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WEAVERS OF CHANGE: PORTRAITS OF NATIVE AMERICAN
WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

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Valorie Jean Johnson

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**WEAVERS OF CHANGE: PORTRAITS OF NATIVE AMERICAN
WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS**

By

Valorie Jean Johnson

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

WEAVERS OF CHANGE: PORTRAITS OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

By

Valorie Jean Johnson

The purpose of this research was to gain greater understanding about the leadership of Native American women who have created educational change in the last quarter of the twentieth century. A qualitative method was employed to explore meanings of leadership that six Native American women attached to their life experiences. Four major research questions guided the study:

1. How do selected Native American women educators talk about their leadership experiences?
2. How do they assess their leadership efforts to effect change in Native American education?
3. What lessons about leadership can be learned from understanding their experiences?
4. What are the implications for preparing Native American women for educational leadership in the future?

A conceptual framework of leadership was shaped, including the origins and motives, the social and historical context, the process, and the outcomes in which leadership is seen as nonhierarchical, and the leader is viewed as a catalyst or facilitator who enables others to act collectively toward the accomplishment of a common goal. The metaphor of basket weaving was used to further illustrate important dimensions of leadership.

A series of interviews with each woman was tape-recorded and transcribed. These narratives were then used as texts for analysis and interpretations. Five themes emerged: (a) A Commitment to Serving the Community, (b) The Emergence and Claiming of One's Native Voice, (c) Education as a Key to Cultural Survival and Self-determination, (d) Travelers Across Boundaries, and (e) The Spirit and Soul of Native Leadership.

Major findings regarding the way these women think about leadership include: (a) Leadership is focused on a group-centered process that creatively responds to constantly changing forces; (b) leadership is relational, organic, and synergistic; (c) power is used as a force that empowers others to create or improvise change rather than control others to respond/react to change; and (d) life and leadership are woven into one.

These research findings provided a greater understanding of how Native American women went about creating social and educational change and provided another lens through which to view leadership. This leadership paradigm is based on connection with others, synergistic collective action, and sharing power.

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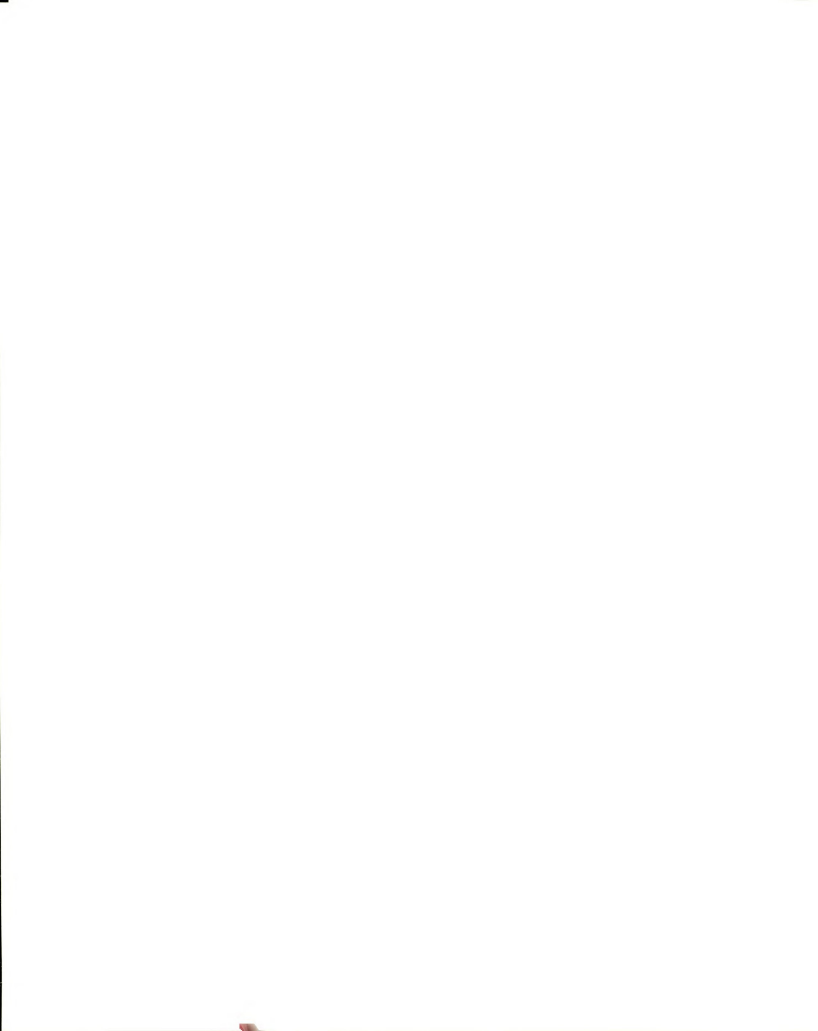
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creating and maintaining a home for our family, and encouraged me to pursue my dreams and interests.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The formal educational experience of Native Americans over the past several centuries has been a history of educational failure (De Jong, 1993; Ravich, 1976; Szasz, 1977; Tippeconic, 1991). In the twentieth century alone, a number of national reports have documented that formal education systems continue to fail the majority of Native American children (Pavel, Swisher, & Ward, 1995). From the Meriam Report in 1928 to the Kennedy Report in 1969 to the White House Conference Report on Indian Education in 1992, these and other documents have detailed the disastrous effects that educational policies and programs have had on the formal education of Native American children, families, and tribal communities. To remedy these effects, virtually every report has recommended that Native Americans have more involvement in and control of their own education.

Yet it was not until the 1960s that this recommendation began to be implemented. In the early 1970s, there was a radical reversal in federal policy toward Native Americans, which was precipitated by Native American activism. For the first time in the history of the United States, the policy shifted from assimilation to self-determination. Congress enacted several education laws designed to grant

Native Americans greater control over their own destiny. The Indian Education Act of 1972 and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, for example, were designed to encourage greater Indian participation in the education process and to provide for special Indian education programs ranging from early childhood, K-12, and higher education, to adult and continuing education.

In the past 20 years, there has been a slow but steady increase in the number of native efforts focused on leading change in education (Indian Nations at Risk National Task Force Report, 1991). Even though the problems are extremely complex and federal resources remain sorely insufficient, there has been great movement toward self-determination (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1993). This movement has been catalyzed by Native American individuals who assumed the responsibility for leadership at various times and in diverse settings to create change.

For many of these native leaders, particularly in the field of education, the challenges have been daunting. In fact, many individuals have resigned from formal leadership positions, citing the extreme stress. On the other hand, some individuals have accepted these leadership challenges and taken action to bring about positive changes in the education of Native Americans. Today, very little is known about these native leaders outside of their own families or communities.

In 1995, the American Council on Education indicated in its annual report that one of the major barriers to adequately addressing the educational concerns of Native Americans is that many Euro-Americans are not very knowledgeable about



this country's native peoples--their histories, their cultures, and their current educational realities and needs. This is particularly troubling considering the majority of formal educators of native children are not native, but rather Euro-American. Furthermore, the report stated that

unless concerted efforts are made by the American public to learn more about Native Americans . . . the average American will likely never understand fully what it was and is like to survive as an Indian in American society . . . nor appreciate the successes brought about by Native American leadership efforts toward self-determination. (p. 54)

In the absence of understanding about Native American leadership processes and ways of creating social change, it will continue to be extremely difficult to reform the existing educational systems in the United States. With increased knowledge and understanding, however, it is conceivable that long-term systemic change can be brought about.

In an effort to add to current knowledge about native leadership, this study was focused on the experiences and perspectives of Native American women who have led efforts toward self-determination in education during the past 20 years. Although it is recognized that Native American men have also led such efforts, native women's leadership experiences in both historic and contemporary times have been downplayed profoundly in the literature. There has been little recognition of their efforts, limited knowledge about their experiences, and lack of a keen understanding about how they have enacted leadership in the numerous native communities that they represent (Allen, 1986; Green, 1983; Green, 1992; Medicine, 1988).



In the past 25 years, when contributions of leaders have been assessed in terms of how they have influenced the fiber of this country, the vast contributions of Native American women leaders have gone largely unnoticed. As a result, Native American women leaders often are invisible or misrepresented. This only adds to the misinformation and stereotyping of native peoples that has been generated over the years and that continues to diminish their humanity today (Bowker, 1993). This situation is disturbing when one considers that a potentially rich source of information has been overlooked. Even more disturbing is that this oversight has resulted in the continuing denial of the dignity of native women, including their history, their experiences, their contributions to contemporary society, and their distinct ways of approaching life and leading educational change. It is important to listen to the stories of the various leaders to determine how they define and enact leadership, as well as how they develop their leadership competencies.

Today, an increasing number of Native American women are working to lead positive change in education at many levels. A vast majority of these women have faced extreme difficulties in responding to leadership challenges. One major challenge for those who have secured higher education degrees has been to draw together the traditional cultural values of their tribal backgrounds with the contemporary skills, knowledge, and information they have gained from educational and professional experiences in "mainstream" society.

Today there are many Native American women who have found ways to meet these challenges and are leading efforts to create new paths, not only for



themselves but also for other Native American women. They have identified ways to maintain cultural integrity in order to contribute meaningfully to the larger group. They have found creative ways to effect change in different arenas: their families, their tribes, their local communities, their states, their nation, or the international arena. From the great number of these women who are enriching our society and promoting the empowerment of native people through education, I was able to listen to the stories of only a few. It is these women and others like them who possess knowledge regarding leadership and whose voices need to be heard by younger Native Americans, particularly the women, as well as by society at large.

Yet little recognition has been given to Native American women's voices in the past, leaving the knowledge they had to share unheard. In a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, however, it is in the stories of women such as these that some answers may be found, with which to address complex educational problems, not only for Native Americans but for society in general. In an effort to better understand their unique experiences, this study was undertaken to focus on the leadership of a cross-section of Native American women working within the broad context of education. Included were Native American women who have achieved advanced academic degrees at mainstream universities and led efforts either to create an alternative educational institution for Native Americans or to transform existing educational institutions into ones that are more responsive to Native American students.

The Native American women who were the focus of this study now serve in various leadership positions, including:

1. President of a tribal college.
2. Education director employed in a federal agency that oversees Native American affairs throughout the nation.
3. Officer of a national native-controlled nonprofit organization focused on holistic community development that includes education.
4. Superintendent of K-12 schools that are either tribally controlled or controlled by the federal government in a region where there are large enrollments of native children.
5. Cabinet-level director of cultural programs for a municipality with a large population of Native Americans.
6. President of a multi-tribal, multi-campus native-controlled private college.

Need for and Significance of the Study

There is a need for research sheds light on the role of native women in shaping educational policy and creating programs which have advanced the resources available in the educational area. Further Bowker (1993) suggested that if the leadership capacities of Native American women can be strengthened and if they are helped to perceive and create actual opportunities for improving their way of life, the cycle of intergenerational inheritance of poverty and hopelessness may be broken.

Toward this end, the present research was designed to describe leadership experiences as perceived by Native American women who have attained a variety of levels of leadership positions and have successfully worked to create positive educational change for Native Americans. I explored the relationship between women's life experiences and the values and beliefs that emerged in the way they talked about educational leadership. I especially probed the formative influences affecting their leadership development, such as key relationships, family relationships, mentors, and role models. I also focused on key experiences and influences as identified by the women themselves, including formal education in the early years, in college, and/or as a result of job experiences and assignments; formal training; community involvement; and/or relationships with elders and other role models.

At the end of this dissertation, I provide some recommendations to higher education institutions for change in the way they prepare the next generation of leaders, teachers, and school administrators. It is my hope that the study findings may also illuminate other people's thinking about alternative ways of leading and of creating change in education by viewing it from a different vantage point or through a lens that is more focused on equity and diversity.

Literature in the area of educational leadership has been largely devoid of Native American educational leaders' voices, both male and female. Rarely have Native American women educational leaders been the sole focus of research (Bowker, 1993; Green, 1983). Although Native American women as a group have

been studied "to death or distraction" (Green, 1983, p. 1), the studies usually have been a negative, deficit-based, or inaccurate portrayal that has been damaging to Native American women, especially girls (Allen, 1986; Bowker, 1993; Green, 1992; Medicine, 1978). As a result, native peoples have been the subject of gross stereotypes based more on misunderstanding than on informed knowledge, which has led to the formation of a basis for racism and cultural repression toward native peoples that continues today. Ignoring native voices has resulted in the loss of a great deal of wisdom and knowledge, not only for native communities but for society as a whole.

The need for accurate knowledge has never been greater, for a variety of reasons. Demographic trends indicate that changes are rapidly occurring in the U.S. population, including a dramatic rise in the numbers of people of color (Hodgkinson, 1992). The United States is now on the threshold of a new century in which women and people of color are destined to play increased leadership roles in shaping American society, including positions in public education (Ragland, 1995). In fact, in the past decade, the numbers of people of color and women in positions of educational leadership have increased rapidly. The values, beliefs, and commitments of these groups will further permeate every aspect of American culture. As a result, adjusting current structures and institutions to be more responsive to what it means to live and work in a culturally diverse world is now a major challenge confronting current leaders.

Many leaders recognize that by embracing diversity themselves, they will be in a better position to help established institutions, including education, sustain change and survive in a highly competitive, increasingly diverse environment. It is further recognized that, in order for established institutions truly to embrace diversity, expanded definitions of effective leadership must be accepted, and wider paths of leadership must be created (Rosenor, 1990). Translating this awareness into action will require an increased understanding and development of new or formerly unrecognized knowledge, as well as forms and styles of leadership. This has become increasingly important because the authoritarian, male-dominated leadership of systems that worked in the industrial age is not as effective in the information age in which we now live (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992; Bennis, 1989; Helgesen, 1990).

Translating awareness into action also requires that we more effectively acknowledge existing but currently unrecognized and undervalued forms and models of leadership that have been found to be effective in various groups, including women and people of color. Understanding and advancing this knowledge is critical not only to our common growth and development as a nation, but to the growth and development of future leaders who are being trained in U.S. educational institutions.

This study was focused on the experiences of one segment of the population whose contributions in the field of education have been ignored. Whether one examines historical or contemporary literature, it can be seen that very little is known about the experiences and perspectives of Native American women as leaders, in

education or any other field. Historically, the important leadership that native women have provided in the determination and survival of their people has not been well documented. In 1992, Green noted that historical accounts have tended to focus on the leadership roles of men as chiefs, warriors, medicine men, and diplomats. Indian chiefs, such as Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Sequoyah, and Chief Joseph, have become well-known figures. Even though women played equally important leadership roles in many of their tribes, their experiences have received inadequate attention (Bowker, 1993; Green, 1992; Kidwell, 1976; Medicine, 1988).

There has been an increase in the amount of research being conducted to discover more about the lives and experiences of Native American women and their place in U.S. history, as well as in contemporary times (Esmailka, 1994; Napier, 1995; Tsosie, 1988). Esmailka's study on Athabaskan women in Alaska was one of the first that honored those women's voices, their experiences, and their own interpretations of their higher education experiences. For me, Esmailka was the first researcher who used an effective methodology and affirmed that eliciting the stories of Native American women can help to inform and change the stereotypical and negative images of those women. However, there remains a meager amount of literature on native women's leadership. In a survey of Dissertation Abstracts International, Davids and Tippeconic (1988) identified only six dissertations that addressed Native American leaders or leadership, out of 441 doctoral dissertations that addressed Native American education between 1972 and 1987. Since that time, there have been a few more dissertations focused on Native American

education, and on Native American women, but none that focused specifically on Native American women's leadership development and enactment in education.

One of the goals in this dissertation was to demonstrate that, even though I could not identify any Native American women who hold prominent positions in "mainstream" national education organizations or educational institutions, such as university/college presidents, provosts, or deans; public school superintendents or principals; or chief executive officers, nevertheless, there are Native American women who serve as educational leaders in today's society. By sharing these leaders' own understanding and interpretations of their experiences, I have illustrated the diversity of Native American women's experiences and have demonstrated that there is a great deal to learn from the wisdom these women have gained from listening to and learning from their elders, from the ways they live in today's multicultural society, from the passion they have to make a difference in the quality of education that students receive, from the courage they find to deal with injustices and create change, to the commitment to family and community that gives deep meaning to their lives.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The organizing framework for this study was grounded in the work of Astin and Leland (1991). In their study of women leaders involved in social change, they offered the following constructs:

1. The Social Construction of Reality: Complex social phenomena, such as leadership, are strongly influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Therefore, new conceptual models that incorporate diverse experiences and perspectives must be formulated.

2. Interdependence: "People are not isolated entities, but their life experiences are closely intertwined with those of others. By acknowledging this interdependence, it is logical to view leadership as a process of collective effort rather than as something one person does in a vacuum" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 8).

3. Power as Energy, Not Control: A leader does not have to exercise power—that is, control—over others. Instead, she or he can mobilize power and engage in leadership activities that empower others. In other words, a leader can exercise power with others, or share power.

The conceptual framework that guided my learning was developed for a study that Astin and Leland designed in 1991 to explore women's experience in leadership roles. In this model, leadership is seen as nonhierarchical, and the leader is viewed as a catalyst or facilitator who enables others to act collectively toward the accomplishment of a common goal. It is a framework of leadership that focuses on four key aspects, including the leader and the context, processes, and outcomes of leadership. These aspects are explained below.

1. The leader (the facilitator or catalyst): This included the personal characteristics of individual leaders, such as their values and beliefs, and key influences and experiences, especially cultural, that helped instill these values and form their character.

2. The context within which leadership takes place: This included the contemporary and historic contexts and their effect on the lives and actions of these women. Consideration was given to the place of change, such as an educational institution, a nonprofit organization, tribal/federal government programs, or a scholarly enterprise. As "historical context is an important parameter in a study of social change" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 12), that context also included the time of change—in this case, the time frame from the mid-1940s through the present. The generation of women studied is often referred to as the postwar baby-boom generation.

3. The leadership process: This involved looking at the "how" of leadership by inquiring about the personal attributes, skills, and strategies that these women put into action to produce change. It also included questions about mentors and role models, significant relationships, and networks.

4. The outcomes of leadership: This included the changes these women facilitated that were aimed at improving the formal education of Native Americans, such as new institutions, organizations, programs, and activities; preservice and inservice education; educational materials; and research.

In their study, Astin and Leland (1991) enhanced knowledge about transformational leadership by viewing it through a different lens, one that values diversity, tolerance, respect, and equity rather than, as Gosetti and Rusch (1994) termed it, a "lens of privilege" (p. 17), reflecting its exclusion of women as subjects of study and conception of power as domination and control. The Astin and Leland

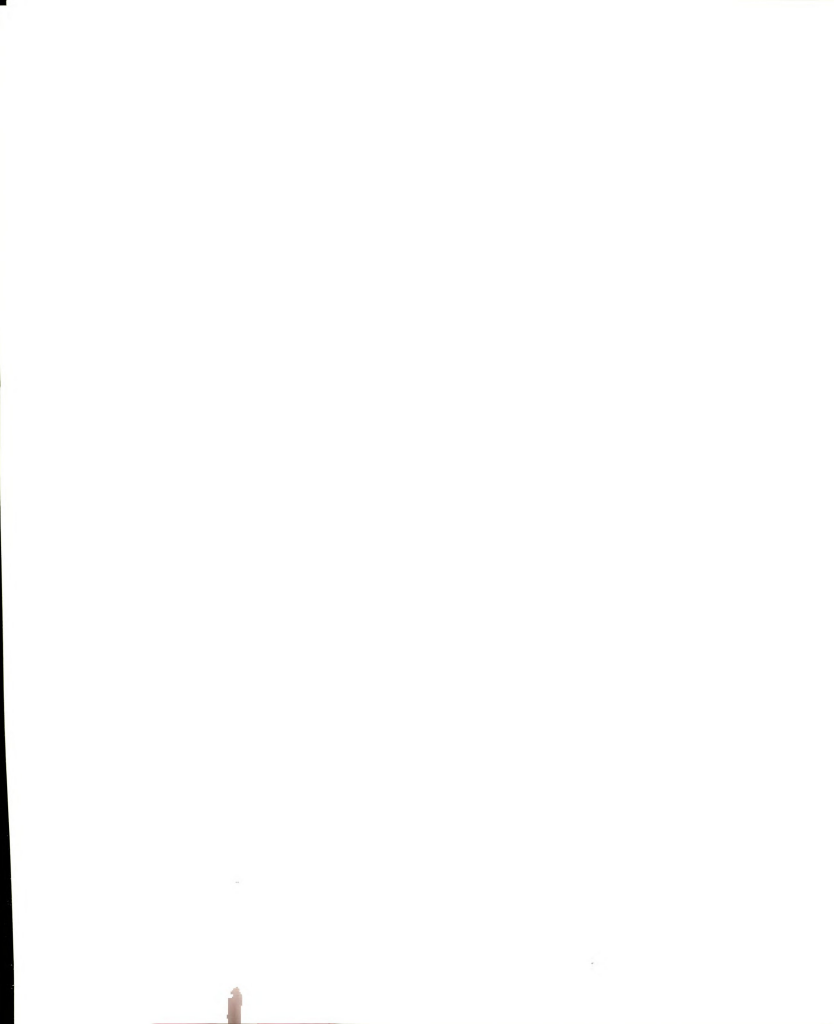
study also expanded knowledge about the leadership of women educators, a population that had not been well represented in previous studies of leadership. Key elements of their framework were (a) redefining who a leader is beyond his or her position, (b) exploring the origins and motives for leadership, (c) analyzing the processes of leadership, and (d) identifying the ends or outcomes of leadership.

This framework was very compatible with the goals of the present study. Based on Astin and Leland's framework, I conceptualized the model shown in Figure 1.

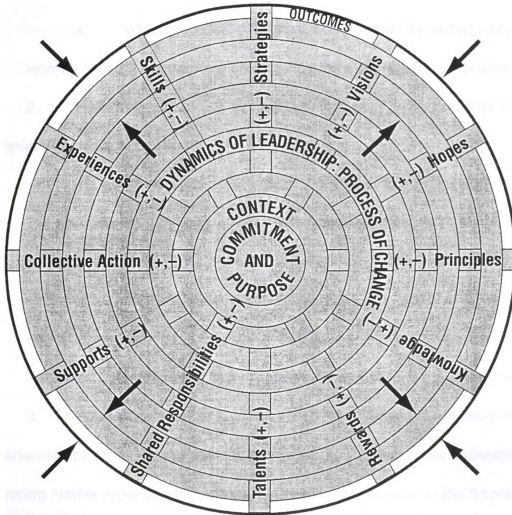
Research Questions

The following questions were posed to guide the collection of data for this study:

1. How do selected Native American women who have been involved in improving the education of Native Americans talk about their leadership experiences? What is explicit and implicit in the way they discuss their development and practice of educational leadership?
 - a. What key experiences and relationships have influenced their leadership activity and development?
 - b. What role have historical forces played in motivating and mobilizing their leadership?
 - c. What opportunities for learning to lead do these Native American women believe to have been crucial to their leadership development?



Weavers of Change



- A. Leader as Weaver of Basket** – The Catalyst or Facilitator – Represented by the fibers, tree, vines, grasses, etc. used as the weft that moves over and under the stakes/warp
- B. Context** – Educational Organization, Scholarly Enterprise, or Historical Context and its Effect on Lives and Actions of Others
- C. Process of Change**
1. The Weft – The personal attributes, skills, and strategies that are used by the leader/weaver to create change (i.e. courage, compassion, collaboration, empowerment)
 2. The Warp – The personal attributes, skills, and strategies of other involved individuals
 3. The Arrows – The external and internal tensions associated with the process – (the challenges, the strategies, the barriers, ways of coping)
- D. Outcomes** – The Different Baskets that are Created to Effect Social Change (i.e. New Organizations, Innovative Programs, Educational Materials, College Graduates, Economically Viable Communities, More Highly Educated Human Beings)

Figure 1: Conceptual model.

d. What skills and strategies do these women use to create change?

e. What obstacles, difficulties, and pains do these Native American women leaders experience, and how do they manage to overcome them?

2. How do these women assess their leadership efforts to effect change in Native American education?

a. What accomplishments do these Native American women leaders believe they and others have brought about in regard to Native American education?

b. In what ways do they evaluate the effect of their cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds and experiences on their enactment of leadership, use of power, and success in creating change?

