approach to networking, whether it's on the local level, the state level or the national level. I need to point out that there's another level in between: the regional level.

The first thing you have to do is figure out "what I want to accomplish" in building a network in advocacy of a certain issue. You have to define your own position. Put it in a couple of sentences that are very clear.

Then, you must know the laws — the existing laws — that relate to the issue, whether it's local, state or federal laws. Know those laws. Know how they impact on what you're trying to do.

Next thing is to be aware of other opinions that might bear on your particular issue. Some are going to be contrary to what you think, perhaps, but it's surprising when you're talking about an issue if you explain very well your position to other people. You may just find that the only obstacle to their support is a difference in approach.

Your next step is garnering support. I swear that you can't do anything locally, statewide or nationally until you have the support of your own people. You have seen Indian people go out and give these big lectures and expound about things, but if you don't have grassroots support from people at home, you're shot down before you start. So discuss this issue thoroughly with folks at home — your people, neighbors, sisters, brothers, aunts, teachers — anybody that will listen. Just pound their ear and discuss it. Don't be afraid to talk it out. Doing this, of course, you use all the local forum for input regarding both support and questions and possible opposition; all forums — churches, church groups, school

groups, talk to the mayor if you can get an audience.

While you're doing all these things, keep notes with the names, the dates, the places, of the meetings, the people you've talked to. Record the dates. And, what I have done on certain issues when I've been involved, just keep running notes. I may have to tear up the corner of this paper and make a note to myself. Keep these notes. They'll help you even to develop a chronological report when you get done. You may not need them, but ten years from now they'll make good reading.

While you are working on this particular issue, don't let side issues get involved. If you're talking about housing, don't start bringing in the employment. Stick with the housing. One item at a time. Be very single-minded about it. They talk about tunnel vision, but there are times when you have to keep one main thing going. Because if you get into something else, that dilutes your efforts.

When you are dealing with local people, you can do it through written statements. Learn to write. You don't have to be a proven author. Just write from the heart. Just express yourself as though you were talking to someone, but make it from your heart. Make it sincere and, above all, be accurate. Stick to the facts. If everything is accurate, you're building your credibility.

Be businesslike and cooperative in your approach. Approach it as though you were the president of General Motors. State your purpose, be cooperative. So long as you can cooperate, that's what you should do because the old saying that you draw more flies with sugar than you do with vinegar is certainly true. So you cooperate insofar as you can but you do not have to compromise your main issue.

My tenth suggestion is to be as optimistic and as upbeat as possible, whether you're writing or speaking. Keep things on the upgrade. If you have something to report, make a recommendation that will be helpful — show how it will improve things — if it will do some good for the general public — if it will save the taxpayers some money, good. Report that. That's an optimistic note. If it will help the Indian people feel better about themselves, that's great. Just keep as optimistic as you can. We know we have enough problems all along the line. We've been to meetings where all we hear is, "Gee, this is wrong, that's wrong, something's falling apart, Washington's doing this to us, the state's doing that to us, the Ku Klux Klan's got our first names." Be optimistic.

There are 33 states right now that either have Indian people in the governor's office or whose state legislatures have passed laws to create Commissions on Indian Affairs. When you approach your

state's Commission on Indian Affairs, have a written statement prepared and mail it to the members before meeting time. When you appear before them, read only a synopsis. Don't try to read your whole paper; that's too time consuming. Then, open yourself up for questions. You must be prepared to answer these questions and provide clarification by doing your homework. You must know the law that supports your issue; then, you seek the support of the state commission.

The best way to secure support for your issue is through passage of a resolution. You can find people who can write resolutions. If you need help, just ask anybody. Ask an English teacher or go to your school, or go to your tribal chairman, whatever. There's somebody out there who knows. If you're soliciting support from the tribal council, go the same route. Their meetings are usually open. If you request a place on the agenda, have a well-written position paper there ahead of your appearance. Give a short oral review, answer questions, and present your pre-written resolution ready for the council's support. Of course, you must always be aware of and adhere to the format of any organization before which you appear.

When you go to the national organization, it's the same thing there. You obtain the addresses and meeting times from either your tribal office or from Indian centers. Indian centers have a wealth of information and once again you ask to be on the agenda. Take your paper and make yourself open to questions. Present your report and have your resolution ready.

Your last step in all this is to disseminate all resolutions of support to the appropriate Indian leaders, Indian organizations, Indian centers, and appropriate local, state or federally elected-appointed officials. Anyone that can have impact on what you're doing. Get the information to them and your approach can be friendly, it can be shy, but however you approach them, don't be fainthearted. Just move right along. Your heart will pound and your palms will sweat on some occasions. But, you are after a purpose. You are here to improve some aspects of Indian life, whether it's in the city, whether it's in the country or whether it's at the tribal level.