3. What lessons about leadership can be learned from understanding the experiences of these Native American women? What are the implications for preparing Native American women for educational leadership in the future?

a. In what ways do the narratives shared by these particular Native American women contribute to current understanding about educational leadership as it relates to culture and gender?

b. How has the leadership of these Native American women contributed to bringing about educational and social change for Native Americans?

c. How might leadership development at colleges and universities and other educational institutions be changed to reflect the interests and needs of Native American students?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in this study.

American Indian: A person who is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe and who has at least one-fourth degree Indian blood. In this dissertation, the term "American Indian" is used interchangeably with the terms "Indian," "Native American," and "native."

Leader: A person who plays a catalytic role and manages to empower and mobilize others toward a collective effort to improve the quality of life (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Leadership: The process by which group members are empowered to work together synergistically to achieve a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter I provides background information about the study, including the research questions. Chapter II contains a review of the literature on three major topics: (a) a history of Native American education, (b) multiple perspectives of leadership, and (c) Native American women

and educational leadership. Chapter III includes a rationale for and description of the research methodology, an overview of research issues, and a description of the procedures used in this study. Chapter IV contains portraits of the Native American women leaders who were the focus of this study and an analysis of the themes that I identified. Conclusions and implications of the findings, as well as recommendations for further study, are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of writings and research pertinent to this study. The review begins with a history of Native American education, followed by an examination of multiple perspectives of leadership. The focus of the third section is Native American women and educational leadership.

History of Native American Education

A brief historical overview of Native American education is critical to understanding the complex challenges that contemporary Native American educational leaders face. In addition, an overview is provided of the federal educational policies and programs that have directly affected the lives of Native Americans, and their influence in relation to the current educational status of Native Americans, especially women, is assessed. As a group, Native Americans have had a most difficult experience with formal education and, as a result, have much lower rates of educational attainment than the general U.S. population (Pavel, Swisher, & Ward, 1995). In addition, as they have for decades, Native Americans remain at the bottom of virtually every socioeconomic indicator utilized by the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal studies.

Tippeconic (1991) identified three factors that are critical to understanding the complexity of the education of Native Americans:

1. There are great differences between mainstream educational standards of teaching and learning and native cultural ways of teaching and learning.

2. Native American education has strong ties to the federal government, based on the special relationship established during the treaty period from 1778 to 1871. This legal basis for federal responsibility and involvement has since been confirmed by numerous congressional acts, Supreme Court decisions, and executive orders.

3. Native Americans comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population. Another point not often realized is that there is great cultural diversity among the nation's indigenous people, with over 500 groups, each having its own distinct culture. Because of their small numbers and tremendous diversity, Native Americans often find it very difficult to have their voices heard in any larger political, social, or educational arena, even when the viewpoints of ethnic-minority and community representatives are sought.

The above-mentioned three factors provide the context for understanding why the nature and problems of Native American education are so complex.

In 1969, the Kennedy Report described the history of American Indian education, aptly titling it A National Tragedy—A National Challenge. Due to the legal complexity of Native American education, it is not possible in this study to provide a detailed history. Rather, a cursory overview will be provided, summarizing



information found in more detailed descriptive histories of Indian education contained in the Report on Indian Education to the American Indian Policy Review Commission (Task Force Five, 1976) and in the books Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination (Szasz, 1977) and Promises of the Past, A History of Indian Education (De Jong, 1993).

The following overview of Indian education is categorized by policy phases. As presented by Stein (1996), these phases can best be understood when they are inserted into chronological eras of American history and federal Indian policy. These time periods are the Pre-European-Contact Era (before 1492), the Contact and Conquest Era (1492-1776), the Treaty-Making and Removal Era (1776-1887), the Federal Era (1887-1961), and the Indian Self-Determination and Renaissance Era (1962-present).

The Pre-European-Contact Era

Before 1492, the many Indian nations had their own educational systems, which were diverse in nature but shared several common characteristics. In his book Promises of the Past, De Jong (1993) wrote of these common ways of educating the young:

Indian children learned by application and imitation rather than the memorization of principles. Great value was placed on sharing and cooperation, which contrasts sharply with the American values of competition and individualism. Indeed, in tribal societies the individual was subordinate to the tribal group; thus, tribal needs were given priority over individual needs. Traditional Indian education covered tribal history, including origin and great deeds; physical science, as seen in the Indian's love and care of the natural world; physical education and athletic ability; etiquette, including respect for elders; hunting or learning to provide for one's family; religious training and



fasting, which connotes self-discipline; and diet and health care. In short, traditional Indian education provided the skills needed for any society to function. (p. 6)

The Contact and Conquest Era

Following contact in 1492, the Europeans imposed a more formal and structured educational system on the natives, primarily through efforts of religious sects whose goal was to civilize and Christianize them. Initial efforts to educate native children were carried out by churches and missionaries and were geared toward assimilation. Wright (1989) wrote that the efforts of the early colonists to recreate Native Americans in their own image only contributed to the overall failure of these early attempts to introduce western education to Native Americans.

With the establishment of the United States in 1776, laws, policies, actions, and other elements imposed by the American government served to destroy not only native educational systems but also native lifeways. Initial efforts were geared toward extinction and included wars against the Indians and introduction of weapons, liquor, and European diseases such as smallpox (Green, 1992). Each contributed, in part, to the native people's eventual loss of lands, cultures, religions, languages, and control of their children's education (Tippeconic, 1991).

The Treaty-Making and Removal Era

As the United States began to grow, English settlers began their westward expansion, resettling many tribal groups on tracts of land called reservations. From 1776 to 1887, approximately 400 treaties were signed between the U.S. government

and Indian nations. Numerous treaties included the provision of education for children as payment for lands ceded to the U.S. (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Thompson, 1978). It was at this time that the special relationship between the U.S. government and Indian nations was solidified; the federal government has played a dominant role in the education of Native Americans ever since.

The Early Civilization Fund Act of 1819 provided an annual fund for Indian education. This fund supported the mission schools established by various religious orders (Task Force Five, 1976). Mission schools provided room and board for students who did not live within commuting distance. The curriculum focused on four subjects: reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion (Szasz, 1977). In 1839, the Indian Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs implemented a manual-labor plan for Indian education. Some schools established farms that provided training primarily in agricultural methods for older male students, whereas older female students were instructed in housekeeping tasks. Overall, the U.S. government considered these schools failures because they did not result in total assimilation of the Native Americans. They did, however, serve as a powerful tool to annihilate Native American culture (De Jong, 1993; Noley, 1992).

It must also be noted that during this time, several Indian nations, such as the Cherokees and the Choctaws, started their own educational systems. These schools were seen as very successful until President Andrew Jackson forced them closed and forcibly removed people from these two nations westward to lands now known as Kansas and Oklahoma. During this forced removal in 1830, now known

as the Trail of Tears, tens of thousands of people were affected and thousands, mostly children, died.

The Federal Era

Beginning in 1878, the U.S. government established federal boarding schools, which have since proven to be one of the most destructive forms of education ever imposed on native people. The first such school was established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and like all the schools that subsequently were established, it served to destroy native languages and cultures. Government officials believed that off-reservation boarding schools offered the "best opportunity for incorporating Indian children into the white-dominant society" (De Jong, 1993, p. 107). Furthermore, they believed that "the release of the Indian child from the slavery of tribal life would help to solve the Indian problem and the Indians would be assimilated as were the immigrants. . . . Giving these children a new culture would allow them to compete as equals in American society" (De Jong, 1993, p. 107).

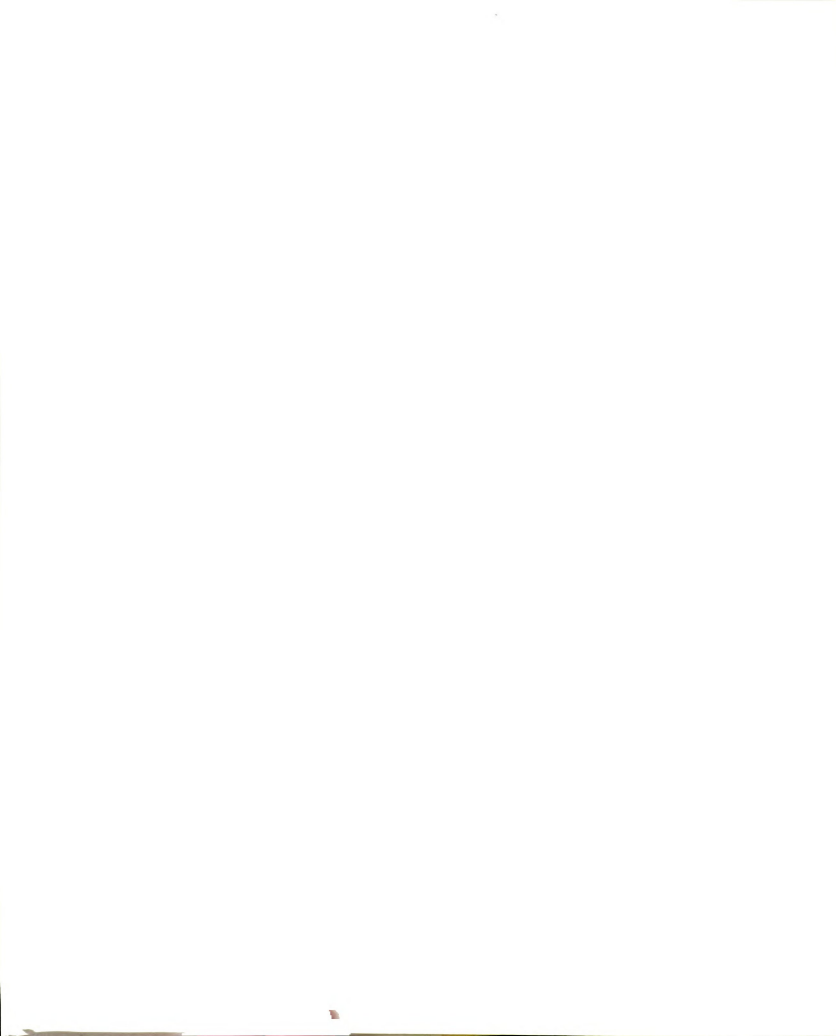
Richard H. Pratt, the first administrator of the Carlisle Indian School, held this strong belief. His policy of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" resulted in a school whose discipline and regimen were modeled after those of the military. Children were forcibly removed from their families for long periods--in some cases for years at a time--to receive a non-Indian education. Children were severely punished for speaking their native language or practicing their spiritual beliefs. Conditions were overcrowded, personnel were unqualified, and the health and emotional needs of the children were grossly neglected. The results of this type of schooling were traumatic

for native children, who were accustomed to living close to their extended family and tribe (Green, 1992). All too often, children left these schools unprepared to make it in either the white world or the Indian world (Reyhner, 1989; Tippeconic, 1991).

In 1928, Meriam published The Problem of Indian Administration, in which he condemned the cruelty of the policy that removed Indian students from their homes and placed them in inhumane institutions known as boarding schools. He recommended that day schools replace boarding schools, that Indian schools be models of excellence, that the quality of the teachers be improved, and that efforts be made to provide a relevant curriculum for the students (Szasz, 1977; Task Force Five, 1976).

The official policy of forced assimilation then ended and soon was replaced with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which called for approaches that encouraged tribes to develop their own forms of elected local government. During the next few years, many boarding schools were closed or radically changed, and community day schools were built in many native communities across the nation. The Johnson O'Malley Act, also passed in 1934, led to the enrollment of thousands of Indian students in state public schools as it provided a source of income to schools for their Indian enrollment (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Szasz, 1977).

Following World War II, hundreds of native veterans entered college with the help of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the G.I. Bill. Whereas enrollment increased, however, the dropout rate was tremendous. Some researchers attributed this to inadequate schooling in the native students' earlier



years, while others have cited higher educational system's inability to address and support the special educational needs of the newly entering population of native students (De Jong, 1993; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972).

In the early 1950s, the federal government once again shifted its policies regarding Native Americans. During the Eisenhower administration, a major effort was undertaken to reduce or eliminate the sovereign status of many Native American nations. Stein (1996) indicated that this policy was promoted under the guise that all citizens of the United States are created equal and have the same opportunities. However, he found that less honorable reasons drove the termination policy. Those reasons included the following:

1. Congress wanted to get out of its treaty and legal obligations to the various Indian nations.
2. State governments deeply resented the semi-sovereign status that protected tribes within their boundaries.
3. Non-Indian neighbors wanted access to the remaining resources held by American Indians on their reservations (homelands). (Stein, 1996, p. 7)

As a result of the termination policy, members of terminated tribes were no longer eligible for assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the states in which these tribes resided became responsible for their education (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Task Force Five, 1976). The outcome of the termination policy was an increase in the numbers of natives living in extreme poverty.

Also at this time, the federal government began to encourage all natives, not only those from terminated tribes, to attend public schools. The Urban Relocation Act of 1951 resettled large numbers of Native American families from reservations

to major cities, where their children were enrolled in public schools (Task Force Five, 1976). Clearly, the government policy was once again one of assimilation—of moving Native Americans away from their cultural lifeways and into the non-Indian society.

The Indian Self-Determination and Renaissance Era

During the 1960s, many social movements, including a push for civil rights, the women's movement, and the American Indian movement, helped drive numerous efforts geared toward social change. During the late 1960s, three major native education studies were released, resulting in major reforms in the education of Native American children. The studies included Equality of Educational Opportunity (Coleman et al., 1967); Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, also known as the Kennedy Report (Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969); and Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education: The Education of Indian Children and Youth (Havighurst, 1972). Collectively, these reports led to meaningful changes in Native American education. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was a significant piece of legislation as it provided for Head Start, Upward Bound, Job Corps, Vista, and Community Action programs. These became the first social programs that were operated directly by native communities (Tippeconic, 1991).

Beginning also in the late 1960s, funds for low-income and minority students to attend college became more readily available. During this time, thousands of native youths were encouraged to attend college. Many chose to enter the

education profession, believing that education was a starting point to break the cycle of poverty. Also, during this time, the Navajo nation set up the first tribally controlled K-12 school, known as the Rough Rock Demonstration School, and the first tribal college, Navajo Community College.

Native American leaders fought hard for much of the legislation that was enacted during the 1970s, including the Indian Education Act of 1972, which required community participation in programs designed to supplement public school education; the Impact Aid programs; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments, which provided for culturally relevant curriculum materials and programs in the schools; and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Task Force Five, 1976).

One of the brightest spots in the history of Native American education was the establishment of tribally controlled community colleges, beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1990s (Boyer, 1989; De Jong, 1993; Wright, 1994). In 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act was passed. The act established a method of payment for higher education in tribally controlled community colleges. Today there are 29 tribal colleges throughout the nation that are experiencing tremendous success in providing postsecondary education to native students from reservations and other remote rural areas. In numerous national reports and studies, tribally controlled colleges have been referred to as "vanguards of a cultural renaissance" (De Jong, 1993, p. 245), "islands of cultural hope" (De Jong, 1993, p. 244), "the heart of the spirit of renewal among the Indians"

(Carnegie Council, 1989, p. 2), and "shapers of the future of Native America" (Carnegie Council, 1989, p. 1); yet today, these colleges remain virtually unknown to the majority of Americans (De Jong, 1993; White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992). De Jong wrote in 1993 that "tribally controlled community colleges are significant in that they actively seek to rebuild Indian communities and reassert tribal identity" (p. 267).

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan reaffirmed his support for Indian self-determination with an emphasis on economic development. However, budget cuts during the Reagan administration (1981-1989) drastically reduced federal spending for Native American programs, particularly in the arena of education. The result was a policy that espoused native control but was backed by few resources to support technical assistance and capacity-building to prepare leaders or continue to build communities.

During the 1990s, two major reports were released, Indian Nations at Risk: Listen to the People (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991) and the White House Conference on Indian Education (1992). Both reports cited the tremendous strides that have been made toward improving the education of Native Americans and emphasized that positive change is possible when it is directed by the native community itself. Each report confirmed that formidable challenges will continue to face Native American communities in the future, made especially difficult by the fact that Native Americans as a group have the highest birth rate in the nation. According to demographic indicators, by the year 2000, 50% of the Native American

population will be under the age of 18. In addition, numerous social and economic problems confront most of the schools that native children now attend, regardless of whether they are in urban, rural, or reservation areas.

In response to these challenges, native communities across the country are creating programs through community-driven efforts. Several of these innovative programs are focused on creating age-appropriate culture and language programs in native-controlled schools, preparing more native teachers and administrators for both native-controlled and public schools, establishing culturally and developmentally appropriate early childhood programs and curricula materials, and strengthening the technical and professional capabilities of native communities to lead their own changes. In addition, schools are recruiting, hiring, and retaining native faculty from both tribal and mainstream colleges and universities, and more native communities are developing partnerships with local school districts to improve the quality of education for all children. Nevertheless, even though great strides have been made in the education of Native Americans in the past 20 years, much work remains to be done, and the concept of self-determination remains to be resolved.

Summary

A review of policies demonstrated that Native American peoples have withstood decades of deliberate and systemic political, economic, physical, spiritual, and cultural oppression. They have survived every conceivable strategy designed for the purposes of genocide, assimilation, resource appropriation, or conquest.

Such strategies include military onslaught, forced removal from homelands, relocation policies, biological warfare, spiritual and cultural repression, economic repression, and political and legal domination. As a testimony to this situation, more than 4,000 pieces of legislation, treaties, policies, and laws exist that govern relations between the United States and native nations. These acts have had tremendous negative social and psychological effects on the lives of native peoples.

Ironically, a current view of education that predominates in native communities is that it is a vehicle to empower Native American individuals and groups (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992). Furthermore, schools are seen as the primary mechanism enabling Native American people to control their own destinies through personal empowerment. In the space of two decades, Native Americans have progressed from having their education determined for them to having more control over the course of their education (Noley, 1992). Most of the success in this regard has been attributed to various educational interventions, such as changes in federal government policy, significant legislation, targeted funding, public school and higher education institutional responses, and the establishment of alternative educational institutions. Fundamental change has occurred because of increased Native American leadership at local, tribal, state, and national levels (Tippeconic, 1992). However, limited research has been conducted on how native leadership has emerged or the individuals who have catalyzed efforts to move the reforms forward.

Multiple Perspectives of Leadership

The evolution of leadership theories and perspectives, past and present, is summarized in this section. First, there is a discussion of how leadership, particularly educational leadership, is changing in today's world. Then major leadership theories are reviewed. Finally, there is an overview of leadership from a Native American perspective, as well as the leadership issues and challenges that Native American educators, particularly women, will continue to face as we enter the twenty-first century.

Changing Views of Leadership

Today's challenges require a new kind of leadership, one that can successfully bring together groups of people with diverse interests and needs and achieve results that will benefit the greater community. Comprehensive school reforms, global competitiveness, unstable economies, rapidly changing technology, human resource demands, and other concerns challenge educational leaders from all sectors, including government policy makers, local school board members, superintendents, principals, teacher leaders, union officials, building-level administrators, college faculty and administrators, philanthropic representatives, and directors of nonprofit organizations. Many of these individuals who have attempted to lead change efforts are abandoning their leadership positions, citing the numerous difficulties with which they must contend. One can argue that a reason for this phenomenon is in part the changing definitions of, expectations of, and needs for school leaders. The traditional concept of positional leadership with an all-knowing,

all-powerful leader is no longer working as well as it once seemed to. The constructs of control, order, and predictability, grounded on well-groomed hierarchies, are shifting to a more democratic, inclusive, and collaborative style of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

In ever-increasing numbers of educational institutions, there is a nonhierarchical order in which teamwork, shared decision making, and individual contributions are solicited and acknowledged (Kaagan, Stovall, Hesterman, & Catala, 1995). Leadership is focused primarily on the success of the collective endeavor, and work is collaborative in scope. In an organizational environment leadership centers on enhancing growth and engaging members of the organization in both personal and organizational growth and development.

What Rogers (1992) referred to as the emergent paradigm positions the leader as enabler, servant, collaborator, facilitator, and meaning-maker. This is in contrast to the conventional idea of the leader who operates from a top-down philosophy and is controlling, reactive, exclusive, domineering, efficient, and tough-minded. Although a number of leadership scholars have recommended that this model replace the more conventional one, Quinn (1989) suggested that the emergent model be considered as inclusive of the conventional model. He believed that leaders will achieve excellence in their organizations through their ability to use a variety of perspectives to solve problems related to education.

Contemporary thinking focused on transformational leadership contends that leaders work very closely with followers. This dynamic process results in shared

vision, genuine team work, and increased performance. The seminal work on transformational leadership was done by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. He wrote that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p. 3). Despite extensive research on the topic, however, Stogdill (cited in Bass, 1990) claimed that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 259). Burns's insights were later developed by Bass and have been used as the basis of work by many scholars, including Bennis (1989), Kanter (1977), Rosenor (1990), and Sergiovanni (1992).

Theories of Leadership

In these times of rapid change, leadership has taken on greater importance than ever before. The study of leadership has spawned several thousand publications across numerous disciplines in the past several decades (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1989). In fact, Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (1974) recently was revised to cite more than 5,000 leadership studies. There are numerous studies and theories about the conventional and changing perceptions of who is a leader and how leadership is enacted. In his article "Evolution of Leadership Theory," King (1990) categorized the major leadership theories. They include the trait theories or the "Great Man" theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, cultural or symbolic theories, cognitive theories, power and influence theories, and transitional and transformational leadership theories.

Trait theories of leadership attempt to identify specific personal characteristics that contribute to a person's ability to assume and successfully function in positions of leadership (Cronin, 1984). Traits include physical characteristics (e.g., height, gender, age, appearance), personality characteristics (e.g., degree of self-confidence, energy level, degree of initiative), characteristics related to social background (e.g., level of education, where educated, socioeconomic background), and specific abilities or skills valued by the group (e.g., intelligence, verbal fluency, technical proficiency). According to this primary theory, effective leaders, male and female, need to manifest appropriate traits in different situations (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989).

Adding dimensions to trait theory, behavioral theorists have studied leadership by examining leaders' patterns of activity, managerial roles, and categories of behavior (Bensimon et al., 1989). In effect, behaviorists would view the behaviors leaders exhibit that influence people toward specific goals. Fiedler (1967) wrote, "By leadership behavior we generally mean the particular acts in which a leader engages in the course of directing and coordinating the work of group members" (p. 36).

Although the behavioral theory was intended to aid in understanding the activity of leaders, it did not sufficiently explain how leaders behaved in different situations. Thus, this dimension led to contingency theories, which attempt to indicate how the leader's behavior is shaped and constrained by situational factors and unfolding events. These theories emphasize the importance of situational

factors, such as the nature of the tasks to be performed by a group or the nature of the external environment, in understanding effective leadership. According to these theories, different situations require different patterns of traits and behaviors for a leader to be effective (Bensimon et al., 1989).

The limitations of the above-mentioned leadership models brought to the fore the thinking of cognitive theorists, who recognize that the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by individual leaders often affect their leadership styles. To decide what constitutes good leadership, then, one must take into account what information a leader chooses to consider, what sense the leader makes of this information, and what actions may flow from that understanding. Cognitive theories of leadership suggest that "leadership is a social attribution that permits people to make sense of an equivocal, fluid, and complex world" (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 23). Birnbaum (1992) identified three concepts that are of particular importance in cognitive theories. These are cognitive frames, strategy, and the implicit theories of leadership held by the leader.

Another popular movement in leadership theory involved exploring the cultural or symbolic influence of leaders on maintaining or reinterpreting shared beliefs and values that give meaning to organizational life. Bensimon et al. (1989) stated that these theories propose that leadership functions within complex social systems whose participants attempt to find meaningful patterns in the behaviors of others so that they can develop common understandings about the nature of reality. A leader's success depends on the degree to which he or she is able to articulate and

influence cultural norms and values by creating new symbols or myths, developing organizational sagas or stories, or establishing and reinforcing consistent values. Culture, according to these theories, can also be thought of as a powerful constraint on the individual leader's behavior. That is, if a leader does not function within the culture of the organization, he or she may lose influence and authority (Bensimon et al., 1989).

Aligned with this notion of authority and control, the power and influence theories found an audience. According to Bensimon et al. (1989), these theories "consider leadership in terms of the source and amount of power available to leaders and the manner in which leaders exercise that power over followers through either unilateral or reciprocal interaction" (p. 7). The power and influence theories can be grouped into two main categories: social power theories and social exchange theories.

Social power theories emphasize one-way influence, usually top-down, whereas social exchange theories emphasize "two-way mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders who provide needed services to a group in exchange for the group members' approval and compliance with the leaders' demands" (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 9). In addition, social power theories take into account sources of power that leaders can use to influence followers, including legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power (French & Raven, 1968). In contrast, social exchange theories recognize that

although leaders accumulate power through their positions and their personalities, their authority is constrained by followers' expectations.

The difference between fulfilling and changing followers' expectations is at the heart of the distinction between the social power and social exchange theories, and between transactional leadership and transformational leadership, as described by Burns (1978). Burns discussed the distinction between what he called transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leaders are those who exchange one resource for another—for example, jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contributions, and so forth. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) suggested that a transactional leader can be defined as a person who takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of exchanging something of value.

Kellerman (1984) asserted that transactional leaders engage in mutual dependency. In fact, effective transactional leadership is contingent on a leader's ability to meet and respond to the reactions and changing expectations of followers. The transactional leader concentrates on maintaining the status quo by satisfying a follower's current psychic and material needs.

Of the 5,000 leadership studies cited in the revised edition of Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (Bass, 1985), fewer than 1% focused on transformational leadership. Bass distinguished between transactional and transformational leaders, emphasizing "the leader's ability to succeed in elevating the basic needs of followers. The embodiment and transmission of higher values is an important

component of transformational leadership" (p. 14). Transformational leaders are unique in that their personal values are consistent with the way they lead.

Both Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) asserted that transformational leaders operate out of deeply held personal values. Burns referred to these qualities as end values, those that cannot be controlled or negotiated between individuals such as justice and equity. When leaders' end values (internal standards) are adopted by followers, changes are produced in attitudes, beliefs, and goals. These end values such as equality and liberty, can potentially transform followers into leaders.

Crawford (1995) summarized these six central characteristics of transformational leaders that have emerged from the literature:

1. Creative. Hackman and Johnson (1991) posited that creativity is "challenging the status quo by seeking out new ideas" (p. 64). Crawford (1995) reported that transformation requires innovation and fresh perspectives on enduring questions.

2. Interactive. An interactive leader provides better direction than a noninteractive leader. To meet the needs of followers, the leader must take a posture of open participation (Burns, 1978; Sergiovanni, 1992).

3. Visionary. "More than anything else, transformational leaders communicate a vision to their followers" (Hackman & Johnson, 1991, p. 65). Bennis and Nanus (1985) contended that transformational leaders must create a shared vision with their followers; they must become the social architects for followers'



performance. Zorn (1991) suggested that vision helps to rally action toward achievement of a goal.

4. Empowering. Hackman and Johnson (1991) suggested that empowerment is the ability to "translate intention into reality and sustain it [for followers]" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 80). Power translates into empowerment, and empowerment, in turn, creates more power.

5. Passionate. A passion to make a difference is critical (Matusak, 1997). Bennis and Nanus (1985) elaborated, "Like explorers and artists, [leaders] seem to focus their attention on a limited field--their task--to forget personal problems, to lose their sense of time, to feel competent and in control" (p. 76). To transform, leaders must have a strong commitment to their vision. Passion is essential for this strong commitment; without passion there is no direction, and vision is short-lived.

6. Ethical. Having high ethical standards moves people in the direction of the common good (Gardner, 1990). Leaders must effectively connect with followers from a level of morality only one stage higher than that of the followers, but moral leaders who act at much higher levels relate to followers at all levels" (Burns, 1978, p. 455).

Hater and Bass (1988) argued that transactional and transformational leadership should not be construed as being mutually exclusive. Transformational leadership can be viewed as a special case of transactional leadership, inasmuch as both approaches are in the service of achievement of some goal or objective. Peters and Waterman (1984) found in their studies that transformational qualities are

associated with leadership in companies that achieve excellence. Most experimental researchers have focused on transactional leadership (Bass, 1990; Hollander, 1985). Yet, as Bass (1985) said, "the leadership of the great men of history has usually been transformational, not transactional" (p. 26).

In addressing needs for future research, Bass (1985) stated, "Surely we should be able to abstract some of the elements in the dynamic interplay of such leaders and their followers. We need to examine the conditions that promote the emergence of the transformational leader and how to facilitate this emergence" (p. 611).

Green (1988) stated that, in the future,

society in general will look to educational leaders to clarify their missions, to articulate visions, and to be accountable for the quality of their programs and students. Leaders will have to do all of this in an atmosphere of growing external controls, decreased institutional autonomy, and generally scarce resources. (p. 36)

Green further stated that leadership tasks will require leaders to be coalition builders, team leaders, and knowledge executives. In addition, they must be able to provide leadership by helping their organizations create shared values and a common agenda, and by fostering a stronger sense of community. These changing requirements of educational leaders underscore the need for leaders who have the ability to use multiple vantage points, skills, and strategies in coping with their leadership roles. In essence, this indicates a need for more transformational leaders in educational institutions. Yet there has been limited research in this area.

Gilligan (1982) argued that conventional theories such as those I discussed reflect an industrial paradigm written by men, for men. These theories are management oriented, utilitarian, focused on the leader's personality and self-interest, and materialistic. Gosetti and Rusch (1995) wrote, "As leadership characteristics are described through the concepts and terms of this still predominantly male discourse, they become genderless and are merged into a universal and privileged perspective that, once again, renders women and marginalized people invisible" (p. 17). Furthermore, although Gosetti and Rusch indicated that transformational leaders in educational administration are needed, they were cautious as well as critical because past researchers typically have excluded women and people of color as subjects of study. Therefore, it is difficult to know whether conventional theories are applicable to understanding leadership among women in the educational arena.

Leadership and Gender

Many scholars who have investigated leadership issues related to gender have found that the attributes of leadership are gender related, not gender specific (Matusak, 1997). Repeatedly, women are changing the perceptions of how leadership can be practiced and are altering time-honored stereotypes and entrenched ideas (Shakeshaft, 1987). In essence, they are demonstrating that there is more than one way to practice successful leadership.

Helgesen (1990) described the new leader as one who empowers others by having faith in their abilities, taking risks on them, and creating spaces where others

can exercise initiative, freedom, and commitment. She indicated that although many stereotypes abound that men are better suited than women for leadership roles, there are numerous definitions of leadership that contain no references to gender. In his book The Fifth Discipline, Senge (1990) suggested that leaders are no longer "men on horseback" who shape up organizations through the force of their personalities. Rather, Senge asserted that leaders are no longer expected to know all the answers but rather to seek the best ones along with their followers.

In their book Women and Work, Nieva and Gutek (1981) indicated that "traditionally, women are seen as lacking the necessary attributes for leadership. They are believed to be compliant, submissive, emotional and to have great difficulty in making choices" (p. 83). However, after extensive review of many studies concerning gender differences and personality traits of leaders, they discovered that there were no significant differences between women and men in terms of personality traits. Nieva and Gutek concluded that the reported differences simply reflect social perceptions. For example, male and female behaviors that are in line with the gender role expectations of the culture are evaluated positively. For example, "considerate female behavior is valued more by subordinates than considerate male behavior. Male aggressive/assertive behavior is assessed more positively than female aggressive/assertive behavior" (p. 92). It all depends on who is doing the observing or responding.

Because of the historical predominance of authoritarian forms of leadership, the new style of leadership that shares power and seeks input from many is

frequently considered weak and feminine. Whatever weaknesses one may attribute to this inclusive form of leadership, powerful forces are moving U.S. society toward this model (Matuzak, 1997). A 1995 report entitled Drawing Strength From Diversity by California Tomorrow indicated that rapid changes in the nation's schools, universities, and other institutions call for this paradigm shift in the way leadership occurs. The technology revolution, school reform, changing demographics, and the growing importance of decentralization of big government are rapid changes that make it almost impossible for any one person of either gender, or preferred leadership style, to have all the knowledge, insight, or power. The old forms of leadership, which gave power and a title to one of only a few individuals, are rapidly becoming dysfunctional. Rosenor (1990) wrote that it is time to "widen the path of leadership" (p. 125) in order to free potential leaders, be they men, women, or people of color, to lead in ways that play to their individual strengths.

Adler and Israeli (1994) found that, whereas both women and men have the capacity to alter their leadership styles to suit the new demands, many barriers to equal opportunities in leadership remain. Structural barriers include legal, educational, cultural, social, and historical factors. The major psychological factors influencing equal acceptance of women as leaders include not only cultural and societal attitudes toward women, but also the socialized perceptions of women and women's own self-perceptions. Adler and Israeli concluded that these factors are highly dependent on each person's culture, the effect of social policies, and access to higher education and organizational contexts. Cultural images, which are

transmitted through socialization, influence not only the characteristics that women themselves embody, but also the attitudes that others hold about them (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995). Thus, it is important for Native American women from various tribal cultures to examine how one's culture influences her or his leadership. It also is important to address the education and socialization of young people so that the next generation of leaders, especially women, does not encounter the same barriers.

In her study of women school leaders, Colflesh (1996) identified 14 characteristics that consistently emerged in the research on women's views and practice of leadership. In comparing those qualities with characteristics of Native American cultural views and practices of leadership, I found many of the same attributes identified in the literature that I reviewed. They are described in the next section. I identified the following six characteristics in common with those Colflesh (1996) culled from her extensive literature review:

1. A strong caring ethic.
2. Accomplishment of work through relationships and connections.
3. Value placed on inclusion and connection.
4. Integration of professional and personal aspects of life.
5. Collaborative and participatory styles of leadership.
6. On-going learning from a variety of sources; view of leaders as learners.

Native American Women and Educational Leadership

For many years, research on Native American women has not focused on their leadership, their accomplishments, or any of their strengths. Instead, it has centered on their poor socioeconomic status, their deficits, and negative characterizations (Green, 1992). The negative stereotypes are those of the squaw as a drudge, a beast of burden who walks along ten paces behind her man with a papoose on her back, or of the exotic Indian princess (Medicine, 1978). These characterizations of women were illuminated in anthropological, historical, and missionary writings and currently are reinforced by "stereotyped and bizarre portrayal in the media" (Medicine, 1988, p. 2). The contemporary images that predominate in print, visual, and mass media include the alcoholic, the prostitute, the neglectful mother whose children need to be saved from a life of despair with their own people, or the little princess, Pocahontas. These negative images of Native American women have influenced the perception that the general society has of native women, as well as the personal perceptions that Native American women have of themselves.

As a result, native women continue to be misunderstood and prejudged as not qualified to provide leadership (Tsosie, 1988). In 1986, Yeakey, Johnston, and Adkinson reported that research on minorities and women in positions of educational leadership was very limited, and in the case of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Asian/Pacific Islanders, it was minuscule. Other researchers also have stressed that there is a need for research that advances an understanding of

underrepresented groups' leadership experience and includes the perceptions and experiences of such groups (Gilligan, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Although there is a paucity of literature focusing on effective Native American leadership, the literature that does exist supports the need for more highly trained leaders who are knowledgeable about their culture and secure in their identity. Lynch and Charleston (1990) emphasized that American Indians, both male and female, are relatively new to educational administrative positions. In their article, "The Emergence of American Indian Leadership in Education," they stressed that, in order to understand American Indian leadership, one must first understand the context in which the entry of Indian people into administrative positions finally became a reality. Their study reminds us that it was not until the late 1960s that the relationship between the federal government and Indian nations began to change and Indian communities began to exercise control over their educational systems (Napier, 1995). Unfortunately, in the mid-1990s the supply of qualified leaders had not yet met the demand, and there was still a great shortage of Native American educational administrators and teachers.

In their monograph, Robbins and Tippeconic (1985), two well-respected native scholars, identified the following characteristics of effective Indian educational leaders:

1. A leader must be able to recognize that differences between native people and nonnative people exist and are often incompatible. An effective educational leader will share information with both the native community and the

nonnative community in ways that promote respect, rather than contempt, for cultural differences.

2. A leader must possess skills in cross-cultural communications. She or he must be able to exchange ideas and convey concepts through such means as public speaking, writing proficiently, or serving as an ambassador for native concerns with groups such as educational administrators, congressional representatives, university representatives, or government officials.

3. A leader must be able to translate theory into practice so that formal educational experiences may be of practical benefit to the native community. This is particularly important for natives who are college graduates and want to return to their communities to improve social and economic conditions. Translating what they have learned in college into practice that is culturally acceptable is often a difficult task.

4. A leader must maintain a positive attitude toward and a deep commitment to the education of, by, and for American Indians. The commitment to education for Native Americans implies a respect for native heritage, cultures, and values. Oftentimes, the issues are so complex that it requires great strength for a leader not to become discouraged.

5. A leader must have creativity and vision. Effective leaders must be able to develop new and innovative approaches to education and not be hampered by previous attempts to do what seems impossible. They must have a vision of how life could be better and plans to achieve that vision.

6. A leader must demonstrate patience and tolerance with regard to various opinions and positions. Creating positive change can sometimes be a very frustrating experience, especially when leaders must deal with various levels of bureaucracy, bureaucrats whose values are very different from those of the native community, and community members who are negative about any change.

7. Finally, a leader must possess self-confidence and pride in being a Native American. This behavior is exhibited through care and concern for self, but more important, for family and the tribal community.

In her book Leadership and the New Science, Wheatley (1994) stressed the necessity of a global paradigm shift from centralized to decentralized leadership. In the literature on culture-related Native American leadership, one model of leadership that is different from conventional models often has been described (Reyes, 1993). Such leadership is decentralized and collective, similar in many ways to the new types of leadership that are currently being promoted by Wheatley and other scholars. Within a tribal context, every person has a role to play, and each person's role is important to the whole. No other person can make an identical contribution because each individual has certain personal gifts that the Creator has given him or her; in other words, each has certain attributes to share (Arden & Wall, 1990). The total contribution results in an ever-evolving and dynamic whole (Reyes, 1993).

This understanding of one's relationship to the whole as decentralized is very different from those understandings common in the traditional literature, which is grounded in western thought. However, in the literature on emerging theories of

leadership, one can begin to see strong affirmations that leadership is now becoming decentralized and encourages shared responsibility. Belasco and Stayer (1993) created an image of decentralized leadership with their metaphor of a flock of geese. In such a flock, leadership changes repeatedly and responsibility is shared.

De Pree (1994) used the Native American water carrier as a metaphor for decentralized leadership. The water carrier is the person who does what needs to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of position or role authority. De Pree cited an inscription next to a sculpture of a water carrier at his company: "The tribal water carrier in this corporation is a symbol of the essential nature of all jobs, our interdependence, the identity of ownership" (p. 65).

Current trends in leadership now focus on team decision making or shared leadership, which is similar to native ways of decision making in many native societies. Coyhis (1995) described a talking circle, a method for decision making when a group must make an important decision. In a talking circle, everyone participates, although not all are expected to talk, as that is an option. Each is expected to listen, however, and no one is allowed to interrupt. Participants are arranged in a circle, which is a common metaphor for many Native Americans. When conflict has been diffused and a direction for action has been established, decisions are made.

There are numerous differences between western theories of leadership and native ways of knowing about leadership. "A native leader is not known for what he has done for himself, but rather what he has done for his people." This statement



by Edward Benton-Benai (1975), an Ojibwe spiritual leader, highlights one of the many differences between how native communities view effective leadership and how western society views it. As the literature review confirmed, in western society, leadership is focused more on individuals in positions of power influencing followers to pursue organizational or societal goals, whereas in native societies, leadership is focused more on the group as a team of individuals involved in a process of change, a process that usually is catalyzed or facilitated by one individual.

An educational leader who has been trained properly in American society, which generally means having a college degree, can move easily among a variety of fields and geographic locations (Green, 1992). For example, superintendents and administrators of public education usually are hired based on their educational backgrounds, individual skills, and experiences. They need not have a connection to the local community, and in fact it sometimes is considered best if they do not. The basis of leadership is viewed as a set of skills a person uses to manage a situation. These skills can be learned, usually through formal schooling, although they are best tempered by experience.

In contrast, a leader who has been trained properly in a Native American community cannot move easily among a variety of fields and geographic locations. It often does not matter how many academic degrees one possesses or how much experience one has had in other fields or geographic locales. According to Harris (1996), a person is not an effective leader in a native community unless and until the community has sanctioned that individual's leadership in whatever capacity he or

she works. That sanctioning will not occur until the person clearly understands his or her place in the community and acts in ways that the community recognizes as valuable. So many outsiders have tried to define native communities in the past 200 years that oftentimes these communities have outright rejected leadership from anyone who was not perceived to be grounded in the ways of those particular communities. Often, this situation is also true for college-educated natives who return to their tribal communities to create change, assuming they are leaders because they possess a degree and/or have some knowledge to contribute.

In his research on native educational leadership, Noley (1992) indicated that a leader must clearly understand the legal conditions in his or her tribal community in order to make effective policy decisions, whether in governance, economic development, education, or health. American citizens' rights are based on constitutional protections, which emphasize individual and property rights, and leaders must understand these individual and property rights to make effective policy decisions. Native Americans have a legal relationship with the United States that is different from that of any other group. Understanding this relationship and the effects of educational policies on this and past generations is one of the keys to effective leadership. Native Americans' rights often are defined by treaty and case law derived from treaties. Many of these rights, in turn, are defined by preexisting tribal customary law. Over the past 200 years, western and customary laws have shaped each other in complex ways (Echohawk, 1995).

Morris (1978) wrote about how differences in world views and their corresponding values have resulted in unique challenges for contemporary native leaders. She stated that native leaders need to know both their own community values and history and the Euro-American community values and history because they must function in both societies. Until recently, most Euro-American leaders have not had to deal with this duality and, more recently, multiculturalism. To accommodate tribal values, the values of Euro-American systems in which they coexist, and other systems, native leaders often have had to develop a multicultural dexterity and work to create new institutions and organizations to address contemporary needs. In education, for example, the new entities that have been created include tribal colleges and tribally controlled K-12 schools that are different in many ways from the traditional educational institutions. In recent times, educational leaders throughout the nation have reexamined these traditional educational institutions and worked to reform them in ways that are more responsive to today's rapidly changing student populations. To accomplish this, leaders need also to develop a multicultural adroitness if they are to bring about effective change in education for the future.

Morris (1992) also examined selected values to demonstrate the divergence between native and nonnative world views. She indicated that native women leaders must be able to gauge the effect of native values on their enactment of leadership. Morris provided an example when she described the clash between the priority the native places on the value of humility as compared to the value the

nonnative places on the value of self-promotion. She wrote that a leadership behavior greatly admired by Euro-American society is one's ability to sell or market oneself to secure opportunities for leadership positions, to get elected, to get hired, or to get ahead. In contrast, native societies recognize the value of and need for personal reserve, of not drawing attention to oneself and one's accomplishments. If an individual has provided a great service to the community, the community will honor that person in various ways and others will speak about the individual's accomplishments. In this way, an individual can behave modestly, with humility, and not promote himself or herself over others. In social interactions, native women leaders often struggle to arrive at a comfortable balance, for example, in nonnative organizational settings in which job performance is based on an ability to highlight their annual leadership accomplishments. Native women often find it difficult to identify themselves as the leaders of certain successful initiatives.

This is a related situation in which values may conflict. When one is singled out as a leader, one can accept and feel honored, but if one actively promotes oneself, that action is likely to result in disrespect (Mankiller, 1991). The practice of deflecting praise to something or someone else is very common in native circles. Downplaying the importance of an individual contrasts with western leadership theories, which tend to single out leaders for special examination, attention, and privilege.

In writing about Native American women's leadership images, Miller (1978) indicated that leadership as "an authoritarian role is still a foreign or unacceptable

concept to many Native Americans" (p. 37). Rather, she reported, that role comes as a result of consistent care-giving behavior over a long period of time. It is these caregivers who earn the respect of others and who are then likely to be sought out for their wisdom by community members. Problems often arise when nonnatives publicize a caregiver's behavior in a nonnative manner, as this may destroy the Native American's image as a selfless person and instead project an egotistical or authoritarian image so antithetical to Native American values. This explains why many native women do not identify themselves as leaders and why many who work on social issues feel uncomfortable when their achievements are publicly singled out to stand above others.

Western culture requires that leadership be future oriented (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992). Strategic plans, mission statements, information systems, and forecasting are all common to top organizational leadership. All are oriented toward the future, either to achieving a future goal or to analyzing possible trends. Reducing future uncertainty through an ability to predict events is a key aspect of the job of top leaders in modern organizations. In fact, the way in which the members of a culture live with or seek to avoid future uncertainty is a major dimension that can be used to distinguish leadership behavior (Hofsteade, 1980). In some cultures, this concern with the future is expressed differently.

Native American leaders have a deep connection to the present. Often this connection is linked with an ability to see and comprehend the meaning of natural events. The traditional Native American leader has a strong spiritual component that

seeks to understand the lessons provided by daily experience and always to reflect and give thanks (Shenandoah, 1993). Only by seeing the present clearly and reflecting on its meaning are leaders in a position to envision a future.

Another example is the notion that the transformational leader in western culture is a teacher and a mentor. This differs from the Native American context, in which the leader is seen as a student. Through the leader-student's own learning, others learn. Learning is voluntary and unending. For example, a Native American leader never claims to know all there is to know about his or her culture, even when it is evident that the leader knows so much more than anyone else (Arden & Wall, 1990). Lifelong learning is perceived as being very important.

Another difference is that western leaders maximize resources leading to structures that judge and value some things more than others. In Native American culture, leadership requires an understanding that everything in the universe has a purpose, a place, and a worth, as well as a knowledge of how things work (Lyons, 1993).

At a national Native Higher Education Leadership Conference in 1996, Artley Skenandore, an elder from the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin, spoke about native leadership for the twenty-first century. He identified the following five principles that should guide both ways of living and leadership, as they are seen as one. He reminded the audience that this knowledge is based on "ten thousand years of wisdom":

1. Kahnlu kwasla: Compassion, caring, identity, and the joy of being.
2. Kanikuhliyo: The openness of the good spirit and the good mind.
3. Kahtsast^sla: The strength of belief and vision as a people.
4. Kalhliwio: The use of the good words about ourselves, our nation, and our future.
5. Kaletyalusla: Encouragement.

Summary

In summary, the following attributes and processes of leadership commonly are found in Native American cultures:

1. Compassion, caring, and encouragement (Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985; Skenandore, 1996).
2. Knowledge of history and courage to change the status quo (Morris, 1992; Noley, 1992).
3. Interdependence: Recognition of and a deep respect for one's gifts and the gifts of others (Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985; Arden & Wall, 1990).
4. The strength of vision, especially a shared vision (Reyes, 1993; Skenandore, 1996).
5. Value placed on connection and relatedness (Harris, 1996; Mankiller, 1991; Shenandoah, 1993).
6. Humility and personal reserve (Miller, 1978; Morris, 1992).
7. Concern for the group, the team, and the community as opposed to concern for self (Benton-Benai, 1975; Coyhis, 1995; Miller, 1978; Reyes, 1996).

8. Connected between the heart and mind (Arden & Wall, 1990; Morris, 1976; Reyes, 1993; Skenandore, 1996).
9. Power through inclusion in decision making and shared responsibility (Belasco & Stayer, 1993; Coyhis, 1992; De Pree, 1994; Resnick, 1994; Wheatley, 1992).
10. A leader's life work viewed as the "joy of being" versus the "joy of doing" (Skenandore, 1996).
11. A positive attitude, commitment, and perseverance (Mankiller, 1991; Morris, 1992; Skenandore, 1992).
12. Understanding of and respect for differences (Harris, 1996; Morris, 1992; Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985).
13. The importance of giving back, service to community (Benton-Benai, 1975; Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985).
14. Diplomacy; representing self, community, and the nation (Harris, 1996; Mankiller, 1991; Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985).
15. Knowledge of self, positive outlook, and pride in being native (Robbins & Tippeconic, 1985; Skenandore, 1996).
16. The importance of giving thanks (Lyons, 1990; Powless, 1990; Shenandoah, 1990).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to examine the leadership experiences of selected Native American women who have worked to create positive educational change for Native Americans. I believed that the leadership experiences of Native American women could be of value in informing and enlarging an understanding of leadership, especially one that involved a diversity of effective styles, strategies, risks, and initiatives. I began by searching for a methodology that I could use to generate such knowledge. I concluded that through the use of narrative, others, including educational leaders, would be better able to understand the life perceptions, personal meanings, frustrations, concerns, hopes, and dreams of a few Native American women leaders. As a result, doors would be opened wider for thinking about and valuing alternative ways of defining leadership and developing leaders.

I used narrative as a way of exploring the leadership experiences of Native American women in education. I sought to learn and understand how significant Native American women leaders participated in creating positive change in the education of Native American children and worked toward the reality of self-



determination by native people. In line with a constructivist paradigm, Allen (1990) identified how constructivist assumptions could guide the study:

1. "Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Therefore, the leadership of the women I studied had been affected by their many values and experiences and had to be studied in a holistic way so that interconnections could be discerned.