I have heard tribal people saying they are not getting turnout for tribal meetings. That's too bad. It's the same thing that's too bad about Indian centers and their boards of directors. If you want to get something done you have to inform yourself. As Carol Connor was telling us yesterday about the Crow Reservation, they're losing their rights. They're cutting into the sovereignty of the tribe. If the sovereignty of the tribe is cut into you can imagine what will happen to the rest of the Indians in the country. They'll just pack us

off one by one — program by program — dollar by dollar — to shut down. We must be alert to these things. These are times we must act.

Indian people have been reacting for too many years. We react. We don't take the action first and let other people react to us. We're always on the defensive. They back us into a corner and we come up fighting and then we're the bad guys because we're fighting. Fighting for our rights. If we go at it in a businesslike way, we must anticipate the needs that are out there. If we could use our efforts to convince our own folks of what needs to be done, then we won't have too much trouble convincing the rest of the world.

## Accessing Indian Education Workshop

Moderator: Yvonne Wynde  
Panelists: Carol Cross Juneau  
Carol Allen-Weston  
Mary Ann Brittan  
Delores Twohatchet

### OVERVIEW OF TRIBALLY-CONTROLLED COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Carol Cross Juneau (*Mandan-Hidatsa*)

*President, Blackfeet Community College in Montana; authored successful proposal securing Women's Educational Equity funds to implement a women's resource center within the college.*

I am a Mandan-Hidatsa Indian of Fort Berthold Reservation, N. Dak. I currently serve as the president of Blackfeet Community College of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. The Blackfeet Reservation is located in the northwestern corner of Montana, bordered on the west by the Rocky Mountains and on the

north by Canada. It is a beautiful area of the country with a variety of scenic areas. The eastern part of the Reservation is farming plains and the western part extends up to the Rocky Mountains with many lakes, streams, and timber. The Blackfeet Indians number approximately 12,000 enrolled members, of which an estimated 7,000 live on the Reservation. Other Indian people, such as a small group of Cree, have settled along the Babb/St. Mary's area and there are other Indians and non-Indians who reside on the Blackfeet Reservation.

The Blackfeet Community College is just one of the many tribally-controlled community colleges now in existence in the United States. The tribally-controlled community college movement came to life in the 1960s with the first being Navajo Community College in 1968. In 1972, there had been six others established primarily in the state of South Dakota on the Sioux Reservations. In 1981, there are approximately 22 tribally-controlled community colleges throughout the United States.

Historically, Indian education, as provided by the United States government, missionaries and churches, public institutions, and private institutions has been unsuccessful in meeting the unique needs of Indian students at all levels. Many major studies have addressed the failure, the neglect, the disgrace of Indian education in the past by these agencies and institutions. Through the work of many individuals, the tribal councils, various organizations, in efforts to design a more effective educational system to meet the needs of Indian students, new systems of education are being established on reservations where Indian people themselves can have control of their education and their children's education. This concept of Indian-controlled education includes the tribal colleges. The success of students at the traditional institutions of higher education has been very minimal. One study showed that only 4 percent of the Indian students who entered college graduate from college with a bachelor's degree. Also, the number of Indian students who enter college is far below the national average. The traditional colleges are not meeting the needs of Indian people in higher education as they should. There are many people who live in reservation communities who cannot leave their home communities nor want to leave for various reasons such as close cultural ties, family ties and financial needs. But, the need to provide these individuals with the opportunity to secure post-secondary and higher education services is extremely important. Therefore, the tribal colleges are designed to bring post-secondary and higher educational services to the people of the reservation communities that is relevant and specific to the needs of that community.

A tribally-controlled community college has many unique features which include the following:

- The college is tribally-controlled. The representative tribal governing body of that reservation provides the college with a charter and either through an election process or appointment process gives the governance of the college to a board of regents/directors. This board is composed of tribal members.
- The college is located in the heart of Indian Country. They are centered in their respective reservation communities, thus making the college accessible to the people.
- The programs of study are designed to address the specific needs of that community, with an emphasis placed on the cultural heritage of that tribe and also with programs that are designed to provide skills for entry into the labor market both locally and off-reservation.
- The majority of the students are Indian students.
- The staff of the college are primarily Indian people.
- The colleges are community-oriented, utilizing the services of many community agencies and organizations in a cooperative effort.

Services provided by the tribal colleges vary according to the needs of the respective reservation community which it serves. An example is Salish-Kootenai Community College of the Flathead Reservation in Montana which provides training in the area of forestry, which is one of the Flathead Tribe's major industries. The Blackfeet Community College provides training in the area of teacher training, which is one of the deficiencies identified by many needs assessments and is due to the lack of certified Indian personnel in the local public school systems on the Blackfeet Reservation.