2. The "knower and the known" are inseparable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Therefore, the researcher and the object of inquiry cannot remain independent of each other; in fact, they influence each other.

3. Only "time- and context-bound working hypotheses are possible" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Truth is affected by time and context, and therefore it changes over time, suggesting that there is no single truth surrounding leadership. Further, the understanding of leadership will be enhanced through studying individuals whose evolving experiences and context provide them with multiple realities.

4. "All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Therefore, leadership must be studied through a lens of mutual simultaneous shaping (heterarchy) rather than linear cause and effect (hierarchy), supporting the interviewing of people who are not at the top of an organization.

5. "Inquiry is value bound" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Therefore, a researcher designs studies, and subjects respond through their unique personal backgrounds, experiences, and gender.

In this chapter, I provide a rationale for the methods I employed. Narrative helped me advance toward my goal of understanding what constitutes effective leadership for social change brought about by Native American women in education. Knowing about their leadership provides valuable insights and recommendations for further action aimed at improving the education of Native American children and for training the next generation of leaders.

Rationale for Using Narrative Methodology

Narrative as a methodology allowed for the expression of the women's own voices without the imposition of already identified hypotheses about their successful leadership in native education. I employed qualitative research strategies, particularly narrative research, as there was no intention to control or manipulate variables (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) wrote, "The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). I was influenced by Polkinghorne (1995) who advanced this thought, stating that "stories are linguistic expressions of this uniquely human experience of the connectedness of life" (p. 7).

Indeed, narratives "allow us to see lives as simultaneously individual and social creations, and to see individuals as simultaneously the changers and the changed" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Because the study of leadership often is focused on individuals who are social change-makers and who are personally changed or transformed during the process of leadership, narratives have the potential to capture expressions of lived experiences (Smith, 1994). In addition, Cooper (1991) indicated that narrative had been useful as a central focus of inquiry into the study of leadership as experienced by school principals. This is because narratives not only structure experience, but, as Noddings (1984b) and Ayers (1989) discovered, they also allow for the evolution of meaning by serving as guides from the past to the present and to the direction of future action.

I believe that the stories I explored, a belief supported by Casey (1993), not only were beneficial for the tellers, but also will be beneficial for future generations. Many of the native educational leaders are pathfinders of the 1990s; that is, they are the first natives to enter into positions or arenas that no natives had entered before. It is hoped that relating their stories will help clear the pathway for the next generation or at least help them understand some of the challenges they will face as they work to lead social change. As Clandinin and Connelly (1991) indicated, narrative served as a vehicle for both personal and social growth.

Narrative was most suitable for this study because narrative as storytelling is very compatible with native cultures (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993). In fact, storytelling serves many functions: It tells of the origin of the people, recounts

history, entertains, teaches appropriate ways of doing and being, heals, protects, and locates one's people in relationship to creation (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994). As Rayna Green (1984), a highly respected native scholar wrote,

Before European writing, there were voices to sing and speak, dances to make real the stories that the people told or to honor the retelling anew. There were hands that talked and drew and shaped. Some tales could be told with one or two small marks—because artists knew how to put them together so that those who saw would be reminded of where they came from just from seeing the marks. Others would take eight nights to sing the words so that someone could be healed and the others could remember. Still others might get the story as they watched the women weave it into the rug. They'd have to remember what their duties were toward the People because the rug told them every time they looked at it. Whichever way it was, the story got told, and it gets told now. The old ways of speaking aren't gone. They've changed, of course. There has always been change. There are always new ways to remember. (p. 2)

These traditions of maintaining tribal and family history, cultural traditions, symbolic meaning, spirituality, social and kinship relations, and responsibilities through stories exist in most cultural societies throughout the world (Spradley, 1979). Storytellers still bear an enormous responsibility to maintain various cultural ways by remembering and retelling. Some tribes have lost many of their stories because they were not recorded or passed on to the next generation. Today, many efforts are being made throughout native communities to preserve the stories by remembering, collecting, recording, videotaping, or putting into writing those that formerly existed only through oral tradition (Hirshfelder, 1995).

Many extended families, including my own, are working diligently to maintain the stories that have been handed down from generation to generation. Sainte-Marie (1996) wrote of the need to create new stories about contemporary life to

counteract the old image that most school children today have—that the only real Indians are the dead ones of long ago. This situation, too, enhanced the need for the stories I collected to be told.

Storytelling is a rich cultural legacy, not only in my tribe, but in many tribal communities across the country. As Proudfoot (1991) stated in an unpublished keynote address to native college students:

Storytelling, traditionally used as an integrated mechanism for presenting the wisdom, experience (historical record), values and relationships within a tribal structure, was totally overlooked by invading Europeans. The "intellectual" traditions of our peoples, deeply rooted in centuries of experience on this continent, have only recently been acknowledged by European-American academicians as they renamed our traditional ways of knowing, doing, and education in the form of "story" as qualitative research.

In the past, research in academia, as a concept, emerged from Western European world views and practices. Anthropologists and sociologists often focused on indigenous people in this country as their principal objects of study. Native cultures were studied by outside investigators, often through the services of a native translator, and elucidated through the interpreter's own cultural lens (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996). Anthropologists often recorded a subject's presentation of his or her life experiences. These life stories were gathered "not to focus on an individual life, but rather to use a single life to illuminate a culture" (Bataille & Sands, 1984, p. 29). Where native people were concerned, most of the life histories focused on men, whereas women's life histories were used to supplement information that had been gathered from male informants (Bataille & Sands, 1984). Although many of these accounts served to create a rare written record of women's lives, what did not

come to light were the cultural biases created by the real differences in world views and ways of knowing between the investigator and the investigated.

It must be noted here that, in the early 1900s, a few autobiographies written by Native American men and women were published (Bataille & Sands, 1984). Since then, native and nonnative writers have continued the tradition of life stories because they have found, as Long (1987) claimed, that "first person accounts help others understand the subjectivity of a social group that is muted, excised from history, and invisible in official written records" (p. 5). For many years, it was my goal to study the lives of successful Native American women as the focus of my dissertation, yet I could not figure out how to do that. As Madison (1994) wrote,

It was and is through the story that history is unveiled and passed on from the hearts and minds of one generation to the next: that moral codes, values, and ethics are understood; that the practical survival lessons of everyday life are taught; and the cultural pride, dignity, and identity are instilled.

Although there are a number of recorded life narratives of Native American women, only a few of them were recounted by Native American women from their own perspectives. An exception to the usual practice of outsiders recording the stories and culture of Native Americans was Ella Deloria, author of the classic collection, Dakota Texts (1932). As a Yankton Lakota, Deloria was one of the first ethnographers to record other Native American women's experiences. Her stories and others since that time began to uncover the many facets of women's experiences, breaking the squaw stereotype and presenting the more complex realities in the lives of Native American women (Madison, 1994). Within the last 15 years, more stories by and about native women have become available. These tales

include Life Lived Like a Story (Cruikshank, 1990), Spiderwoman's Granddaughters (Allen, 1989), The Ways of My Grandmothers (Hungry Wolf, 1980), and That's What She Said (Green, 1984). This indicates to some that storytelling as a critical form of cultural transmission has regained its visibility in native cultures, and that a place has been found for native women's voices to be heard through narrative research in academia, which also has recently gained in visibility.

Description of the Methods

Kahn and Cannell (1960) indicated that qualitative research methods, such as interviews, require frankness and honesty based on the establishment of trust. Marshall and Rossman (1995) further indicated that trust must first be established in order to help people make sense out of their experiences and their own sense of reality. Therefore, every effort was made in this study to establish a trusting relationship with each educational leader; this encouraged honest discussion and deep reflection.

I also made an effort to approach native women, as Archibald described in the article she co-authored with Haig-Brown (1996), titled "Transforming First Nations Research With Respect and Power." Her method involved focusing on ways that observe a "cultural learning protocol." Archibald gave the example of approaching another, not on the basis of a formal interviewer/principal researcher relationship, but rather one of teacher/learner, stemming from cultural ways. She also indicated that the elder/leader should determine where and when to meet, and that the learner must be sure to create unhurried time together and provide food and coffee or tea

to share. Most important, Archibald confirmed my own cultural learning that "our relationship as teacher and learner has to be based upon respect for each other and respect for the traditional cultural ways of teaching and learning" (Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996, p. 254).

With each woman I interviewed, I was the learner, the benefactor of the teaching. Having food and a nonalcoholic beverage was always part of the gathering. I confirmed for myself that the narrative process was ideal for use within native communities because it acknowledges the power and expertise that already exist in the community and the necessary equality of relationships. Also, narrative lessens the intrusion of the research process, which was so prevalent in native research during the past century (Green, 1983). This is because the research participants become involved in the process of collaboration, of "mutual story-telling and restoring as the research proceeds, a relationship in which both stories are heard" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). In her book Feminist Methods in Social Research, Reinharz (1992) wrote about her own experience in recording women's lives through the use of narrative as:

a type of scholarship that begins with an insight about women's condition that requires further elaboration so as to solve the puzzle of one's own life. . . . It may begin with a discovery about a hitherto ignored woman or trivial aspects of women's competence that needs careful examination and then distribution. Once the research begins, a circular process ensues: the woman doing the study learns about herself as well as about the woman she is studying. (p. 127)

The narrative process was very effective with the native Maori people in New Zealand because it is an approach through which people are able to recollect,

reflect, and make sense of their experiences within their own cultural context (Bishop, 1994). Bishop believed that when indigenous ways of knowing become the context for research, the research goes beyond empowering or enabling others to find their own voices. The context sets the pattern for subsequent interactions, in which the research participants engage in an interactive, complex, holistic approach to research. This involves mutual telling and retelling of stories by people who are living those stories. It also supports the concern expressed by indigenous people that research should address their desire for self-determination. The traditional role of the researcher has been that of the storyteller, the narrator, the person who decides what constitutes the narrative changes in collaborative storying. The major implication for my role in this study was that I participated in these sense-making contexts rather than simply reporting what the respondents said.

I believed that cultural knowledge about Native Americans in the 1990s could be told as a collective story. Effective leadership in the native community is a group process; therefore, it is not the story of one individual's knowledge, skills, and strategies. Rather, it is the story of many individuals collaborating and composing solutions to the problems that life presents. Narrative offers the framework for an interactive process whereby a group of leaders who have been involved in educational change give their version of and approaches to truth and the meaning of leadership. In my role, I became more of a meaning-maker of a story, rather than a detached reporter of others' stories. I did not seek to provide yet another interpretation of leadership or to create the conditions of empowerment for a group

that has often been perceived as powerless. Instead, I sought to collaborate with a group of Native American women who are outstanding educational leaders to consider our own ways of knowing in order to, as Chief Sitting Bull is often quoted as saying, "put our minds together to see what kind of life we can make for our children."

The actual process of doing the research was based on recording women's personal narratives using an in-depth interview protocol guide and undertaking a storying process that honored each person's subjective experience and her own meaning.

The interview protocol served as a guide to help me probe more deeply and raise questions or issues that might not otherwise have been addressed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that the unstructured interview is the model of choice when the researcher wants to establish "a human-to-human relation with the respondent and [desires] to understand rather than to explain" (p. 366). I probed particular areas based on my knowledge of culture, leadership, and social change. Therefore, both structured and unstructured interview questions were employed at various points throughout the process.

The women I interviewed had control over their particular narrative portion and could choose both what they wanted to share and at any time to end their participation in the process. They will help decide about future use of the materials and will be given copies of the dissertation to share with their families.



Issues/Contentions Regarding Narrative

Qualitative researchers attain validity in their work "by obtaining first-hand knowledge of social life unfettered through concepts, operational definitions and rating scales" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 7). This is done by observing people as they live out everyday life; by listening to them talk about their lives, their feelings, and their experiences; and by examining documents/artifacts they produce (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

In qualitative research and the narrative process itself, total control over the validation of data processing is taken out of the researcher's hands and placed in the hands of both the researcher and the researched. Neither has complete power because power resides in the group and the group processes. In the case of the Maori culture, such an approach to validity located the power within Maori cultural practices, where the Maori determined and defined what was acceptable and what was not acceptable research, text, and/or processes (Bishop, 1994).

Because I did not rely exclusively on data from a single individual, objectivity was less threatened. Credibility was enhanced because I made a significant investment in learning about the women's work before the interviews, spent time and effort building and maintaining the women's trust, and was substantially involved with the research participants. Also, triangulation of data enhanced credibility as other forms of data were collected and peers were involved in analyzing the study findings. Triangulation is also a means of assessing dependability. Good documentation of

the overall process was extremely time consuming, but it was critical to the successful completion of the research.

Research Approach

The Participants

Although there are a number of Native American women in the United States who are part of the baby-boom generation and have been leaders in improving the education of Native Americans during the past 30 years, the study participants whom I selected were identified through personal contacts with women suggested by friends and colleagues working in the education field whom I had asked to identify Native American women leaders in education. The participants were individuals whom I had observed or worked with over the years. I used the purposive sampling method in selecting the study participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Patton, 1989).

It was my desire to dispel the myths that there are very few Native American women who function as leaders in today's society and that there is only one native epistemology of leadership. Just the opposite is true for both issues.

I have had the honor of becoming acquainted with many native women across the United States who are strong and outstanding leaders in education, as well as in other fields. Just as there is no one theory of leadership that applies in all nonnative settings, there is no one theory of leadership that would be applicable to all of the more than 550 tribal communities that exist today. Not only were the women whom I interviewed affiliated with different tribes, they also were diverse in terms of the contexts in which they practiced leadership, their positions of

responsibility, and the outcomes of their leadership experiences. I believe that their stories illustrate that there are multiple voices of leadership that represent ways of thinking about leadership within Native American communities and that these diverse voices need to be better understood, acknowledged, and used as we enter the twenty-first century.

My preference was to explore Native American women leaders' experiences in educational leadership roles over the past three decades and to determine how their styles of leading are particularly useful at this critical moment in the history of Native American education. I also wanted to provide a historical perspective of Native American leadership by interviewing and focusing on one particular generation of women, my own generation, which often is referred to as the post-World War II baby-boom generation. It is my hope that these stories will contribute to the existing educational leadership literature and knowledge and that they will be applied to address critical societal issues and to enhance leadership-development efforts in the future.

The women who agreed to participate in this study are Native Americans who represent various tribal background and who have had led educational change in two or more contexts, e.g., public schools; private colleges; tribal, city, state, or federal government agencies; nonprofit organizations; universities; tribal colleges; early childhood centers; or tribally controlled K-12 schools. In addition, these women hold positions at various levels in educational administration, not just at the top.

To identify potential respondents, I secured names of leaders from Native American women educators representing older, younger, and same-generation peer groups. I then selected individuals whose names were repeatedly identified by Native American educators or someone whose leadership was greatly respected. However, this was not a study of the "top six most effective Indian women leaders in America," nor was it a study of the "six most admired leaders in the national Native American community in the 1990s." There are literally dozens of native women who have led change in education during the past 30 years who could have been interviewed. In addition, this was not a comparative study of Native American men's and women's leadership styles, nor was it a study comparing Native American and nonnative women's leadership styles. Rather, my focus was on understanding the nature of leadership as it was experienced by Native American women from a particular generation. Therefore, I chose to look at their social and historical contexts, their formative influences, the forces that shaped their commitment to improving the education of Native Americans, the outcomes of their leadership efforts, the dynamics of leadership, and the costs of leadership.

Although I interviewed 12 women in a pilot study before beginning the actual research, six stories were selected for this dissertation. Six of the women I interviewed in the pilot study were not included in the dissertation for two main reasons: They did not fit the final criteria I identified for selection, and there were scheduling conflicts that we could not resolve.

Criteria for Selection of Participants

The women selected for study fit the nature of the methods that were employed. They had many stories to tell and a variety of experiences to share. In addition, they each reflected on these stories and experiences as they related them to their continuing work as educational leaders. Each woman met the following criteria established for the study:

1. Identified herself as a Native American (American Indian, Alaskan native, or native Hawaiian); each woman was an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe.
2. Was between 40 and 52 years of age.
3. Held an administrative position that had directly influenced the education of Native Americans, not necessarily a top-level position in an institution/organization.
4. Had received recognition by a Native American community for her educational contributions.
5. Possessed the minimum of a master's degree in education or a related field.
6. Had experienced leadership in two or more contextual settings (i.e., college or university, K-12 school, tribal or federal government, or native-controlled nonprofit organization/institution).

I contacted potential participants to secure their interest and willingness to participate. A letter to confirm participation was sent or delivered to the women

before the first interview, and participants signed a consent form (Appendix A). The women were asked to provide answers to a biographical questionnaire (Appendix B) and to answer questions contained in the interview protocol (Appendix C). Following the interviews, participants were asked to send me any additional documentation describing their leadership practices, and to record thoughts, feelings, and stories they might have forgotten to share, or that they might have needed to reflect on before sharing them.

Data Sources

Tuckman (1978) described an advantage of qualitative methodology by noting that "questionnaires and interviews are a way of getting data about persons by asking them rather than watching them behave or sampling a bit of their behavior" (p. 197). Tuckman also noted that certain information, with some exceptions, is best obtained through face-to-face interviews. That is, although other data-collection measures may also be used, the interview may be, and frequently is, the most appropriate method for eliciting the information desired. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) described qualitative research as advantageous in that qualitative methods allow one to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world.

In this qualitative study that was exploratory and descriptive in nature, in-depth interviewing was the primary data-collection method. Kahn and Cannell (1960) described interviewing as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 149). Using interviews as the primary source of data allows the researcher to obtain large

amounts of data quickly and provides opportunities for immediate follow-up and clarification, as needed. The working assumption is that people make sense out of their experiences and, in doing so, create their own reality. In this study about women, the subjective view mattered, thus confirming the choice of in-depth interviewing as the research method (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

I conducted a series of three separate interviews with each participant. It was imperative that the social, cultural, and historical context of their lives be an important part of the interview experience. Patton (1989) concurred by suggesting that, without context, there is little possibility of exploring the meaning of an experience. Together, these interviews contributed to the meaning-making that was desired in this study.

The interview formats, recommended by Seidman (1991), were adapted to fit the purpose of the study and use life-history/narrative-inquiry approaches. The first part of the interview established the context of the participants' personal and educational experiences before becoming educational leaders. Emphasis was placed on critical events. In the second part of the interview, participants were allowed to reconstruct the details of their leadership experience within the context in which it occurred. In the last part of the interview, participants were encouraged to reflect on the meaning their experience held for them. However, it must be noted that regulating timing was a tremendous challenge. In most cases, I found it productive to discuss their current activities before discussing the business at hand. Interview times ranged from 90 minutes to two hours. Most of the interviews were

tape-recorded and transcribed. A few were not recorded because the recorder malfunctioned, mainly due to human error on my part. In addition, I kept interview notes and a journal.

Native American women leaders in education were interviewed individually in locations of their choice. The ideal was to conduct interviews in three separate sessions of at least 90 minutes over a period of three months (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, due to scheduling conflicts and the need to capitalize on limited opportunities and resources to meet, this ideal process did not occur with each participant. In two cases, the initial interview had taken place during the pilot-study phase the previous year. In part because of the stories the women shared at the time, I wanted to continue with a study that related the stories of other women like them. Although I believe my trustworthiness and relationships with all but one of the participants had already been established as a result of working together on various efforts, this process served to strengthen our individual relationships.

Whereas specific questions were identified in the protocol, during the interviews every opportunity was taken to follow up on certain responses, ask for clarification, seek concrete details, and request stories to illuminate the participants' experiences. The interview protocol was adapted from one originally designed by Benham (1995) to interview women of color in educational administration, and revised by Colflesh (1996) to interview women school principals.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the appropriateness of the techniques for this population and to determine whether the methods would yield usable data.

I continued the interview process with two of the women, whom I had interviewed once during the pilot study phase. Although I interviewed 12 women in the pilot study, only six of them were included in the study. One reason for selecting them was mutual schedules. As a number of the women were involved in many of the same initiatives I was, and hence were planning to attend the same meetings, I would call ahead and ask whether we could meet for an interview either in the evening or early in the morning. Every woman I approached was extremely helpful and supportive, and I found that the time I spent with each of them was truly a gift to myself.

I experienced what Esmailka (1994) encountered when conducting her research: "Although I didn't realize the attraction, I was drawn to the life stories of women who were forging paths where few Native women had gone before. In so doing, I have come to better understand the choices that my mother had made and the difficulties she faced, as well as my own" (p. 37). I agree with what Neumann (cited in Esmailka, 1994) said:

What I hear of another I can only know in terms of who I am and what I know. And as I retell the experiences of others, I am there as well. It is through my eyes and ears and mind and heart that the story has sifted. . . . The story I tell of the other is as much—maybe more—a story of me. . . . It is this knowing, and what I've learned from it about how people know, that casts who I am, what I do, what I reach for, what I remember, and what I tell. (p. 37)

Data Analysis

Description, analysis, and interpretation are what Wolcott (1994) recommended for the presentation of qualitative data in the final written document.

Bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data from the interviews was an enormous challenge. The process involved a search for general statements about the relationships among categories that emerged in the data; to facilitate the process, I designed a matrix to capture these relationships. Even though I had read about this potential issue many times, I truly was not prepared for the huge amount of rich data I was given, or for the personal analysis that the research process triggered.

The literature review and, more specifically, the conceptual framework served as a guideline for initially marking the data that seemed to offer valuable insights as I reviewed the interview transcripts. I organized and interpreted the data using a matrix; generated categories, themes, and patterns; tested emerging hunches against the data; searched for alternative explanations of the data; and developed both a matrix and a narrative containing the findings and a summary of lessons learned. All in all, the process brought meaning to the raw data in the interview transcripts (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Seidman, 1991; Wolcott, 1994).

After transcribing the interviews, I used the matrix I had developed to try to code some of the data. I then grouped the information in a number of ways to detect themes. Initially, I determined similarities and differences among the participants. The themes I used were based, in part, on the framework of leadership I had used to develop the interview protocol; in part, on the categories that had emerged from similar studies on transformational leadership, women's leadership, Native American

leadership, and educational leadership; and in part, on my own themes that emerged repeatedly throughout the interviews.

While editing the transcript, I often called or met with the participants to reflect, fill gaps in information, or confirm that I understood the situation correctly.

Limitations

Narrative methods are not without drawbacks. One disadvantage is the researcher's effect on the respondents with respect to the results obtained. That is, the data in this study may be unrepresentative because of respondents' efforts to give answers that they thought I, the researcher, wanted to hear. Further, generalization of the findings to other women educational leaders may be problematic due to the lack of common ground in terms of the effects of cultural, social, and historical factors that this particular group of women had experienced. The conclusions drawn from the study are tentative and subject to further study with larger numbers of native women and men, as well as other cultural groups. In addition, the credibility of the interviewees as leaders rests with the reader, who will decide after reading the dissertation.

The methods employed in the study are subject to criticisms of descriptive and exploratory research and of reliability. Basic interview questions such as "What do you believe most influenced your leadership development?" placed responsibility on the participants to organize the data of the study. Both a strength and a weakness of this method is the predictor that how respondents organize their experiences forms a legitimate research endeavor. Because the women were asked

to recall past events and feelings, this research is also subject to the shortcoming of retrospective recall (Loftus & Loftus, 1980). However, this technique provided wide latitude in conducting exploratory research, it provided an opportunity to gather data on the dominant patterns and processes in a small group, and it was a useful technique for discovering complex interconnections.

Generalizations cannot be made beyond this study. The participants were selected from among Native American women from the post-World War II baby-boom generation who have created social change in the education of Native Americans. Differences among tribes and native groups make it especially inappropriate to generalize beyond the women who actually took part in this research (Medicine, 1978). Participants' checks of the initial transcripts and of the syntheses of their life stories mitigated some of the drawbacks to using interviews.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned process proved to be effective in exploring the issue of educational leadership with Native American women. Many of the women who related their stories told me that they had benefited from reflecting on their lives. I believe that great wisdom was shared that can be passed on to future generations.

In terms of my experience as the researcher, I found their stories to be highly revealing, insightful, and inspiring. Together, the process and the stories incited my own internal search for meaning in my life. I found that I learned many lessons from these incredible leaders and resolved some long-standing unresolved internal conflicts. I had not anticipated this transformation when I began the process.

Needless to say, it is somewhat ironic that I was surprised and resistant to the power that I hoped these stories would hold for others.

Through the use of qualitative methods, particularly focused on narrative, I have attempted to depict accurately the world of native women, "the drudgery, the joys, the prestige, the status, [and] the love which accrued to them because of the fulfillment of [various] roles" (Medicine, 1978, p. 16). I have attempted to elicit the voices of Native American women from a particular generation who have led educational change, and in doing so, I have kept a promise to a very special elder, Dr. Beatrice Medicine. The women's stories are shared in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE PORTRAITURES

*Look to the basketmaker!
There is a special elegance to her work
A pride unspoken, but not unfelt
Symbolizing a rich heritage
Brilliant, complex
Filled with meaning and life.*
(From Mary Adams. Mohawk Basket Maker, 1996)

Introduction

In the past 30 years, scores of Native American women have led efforts to change the formal education of Native Americans. Not only have they transformed formal education systems that affect Native Americans, they also have influenced **how** leadership can be defined and exercised to create educational change. In this chapter, I present portraits of the personal/professional and private/public lives of the Native American women leaders who participated in this study, in their own words. Although there is a special elegance to their work, few people in mainstream American society know about it, understand it, or recognize its value.

Indeed, the paucity of research that exists rarely goes beyond the most visible political leaders. Little is known about the leadership efforts during the period that



Stein (1996) referred to as the era of a renaissance in Indian education, the years from 1970 through the present. To fill this information void, I focused on Native American women leaders who are part of the post-World War II baby-boom generation and who have worked successfully for change in education. The leaders in this study and others like them are often the ones whose leadership work has been overlooked by scholars and experts in mainstream society. Even though their leadership has long played an important role in native communities, they rarely have been acknowledged, much less deemed important, by people outside their own communities. In many ways, the Native American women's leadership approaches recorded in this study are not new, as they are grounded on long-established native cultural ways of living and leading change. I believe that native ways of leadership hold the potential to benefit others who are actively searching for new leadership approaches, especially ones that are responsive to diverse groups with disparate needs, and that work within groups where cooperation, rather than domination, is needed.

Before I interviewed the women in this study, my own knowledge and experience confirmed that there are many native women who have empowered others to bring about social change. As I am fortunate to have worked on various national committees and initiatives that focused on Native American issues, I have become familiar with the leadership expertise of many native women. I have experienced first-hand how many of them have valued, empowered, and transformed individuals and groups while moving them toward various goals. I have

witnessed the ability of these women to help large groups accomplish certain outcomes. Like the work of a basketmaker, the work of these leaders is brilliant and complex, yet pride about the outcomes often has been unspoken although certainly not unfelt by either the leaders or others involved in the efforts.

From the start, I did not want to conduct another study focused on the deficits of the "downtrodden Indian." Similarly, it was not my intention to romanticize the women's leadership experiences. When I wrote this dissertation, there was a plethora of romanticized literature about native women's experiences, mainly written by nonnative women describing the native's mystical powers, making it seem as if on some starry night, a crystal was left on her blanket signaling to her that she was going to be a great leader who could do superhuman things in order to bring peace and justice to the world. Instead, it was my plan to highlight the women's challenges and accomplishments, as well as their obstacles and pains. In the telling of the stories, life events illuminated how leading change had often been extremely difficult for these women. Yet somehow each woman managed to overcome the barriers and create positive educational and social change for her Native American community.

Before I present the portraiture, and in alignment with my own cultural ways, I must apologize to the elder leaders who read these portraiture for not including their stories. I also want to give thanks to the preceding generation of heroic women leaders who led the way for our generation. These exemplary women led when there was less of a critical mass to join forces and when the road to change was

even rougher for both Native Americans and women. Among their ranks I include incredible role models such as Audrey Shenandoah, Beatrice Medicine, Henrietta Mann, Helen Schierbeck, LaDonna Harris, Wilma Mankiller, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Rayna Green, Clara Sue Kidwell, Minerva White, Hazel Dean John, and many of our grandmothers, mothers, aunts, older sisters, and cousins, to name just a few.

As I began the interviews, I reflected on what Denzin (1989) wrote:

We must remember that our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those that have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study. These documents will become testimonies to the ability of the human being to endure, to prevail, and to triumph over the structural forces that threaten at any moment to annihilate all of us. If we foster the illusion that we understand when we do not or that we have found meaningful, coherent lives where none exist, then we engage in a cultural practice that is just as repressive as the most repressive of political regimes. (p. 83)

I also discovered that "it is not unusual when women interview women for the conversations to evolve and meander in a manner different from what has been outlined in the interview protocol because that is how women talk with one another" (Colflesh, 1996, p. 81). When the interviewees began meandering, I found that it was difficult to interrupt because, so often, the stories grew richer as the individuals were allowed to choose what was relevant to their conceptualization, development, and practice of leadership.

The editors of Interpreting Women's Lives (1989) described these stories as truths of experiences and explained:

We come to understand them only through interpretations, paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and the world views that inform them. . . . Our own place in the world plays a part in our interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them. . . . Shared stories provide significant ways of understanding the world. . . . To understand one's own life in light of these stories is to be a full participant in a particular culture. (p. 261)

My interpretations were from a Native American woman's perspective because that is who I am. I come from a multitribal background and consider it good fortune that my own world view has been shaped by all of the tribal nations with which I am affiliated, including Seneca-Cayuga and Eastern Cherokee. Therefore, the lens through which I viewed these women's lives was not tribal specific, but rather multitribal related. As it turned out, all but one of the leaders I interviewed came from a multitribal, multiracial, or multicultural background, even though they typically identified themselves as being a member or having the world view of a particular tribe. This situation was not intended, but once I recognized it, there were important implications, especially for my own discoveries about myself. These will be discussed later in this study.

During this process of interpretation, as Brayboy (1990) pointed out, it was my hope that these women's truths would inform my realities as well as others'. As I chose to view their stories from my Native American woman's multitribal perspective, I wanted not only to share their experiences with others, but also to learn about and reflect on my own experiences. They were the source of my understanding of their truths, as well as my own. These women were my teachers!

Presented in this chapter are the edited leadership portraits of six Native American women educational leaders. During the interview process, it immediately

became evident that segments about leadership that appeared in each story could not be separated from the woman's life and who she is as a person. As Ayers (1989) indicated, "To study a piece of the life experience, to isolate a variable, to narrow one's gaze—these are precisely the things that can kill so much of meaning and render a study less than useful" (p. 20).

I have entitled my dissertation "Weavers of Change" because the native women I chose to profile all have drawn on their tribal cultures as sources of inspiration and strength in order to weave shared visions of improved education and quality of life for Indian peoples. Their leadership life stories are a reflection of their cultural, historical, and social contexts.

As Seidman (1991) suggested, I chose to identify the women by selecting for each one a pseudonym that does her justice. This was not an easy process for a number of reasons. One, although I personally wanted to identify each woman by name and publicly recognize her leadership contributions, I had indicated in my letters of invitation that I would make every attempt to guarantee the participants' anonymity; therefore, I wanted to honor that commitment. Two, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality is difficult because the Native American population is relatively small and the network of educational leaders and educators even smaller, making it relatively easy to know others who are working in the field. Three, many of the institutions or programs that these leaders are associated with are unique, often one of a kind or one of only a few, thereby making them potentially visible to other native educators who are knowledgeable about the field of Indian education.

Four, when I asked the respondents to identify a pseudonym, they chose three types of names: (a) the native counterpart of the famous baby-boomer, i.e., Jane Doe, as being Jane Deer; (b) a name too closely aligned to their real name, i.e., Cary Mead instead of Mary Sneed; or (c) a takeoff on their own name or a stereotypical Indian name such as C. Horsefly or Lakota Giveaway. Their sense of humor was evident from the very beginning of the interviews and persisted throughout the process. It confirmed findings from previous studies (Esmailka, 1994; Green, 1983), as described by Bataille and Sands (1984): "Humor is a central characteristic of Indian women, both traditionally and in contemporary life. It tempers the burden of responsibility they bear individually and collectively" (p. 19).

To resolve the pseudonym issue, I decided that I would use the idea that a very dear friend gave to me and not use anonymous names. I did consider using the women's Indian names or the English translations because they are beautiful—One Who Likes to Pray, Bright Eyes, Golden Eagle Woman, Star Woman, Evergreen,—but not all of the women had been given their names yet. As I saw each of these women as a weaver who had drawn upon her native traditions to imbue the future with vestiges of the past, I decided to name each woman after a fiber, wood, vine, or leaf that native groups use in weaving baskets that are symbolic of their cultures. These fibers, woods, vines, and leaves vary in terms of texture and durability, and their functionality often varies from one generation to the next, as does leadership. Willow, sweet grass, cedar, river reeds, ash, deer hair, porcupine quills, sage, birch bark—they all have been used to create beautiful vessels that

embody our past, provide function for today, and reinforce our culture for tomorrow. Also, I attempted to capture the essence of the respondent's concept of leadership in her title.

Willow—President of a tribal college.

Sweet Grass—Education director employed in a federal agency that oversees Native American affairs throughout the nation.

Horse Hair—Officer of a national native-controlled nonprofit organization focused on holistic community development that includes education.

Cedar Roots—Superintendent of K-12 schools that are either tribally controlled or controlled by the federal government in a region where there are large enrollments of native children.

Quill—Cabinet-level director of cultural programs for a municipality with a large population of Native Americans.

Birch Bark—President of a multitribal, multicampus native-controlled private college.

I listened to the interviews many times during my long winter commutes to work. I also reread the transcripts repeatedly. In spite of this, there were many instances in which it seemed that I was hearing or reading something for the very first time. I found myself writing many journal entries to sort out personal and professional issues and leadership concerns facing our community. I asked myself many questions about what my own life story had to reveal. This entire process made me question my cultural identity, my passion to make a difference, how I

approached work-related issues, what my relationships with other people meant, how I should define or redefine my life priorities, and how I fulfilled the various roles that are important to me--mother, wife, daughter, aunt, sister, niece, friend, program director, and student--as well as the many additional roles that many native women are expected to fulfill in today's world. These roles include transmitter of culture, economic provider, caretaker of children and elders, community activist, spiritual being, restorer of ceremonies, and leader. It is my hope that reading the stories of these incredibly strong women will cause others to ask themselves similarly important questions.

Constructing Leadership Portraits: In Their Own Voices

I conducted interviews with each of the women, using elements of a model for the study and practice of leadership as developed by Astin and Leland (1991). These researchers viewed leadership as integral to social change and as "a creative process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (p. 8). In their model, Astin and Leland identified four key elements that must be examined in order to understand the meaning of leadership: (a) the leader; (b) the context within which leadership takes place, (c) the leadership processes, and (d) the outcomes or the desired change.

Driven by a desire to counteract the popular belief that women do not possess the necessary attributes for leadership, Astin and Leland expanded the concept of

leadership by conducting a study to explore women's experiences in leading change for women, mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. They took a departure from previous studies that had focused on the effects of leader behavior on followers by focusing instead on the experiences of women leaders while they were growing up and exploring the factors that prompted their interest in social change. In addition to the personal characteristics of the leader, whom Astin and Leland (1991) defined as "a catalytic force, or someone who by virtue of her position or opportunity empowers others toward the collective action in accomplishing the goal or vision" (p. 8), they also looked at the processes of leadership, such as the skills and strategies that the leader employs, the challenges of leadership, and the outcomes.

Through their study, Astin and Leland (1991) expanded knowledge of women's leadership and identified three significant factors that contribute to leadership accomplishments: collective action, passionate commitment, and consistent performance. I believed that similar factors would emerge as significant in the lives of Native American women who had led educational change during the last three decades. I used Astin and Leland's model because it provided a framework for understanding the driving forces in leadership behavior and illuminating tensions on personal, institutional, social, and cultural levels.

I reviewed the narratives and other interview data, and framed a portraiture for each individual, employing the Astin and Leland model as my guide. The portraitures allowed me to transform my learning from the interviews into telling a life story. Mishler (1986) wrote that telling stories is one major way that human beings

have devised to make sense of themselves and their social world. In Seidman's (1991) words, "The story is both the participant's and the interviewer's" (p. 92). It is in the participant's own voice, but it is crafted by the interviewer from what the participant said.

Benham (1997) recommended portraiture as a methodology for sharing the voices of native women educational leaders that have been hidden from the world, but offer solutions for learning and living in an increasingly diverse world. Like other native women scholars, Benham reinforced the need to speak out against stereotypes and instead

to affirm the femininity, warrior voice, and centrality of balance and motion in native women's lives by sharing their stories. These are the stories similarly told by Beatrice Medicine, Paula Gunn Allen, and Leslie Marmon Silko—the dynamic stories of cultural and social pain, resilience, change, and lasting power. Portraits counter the princess and savage myths with clarity, dignity, depth, and hope. (p. 1)

Constructing each leadership portraiture in a similar fashion afforded consistency and clarity for the reader. The portraits are, however, as Ayers (1989) explained, "more than descriptions of facts and events. They are interpretations, chronicles of meaning, reconstructions of experiences in light of the present. They seek essential truths in lived lives" (p. 20). Portraits reveal patterns and themes that help one understand something that is complex and holistic, and needs to be understood in its broadest social/cultural/historical context, such as leadership. To understand leadership, then, it must be captured in the action of individuals' lives, and as Ayers wrote, "in the ever-changing framework of the construction of personal meaning by the participants themselves" (p. 20).

Denton (1974) pointed out that life stories give us clues to the present as well as hints of the future, and they are not assumed to be the last word because "mystery can never be fully disclosed" (p. 113).

Storytelling

Willow's Story

As president of a tribal college, Willow is a leader in the tribal-college movement, which promotes native-run colleges on or near reservations. Fewer than 10% of Native American high school graduates attend non-Indian colleges, and of those students, fewer than 10% earn degrees. Tribal colleges have increased the percentages tremendously by respecting students' geographic and cultural ties. As with the 29 other tribal colleges scattered throughout the United States, standard academic classes alternate with lessons in tribal language and culture, which elders often teach. When this college opened in 1980, it operated out of a garage insulated with blankets, and teachers taught classes around homemade tables and shared teaching materials that were pasted on the backs of cereal boxes. Willow joined the college in 1982; it is now a fully accredited junior college with more than 300 full-time students.

Willow was born in 1949 on an Indian reservation in the Northwest. Her own family background reflects a multigenerational and intercultural interest in American Indian education. Her paternal grandfather attended a boarding school in California, which is still operated today as a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, and married a woman from his tribe. Willow's father was a master teacher, principal, and



coach who also served as a Jobs Corps director. Her mother, also a teacher, is a mixture of German and English heritage—as she says, “coal-miners’ stock.”

On her maternal side, Willow’s white great-grandmother met her Native American grandfather while working at a mission school for Indians that was open from 1886 to 1897. The school was a pioneer effort to educate American Indians. However, it was not until about 1927 that the first Indian from Willow’s tribe graduated from any high school.

Today, Willow is happily married to John, a spiritual leader from her tribe. She has two children of her own, and her husband has children from a previous marriage. She is tightly connected to her family, tribe, and the Indian education community. Willow has succeeded in many roles by mixing a talent for action with a genius for compassion. Willow has also been the recipient of a number of prestigious national awards. Being fourth-generation well educated is unusual among Indian people. She has worked to make it much more common. Willow’s commitment to make a difference in the quality of Native Americans’ lives through education began in her childhood and has been fueled by her energy and spirit throughout her life. Like the willow, which is strong yet flexible, Willow has survived many tests, has yielded to forces that would destroy others, and has always sprung back. This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. Education is freedom-giving! It’s not a mandate, but rather a voluntary exploration and discovery of yourself and your place in the world. Education is a potent weapon in reservationwide struggles



against alcoholism, poverty, and despair. No one is immune. These struggles have touched your family, and they have also touched mine.

Our lives are often riddled by alcoholism. It rips us to shreds. It has to do with lack of education, of good health conditions and housing. It has to do with hopelessness because of poverty. If people have an occupation that has meaning to them, not the ditch-digging job that somebody gives them, they'll have more reasons to stay sober and to see that their living is contributing to a good life for their kids or their spouse and to the strength of their community. I have always known that education is the key. We must work to make it a reality for many more.

My passion to make a difference began a long time ago, when I was in junior high school. The inequities in life that I would see between my family members, whom I loved and respected, and other people in other communities, mostly non-Indians or white people, in particular, really struck me.

I was very curious about the civil rights movement, too. I was in high school from 1963 to 1967, and it was a very turbulent time. I was impressed by the material on the civil rights movement and was looking at it from quite a distance because I was raised in Washington State. My parents had been teachers all those years, and they were always very curious about civil rights and equity in education, and what had made a difference in their lives. They wanted to pass on the goodness that had come their way, and they worked to bring about needed changes. Their commitment carries with it a tie to the past, a first-person tie to the past. Anyway, they would continue to advise us. I do not remember their commitment having anything to do

with real anger. I just remember that I had a real curiosity and an idea that I had something to do with that. Because I knew about it, I had a responsibility to do something about it.

I have never separated the knowledge from the responsibility to do something about it. If there was a message that my parents gave me in their lives, it was, first of all, that education really meant a great deal to their ability to help others, their ability to make a living, and their ability to make a difference. For both of them, being teachers and being involved in young people's lives, or the lives of people in the community, was extremely important. We were constantly involved in the community with people of different ages and so on.

My mom and dad had taken summer courses over their years of teaching in order to be recertified. They shared whatever they read with us, especially the study of American Indian people and their ways of life. One summer, I met one of their friends, an individual in the Department of Anthropology who was a specialist in culture change and what happens when cultures become either adjacent, or on top of each other, or diffuse into each other's culture. I found the various dynamics to be extremely fascinating and began to study what was happening in my own life. My mom, you see, is non-Indian; my dad is Indian. I also really wanted to take into consideration what was happening with my own tribe, even though I hadn't lived here a whole lot. I had lived here summers. So I was completely fascinated with the subject of culture change.

Being the oldest of four, I found that I liked, and was good at, being the big sister. It seemed like I always really wanted to be an adult so I could be contributing. I wanted to help. I wanted to participate. I got deeply involved in student politics. Even as an eighth grade, I campaigned heavily for the governor and the local senator and state senator. I was an active Young Democrat in high school. I didn't ever myself run as a candidate, but I was always the designer behind the scenes, helping design and helping work on campaigns. So many policies were changing in that period of time: dress codes, speech, access to education, and organizations, to name just a view.

I chose the college where I went because it didn't have Greek organizations because of the racial discrimination by Greeks at the time. I had a real class consciousness at that age and was not interested in associating with people outside my economic class. It wasn't long after I arrived at college that I became involved in dorm politics, and by the time I was a sophomore, I was vice-president of the dorm. The floor where I lived had always been able to really influence the elections. There were 800 women in our dorm.

In college, I became extremely interested in Spanish because I became more and more convinced that the new world—that is, the Western Hemisphere—is really Spanish speaking, and I felt interested in that. So I ended up taking 44 credits in Spanish, along with my degree in anthropology and a degree in sociology. I decided to do a winter quarter in Mexico. Well, our tribe had a claim, you know, all the land that we lost all through the various cessions of treaties. Each one of us received a

thousand dollars in claim money, and this was in 1961. My parents just put it in a savings account and said to each one of us kids, "When you get to a point where you decide what you want to do to spend this money, why, we'll do that." So I decided I wanted to do a quarter in Mexico.

I was curious by that time about the backgrounds of the cultures in Mexico, and I was really interested in the civilizations in Mexico, but also in meeting Indian people from Mexico. One of the things I saw was what poverty can do to people, and what kinds of differences there were in the classes there. I became very impressed with the imperialist politics or the colonialist politics that subject millions of Mexican people to abject poverty. I became aware that Indians weren't even fifth-class citizens in Mexico, and I was more than impressed with that. I was made more aware also that I had a whole lot of pride in who I was. It didn't matter, even if I was in a country of people who thought nothing of Indians. I knew exactly what I was saying when I'd talk about being Indian. I had pictures of my being Indian, and my family, and I was proud of that. The pride in who I was really firmed up during that experience. But also I developed a consciousness of Indian people, indigenous people beyond our borders.

While I was gone, my dorm sisters elected me president for the next year. So I came back and we went about all kinds of changes that particular year. Changes were just flowing around us, and it was a very, very turbulent time. I met up with other dorm presidents, and there was one other minority president among 21 dorms on this campus. He was a black man from Spokane, Washington, and was

president of a men's dorm that was filled with the track stars. He was a track star and a football player, had tremendous intellect, and was extremely into the civil rights movement—the idea of equity and equality—where it actually comes from, how it existed in our society. I became very good friends with him. Well, we engineered a campaign for him to run for student president.

Working with this man on a campaign was real interesting. It was a coalition building. We visited with the Peaceniks. We couldn't associate with the cowboys because they were also red necks and hawks (supporters of the Vietnam War). There was a small vestige of rich kids on campus who were kind of in the peace movement, and they were pretty much pro civil rights. There were a lot of people who were anxious to see Paul get elected.

Well, he won and we had a lot of work to do. We overturned a whole health system that was corrupt. We also managed to bring in a series of ethnic studies. The coalition that we had built, just the year that we were in, did an amazing number of things. I learned a lot in the process of campaigning. I think the skills that I learned were just amazing because I've only just been able to build on them since. I suppose I've suffered some major defeats. I know that I have, but I think there are some major building blocks there. I think it started with my parents, who were more than generous with all the knowledge that they had and always discussed how people behaved and how communities were organized. My mom and dad would work from the advice of their elders. I've really had a lot of things come my way, too,

like the loyalties and the friendships I built in the dorm that led me into new opportunities.

It's easy to underestimate the power of an undergraduate education, but I think it is a very powerful experience. It's a lot of times what keeps Indians out of the system, out of a lot of professions, and out of a lot of positions that they would otherwise really have influence in.

I was very fortunate to meet up with some tremendous people who cared about my getting an education. I left the campus, and I took a job in the governor's office at the state capital. It was called the Commission for Youth Involvement. Here, again, a lot of the skills that I had learned were really put to work in the state government. I didn't find it a very happy home for a young woman involved in party politics. You know, when a governor appoints someone, then you're really beholden to the governor, the parties, the fund-raising, and a lot of activities.

You entertain legislators, and there were expectations of me that were beyond my loyalties in terms of—you know how each of us has our boundaries? We'll work for certain causes, but for the sort of schmoozing that they were interested in our doing, particularly me as one of two young women in the office, like hostessing at cocktail parties, it was not anything I wanted to do. I had had almost no alcohol in my life, and I was not interested in the party scene. This business of party politics nearly drove me crazy. I didn't like it, and I left after the legislative session was over.

A friend of my dad's was a dean at a community college in the eastern part of the state. He knew that I had graduated and asked if I might be interested in a Student Special Services Trio Program counselor position. Lots of other Indian people have started with Trio programs. Right away, I saw people who were illiterate in one year go through all 12 grades, get their GED, and start their freshman year of college. I was just awestruck. I had never seen a community college before, and I went into a learning center with a woman who had designed all her own curriculum from scratch. I mean, she made flash cards from 3" x 5" cards, and she had all these wonderful ideas, just a completely homespun learning-resources encyclopedia. I worked in her lab, and we taught everything from math, to English, to biology, to psychology out of this learning-resources lab, and there were some lectures on the side. It was an incredibly creative experience and such an opportunity. I taught some Native American Studies classes and found that I had a lot of things to offer that little community college.

There have been many life situations that I went through that have strengthened my ability to handle tough situations. One example is when I was younger, got pregnant, and couldn't work any longer. The man I used to be married to, Dave (fictitious name), got a job at his reservation, so we moved up there. My son was born, and we lived there for a little less than two years, during which time Dave worked for about seven or eight months, when he lost his job. We were just destitute, and we had to go on welfare. Dave started really being strange and disappearing, and I was by myself. It was an amazing period of time. I was nursing

my baby, living on commodities, and butchering venison that my brothers-in-law were bringing to us. I was picking berries and doing everything I could to survive. I was really in desperate straits. The reservation was 35 miles from the nearest town. That was quite an experience. Even though Dave kind of fell off the wagon once he lost his job, it was really hard for him. It's hard, you know; it's so hard. I'm sure you've known these things.

So then I really had first-hand experience of what it meant to be on welfare and have to deal with social workers from the receiving end. I knew the infuriation, the entrapment, just the hopelessness of "What am I going to do for dinner tomorrow?" My kids ran out of shoes, and I'd have absolutely no money for like four months. We never, almost never, left our house because I couldn't dress them. I was making things out of rags from the missionaries or yardage they brought in for quilting. I even sewed moccasins for money. General Indian Assistance was like \$235 a month, and I was making bills for propane and my rent, but the social workers kept asking me, "Why are you on welfare?" I had two little ones, and I wanted so desperately to be a good mother. I finally just decided to make up my mind. I got a ride into the nearest town, and I applied for absolutely everything I could apply for. I never ran into such incredible racism in all my life! There were some racists who didn't even want a college graduate for as much as a bar maid or a motel maid. I was turned down for everything. I just couldn't believe it.