The curricula offered is available on the freshman and sophomore level in addition to curricula in the areas of developmental studies, community services, vocational and occupational areas. Tribal colleges also work with their tribal governing bodies in providing research assistance in grantsmanship, serving on various local committees and other services that address the needs of the community. One of the areas that many of the tribal colleges need to get more involved in is the area of research. It is an area that we have not concentrated on as we have worked to meet specific needs in development stages. It's an area that I think tribal colleges should get into more. The tribal colleges award Certificates of Completion, Associate of Arts degrees, Associate of Applied Science degrees, and Diplomas to students who successfully complete the requirements of the program of study.

Tribal colleges' students are mainly Indian. At the Blackfeet

Community College, approximately 95 percent are Indian, and many are Native American women. The female student enrollment is approximately 70 percent or more each quarter. Many of these women are heads of households and/or working mothers. Services need to be provided to meet their specific and unique needs. The Blackfeet Community College has been fortunate to receive funding under the Women's Educational Equity Act for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 to provide services to students. Child care needs are now being met through organizing a network of child care services, transportation needs are being met through a van and car pools, an information center/resource library is being developed and specific workshops and courses are being offered that address the specific needs and concerns of the American Indian female student.

Tribal colleges are attracting the student who has never previously attended college, students who have gone to college elsewhere but who have left or dropped out of that college, students who are taking specific classes to update their job skills for upward mobility in employment and students who take classes for their own personal and social reasons. The typical high school graduate is still leaving the reservation community to attend college elsewhere. We hope to be able to recruit the high school graduate as our college continues to grow.

A tribal college must have certain criteria in order to begin operation and provide services. Over the past five years the Blackfeet Community College has grown from a very small, struggling institution with a staff of three people, a small office, and with a very small budget, to an institution of higher education. The Blackfeet Community College now has six programs of study and a variety of services available to students. The enrollment has increased from 67 students enrolled in Fall Quarter 1976, to an enrollment of 304 students in Fall Quarter 1980. Some of the criteria and tasks necessary to accomplish for a tribal college include the following:

- *Tribal Charter.* The Tribal Governing Body must support the institution through the issuance of a charter giving the powers and authority to the institution.
- *Board of Regents or Directors.* Through either an election or appointment process the Board of Regents must be established, and this Board should be tribal members. The Board must establish by-laws for operation.
- *Tax-Exempt Status.* The college needs to secure tax-exempt status as a non-profit corporation from IRS.
- *A Needs Assessment.* The college should complete a needs assessment to determine the needs and interests of the community in curriculum and the services needed by students.

- *Staff.* The staff of the college needs to be committed to the goals and purposes of the college and be willing to face a lot of struggles, problems, and work in the college's development.
- *Funding.* Financial support is necessary. The amount needed to begin is minimal. The Blackfeet Community College began with a \$32,000 budget the first year. Financial support continues to be one of the major needs as the college grows.
- *Community Support.* The tribal council, the organizations/agencies, and community need to support the college. You will need to call upon the resources, expertise, facilities, and materials of the community to assure the success of the college.
- *Students.* Students need to enroll. Without the student, there is no need for the college. Services need to be provided, with financial aid being the major concern and need of students.
- *Curriculum.* Courses must be provided to the community that are relevant and needed. It is important to provide courses as soon as possible to let the community know that the college is available.
- *Sponsoring Institution.* Many of the tribal colleges began operation through the assistance of a sponsoring institution of higher education close to them. The sponsoring institution provides the developing college with a great deal of support systems and technical assistance. One of the state institutions or private institutions in the state that is accredited sponsored many of the tribal colleges under a bilateral arrangement through Title III of the Higher Ed. Act. This is the way the Blackfeet Community College started out with Flathead Valley Community College providing us with the services, the expertise, the assistance and the support systems necessary for the Blackfeet Community College to begin.

The major step of a tribal college is accreditation. The first step in this process is to achieve all the standards and criteria set forth by the Accreditation Association with which the college will be working. This process consists of an application with planning documents, a self-study, an evaluation visit, and an interview with the Commission on Colleges of the Accreditation Association. If the college is deemed to be making progress toward accreditation and meets the established criteria, then the college is awarded Candidate Status for Accreditation. This status does not mean that the college is accredited, but that the college is progressing toward accreditation. The Blackfeet Community College achieved Candidate Status for Accreditation on December 1, 1979, after three and one-half years of operation. Now, the Blackfeet Community College is continuing to work toward achieving full accreditation on or before 1985.

Accreditation is vitally important for tribal colleges. Without this status, the students of the colleges cannot transfer credits to

other institutions of higher education and the college is not accepted as a viable institution of higher education in the higher education community. Also, PL 95-471, the Tribally-Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, which provides operational support to tribal colleges, requires that the tribal college be feasible, which includes Candidate Status for Accreditation.