I finally got one interview for a legal aide to look into problems with child support for a three-county area that included two reservations, three counties, but

the tribes were kind of living everywhere in those three counties. They said some of the most incredible things to me in the course of that interview, like "Are your children sick?" "Do you have alcoholic relatives?" "Do you drink?" You know, just really stereotypical kinds of expectations that make you sick. So I decided that I was going to have to really set my sights on my profession again, that I had to look around the state and face that I would have to move. It all seemed so impossible because moving was so expensive, but I managed to wrestle away about \$400 from little bits and pieces of things that I could do. I was doing some educational evaluations for one of the tribes, and gradually I saved enough money so that I could move us. I applied for three jobs in a bigger city, and I was offered all three. I applied for a job at the university, and two jobs at the Indian Center. I made a decision, and we moved with just thousands of dollars in debt because our landlord hadn't made us pay rent for 15 months and I had big propane bills. As soon as I moved, energy assistance decided they didn't want to help me, so I had this huge propane bill I had to pay. Oh, gee, it was this giant amount. It was hard, but I managed to pay off my debts in about 18 months after I started working at the university.

My job at the university was in student recruitment and liaison to the tribes, except there was no money to travel. So I did a lot of work on the phones. Once the students came to campus, I was supposed to try to help them find housing and other support services. It's the same sort of position almost every educated Indian working off the reservation has ever had--you know, the old liaison position where

you do everything for everybody. You tutored them through hard classes and you counseled them through broken marriages. I really got into a lot of battered-spouse counseling at the time and tried to help as I saw lots of troubled lives.

I also became heavily involved in a practicum program. We got a small grant from one of the refineries, which gave us a small grant to fund students to buy clothes for an entry-level executive office position where they would spend a quarter in a mentoring relationship, at no cost to the company, at no cost to the agency. My job was to locate positions where seniors in every field could go and do a practicum, even though it was not particularly a part of their curriculum.

Nobody wanted to hire Indians. I couldn't believe how closed the community was! I never had doors slammed in my face, but I had lots of people go through long conversations and make giant excuses for why they didn't want Indians, even though they didn't have to pay a dime. The students were tremendous talents, people who were just so bright, so ready, so right for what this could do. Not a single private enterprise would hire them! I was partially funded by the foundation board, and you know how they have luminaries on the foundation boards. Well, this one was no different. I'd go to the foundation meetings, and these board members would say, "We will take you to our corporate heads and we can visit with them about a practicum for a young person." But nothing ever happened. The only placements that I could find were with the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It was so disgusting!

I became very involved in monitoring what was happening in student housing because there was no family housing at the university. In fact, there was a sociology practicum study that several students did that found that if you had an Indian name, you simply wouldn't get housing. I couldn't get housing! I looked for months for housing. The first house I got was through a friend. It was terrible—full-blood husband, dark children, half-breed wife, no luck! Indian name! I had the money in hand, and I couldn't find a house. Finally, my dad, who lived in another town at the time, worked with a lady who had a close associate who had a house that needed to be rented. That's how I finally got a house on the south side. Then we started life on the south side. There were three murders within a year within four blocks of my house.

Right at that time, my husband just lost all contact. He started beating on me and really being harsh on the kids. He's a Vietnam War vet and was exposed to Agent Orange way too much. He had respiratory ailments where he'd lose his breath in the night. He had night terrors, and he just drove us crazy. Finally, I asked him to leave. That was good because I was getting wild myself. I went into some really intensive spiritual counseling. I went to a spiritual counselor for the better part of a year.

Dave went off and embezzled some money and got into big trouble. Meanwhile, a job at my reservation opened up, and the tribal chairman came to visit with me. He offered me a job in adult education; I accepted and have been working

here on the reservation ever since. I divorced Dave, and for many years I raised my children as a single parent. I remarried and am extremely happy.

I always tried to continue my own educational pursuits, but fitting it into my life was extremely difficult. Although getting my Ph.D. was important, I could never seem to make my own goals a priority when there were so many more urgent things happening in our community and at the college. When I finally finished and graduated with my Ph.D., I wore my buckskin dress. I didn't think that graduation would be as emotional as it was. I was just so relieved to be done after being in school for more than 15 years! But I cried throughout the whole thing. I mean, I was just a wreck! Well, I just knew it would be great. When I came down that aisle and glanced up toward my family, my dad just kept waving; he was so thrilled. I thought, "This is wonderful," and then I'd start crying all over again.

For my graduation celebration, my husband and I had a feast, dance, and give-away and invited the entire tribe. He had a song made for me, and it was so powerful! He had an eagle fan made for me about six months before I got my degree. It's a work of art; it's just beautiful! We had all of my honorary doctorates brought in by one of my kids or my nephews and nieces, to show all the people. My husband, who is a Sundance leader, feels like the honors that I've achieved are like the honors of old times, that they are "a coup" by any other definition. He wanted the people literally to see them, and so then we put together a feast. We asked the district if we could give the feast that night, my family and his family. We had a huge give-away to my clan relatives. It was a big event. We made a little program, and

I condensed my résumé. I very seldom ask anyone to call me Doctor. See, everybody's known me all my life, anyway.

You know, some of the life experiences that I've had have made me more and more committed to the idea that we have to seek freedom, at least of the mind and heart, even if we don't have economic freedom. I mean, we can at least have the consciousness of freedom of the mind. No one can bind that up.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. I do see myself as a leader now, although I may not have seen myself as a leader years ago. I've been placed in a position where leadership is very, very important. I've been supported by the community to stay in this position for this many years. At times, it has felt lonely having to do a lot of hard things all by myself or with a couple of other people. There is certainly a quality of leadership that is important to this position, but it's by permission that I'm here. If I weren't exhibiting characteristics of leadership the way the community thinks of it, I wouldn't be here. I feel it's a permission to exhibit those qualities, to express those qualities and to carry one.

One of these qualities is persistence. You have an idea, you have an objective, you have a goal in mind, and you persist—you just do it! A lot of it also is just nuts and bolts. It's a matter of getting enough nuts and bolts to hold things together and then continuing to hold things together—for example, to put together classes, to bring together faculty, you know, the nuts and bolts of an institution. So it's not only the strategy of how to get those things together, but to generate the resources, to operate the classes, to get the curriculum going each quarter, to figure

out how to build tables and how to get the material, how to get the money to buy the material. It's the figuring out and then the doing.

I don't think that I'm as much of a dreamer as I am the "take a good idea and try to figure out how we do this and then see that it gets done." So I'm a doer. From the beginning there's been a lot of the just plain doing—the organizing of information on charts or the pulling people together in meetings. Sometimes people won't meet with one another unless they've been invited by me. I think that's one thing that happens. People will come to a meeting if you're the one who has invited them, or if you're there they think it's significant; so there's something about a presence.

There's also something significant about faith. Gathering the resources, gathering the talent can be difficult. Some people, with the expertise that we need, will come to this institution knowing that somehow I'm involved in holding it together, in keeping it moving forward. So there's faith there—I think there's faith in people, saying, "Well, I'll go there because I'll be treated all right there and I can express my talents and share my knowledge with students."

It's hard for me to understand when others call me a visionary. I don't see myself that way, and I'm a little fearful of that because maybe it's a little too powerful a term for me. I like to characterize myself as more a "feet on the earth" kind of person. Maybe it depends on how I see a visionary. I don't see myself as my own inspiration, so I don't see myself as self-inspired. I think of people who have inspired me. In turn, other people might not see that link. What I do is carry around lots of other people's visions, and often I interpret them somehow to others. It's then that

people will think they are my visions. It might be something that one of the chiefs said, it might be something that a grandmother said, or it might be something that a group of community people thought of as a need of our community in the future. I see all of these as sources of vision. So maybe you gather it all into one place, and then you begin to interpret it. I think that, in a way, I've been a grand interpreter by listening to people in the community who have needs, who express a need, or who may need a connection or some access. They need access to some resource or some information or some capacity or skill, and I've been able to interpret what it is they might need, at least in terms of an institution like this, the community college. Like I say, people are the sources of the vision. I'm not out there making this up on a lonely mountain top. I'm more of an intermediary on the receiving end of it. I suppose people might look and say, "Well, she's such a visionary."

My greatest strength is in being a translator of culture. I love to translate our culture to others. I can often translate to other Indians why non-Indians think and act as they do. I listen, I glean the essence, and I translate. This skill can be learned only through lifelong, experiential-based learning.

One of the things I've decided in dealing with non-Indians is that sometimes if you can build a relationship with people, it's better than confronting them on anything because they begin to have a sense of faith and trust in who you are as an Indian person. Once relationships are established, then maybe you have a foundation on which to speak or begin to educate. This is how I have dealt with one of the local school districts where many of our urban tribal members attend. Just to

get the teachers and administrators to begin to think that they need to change their behaviors requires that we build relationships with them. First, to address inservice training needs, the idea is we'll do two days now and two days next summer with the same group, and slowly get to the fact that now we're going to talk about how you meet the needs of the Indian students who attend your school.

I think sticking to something for a while when things get rough is one sign of personal success because there are lots of people who just sort of float around. But then, there's a guy who tells a fabulous story and is sought after for major clan events because he tells stories that are healing, that are informative, that are legendary, and he never really had a profession. Basically, he's kind of a bum and a cowboy, and he shoes horses when he feels like it, but he's considered remarkably successful because he uses his talent in a good way for the people.

I was really sarcastic about this man one time because I've known him to be sort of a womanizer, and my husband said, "Well, you know, let me tell you about his stories, let me tell you about his whole family. They are known for their storytelling, especially his grandfather and his father before him." We went to some clan events in homes--gatherings of 20 or 30 people--and he was there telling stories. He really was remarkable. I would say that he's a very successful man, but he doesn't have a pot to pee in, hardly.

I have had some formal-education experiences that have helped shape my thinking about leadership and education. The Kellogg Center at Montana State University funded a convocation of adult education scholars, and Peter McLaren



was one of 14 presenters. They asked three graduate students--I was one of them--to participate as presenters. We spent a week, and it was the most outrageous week! I mean, it turned my life around. It was terrific! It was great!

In order to turn our communities around, it will take an amazing amount of effort for us to relieve ourselves of the cages we sometimes put ourselves in. People have no idea how bound they are to their concepts of who they are and who other people are. Ronald Takaki has had a lot of impact on me, as has Paulo Freire. They have been able to characterize concepts in such a way that it lights a light bulb for me. People need to begin to say, "I really need to reexamine this; I need to be aware that I've lulled myself to sleep in a cage, and I need to get out of it."

I've always been influenced by some metaphors. When our Chief Plenty Coups said "Education is your most powerful weapon. With education you are equal, and without it you're a slave," he was referring to the bondage thing. You know, being bound by ignorance, being a slave, losing your way of life--these are things we must consider. In his day, if you were the victim, you became a snake; you lost your loved ones, you lost everything. For him to make that metaphor is pretty powerful, so I tie these metaphors together. It's really important for people to understand the power of education, the power of empowerment, being empowered by one's own vision and dream. I also think that people are so despondent over education. They don't understand its value in their own lives, or in anybody else's.

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. The turnover rate of leadership is incredible, not just at tribal colleges, but in all of Indian country, in tribal

governments, and in other types of institutions. People burn out really easily. Our approach is very family based, and as a result, we often become way too kindred, too connected to the issues. The hardest thing I ever had to do, though, was handling a tough personnel situation at a national organization where I serve on the board of directors. When I see something that needs to be righted, I have to address it. In this situation, though, it was really hard for many reasons that I'm not at liberty to discuss. What I can say, though, is that it was a very difficult situation to have to handle because of our tight community and close relationships.

Today, some things in this state have changed for the better, but there are some really harsh things, too, things that just hurt me when I hear about them. In the city that is nearest to our reservation, my son and daughter have both experienced discrimination. They have been refused service in restaurants, kicked out of places, followed, and detained for shoplifting. It's still not a nice place, and we have a long way to go. We've had experiences in the last two years of Ku Klux Klan information being distributed and skin heads making threats. People have been pulled from their cars and beaten at convenience stores, and called prairie niggers. We actually have had huge meetings in the schools on the reservation, where we talked to the kids about not going anywhere alone, going only with your buddies, and keeping your nose out of other people's business, being safe, and letting your family know where you are. It saddens me to realize that, in some places, there has been little or no progress in the past 30 years.

However, when I stop to reflect, I realize that, in many ways, we've made great progress, like the establishment of our own college that works to preserve our cultural ways of life. It hasn't been easy, though, as we've had some real struggles. Several summers we had to lay each other off. We voted to lay each other off, and we had no salaries for three or four months. My kids and I lived in a cabin with a wood stove, in a very small town. We even did our bathing in the river! All that really contributes to some pretty strong character, but it's not a bit different from the stories of the rest of the people in this institution, you know. That's where most of them came from. We were all laid off, but we still worked. Also, the staff here is an amazing group of people.

Achieving accreditation was another tough issue because it was difficult to translate our culture to conform to their standards. They couldn't understand why we saw some of our elders as professors, as scholars, and why my salary was the same as that of faculty. To them, this was poor management.

To be able to handle all the challenges, I pray a lot, and I think that my relationship with the Creator has helped me survive. My family has helped me a lot, too. My mom and dad have both been in educational administration and teaching. They've been very helpful, and now they live relatively nearby.

Because of the tribal culture, I've had the luxury of wonderful advisors since I came here to work in 1975. I still call those advisors up; I still talk to them. Those relationships are as fresh as they ever were. I'm also here with a system of built-in advice, right here where a lot of the context is well known by these advisors. For

instance, if I had a personnel problem with an individual, I would have the opportunity to go to one of my elder aunts and I would tell her exactly who it was. I would say this is the situation, and she would know the nature of the family, who might be encouraging the person to take up an issue, what has worked with the individual in the past, perhaps even with members of his or her family.

It sounds odd, but we know each other by families, and families have a way of operating in the community. Some get mad really fast, but they get over it. Some people will be mad for ten years and never forget, and the rest of the family will be mad with them. Some people don't understand things very well, even though in some other areas they have tremendous expertise. Some don't want to be bothered to understand things. So there are family characteristics to consider, and in this regard I've been able to learn patience and understand the character of people on a grander scale. You could say it's like having personnel consultants, but these are advisors who are well-versed in the people who are here, with knowledge of how to work in the community and operate effectively. So it's been very helpful.

The dean has been here as long as I have, and together we have a very effective partnership. I'm a little bit quicker to judge people than the dean is. She has a real talent for saying, "Let's think about what this person is doing from the position of standing in their shoes. Let's think about what they must be thinking about, what's really pressing them, what seems to be motivating them to make this request or take this perspective." I've really been helped with that, so I don't sit here all lonesome and blue, trying to figure things out.

There's a set of rules that I've generated for myself. Nothing can be all that serious that it can't wait for a day to have a little more deliberation. I often pray for calmness, and for not hating anything. If my reaction is a hateful one, I know that is probably not a good place to be in my state of mind because it's too hard on your heart, and it's too hard, probably, on anybody involved. What I pray for is that I can be calmer and more analytical, that I can be more patient with others and myself.

Also, I study a lot. Right now I'm really interested in religious expression here, so I'm studying avidly. I'm reading everything I can get my hands on, and I'm trying to think about how my family and I are expressing our religious beliefs. Last winter, the issue I studied was learning effectiveness.

I try not to take my work home, and that has preserved more balance because I could do this job 24 hours a day. In some respects, I feel bad about it because, when the kids were younger, they would be in bed by eight. At eight o'clock, I'd get out my books, and I'd work all night on some aspect of the curriculum or something. I don't think it was really healthy for me to do, although I'm sure that the college benefited from it. I didn't know a lot when I was younger about when I was effective, and nighttime is not an effective time for me to do much. Now I know that early morning is really good, and I can do some good things until about six or six-thirty; after that, I'm not good for much.

Staying balanced is so important. My family's got to come first at this point in my life. It's hard setting priorities, although I do try to perceive when and where my presence is absolutely necessary in the tribal college education movement,

whether it's here at this particular college or on the national level. I haven't always been necessary. There are some times when I certainly have been, though, when there was absolutely no one else who could have done a certain thing that needed to be done. This has been one of the most demanding years in that regard. I came to a point where I decided, not only did I need to be at home more, but also I saw other people picking up the ball on the national level. Others were stepping in to assume responsibilities that only a few of us had been able to handle. I think of things more as institutions, I guess. I don't mean to call people fixtures, but there are certain people in tribal colleges who stand firmly for something and who have always served as leaders. We all know what their special talents are, and we've come to depend on them to be there at the right time.

It's an odd thing. When you're a community member in our communities, you come to realize what your role is, what your talents are, when you're needed, and when you can pull back. It seems like we all do this so well. We're really complex creatures. One of the things that I think is happening in the Indian community is that all the leaders are fully participative in their communities as family members, as tribal council members, as religious participants, and as leaders in other capacities, so it's very complex and sometimes overwhelming. What we bring to the educational movement is a function of all of that. In the tribal college community, when one of us presidents has had a harsh year, we step in for that one and let him or her heal, take a break, or whatever he or she needs to do. When someone gets out of control, we all try to pull the person back into the circle.

I've had harsh years, like the year that our current chairman got elected. She took after the college and nearly tore it down. There have been a couple of other times when it's been like that, when chairmen, leaders, a community member, or someone else will take a whack at the college.

Once I fired an employee for not coming to work for a long time. We tried everything to make him change, but it didn't work. Eventually, we put him on probation, and finally I fired him. He decided to take a resolution to the tribal council to have me fired for gross negligence. He made up all kinds of lies, and it was outlandish. Even my husband's sister got right in with this guy on the floor of the council. She called me a criminal and an embezzler. It was real, real painful. I just couldn't even believe it! Nobody believed it. Oh, it was horrible! I cried a lot. I just asked our staff to stay out of it, to have faith that the community would handle it. I reminded them that people knew the work we had done. There were people whose families came into the council to support me who have never been there since. The community support was so incredible, and the vote was in my favor. I never knew, until years later, that there were many other ways that people supported me through those tough times. I think that is another thing about our Indian communities. The support isn't always visible. You don't know how much support you have until a crisis occurs. A lot of people told me later that they had held sweat lodges for me or that they had had a prayer meeting in their church.

It often is difficult but critical to stay abreast of educational activity at the national level. I was a participant in a White House Conference in 1992. It was quite

an experience. I was amazed at the split between the reservation and the urban and Oklahoma Indians. California, Oklahoma, and urban Indians, whom we had always known in the context of the National Indian Education Association, voted against tribal rights and tribal control because they saw it as something that somehow eroded what they were doing. It was the biggest eye-opener I've had in Indian country besides some of the early things that happened to us tribal colleges. We lost everything, so far as I was concerned, because they had about 20 more delegates than we did. We lost everything that stood for tribal sovereignty, the essence of our relationship with the federal government.

Trying to have a voice outside of our world of Indian education has also presented challenges. One of the most frustrating experiences that I have had was serving on a panel during a teleconference on women's issues. I was so slow and so upset with my inability to react more quickly. I've found that many non-Indian women are fire-fighters, they're just so articulate and rapid with their responses. They are assertive and make sure they are heard! I just thought, "I'm not real suited to be here." I got really upset with myself because I do feel that I am fairly fast at responding, I'm fairly articulate, but that's among my profession, which is native educators. I didn't even begin to light a candle with those folks. They were just rapid fire! I, on the other hand, have to think about things, and by the time I had thought of a good answer, it was already ten topics too late! I hated how I presented on that panel with other women, even the women of color. The whole experience was just so shocking. Those women were really interesting, and it pointed out what

I think are some basic cultural differences. You see, we Native American women are taught to be more thoughtful, careful, and introspective before we speak because it's proven to be a wise thing to do. This rapid-fire stuff is not our way. Unfortunately, there isn't a lot of recognition of or respect for our way. I've had similar experiences on other national boards and commissions that I've served on. Sometimes people just think we're incompetent or, when we do speak up, that we're militant.

There have also been some very exciting challenges where we learned so much about ourselves as a result of trying to educate others about us. For example, Ernest Boyer, CEO at the Carnegie Foundation, invited us to go to New York to talk to him about tribal colleges. He just wanted to understand who we were way back when. I was one of the fortunate ones who was able to go, and it was just a phenomenal experience to have his attention. I was so wet behind the ears—oh, I cringe! They served us meals that were really elaborate, and it was during the time period when the kids and I could barely scrape things together. We were just pitiful! There were a lot of things I had never been around, never eaten, like exotic foods. We had some sort of a brandy dessert, and it was so powerful! I took one bite of it, and I said, "Whoaaa!" Oh, honestly! I mean, it came out before I could even get ahold of it, I was just so shocked! He must have thought we were truly hicks! I certainly was. In spite of this, he believed in us completely. After we got done with the Carnegie Report on Tribal Colleges, I thought he believed in us more than we did because he just knew we were doing the right thing. It was really amazing! Of

course, his son Paul did such a great job on that report, and we learned just as much about ourselves as others learned about us.

I actually think that educational administration is a very odd profession. You have to love it. You have to understand what its potential is to the purpose of your work. You have to really understand it or you would never, ever go near it. It's a very odd thing for people to be in education as administrators. In fact, most people aren't and never hope to be. In Indian country, I think it's even odder to find someone who loves administration. There are people who fall into it and do it, partly because it might be the best option they have and they want to find out if they can do it. But there's something about being willing to do entirely different things and being odd.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. My tribe has metaphors for many things, but one that is related to leadership is also related to family, clans, and tribe as one. It's related to the idea of tension that we both have talked about as being an important component of leadership and of life. Really, the two can't be separated. We liken life and thus leadership to the driftwood along a river. If you have ever seen a pile of driftwood along the river, it looks like it is a neat pile of wood that you should just go down and gather for your fire. But when you go to get it, it's so tightly interwoven that you can't even get one piece out. You have to saw it apart because it has been welded together so tightly. Even though the driftwood looks somewhat chaotic, it has been connected by pressure, the pressure of water and its constant flow. Water is essentially life--it flows and it pressures; whether it's good

water or bad water, whether it's high or low water, it pressures against that assemblage and makes it inseparable. Wind, water, any number of conditions help strengthen it, help mature it, beautify it, and then turn right around and test its strength, maturity, and beauty. Thus we characterize our world as "driftwood lodges." We use that metaphor to discuss what life brings. It's important to think of things metaphorically because it helps you sort things out. You come to understand important relationships.

What is most satisfying to me is seeing our students graduate. In fact, we have a warrior's entry at the graduation ceremony because we feel graduation is symbolic of a coup in the struggle of life, and now they're coming home victorious! They say anyone can be a great warrior, but if you have no fight to fight, then there's no story to tell. When there's no battle, there's no achievement to attain and no one can witness your bravery. So there has to be some trial to test and some witness to its strength. Without the test, it'll be just a group of individuals who are loosely bound together or loosely coupled.

They have this loosely coupled idea for colleges and universities. I don't know if you've ever studied that in administration, but there's one theorist who says that "colleges are held together, not by hierarchies but by loose couplings." If you looked at a college you'd see this tied to that, and that tied to that, and that tied to that--couplings all over the place. I think the tribal colleges are so much more than loosely coupled because we've had to fight long and hard for the freedom that education brings. This institution, I know, is much more tightly woven than a group

of professionals who are bound together simply because they've been hired to teach here. There's a whole lot more that binds us together than that. Needless to say, there are many trials to test or battles to fight because of the environment that would have us spin apart. We've just not had much friendliness in this environment, whether you're looking at resources, support, or congratulations. First of all, there is constant pressure from the community to offer even more courses. Even if you look at the achievement of our students, there's an immediate test. As soon as they get a job, there's a bunch of relatives who need help from them and kids who are hungry. There is constant pressure on them by their extended families. It's just a really adverse environment. It's difficult to deliver this idea to people if they haven't ever had to live in adverse conditions.

To train our next generation as leaders, we need to teach them the concept of the contrary warrior, the one who makes a deep, deep commitment despite everything else. I think you've heard of this man who's adopted his old high school's graduating class, which is now all black. He's devoted himself to paying their way through school and has said that his motto is the contrarian's motto: "To do the different, to do that which has not ever been done." We have to help our future leaders find their deep commitments and then encourage them to go out and be contrary warriors, to do that which has never been done. You know, and I know, there are so many battles out there that need to be fought, many deeds that need to be done. We need strong leaders.