There are many challenges continuing to confront the tribally-controlled community colleges today. Some of these are:

- **Accreditation.** In the efforts to achieve full accreditation or candidate status, you find many, many standards or criteria placed upon you by the Accreditation Association and by other institutions in the state. You have to try to maintain your uniqueness as a tribal college serving the needs of the community, yet meet the standards imposed upon you by many outside, non-Indian institutions. There have been some discussions by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium on the need for a regional or national accreditation association for tribal colleges. At the present time, the tribal colleges work with the Regional Accreditation Association.
- **Funding.** The majority of the Indian reservations do not have a tax base and tribal incomes are limited. Therefore, it is difficult to secure adequate tribal financial support for a stable financial base and most tribal colleges are dependent upon federal sources. The proposed budget cuts of the new administration will have a detrimental effect on tribal colleges. The block grant concepts of the BIA and state block grants from the federal government will create new challenges not only to the tribal colleges, but all tribal programs. Tribal colleges do charge tuition, but it is minimal and this source of revenue cannot meet their expanding needs.
- **Facilities.** Many of the tribal colleges began out of small offices here, church basements, various places that were provided to them by some community agencies. Some have been able to get new facilities — many haven't. The majority of them are in need of adequate facilities for classroom space, office space, library space, and student centers. Construction funds are almost non-existent now and many tribal colleges will have to continue to operate out of makeshift rented or in-kind facilities.
- **Work with State Institutions/Agencies.** The issue of transferability of credit from tribal colleges to the state institutions of higher education will continue to be a major concern and effort of the tribal colleges. Also, with the new state block grant programs, the tribal colleges will now need to develop the necessary processes and relationships with state agencies to secure funding from the programs under the block grants. As

tribal and state relationships have not always been very successful, the liaison that will be necessary now will require a great deal of work. The federal trust relationship that exists between tribes and the United States government due to treaties and laws must not be lost, and it will be threatened through the state block grant program.

The tribally-controlled community colleges are relatively new to the systems of education in the United States. It has been only 15 years since the first tribal college, Navajo Community College, was established. Many are in developmental stages, some have achieved Candidate Status, and some full accreditation. The future will continue to bring new challenges, not only for tribal colleges, but all of Indian education. Indian people are now experiencing a new era of Indian education. The 1970s gave us many new concepts of Indian education, more acts were passed for assisting Indian education, and Indian education experienced a great deal of support this past decade. Now, the pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction again for Indian people and we again will need to begin our work to keep what we do have in the 1980s.

The Education Commission of the States just completed a report entitled INDIAN EDUCATION: INVOLVEMENT OF FEDERAL, STATE AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS. This was the result of a major study during 1979-1980 in five states, including Oklahoma and Montana. This study made some major recommendations to tribes, state legislatures, governors, state boards of education, local education agencies, colleges and universities, parents, students, and to ECS itself. I believe these recommendations should be utilized by Indian education programs in their continued work to meet the needs of Indian children and adults. Following are some of these recommendations:

#### TO TRIBES:

- Develop educational philosophies, codes, and policies on Indian education.
- Develop stronger roles for tribal communities and parents, and exert more influence on public schools within the reservation and/or Indian community.
- Become more actively involved in the state political process, particularly with the state legislature.

#### TO STATE LEGISLATURES:

- Consider state financial support for alternative Indian education programs and tribally-controlled community colleges.
- Provide state appropriations for bilingual and bicultural programs that Indian children need.

#### TO GOVERNORS:

- Appoint Indians to state boards of education, boards of regents for higher education, and to other educational boards.
- Use the prestige of their offices to support legislation and appropriations for Indian education.
- Be encouraged to hire Indian staff persons.

#### TO STATE BOARDS AND STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES:

- Place Indian culture courses in the curriculum for all students.
- Promote and improve communication channels with tribes and Indian parents.
- Place Indians in education policy-making positions.
- Establish a state-funded Indian Education Office.

#### TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES:

- Recognize and reflect the unique cultural and academic needs of Indian children, developing specialized programs to meet those needs.
- Learn and understand the unique federal-Indian relationship.

#### TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

- Accept the existence and legitimacy of tribally-controlled community colleges.
- Accept transfer credits from tribally-controlled community colleges.

#### TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

- Reaffirm its commitment to Indian education.
- Increase federal scholarship and fellowship money for Indian college students.

#### TO INDIAN PARENTS:

- Recognize and practice educational support, reinforcement, and motivation for their children to remain in school.

#### TO INDIAN STUDENTS:

- Accept the responsibility for their own education.
- We must use the power of the vote. We need to get people registered to vote and to the polls on election day. Our numbers are limited, but we can make impact locally in school elections, county elections and let our views be known through voting. Get people registered to vote and make sure they get to the polls.
- We have to become experts in the field of legislation. Too often we wait until it is too late to have our input into legislative matters.

- We need to teach our children of their rights and responsibilities as Indian people. I believe many of us have wanted changes overnight, but have come to the realization that it will take many years and some of us won't see these changes in our lifetime. It is our children who we are doing the work for and who will carry on.
- We must become involved locally. Serve on committees, volunteer for services, run for public offices, and support the tribal councils. The tribes are the power of the Indian people and we have to keep them strong.

## BIA EDUCATION UPDATE

Carol Allen-Weston (*Quapaw/Euchee/Cherokee*)

*Education Program Administrator, Muskogee Area Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs; former Dean of Instruction, Haskell Junior College; past President, North American Indian Tennis Association. Resident of Muskogee, Okla.*

Ten years ago, after I got my master's degree, I started working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I worked at Seneca Indian School here in Oklahoma, Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kans., Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota, and the Phoenix Area Office. I had the opportunity to come to the Muskogee Area Office as Education Program Administrator and I'm finding it a different kind of challenge but one which I enjoy.

Today, I want to give you an idea of the national scope, then inform you some about the Muskogee Area Office and close with suggestions on how I think you can become involved in Indian education.

Two new public laws have been passed in recent years about which you should know if you don't already. They are Public Law 93-638 Indian Self-Determination Act, and 95-561, Indian Education Act. Both are quite significant to Indian education. The Self-Determination Act enables tribes to contract directly with the

Bureau to provide activity to the people. The second one, 95-561, has restructured the chain of command. In the past, the Bureau was directed by the Commissioner. Now, the Assistant Secretary is in charge. The Director of Indian Education, who is Dr. Earl Barlow from Montana, receives his directions from the Assistant Secretary, and Dr. Barlow gives me, in the Area Office, my directions, and I relay them on to the principals who work out in the day schools. The principals have the opportunity now to run the schools' day-to-day operation.

Another part of this law requires that we have school boards. We've had school boards before, but they've been advisory. Now, the school boards have control of the schools. They are in charge of budget, hiring and firing, and developmental policy. School boards could not do that before.

BIA Education thought you might be interested in knowing a few statistics. There are 273,500 students who are Indian, between the ages of 5 and 17. In the schools that are practically all Indian enrollment, which would be our BIA schools, boarding schools and day schools, we have 47,000 students. That's only 17 percent of Indian students. In Indian-controlled schools, or contract schools by the BIA, we have 2,500 students. That's only 1 percent. We have mission schools which have 9,000 students — that's 3 percent. We have public schools that are on or near the reservation and they have 30,000 students, which is 11 percent.

Now public schools that have 50 percent to 90 percent Indian enrollment, those on or near the reservation, have 105,000 students, or 38 percent of the total. Which means, 38 percent of the students are in public schools. We also have public schools that have only 10 percent to 50 percent Indian enrollment and these are usually in small communities or small cities and they have 50,000 which is 18 percent. So, thus far, public schools have 56 percent of the students. Then we have public schools with less than 10 percent enrollment and those are the ones in the large cities. They have 30,000 enrollment, which is 11 percent. So, we account for 67 percent of Indian students that we have here on our list in public schools.

We have eleven area offices and Muskogee is just one of them, so each area has its own unique characteristics about it. Here in the Muskogee area we try to serve what they call the "Five Civilized Tribes." I know a lot of us could argue with that, but these are called the five civilized tribes: Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Seminole and Creek.

In the Muskogee Area Office we have Sequoyah High School, a famous old school which has been here for a long time. We have about 400 students at Sequoyah and we have Title I monies, Title IV monies and special education monies for it. The Muskogee office also has three schools which serve as dormitories with the students living at the facilities and attending public schools in the towns.

They are Carter Seminary at Ardmore, Eufaula Dormitory at Eufaula, and Jones Academy at Heartshorn.

Also, in the Muskogee Area Office, besides these four schools and working with the school boards, we also have higher education. We provide money through contracts to the tribe or through our office, to 2,000 students to go to college. We also have adult education programs. We have seven contracts with tribes to provide these ABE — Adult Basic Education to adults, and GED programs. We service about 1,000 Indian adults every year in that program. We also have a Johnson-O'Malley contract and we get our money from Washington for JOM. Then we have a contract with the State of Oklahoma. They provide services to Indian students that we provide services for through our JOM contract.

I think all of us need to get involved in Indian education. I think that in the Bureau and in any education project we need people who are involved in special education. There are a lot of jobs out there for people who are trained in special education. So, if you're trying to make a career choice or decision, I can recommend special education to you because there are jobs out there and students who could use your special talents.