How does a person know when his or her leadership has made a difference?

I think that the community has certain levels of recognition for leadership that's been effective. It's more of a community determination, and it depends on what helps the community. It's probably a very generous and open definition of what helps our community.

I think there are also some American Indian administrators who might not be defined as leaders because they're technicians and their doing is just something to do. No commitment or care is given to one's duty to serve the community. Sometimes they don't even know why they're there or if there is something more they could be doing for the community. It's kind of a riddle to me. I think a lot of the people who are successful leaders never set out to be. In fact, I don't think that anyone ever sets out to be a successful leader! It just evolves.

There is a different definition of who a leader is in our communities. Native Americans are relatively selfless. The more selfless you are, the more successful you are as a leader. The more you devote yourself to others, the more people become impressed with you. In our culture there is a quality that the Creator gives people, and that's His prerogative. It's really interesting to try to grasp that quality. People will say, "There's that woman who has medicine," meaning she has something that helps the people, or helps her family, or helps the children. You can't actually put your finger on that quality, but you know it's something.

You know it's an entity so we recognize it. We know that it can also be taken away, given to someone else, or leave if you're not careful, if you're too negative, or

if you're not respectful—basically, if you're not caring for it in the proper manner. This could mean caring for yourself, caring for others, caring for the future and for the community. So it's an entity that has its own existence. You're just sort of a receptacle or a host for the medicine. I'm kind of an idiot for optimism. If troubles were going to pull me down, I'd have been down about 25 years ago.

Quill's Story

Quill is a Comanche woman who was born in Oklahoma. Her mother is one of the most beloved national leaders in the native community and is known for her ambassador style of leadership. Quill is a leader in her own right. Her passion is to secure social justice for people from disenfranchised groups.

Quill wrote one of the landmark pieces of legislation that protected the spiritual and religious rights and freedom of Native Americans. She also served as president of one of the most innovative Indian postsecondary schools in the nation. Under her leadership, an endowment fund was established, and plans to build a new campus were under way. Unfortunately, Quill's experience was not unlike those of other brilliant visionaries. Her ideas were ahead of their time, so she chose to resign.

Quill is currently the Director of Cultural and Recreational Services for a large city government in the Southwest. An enrolled member of the Comanche Nation, Quill graduated from Radcliffe-Harvard (magna cum laude) and Stanford Law School before serving in the 1970s and 1980s, first as an attorney for a commission reviewing American Indian policies and then as a legislative assistant for Indian

matters for a U.S. senator. Her next post was as counsel to a U.S. Senate Committee, followed by a position at the U.S. Department of Energy, and then as development director at New Mexico State University. For nearly five years, she served as president of a national college devoted to American Indian art.

In addition to her formal employment, Quill has served on numerous commissions, boards, and leadership committees, including the founding board of directors for the National Institute for Women of Color. She has served on the New Mexico Women's Foundation. Among her numerous special honors, Quill has been named to the Good Housekeeping Magazine's One Hundred Young Women of Promise and has received the New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women's 1992 Trailblazer Award.

After many years with significant career positions in federal and state government, Quill has been working in a Cabinet position with a progressive city government. According to her current vita, in her position, Quill oversees a nationally ranked zoo, an aquarium and botanical garden, a municipal museum of both history and fine arts, a hands-on science museum, a 15-branch city library system, two theaters, and a special-events division that produces, among other things, seven outdoor concerts, each of which attracts crowds of more than 30,000 people. She also oversees a recreation department that operates swimming pools, tennis courts, playing fields, and even a Triple-A minor-league baseball stadium. Quill has operated effectively on the theoretical level of government in the federal and state arenas, but she has found that the hands-on work at the local level of

municipal government can be especially satisfying with immediate results. This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. When I was growing up, I actually considered myself weird and different from other people. But I think I had a lot in common with other baby-boomers, including an attitude about freedom and political action. I started that kind of thinking a lot earlier than most of my generation. I remember I was very involved in what was called a "honcho group" when I was growing up, a group that worked to integrate my hometown. Because my parents often hosted the group meetings, I was involved, even though I was only 12 or 13 at the time. I can remember, for example, that the cool hang-out for junior high schoolers was this little pizza place, but it was segregated. All my friends wanted to go there, but I refused to go, and they all thought I was very weird.

I was an activist from the time I was a little kid. My dad had me out on the street corners at seven, passing out campaign literature. That was also thought of as sort of the family business. Unlike a lot of political families, where the father goes off and does his work and the family's not involved, in native culture, children are always involved in what the adults are doing, which is not like how non-Indian kids are raised. Unlike other political wives, my mother was very personally involved. We were out there handing out campaign literature from a very young age.

When I was a kid, part of the family value was standing up for justice and fairness. I would always stick up for kids who were being bullied, even by the

teachers or the principals. I would go home and complain. I mean, we just don't stand for injustice.

I was tracked as a smart kid, even though I had various difficulties. I was saved from dyslexia by being intelligent and having two parents who had two different effects on me. One was my father, who had very high expectations and demands, and I was trying to meet those demands. Conversely, my mother had had the same experience. Even though she didn't have a label for it, she knew what she had gone through, and she had ways of coping to help me survive. One survival skill was charming your teacher and convincing her that you were brilliant. It didn't really matter how you performed because of the Pygmalion effect. Her expectation that I was brilliant led her to give me good grades, whether I actually deserved them or not.

As a Comanche, we know how to figure out people, figure out what they want, and figure out what hoops they're asking you to jump through. Being able to figure these things out is a great life skill. Figuring out people is what leadership is about. It's absolutely a miracle.

As for my spiritual orientation, I consider myself a practitioner of the Comanche religion. It's something that is important to me, and it's something that is integrated into my life in a way that is ongoing, but it's not something that I am outward about. I don't consider myself extremely knowledgeable about it, and it's something that's hard to describe in English.

Significant adults in my life, other than my parents, include my great-grandmother and, to a lesser extent, my great-grandfather. They were both very important to me. My grandmother, on the other hand, was a classic lost-generation Indian. She was divorced twice, married non-Indians both times, and was kind of the 1920s flapper. She was a gorgeous woman who drove a red Oldsmobile. She worked as a cook in the Indian Health Service for 25 years before she retired. She had a very non-Indian-food diet. She ate refined flours and sugars, which, of course, was not a traditional diet. This type of eating style was a factor that caused her to have hardening of the arteries when she was in her early sixties.

I was very fortunate that my great-grandfather practiced traditional medicine. He raised my mother to speak Comanche when she was growing up. My great-grandmother was a Christian convert, so there was always that tension between religious systems in the family. My mother, in her gentle, nonconfrontational way, rejected Christianity and went with the traditional side of the family.

My immediate and extended family on my native side are very close, and I'm tightly connected to them and my tribe. Because I'm fairly light skinned, people, particularly white people, have a hard time understanding why I think of myself as Indian. Sometimes even people of color say to me, "Why did you choose to be Indian rather than white when you could have been either?" I never felt like it was a choice. I felt like I was chosen to be Comanche; it was never that I chose to be Comanche.

I was always really close to the Comanche side of my family. I always felt very loved and doted on. You know, Comanches love to spoil children. I say spoil, but what I mean is they pay a lot of attention to children and are very loving and affectionate. I always felt very good about being around Comanche people. I really felt nurtured by the Comanche side, and it was always a very warm feeling. Smells, I loved the way my great-grandmother smelled! I can still remember it. I felt like I was a cherished child, but I don't know if I really was because they's the way they made all children feel.

My father's people were very racist; they're racist against Indians, and they were not very close. They're very intelligence, and there are a lot of admirable things about them, but they are not a close-knit family. They are very interesting people, but not people whom I ever felt were very accepting of me because I was the oldest and they didn't ever approve of my parents' marriage. I remember my grandmother, for example, calling my mother a "gut eater." So I never felt connected to them.

My passion to create social change definitely came from my family background. Part of it is the value system of Comanches. One of the main values that I think is part of the Comanche culture, and not necessarily of other native cultures, is flexibility. We are very eclectic. We're very flexible. We like new things. We like adventures. We're very oriented toward trying new things. I think that's one of the reasons why we're highly educated among tribes. We also survived the transition from traditional culture to reservations because of our ability to adapt.

Our culture is based on a strong value system. Knowing your culture is knowing how to behave, what the proper protocols are, how you treat people, what your relationship is to others. I always felt connected to everybody. In Comanche culture, I knew who I was and how I was connected and how people were connected to me.

Yet when I was growing up, there was always a conflict of values in my house because I had a white father and a Comanche mother. Here's an example of how values conflicted. On my white side, you had to show you were proud and you were not poor; therefore, it was important to turn people down if they offered you food because you were not so poor you had to accept food. If someone said, "Here's some food," you'd have to say, "No, thank you." When they offered again, you said, "No, thank you" again. If they offered a third time, it was all right to accept. But I mean it, you had to be very careful about it.

The non-Indian side always felt very uncomfortable about getting gifts, that whole process of getting gifts. It was like, you know, "Why do you hate me? I never gave you anything." I can remember my dad saying that as if it were Confucius saying that! To them, gift giving and receiving created a sense of indebtedness that was a negative thing. This feeling of indebtedness made you feel obligated.

In contrast, in the Comanche culture, you could have just eaten a 12-course dinner, but if someone offered you food, you said, "Yes, I'd love to have some!" You never refused; you had to accept immediately. Generosity is an important native

value. Part of the generosity making a gift was being able to receive gifts as well as to give them. Giving was very important then and still is very important to me.

I never think of things as being linear. I synthesize information instead of analyzing it because of my Comanche culture.

In Comanche culture, you are always very respectful of older people and pay a lot of attention to them. On the non-Indian side, you are expected to do errands for people but not much more. As long as you are productive as an older person, you are respected; when you stop being productive, you somehow lose face. This is an alien concept in most of Indian country.

In Comanche culture, children are treated like people. Children can actually have a conversation with older people and be listened to. Children's thoughts really matter. We never were treated as something less than adults, less than human beings. In contrast, on the non-Indian side, it was always like children should be seen and not heard.

It is this daily connection of caring that made me who I am today. Comanches feel free to get after you if you aren't doing right. That's why I was such a good, well-behaved child--because anybody in the tribe could come down on me at any point (laughing)! Growing up with that type of concern, I always felt like I was never really alone.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. As a manager either in higher education or in my current job as a cabinet secretary for a municipality, I think I do well. The Comanche culture teaches that you must value people. I think that my

success has been attributed a lot to how I treat people. I value everybody. I'm as friendly to the custodian as I am to the mayor, keeping in mind that each person has something to contribute. People know when they're sincerely being value.

During my career, one experience really stands out where not all staff members were valued. When I was president of a native postsecondary institution, we would have staff meetings in which everyone would contribute and say what they were doing. During those large staff meetings, all staff could freely make comments and recommendations. The white dean was always offended that "everyone" was allowed to make comments, even the custodian. The Dean would say, "This guy's a really nice person, but why am I spending my time listening to the custodian?" There was constant friction from not only him but from others who had been socialized in a sort of Anglo educational system and began to value the hierarchy rather than appreciating people for what their contributions were.

The whole leadership style of being inclusive, of creating win-win situations, of empowering people, all of those things are being touted in management and leadership programs in the mainstream. All of these are leadership qualities of the traditional Comanche culture and most Indian cultures, including that you are not above others--that you are there to serve them, and not the other way around. One of the worst abuses to me, in mainstream culture as well as the broader culture, is when people are arrogant about their power. They begin to think that their position of leadership, rather than serving people, is what gives them rights. I think this sort of thinking leads to abuses. I think it's also a dysfunctional form of leadership that

is not very effective. Traditional native leadership patterns are very much what is currently considered popular leadership theory. I also think that, in some ways, traditional leadership is still ahead of the curve.

The ability to synthesize information is very important. Yet I don't think our educational systems teach students to think holistically instead of categorically. Educational systems, even at the college level, are still teaching people to memorize or, at best, analyze information. People who study cognitive development now recognize that the ability to synthesize information is a much higher order of mental capacity. Studies that have been done on the most effective CEOs have shown that these people are able to synthesize information. But you can't get that from the way education systems are run today. In fact, if you synthesize information in high school, for example, you get burned out because it doesn't fit what you get rewarded for. Yet it is the most viable definition of how the world actually operates.

Synthesizing information makes you more successful in the functioning world. Yet if you use it you're discriminated against in the educational system, and not rewarded for it. There's a real discrepancy between what and how we are educating people and what makes people really successful once they get into the business world. That ability to take A and see how it relates over here to H, and see how it inputs as to Y, and see how it works in a holistic way, and how it all interconnects is much more complex, but it really is something that I feel I got from Comanche culture.

I hate to keep referring to holism, but the ability to synthesize information comes out of the world view of taking everything and trying to see everything as a whole; part of it is religious, the cosmology that we're all related. You don't know exactly how a rock is related to you, but you know it is and it has a meaning, and you don't just say, "Oh, that's a dumb rock. It has no meaning. That attitude, value system, religion, world view--knowing that we are all related--is what enables one to synthesize information.

In our educational system, we not only don't train people to do that, we reward them for not doing that in a real sense. Many teachers usually aren't able to synthesize information. You know what drives me crazy? It is the wonderful minds that are being destroyed every day in our school system. The worst thing about the educational system and the thing that most needs to be changed is the ability to capture right-brain people--our whole educational system is left-brain. To incorporate elements of right-brain and left-brain thinking and the ability to synthesize information would change people tremendously.

As Indian people, we are constantly inundated with clashing cultures, with a clash of value systems. That is very hard for people to make sense of. Most people are unable to make sense of the clashes, and that's what drives them crazy. That's what makes them alcoholics, that's what makes them abusers, that's what makes them victims. They fall into a whole series of self-destructive behavior patterns because their life is essentially chaos, they haven't been able to make sense of it. For those of us who are fortunate enough, because of people who have helped us

or given us insight or strength or however we came to our medicine, who began to figure it out and began to build—it's almost like you build an internal mental structure for yourself that makes it viable. It is chaos, and you have to create something that makes it work. After creating it and then being able to articulate it, you gain a lot of skills that translate into the ability to help other people. This is my definition of a leader. Leaders are those who use their medicine, their strength, to enable them to help whole families—this is particularly true in Indian country. One of the things that distinguishes a person who's successful from a person who's a leader is that the person who's a leader is working for the common good. As one of our spiritual leaders, Reuben Snake, has told us, we must all find our medicine in order to be good leaders. Finding your medicine is part of the journey. Using it for the good of others is another part.

Some things are inherent in your medicine and in your personality that are then nurtured by your experiences, so that it's a combination of nature and nurture. I don't agree with those people who say that Indian women have tunnel vision, in that they work only for Indian people. I think that that is a very valid choice. I mean, it's a value choice, and it's valuable for women to make that choice, and it's inappropriate for people to second-guess so personal like that and to consider it narrow, to not consider it as working for the common good. There's a whole world in Indian country that anyone could work here three or four lifetimes and not get everything done. So to decide not to spread yourself into other areas, I think is totally valid.

Because I had a non-Indian father who was also very committed to the common good, it was part of that bridging issue that we were talking about earlier, about part of what I do in that construct that allows me to survive so that I see the value of each group. That helps me make it work, personally. It's a really selfish personal thing, but it helps me survive. That ability to see each other's value and to be a translator, in a sense, of each other's value, helps me and is the basic premise of a lot of what I do. In the non-Indian world, a lot of what I do is try to make people understand Indian reality as opposed to Indian stereotypes. That's what I was trying to do when I broke with the college board. It was over the issue of the national Indian film group. What the non-Indian people on the board wanted was to have a nice little college where people could become great artists, and where they could develop good relationships with great artists. It was very much a self-esteem kind of thing. I wanted to change the world! I wanted to have people understand Indian people because Indian people could tell their own stories from their perspective. Rather than constantly having people tell stories about us from a non-Indian perspective, which are very different things.

Here we were at an institution that was not only training young people in film and modern technology, but offering them a modern technology as a way to tell ancient stories. Furthermore, it was reaching a larger audience than one person's painting was, one good artist that was probably going to be controlled by a non-Indian gallery owner. We had developed a Peabody Award-winning film, but they didn't see its connection. That was the board meeting where I resigned. It was

where the board decided to cut off the funding and just close that whole section down. Why? Because it didn't fit the main mission of the school, which was to teach Indians the technical skills of art. I saw teaching in a broader, more holistic way, more transformative than just teaching art skills to people in classes. I saw the transformative powers of education.

Similarly, one of the reasons we did the museum before we concentrated on the new campus was that there was money for a museum, but also because the museum was one of those bridge areas. It was something that was communicating among different cultures and transforming people in the process, which I saw as something of value. But the board and I did not see eye to eye, so I resigned.

It was not, however, that I just joyfully leapt to my feet and got this wonderful new position, which is sort of true in retrospect. But the process of that was incredibly traumatic for me. One thing I know about myself is that I'm very bad at failure. I don't handle it well. And, for the most part, I've never done it (laughter), which is one of the reasons I haven't handled it very well.

I went into this major depression. It just freaked me out when I left because I thought I had failed in a very fundamental way, that I hadn't been able to convince those non-Indian people of my vision, that I hadn't brought them along, that I hadn't made it work somehow. There were some good Indian people on the board who were from the education and arts communities, and that was their issue with my leadership. Their issue didn't fit where I wanted to go with the college.

I really did feel like I was a failure and did not handle it well. I was getting depressed about it, and my mother started making fun of me, which of course is classic Comanche behavior control (laughter). She said, "You know, I just realized that here you are, 42 years old, and you've never failed before. That's why you're depressed!" She started teasing me, and I thought, "Damn, Mom!" But, you know, it made me look at it. I just had to reflect on it and realize that I had learned a lot from it and had grown stronger because of it.

When you hold a leadership position in Indian country, it is invasive, and you have to commit a large amount of energy to it. I always just felt like, or maybe I was raised to feel like, given my family, this was just your job. You just had to do it; whether it was comfortable or not comfortable, you did it! And that was one of your chores in life. You just got on with it.

I really believe, too, in a very broad way, that there are some things of real value that Indian society has to contribute to non-Indian society. Indian people can help preserve those things and bring out the good in society, and we can help the United States survive. Just as understanding non-Indians helps us survive, we can help the United States survive by understanding us better. Because we are in a world economy, we are small citizens of a very large world, much of which is still tribal. And industrial societies have forgotten what tribalism is. But Indian people know what tribalism is, and we can help be that bridge between the United States and other world cultures in a way that makes us better-functioning world citizens. It's

better for our economy, better for our business, better for our government. So that's my theory on serving the common good.

You know, I can remember growing up wondering: How long am I going to have to educate people about Indians? Now I think that maybe it is until our great-grandchildren can take over! So just get over it and do it!

It does get frustrating, it does get hard when you don't see movement. You almost have to redefine what the movement is. Across the country the life span of college presidencies is two years. I was at my college for four and a half. I think the ability to translate is something that helped me survive the native postsecondary institution that I tried to re-create. I'm a person to the left of Jesse Jackson on the political spectrum, and all my bosses were Bush or Reagan appointees. I tried to think in terms of "Okay, I understand enough about the white culture to translate in terms that make sense to them, and what I understand Indian culture to be." Then I took this a step further, "Okay, now what's a Republican ideal that I can use as a way to translate?" For example, we talked a lot about self-sufficiency and having individual responsibility because those are things that all people believe in, but in different ways. You can use those concepts to connect with people. You do that with fund raising, and you do that with life, pretty much all of the time. I do believe that our gift is that we know the good side of tribalism, we know the bad side of tribalism, and as my mom has said so many times, we already have the ability to get along with diverse peoples. We've already been doing shared vision, shared responsibility, shared power, and collaboration for hundreds of years.

At various points in my life, I have worked for nonnative organizations. I don't know whether I've done it for good and great reasons. Sometimes I've done it because I was burned out on Indian politics, and it was just nice to get a break from that! There's nothing quite like your own group's internal conflict! So in some ways it's a respite, it's proving to yourself that you can do it, and in some ways it is that more fundamental thing of communicating to the broader group. I have always found it very limiting to say to a person, "Well, you're in charge of the Indian desk for this agency," as opposed to "You're in charge of this agency." Why shouldn't Indian people not just be the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, but be the Assistant Secretary for BLM or the Assistant Secretary for the Forest Service, or the Assistant Secretary for Housing? I think we have more to contribute than just to our community in the narrow sense of the word.

Part of that thinking is from my Comanche religion. Comanche religion says that we're all related. As Indian people in today's culture, we tend not to think in those terms because our survival has been dependent on making the distinction between us and them. But if we really believe what our spiritual elders taught us, there isn't a distinction between us and them. We are all one entity. It has taken scientists hundreds of years to come to the position that Comanches have known from time immemorial--that we're all related.

Of course, there are people who've sold out, and there are people who have come from Indian backgrounds who give nothing back to the community. The distinction is, do you give something back to the community? Because you don't

have to do that in your job, you can do that by giving money to the tribe and to individuals, mentoring young Indian people, and going to Indian functions. What I've done in my life is I really alternated between Indian jobs and non-Indian jobs. I keep getting reconnected to the community by going back to Indian jobs, but I often take jobs that are not directly related to Indians. Every other position, even in non-Indian organizations, has had direct Indian connections of some sort that I've had through the course of my career. What I have found is that even in those "non-Indian jobs," you always find a way of using those positions to give back to Indian people. You must find this way, particularly when you're in a position of power and authority, even if it's a side effect or there's an indirect way. For example, I've pressed for more Indian employment, for getting more people involved. There are so many jobs that the community may not see that are visible ways, that are making those inroads, where there were no roads before.

Being an advisor in my mother's organization is very important to me; it lets me feel like I'm giving back. There are, I'm sure, people who say I've sold out, that I'm not as radical as I used to be and all that sort of stuff. Frankly, that's their problem. I know what I'm doing. And as long as I feel like I'm doing the right thing, it doesn't bother me. I think there may be people who do sell out. But I don't think that going into a non-Indian position is selling out, as long as you look for opportunities to help. At this point in my life, I know there are many community and family expectations. It can be a heavy load, but I don't let it get me down. I find ways to stay sane, to keep balance between what I can and cannot do. Sometimes

I have to go inward, get renewed mentally, physically, and spiritually. Then I'm right back out there again.

One of the reasons we use the word "ambassador" is because leader is a negative word that has those European contexts of hierarchy associated with it. But if you take that connotation away, yeah, I see myself as a leader. To me, leadership is the ability and willingness to help other people--preferably in ways they want to be helped (laughter), not just going in and saying, "Hi, I'm from the government; I'm here to help you!"

To be a leader, do you have to have followers? No! Yes! I think it's how one defines followers that I have problems with. To me, to get something done, I have to involve people who respect my ideas, respect my ability to get things done, who are willing to engage in projects with me collectively for a common good. In a way, it's more a co-equal than a hierarchical thing. It's just that this is the part I have to contribute, and other people have equally important things to contribute, which might not be defined as leadership, but it is something that all works together.

Leadership is also an issue of "walking your talk." Why I wouldn't say I'm a leader is that what I believe in and what I do are not always the same because it is very hard to control me (laughter)! That is something I recognize about myself, and it's something that is very Comanche. What I'm saying is that if I'm working in a hierarchy and that's the culture of the institution I'm in, I'm adaptable. I will use that and respect the chain of command. But I don't really believe in it. Leadership theory

about collaboration and win-win and all of those things isn't very effective in a hierarchy.

However, I am a leader to the extent that I'm able to bring people together as a team that is functioning together. I see that as being more successful than giving people a directive. I think that fits my concept of what leaders and followers are. The terms "leaders" and "followers" still have those connotations, those undertones of European hierarchy, and that's not the kind of stuff that I think is the most effective at getting work done. I think, rather, it is making people feel good about themselves, appreciating people's contributions, figuring out what contributions people have to make. Most managers are trained to give people assignments, and that's a very different function from recognizing people's gifts. Sometimes you don't even know what their gifts are until you have tried them out in different situations, and they don't know what their gifts are because they've never had anyone appreciate them or articulate them. So that whole process of trying to creatively find people's gifts really is a lot of what being a leader is about.

I know I've created change, but I don't know how long term those changes will be. There's something about the ephemeral nature of change and of life that I don't know if things really ever are long term fundamentally. I used to believe in permanent change, but the older I get the more I understand that the world is different from permanent.