The other thing we need people to do for Indian people is to become involved in social development activities. We need people who care and can counsel with people and work with Indian people. I know one of the things I would like to see done in Bureau schools: I would like to see more work and more people trained in teaching people the social graces of the day. I can remember my parents, who went to boarding school, talk about how they had table mates, and all this kind of stuff. We've gotten away from that and it seems like young people today sometimes have forgotten the manners, or haven't been taught the manners, and we need people to begin to work in social development of our young people. I've always maintained, and I could be wrong, that if we can talk and communicate with somebody, that's half of our battle. But if we speak a language different than theirs and they don't understand us, that's where the problems begin. So I think if we can start working on communication and social development, we'll be far better off.

The other area that we need people to work with us on is Indian heritage. It should never die. If you have special talents in that area and can volunteer to work at schools, or would like to get paid for it, there are jobs out there for people who work in Indian culture and Indian tradition.

Another thing you can do for Indian young people, and it would help the Bureau, also, is to attend tribal meetings. Talk about education; be an education supporter. If you know children who are out of school, talk to them personally. Try to get them into school. Try to find a school where they can be happy and succeed. If you don't know the students personally but you know they are out of school, contact agencies, contact the schools, contact people who can get these students into school.

Today, we have students who go to boarding schools because they want to be with Indians, because they want to see how other Indians live and what goes on. Nowadays parents have the choice of sending them to Bureau schools. In the day when my parents went, the only way you could get there was if you didn't have a mother or father, or you were very poor. Times have changed. If parents decide they want their kids to go to a Bureau school, they can go to any Bureau school they want. That means Phoenix Indian School, Inter-mountain Indian School, Chemawa Indian School in Oregon. They can go to Choctaw Central in Mississippi; they can come to Sequoyah High school; they can go anywhere you want them to go. There are spaces out there — there are schools that can provide the kind of emphasis you want your children to have. So, I would encourage any children, whether they be yours or anybody else's, that there are opportunities available. And we would be glad to work with them and accept them into our schools.

I guess all I wanted to impart to you today is that there are things happening on the national scene. Become involved. There are things happening in your local area, in the area that you come from, and you need to get involved with those education committees and tribal committees and get things rolling and going the way you think they ought to go.

## SERVICES OF INDIAN EDUCATION ACT CENTERS

Mary Ann Brittan (*Choctaw*)

*Staff member, Native American Research Institute;  
Officer, Oklahoma Advisory Council for Indian  
Education; screenwriter and curriculum contribu-  
tions to visual aid productions. Resident of Nor-  
man, Okla.*

I am a Choctaw, I am from Oklahoma, I am a senior research and management specialist with the Native American Research Institute. As such, I'd like to share with you the philosophy of NARI and its sister organization, Native American Associates. There are two organizations, the Associates and the Institute. In the fifth year of

operation, NARI is an Indian-owned, Indian-controlled, and Indian-operated private consulting firm based in Lawrence, Kans. There are several women sitting on the boards of the Native American Associates and the Native American Institute. We have satellite offices in Norman, Okla., Washington, D.C., Santa Fe, N. Mex., and Minneapolis, Minn. Our stated objective is to assist American Indian tribes and Alaskan and Hawaiian Natives in improving their current programs and services and in achieving independence.

Our efforts include working with the federal, regional, and state and local agencies that directly impact Indians and Indian organizations. Being an educator and an Indian woman, I do appreciate the philosophy of NARI and the opportunities that are made available to Indian women who are interested in the field of education. Through this kind of organization we are able to experience professional growth and to work with other Indian men and women who are committed to playing some roles that will be of benefit to American Indian communities.

In the pursuit of these objectives NARI responded to the U.S. Education Department, Office of Indian Education, request for proposal to contract for the operation of the Indian Education Act Resource and Evaluation Center V. NARI was awarded the contract and operates the center in Norman, Okla. Our center serves Title IV grantees and potential grantees in the Region V states of Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. Last month we were also assigned to service the three additional states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Within these nine states which Center V now serves, there are presently 431 grantees who operate Title IV programs which are there to provide better educational opportunities. I'd like to delineate those for you.

In the part A section, which is for Indian students in public schools, there is one project in Arkansas, six in Kansas, seven in Louisiana, one in Missouri, 279 in Oklahoma, and five in Texas.

Then in the discretionary portion of Title IV (in the Parts B and C projects in this region) there are, in Part B, five in Oklahoma and two in Texas. In Part C, Adult Education, there are four projects in Oklahoma and one in Texas, making a total of about 310 in this southwest region, with an additional 121 in the three northern states.

The projects range in scope and design from adult education programs through early childhood programs and include special educational services for meeting remediation and enrichment, equal opportunity and culturally related academic needs. The re-

cipients include public schools or local educational authorities (LEAs), Indian tribes and Indian organizations, Indian-controlled schools and institutions of higher learning.

At present there are four resource centers operating in the United States. Title IV hasn't felt the budget cuts as heavily as some other educational programs have. Title IV will be operating on about the same money it did last year. Center I is located in Washington, D.C. and it's also operated by the Native American Research Institute. A lot of you are probably acquainted with the director at Center I. She is an Oklahoma Indian woman who has achieved a lot of prominence in Washington, D.C. with the Administration for Native Americans' program. She is Gwen Shunatona.

Center III is located in Seattle, Wash., and is operated by the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation. It is also directed by a woman, Joyce Reyes. Center IV is located in Tempe, Ariz., and is operated by the National Indian Training and Research Center. It is directed by Jim Shanley. Center II was formerly operated by the Coalition of Indian-Controlled School Boards in Great Falls, Mont. But the Center II contract was terminated at the convenience of the federal government and the Region II states it serviced were then divided among Center III and Center V and that is how we came to be servicing Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

As you have noted, I'm sure, two of the Center directors are Indian women and each Center employs an equitable number of Indian professional women in professional positions. Our Center has the distinction of being the only Center that is 100 percent Indian-staffed. It is directed by Stewart Tonemah, an Oklahoma Kiowa/Comanche, who was elected by NIEA this last year as the Outstanding Indian Educator of the Year. Our staff includes seven Indian professionals in education: Jerry Bread, who is Kiowa/Cherokee; Suzanne Weryackwe, a Choctaw/Pawnee; Carol Butler, a Kiowa/Caddo; Richard Allen, Cherokee; and Sonny Glass, a Cherokee/Seneca/Quapaw/Cayuga. Mary Lane, Osage, and Roy Taylor, Choctaw/Pawnee, are research assistants and Mary Ann Carney, Choctaw/Chickasaw, is the executive assistant secretary. I can't say enough about the staff and what a joy it is to work there.

I'd like to stop for a moment and look at the question "Why do these resource centers exist?" During the eight years since the Indian Education Act of 1972 was enacted, concern has grown nationwide regarding the effective operation of the Title IV projects and the subsequent lack of effective training and technical assistance for grantees. Additionally, the Office of Indian Education and Congress, in turn, came to realize that there was really very little hard data on the impact that these programs had and

were making. We all know that good things are happening but we just haven't yet been able to get the message to Congress in the words that they want to hear. Some questions being asked were:

- Is the intent of the law being met?
- Are monies directly affecting Indian people and benefiting Indian people?
- Are the funds supplementing and not supplanting basic school programs?
- Are Indian parents and Indian communities actively involved in the education of their children?

These are basic questions. This Act was signed into law as Title IV of Public Law 92-318 — the Education Amendments of 1972. It is a Congressional Declaration of Policy in recognition of the special educational needs of Indian people in the United States. The Act provides for financial assistance to meet these special educational needs. The office of Indian Education is responsible for administering the Act and is responsible for interpreting the rules and regulations for Part A, B, and C of Title IV. I say that because people are often led astray if they think that Resource Centers can interpret the law or that state Indian education administrators can interpret the law. No one can interpret the law but the attorneys in the Office of Indian Education. Resource Centers cannot and do not interpret rules and regulations and neither are they designated as compliance agencies. They are designed as training and technical assistance centers. The Education Amendment of 1978, Public Law 95-561, amended Part B of the Indian Education Act to give the Secretary of Education authority to establish these regional information centers. Networks, if you will. And I say that because I hope you will, if you're not involved in Title IV, not feel that you are excluded from involvement in these Resource Centers because they are a form of network and they are there for you to use in various ways.

The Centers are in place and they have been operating since September, 1980. They are presently authorized for two more years. So what, specifically, are we required to do? To render training and technical assistance to grantees, parent committees, advisory boards, Indian-controlled school boards, in the specific areas of: project design, project management, and project evaluation. We are not evaluators. We do not go into projects and evaluate them. We do provide the training to help you become expert in evaluation so that when you are evaluated you will have learned to collect your data, analyze your data, and be able to respond to and work with an outside evaluator.

How are these services rendered? Well, "We do for free what others do for a fee." That's just a handy slogan which underlines

the fact that there are no fees charged for Center services. As parents and educators involved in Title IV education, you are eligible to receive Center services if you need them.

You are invited to share your expertise with the Centers; we do use a good many consultants; we do publish a newsletter. If you are needing to spread the word of something in Indian education and you think a newsletter that reaches nine states would help you out, submit your article, or give us a call. Our services are rendered by correspondence, telephone consultation, on-site training sessions, and regional workshops. We have presented six regional workshops to date in Oklahoma and Lawrence, Kans., and we'll be going to Dallas next month. We have also given them in three regional areas of Oklahoma and we will be doing workshops in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Services and training sessions are designed to meet the needs of administrators, project personnel, parent committee members, and advisory board members. In that training we do stress ways of capacity building to try to get more people involved and more effectively involved in the education of their children.

I want to start spreading a word of caution because I see it happening. I saw it as a Title IV director — in fact, I lived it. But I can't say enough about it when I see it happening to staff members, the Indian staff members and in the Indian parent committee members splitting/fighting each other and neglecting the program and children because of that. Sometimes I wonder if it's not some master plan but please, if you are involved in that, as a staff person or as a parent committee person, try to remember when you do have disagreements that you want to deal with them professionally. you want to work out the steps that are necessary! Sit down and talk — put things down in writing, set up procedures, keep files. read your rules and regulations — abide by them and try not to let your personal concerns override your professional concerns and your interests in the Indian children that are in your schools.

Another service provided by the Center is the dissemination of information. Quarterly newsletters and workshop agendas are sent to all grantees and parent committee chairpersons, as well as to all tribes and Indian organizations in the region. On-site day or evening training sessions may be scheduled by contacting the Center. Additional on-site visits will be scheduled to every grantee by the end of the second year of operation. We'll go to half of them this year, the other half next year. So if you are interested in being on our mailing list, you can leave me your name or contact the Center and ask to be put on our mailing list.

Indian Education Act training materials are continually being developed at all Resource Centers. These materials are cleared

through OIE and are disseminated at workshops and on request, by mail. There are presently not only materials about management, design and evaluation, but also materials about gifted and talented Indian programs, culturally related resources, testing, information on educational funding sources, information on Title IV rules and regulations, and parent committee training.

I would encourage each of you to take advantage of the assistance that is there for you at the Resource Center in your region. If I'm sounding optimistic, it's because there's finally a system whereby Indians on the local level can get information assistance which is also coordinated through the Office of Indian Education. What I'm trying to say is that we're all attempting to say the same thing. How many times, in dealing with rules and regs and Washington offices and specialists, have you gotten so many different stories that you don't quite know who's saying what. The effort is nationwide to coordinate all the materials so that everybody is saying the same thing. It may be impossible, but that is the goal.

Indian women have always been involved in the education of our people from the cradle board to the mortarboard and on into the end of life. All of us are educators whether we have a bachelor's, a master's, a doctorate, or a school of hard knocks degree. There are more Indian professionals in education than in any other professional field, and even though we are being teased a lot about there being so many women in Indian education, we know that the educational needs of Indian people are still not being met and we know we can strive to meet those needs on every level. We've got to be more involved as role models because we can impact the education system. There's still a lack of Indian women educators on all levels and the door is still open for involvement in Indian education. And we get something from it too. We get the opportunity to gain the knowledge that can benefit us as Indian women, parents, parent committee members, council members, counselors, advisors, coordinators, researchers, writers, scholars, and teachers. We can be instrumental in fortifying and giving direction to those programs that are striving to meet the educational needs of Indian people. Our future really does depend on it.

We've heard it before, but we don't want to forget it, knowledge is a form of power. It is the kind of power that is needed to strengthen Indian education across the nation. The Centers exist to provide that kind of knowledge — knowledge that reinforces the universal Indian vision of self-determination, cultural preservation, and educational equity for all Indian people.

## TITLE IV AT THE DELIVERY LEVEL

Delores Twohatchet (*Kiowa/Comanche*)

*Former Director, Indian Student Services, Title IV-A, Lawton Public Schools; Board, Advisory Committee for Institute for the Development of Indian Law. Resident of Lawton, Okla.*

The Indian Education Act was signed into law on June 23, 1972. The act created educational opportunities for Indian children. It provided federal funding in education over and above the limited funds appropriated annually for Indian education programs in the Office of Education and Bureau of Indian Affairs. It helped to close the gap which existed between Indian education and federal education levels of the United States.

In Lawton, the school board and everybody is really uptight because we are losing our impact aid money. I'm glad to hear that Title IV didn't lose any of their money but it scares me because I know from experience that a lot of the school districts are going to be trying to take advantage of our Indian education money in that they are going to be supplanting.

There are five parts. Part A is financial assistance to local education agencies. This is money that is given to Indian students who are in public schools. (These are the types of programs that I've been working with.)

Part B is for special programs and projects to improve educational opportunities for Indian children. These are mostly tribal organizations and preference is given to tribal organizations. Part C is special programs relating to Adult Ed. Part D is the creation of the Office of Indian Education and the position of the Deputy Commissioner and also NACIE, the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, which oversees Title IV. Part E is miscellaneous provisions which provide teacher training for Indians.

Active legislative preparation for the Act began in 1967 when the late Senator Robert Kennedy chaired the Indian Education Subcommittee under the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Later, Senator Edward Kennedy actively pursued the tragic story on Indian education, holding hearings across the na-