I was the author of a major piece of legislation affecting the lives of Indian peoples. I wrote the senate report, and in a very unusual move, I wrote the house

report. As well. I also went to a major department of federal government and helped implement it. That was kind of a world-class event. And you know, some Indian people bitch about the legislation for not having enough teeth. I would have loved it to have more teeth. But that's what we were able to do at that particular time. It's for newer generations of leaders, then, to get more teeth into it.

I've gone to a lot of classes and seminars on how to be successful and how to be a good leader. A lot of them said you need to make a plan, you need to make a list every day about what you need to accomplish that day, have a hierarchy. You also should have a life plan about where you're going to be in five years, and where you're going to be in ten years. None of that has ever had any meaning for me; it absolutely doesn't work, and I don't operate that way. And I have been more successful than those giving the classes.

I have never had a vision of where I wanted to be at a given time in the future and what I wanted to do. I have value systems about what I believe in and what I want to accomplish. I look for opportunities that allow me to do those things. I'm open to opportunities as they come through, but I don't have a plan of "I'm going to go from step A to step B." Rather, it's vision in the kind of figuring out, envisioning how one could take a certain thing and do something with it.

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. Outwardly, times have changed. Now leaders are supposed to empower people and make decisions from the ground up. All of that is actually part of the Comanche value system. So I think we just predated it! I think the feeling of generosity conflicts with some of the

mainstream beliefs about how a leader should act. For example, when I worked for the Department of Energy and was in a bureaucratic environment, there were all these rules about what you could accept as gifts. I couldn't accept a \$5 lunch from a tribal leader. That ran strongly to the spirit of generosity which is not just in the giving but in the receiving part. As a lawyer, however, I feel I'm compelled to adhere to the letter of the law. I do remember, for example, recently a mutual friend of long standing not connected to my current position generously gave me free tickets to a dinner, and I felt comfortable accepting them. As I was driving home, though, I realized that we did business with Paul because his contracts to run an art show for the city. I realized that, as a contractor, I couldn't accept the tickets, so I was forced to return them. This really annoyed him because it was a very generous thing for him to have done, and I was not honoring his generosity. It was the wrong thing to do from an Indian standpoint but was required from a white person's standpoint.

Nepotism supposedly occurs when you pick the person who is best qualified for a position and that person is related to you. Everyone in the tribe is related to you, though, so nepotism is not a Comanche conflict; it is an alien concept. When you go into the broader society, there are rules against nepotism. You know, there's no way I would even suggest that my brother, for instance, be hired by the city because that would just be against the rules, and even if it weren't against the rules, it would give the appearance of some type of impropriety on my part. So those kinds of things are ongoing conflicts that can't be resolved. You just have to balance where you are and whom you're dealing with for each given situation.

In terms of challenges, I think I have been discriminated against based on my sex, race, age, and certainly my handicap of dyslexia. I've been discriminated against, based on my race, in a weird way because I look white to people. So unless people know who I am and who my family is, they don't automatically know that I'm Indian. The weird thing about that in terms of racism is that most racists are basically polite and don't say ugly things in front of those they discriminate against. They're more apt to say ugly things in front of people whom they don't know are members of that race. I had experiences growing up with people saying ugly things about Indians in front of me because they didn't know I was Indian. And, you know, I always immediately perceived that as me. I never perceived that as other people. It's not like the discrimination against people who look Indian and are directly discriminated against, but it is still discrimination.

Also, I am definitely discriminated against quite often as a woman. When I worked for the Department of Energy, just to give you the most blatant example of it—there's a federal regulation that says if you're acting supervisor for more than six months, you get the position. I was the chief staff person under the Director of the Indian Intergovernmental Office within the Department of Energy. The director resigned, and I was "acting director" for more than six months. I went to the Assistant Secretary and said I would be very interested in being the director. He said, "I know you are, Quill, and you've done a really good job, but I really think we ought to get an older Indian man in that position." Meanwhile, I'm thinking, "*Hello, that's illegal!*"

My first reaction was, "If they don't appreciate me, they don't deserve my services." So I decided to leave the Department of Energy. The second thing I did was to bring home the lesson to the Assistant Secretary. I got someone he greatly respected to call him up and say, "You know what you did to Quill was totally illegal, and she could sue you." She also said that what he had done was not appropriate behavior and was not allowed. So I figured out a way to get to that individual personally, rather than through the legal system. I thought that was much more effective, frankly, and I left. I got out.

I want to say a word about class--and that is I think we live in a very classist society. I think because of the whole Communist/anti-Communist thing, we don't use that rhetoric very often. Also, because we're in this great democracy and people have so much ability to rise from being poor, meaning people like my dad and my husband, we don't recognize the pressures and the influences of class. Nevertheless, I think we are in a strongly classist society, and that those pressures are very great and very destructive to people. Although there are people who overcome those obstacles and survive, there are hundreds of valuable, contributing, worthwhile human beings whom we destroy because of our class system. Those people never get the chance to do good work.

Class is a funny thing. When I was very young, growing up, my dad was a college student and then a law school student, and we were living in a trailer next to the railroad tracks. As a young child, we were very poor. But by the time I was in junior high school we were middle class because my dad was an attorney and a



state senator. Class type hits hardest in the teen-age years. I was in the privileged class by the time I was a teen-ager because my dad had been elected to the U.S. senate. We lived in a wealthy suburb of Washington, D.C.; Robert Kennedy's family were our neighbors. I have been very privileged in terms of the class structure. But because of who my parents are and where they came from, I was always conscious of the fact that, yeah, we're affluent technically, but we're really these people over here. I always related to the people who come from poverty backgrounds and identified with them in ways I don't think most middle-class kids did.

The worst thing I ever encountered was Harvard University. Harvard was the most classist--well, no, I'm sorry, Stanford was the most classist because it was economic class, pure and simple. At Harvard at least they recognized intellectual superiority. So you could be poor and still be intellectually superior.

The clash of cultures leads me to try and look for change because it's painful. It's incredibly painful. It destroys people; I've seen people I love totally destroyed. This has hurt me tremendously. It has caused me to want to figure out a way to make it better, that is highly motivating for others to ensure that cultures can survive side by side, so one's culture and being aren't destroyed. That's my passion, that's where I'm trying to make a difference. That's something that my mother always felt strongly about, and strangely enough, on my non-Indian side, they feel equally strongly about it. That comes out of the experience of being Scotch-Irish, never fitting into the upper-class structure, being marginalized, being outlaws. So there

was always an outlaw flavor—that sort of antisnob attitude—to the non-Indian cultural side of me. So together the two cultures are both reinforcing each other for change.

One of the things that I've been questioning lately is my total identity. This was all really a result of the national program for training emerging native leaders, which we serve as advisors to. Every time I sit down with this group, I know I'm giving back something, but the funny thing is that I end up getting more than what I expected out of the process. I always get a fresh idea that's new to me. Our generation went through a lot of bullshit—people didn't ever talk to each other about the non-Indian side of their heritage. They talked about their Indian heritage, but they never talked about their non-Indian heritage.

The ambassadors have to go through the process of talking about their tribal history and their family history, which I think is such an important process of their development. What struck me is that this younger group of people were claiming their non-Indian side. They were actually, in a healthy way, trying to figure out how it worked and integrate that history in some way that made sense to their lives.

What struck me in listening to the conversations was: Why are all these non-Indian people marrying Indian people? Why did they choose to marry an Indian? What is the dynamic? They are different from other non-Indian people because they are the people who have selected Indian marriages. My theory at the time, in trying to just think about why that might be true, was that they were mostly disenfranchised people. They were disenfranchised people looking for other disenfranchised people, and that's why you got African Americans marrying Indian people, and what's why

you got poor whites, or people who were not quite as socially acceptable in the white community for various reasons, marrying Indians.

In my family's case, it had to do with sort of the outlaw edge, you know, marring in! So that was kind of my theory. I have been asking myself that question and waiting for answers to come. I serve on an advisory board to a college, and last month I was in Minnesota having dinner with some of the faculty, administrators, and other board members. Across the table from me was a Catholic theologian who had gone to Notre Dame; I was thinking, "Okay, what kind of conversation can I have with this man?" He turned out to have just written a book called The Wisdom of the Celtic Saints, so I started chatting about his work as an author. I figured I would kind of relate to that, and so he got all excited and gave me an autographed copy of his book, which was very lovely and thoughtful of him. I took the book back on the plane with me and started reading it; it was an incredible experience. I started thinking about the people in my family. Mother's dad was Irish, and my dad is Scotch-Irish, and if you listened to the emerging Indian leaders, not all of their non-Indian family, but a large segment of them, are Celtic people. It never occurred to me that there might be some connections between the Celtic and Indian cultures.

My dad was always interested in Indians. He learned the Comanche language and studied the history. It was all very intellectually interesting to him, but he's "Mr. Rational Man." He's totally disconnected from his religion, except sort of intellectually, and not at all connected to community, spiritually. I mean, it was just like light years apart in terms of the feel of it. So it never occurred to me that there

was a connectedness there, but here's this whole book talking about people who are religious in the Celtic tradition. It basically comes from those old Celtic traditions of paganism—the Druids and all of that—which are different from the Roman-Germanic traditions of Catholicism. For one thing, it's much more pro-women. The early Celtic church had all these women who were bishop-level people and abbesses who formed monasteries that included both men's and women's sections, which was not done anywhere else in Europe. They had a reverence for nature and for what they called "soul friends." I mean, there's this whole variety of commonalities, and suddenly it started connecting that there really is an underpinning here that's very similar. For me, it was an answer to part of the question of identity.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. I see a leadership journey in Indian country as being one of having a lot of support, one of having high expectations to return your gifts to the community, and one of transforming an institution, a community, a family, an individual, or maybe even the world.

Do I have a metaphor? The first thing that hits my mind is a war leader in the community. It's someone who goes off and leads a war party and says, "I'm leading a war party. Who will follow me?" If someone follows him, he leads a war party; if no one does, he doesn't! But I think that there's a more abstract metaphor. It has more to do with work- or office-related leadership. It's visual, and I can't quite describe it; it's sort of like being between a rock and a sponge. I don't know if I could visually translate it very well. That's why I admire artists so much. That's why my role in much of life has been to support, and admire, and do good things for artists—

because I just think it's wonderful that they can translate what they envision to physical reality. When I sort of stumble, saying there's this weird image of being something between a rock and a sponge, what I'm saying is I wish I could make that more real to you, but I don't know how to do it! In my image there is a center there-- that I am the rock-sponge thing. But it's more organic than created, and things interact with it. It's like they bounce off or they merge in.

Let's say, for purposes of argument, that this is Indian culture and this is European/United States culture, and this is the way it was traditionally before contact. What happens in cultural oppression is that you know you have to function in this, and you are functioning in this, but you don't quite have it together so you don't function completely here, and you don't function completely there. And a lot of garbage flows out as a result, and things fall off, and things get lost and burned out, and it doesn't work. But if you're really centered in who you are and that's complete, and you begin to figure out how to make it work, then this whole bridge process is what becomes really exciting.

Things evolve, they change, they evolve, they change. That's the nature of life. This is change. Eventually, instead of this, it'll be something more whole. I mean, it's hard to visualize and explain. Suffice it to say, there's a future there that has to do with leadership that isn't any of the kind now in operation. It's in the minds and experiences of our next generation and the generations yet to come!



Sweet Grass's Story

Through the example of her activist American Indian parents, Sweet Grass learned early in life to champion Indian rights. She also witnessed the value of empowering Indian communities. Her own activism has allowed her to interface with indigenous peoples throughout the United States, Canada, Guatemala, and New Zealand. Currently, Sweet Grass works in a leadership capacity at a federal agency in Washington, D.C. She serves as a technical expert and staff adviser on education and social service issues affecting tribes. Since moving to the capitol in May 1994, she has focused on collaboration and has reduced the isolation of the BIA by increasing the frequency and quality of communication, both internally and externally, with tribes, Indian organizations, and other federal agencies.

Before taking this assignment, Sweet Grass directed a new Native Education Initiative with a consortium of educational centers. The initiative coordinated the provision of services to underserved Indian communities in seven states; it eventually was expanded to involve, directly and indirectly, all educational centers across the nation. Sweet Grass trained on school reform, math and science, alcohol and drug prevention, and equity issues. Under her direction, the consortium produced regional and national Indian education directories. In addition, she co-hosted the first-ever Round Table on Native Literacy.

Sweet Grass believes in being involved in her local community, wherever she is residing. In one state, for example, she volunteered for two years at a girls'

placement facility, where she attended weekly talking circles¹ with young Indian women. In fact, wherever she has lived she has joined local Indian educational groups. She has also been active in state Indian education associations, and has authored numerous articles impacting Indian education, including working lesson plans for an educator's guide on The Indian Perspective of Christopher Columbus. Sweet Grass continues to serve as a board member of two organizations that are committed to working toward individual and community transformation. Recently, she was elected to a prestigious national board aimed at preserving native cultures throughout the world.

Sweet Grass's life consistently has placed her in leadership positions through which she has developed good relationships among indigenous people throughout North America. A current project involves a collaboration with other indigenous people that focuses on gathering and sharing traditional indigenous knowledge with specific and immediate relevance to time-sensitive environmental work. Her vision is to demonstrate the relationship between cultural sustainability and ecological sustainability. Her vision for the future is to increase understanding of traditional indigenous knowledge, thereby eradicating stereotypes about it as unsubstantiated folklore and increasing deserved respect for holders of traditional knowledge.

¹A format that allows everyone full participation, equal status in a group, and the opportunity to speak from the heart, not just the head. Typically, there are no interruptions, conflict or other sensitive issues are addressed, and everyone in the circle has an opportunity to speak.

In an article titled "Separate Yet Sharing," Lewis (1975) described Iroquois women and their roles in society. Although she has a multitribal background, Sweet Grass's life story parallels this description of her Iroquois side:

The modern Iroquoian woman retains many of the characteristics of her ancestors—she can affect change without competitiveness; she accepts her role as a viable one; she has pride in her femininity; and she maintains her sense of security. With these qualities, Iroquois women have contributed to the perpetuation and continuance of native culture, while at the same time advocating change in social conditions.

The Iroquoian woman exemplifies that delicate balance between home-maker and earth-shaker. Since Iroquoian women have been practicing this mode of living for better than five hundred years, they have been able to accept and be accepted for what they are—integral, individual, important human beings. (p. 17)

This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. Nyah weh skanoh! My Indian name was given to me by my Ojibwe father and means "Evergreen." I was born in the Midwest, and for the first four years of my life we lived in a city. Then we moved out to a small town that is now a suburb of that big city. What I remember is that there were swamps nearby when we were younger. My brother was doing hoop dancing then. My dad would just go over to the swamp, cut some switches, and mold them into hoops for my brother, making different sizes as he grew. We lived there through high school, and then I left. I was the first in our family to leave home. I didn't like the state, and I never felt that I belonged there. I hated the winters. I'm not keen on cold weather, even though now it's no big deal, having lived in Canada through some real cold winters that lasted forever. Anyway, I just didn't like the

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state, with all the racism. I wanted to go away and be where there were more Indians, so I left at age 18.

Our mother was the glue that held us all together. She was such a loving individual and remains my role model for kindness—for how you treat people with love and kindness. She used to make me angry growing up, however, because she wouldn't speak up for herself. My dad was a drinker. It's hard to say it, but he was an alcoholic. I would use that word now only because I have read more and know more about the disease of alcoholism, but I never thought of him that way early on because he always worked and he was very much into his role as a provider.

We were fairly poor when I was a child and then moved up to lower-middle-class standards by the time I was a teen-ager. We didn't have a lot, but he always provided for us. He just didn't know how to love. Other than his role as a provider, he didn't know what else his role as a father should be. Later, I came to appreciate that he did the best he could. He had lost his own mother when he was about nine. She had died, so he and his brothers got sent away to their maternal grandmother. She was real mean, real hard on them as little boys. She sent them to an Indian boarding school. He hated it! He eventually ran away from there and just started working on the barges on nearby waterways.

My dad just didn't know how to parent. I hated him when I was growing up because he was so mean. I used to think he'd just as soon hit us as look at us. This made me afraid of men; I thought all men were going to be mean to me, so I didn't trust them. My dad controlled our mother, too. She could never work outside the

home. Her job was raising us, and she had to be the stereotypical wife, always having his meals ready and always catering to him. He didn't know how to be loving to anybody in the family. If he spoke to us kids, it was usually to yell at us. My mother never spoke up for herself, so I used to get angry at her that she took that behavior from him. I swore I would never allow a man to treat me that way. On the other hand, he never tried to control my sister or me, or have us be anything less than independent and think for ourselves.

I can still remember how my mother would look when I would come home from college. She was so proud, and just an image of pure love. I later went through various training programs—local, regional, and national—focused on personal growth and came to understand and love my father.

I always saw us as a close family; we did everything together. All of our close family friends were Indian. It was always so good to be together, to be with them, and meet all these other Indian families and their kids, and raise Cain together.

There was an organization that my parents helped found before we were born. It used to be the North American Indian Club, and it later became an association. They brought Indian families who were living and working in the city together to have some kind of cultural connection. We had family days. That's how I learned to swim--by going to the YWCA, where they used to hold their meetings. A major commitment that my folks had throughout my childhood was their commitment to maintaining a family, keeping the kids all together, doing things as a family, connecting with our culture and with other Indian people. They both really



modeled activism. All through my youth, I remember seeing them be active as officers or just as members of the North American Indian Club.

My dad was so organized. He believed that if you said you were going to do something, your word was supposed to mean something. You don't just drop a task. If you're going to do it, then do it well and do it to completion. The goal of doing something right for your people had to be the most important thing, next to promoting education. Neither one of my parents was able to get much of an education, but it is amazing that all three of their kids went on to school and then on to graduate school with very little money in the family. My dad wanted us to continue to go to school, which was a good thing, but then he'd add that we had to show whites that we were not dumb Indians, so there was a mixed message, the racist anti-Indian aspect embodied in it too. So I was always trying to prove myself. In high school I don't remember there ever being a question that I was going to go to college.

My mom's strength was really in being a leader in the background. Everybody called the house all the time and asked her for advice. She demonstrated another whole style of leadership. I did see for myself, later in life that sometimes it's best not to be out front with your leadership. You really can get more done by not being the one who is visible but by being in the wings--doing your thing or getting other people involved. I know that has shaped me, and even though I'm in a highly visible position now, I didn't ask for that, and I didn't strive for it so that I would be visible. It's where I'm supposed to be right now, which happens to be a highly visible position, but I don't have to do that. That isn't important to me. I will

say my piece, and I will give what direction I can from the background as well, from the back seat. I know that I have a voice, and I will give input where needed, but I don't have to be the one who is always up front. I think that's a very different style of leadership from a lot of men, and also from the dominant society. They equate leadership with the one who is most visible and out front, and see the other style of leadership as being "less than," and it is not. In fact, I've found that it can be even more powerful. The influence can be more powerful than that of the visible leader.

Our people don't brag you up. They don't say, "Oh, you're the best kid in town. You're the best," but you know they care about you. That was always apparent in the Indian club. I knew I should be loved by Indian people. I always felt that I was shown love, cared for, and respected by other Indian adults and families because my family and both parents were very well respected. However, I didn't expect white people to like me. I just didn't expect other people to like Indians, and I never felt that I was equal to others.

I graduated from high school in the sixties, and I went right into college at the University of New Mexico (UNM). I received my bachelor's degree in education. I had taken Spanish all through high school and found I had a facility with it. In my mind, my naive mind, I wanted to be the first Indian at the United Nations (UN), the first Indian interpreter at the UN. Here I go away to school at UNM because my sister had married a man from Taos Pueblo. I had been down to visit at Taos, and I wanted to be in school where they were more Indians. So I entered UNM in 1962. What I discovered is that there were not a whole lot of Indians in college in 1962!

I still took Spanish the first couple of years, but there were all these Hispanics who spoke rings around me. I asked myself, "How could you be so stupid to think you could possibly compete with them?" So then I said, "Okay, I still enjoy the language, so I'll teach." That's when I got into education. I didn't do badly in Spanish, but I really ended up as an English teacher. I was depressed to find out that I really didn't like student teaching, and I told myself, "I don't want to do this." So, I became a social worker, but later went back to teaching.

I got married to a really nice man, but he could not understand why I had to work for Indian people. So we just ended up going our separate ways. After five years the marriage ended amicably. We realized, however, that we had helped each other grow up.

I was the first director for an Indian Education ombudsperson office in a large metropolitan area for five and a half years. It was a liaison type of position. We also did all kinds of teacher training--you know, the whole gamut of Indian Education 101, time after time, after time. I had to be the one who was always arguing with principals and superintendents who were well above me in the pecking order. Yet, never lost any case we took on for an Indian student or Indian teacher unfairly treated.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. When I moved from the classroom to being an administrator, it was my job to advocate for other Indian teachers and students. I helped resolve conflicts and calm tempers. I would say to Indian families, "We're not going to get anywhere by yelling at each other. We must



be as logical as we can be in arguing our case, and we must not lose control. We want people to understand the issue from our perspective." People would say, "I don't know how you stayed so calm," or "You're the voice of reason in these meetings." I didn't even realize I was doing it. I don't know where it came from, but it's helped me tremendously.

When I think about it, I do know where it came from. It was my mother's influence as that quiet, behind-the-scenes leader, you know, a stable force. I have a very strong reaction to yelling, and that's because my dad was such a yeller. I can't stand it. I don't think there is any reason to yell. I have yelled maybe twice in my whole life, and I can't stand it. If you have something to say to somebody, you can say it in a normal tone of voice.

I think Indians are really good observers. We really watch other people in situations that are tense. We've all been in a whole lot of tense situations, and any of us growing up in the 1960s and 1970s saw a whole lot of tense situations, whether on university campuses, or wherever we were at the time. We saw the strong vocalizations of the American Indian Movement's style of leadership. We saw that it got us somewhere. We made some headway using that style. We had our sit-ins, and we got the attention of university administrators. But we soon realized that we needed more than their attention. We needed to be able not only to present our needs, but we also needed to present a plan for meeting our needs. Well, then, someone had better be able to negotiate. Someone had better have a brain in their head that can go beyond yelling and be able to say, "Here are the points—boom,



boom, boom. Here's what we want and why we want it, and we're not going past X. These are the boundaries. This is what we want, and we will accept no ifs, ands, or buts." In college, I was always a liaison, a linker, a negotiator. As a writer, I was always writing up materials for our protests.

Later in life, I learned that there is a certain power in that, too, because there is a measure of influence, by the words that you write down, on what gets implemented. When I was a graduate student at UCLA, I realized I didn't have to be the one out there speaking into the microphone at a rally. My influence was just as strong writing out the key points that were our demands. I just used to love getting into the strategy sessions and saying, "Well, what if they say this? Okay, well, we'll counter with this." I suspect that was some of the planning and preparation that I saw my parents do.

I was influenced by the American Indian Movement (AIM) because that was the closest activist group that I had witnessed. I was influenced by the civil rights movement to a degree, but I honestly couldn't relate that much to the women's movement. I remember Janet McCloud talking about how it wasn't really our movement. The women's movement at the time was more geared to pitting female against male, and that didn't really fit for us. The problem that we, Indian men and women, jointly have is with the dominant culture, and that's our oppressor. If there's a struggle, it's that struggle. That is more important than us getting into a battle with our own men.

I think that, again, although I definitely grew up with poor self-esteem, in some ways, and feeling "less than," there was also a fostering of independent thinking and behavior by both my mom and dad. My mother would talk about Iroquois women and how we were not concerned about who was constraining us. I never thought that I did not have the right to speak my mind, so that wasn't an issue.

I just have always believed and said that our struggle is with the dominant society, not with our own men. Internally and among ourselves, we Indian men and women know we have problems, that's for sure. We don't know how to talk with each other. We forgot we were partners. We forgot we were the other half of each other, and we are trying to learn that again. But there's still a bigger issue, a bigger oppressor out there that has to be dealt with--and we are trying to deal with it. There is no doubt that Indian men and women are joined in that struggle.

When I worked as an ombudsperson, I was a good organizer. What initially scared me, or intimidated me, was dealing with superintendents, who were very much higher up on the rung or food chain. I was supposed to persuade them to move in our direction. What helped me was that the man I was going with at the time was in the American Indian Movement (AIM). At presentations we did before the school board, two or three of the guys in AIM were very much interested in education, and they came to every board meeting. It scared the administration to see these big, burly guys with braids, and they were sure that they probably had knives in their boots or something. I wouldn't usually be the one doing the talking. If you did a presentation to the board, we knew it was better to have a parent or

community person making those presentations. Of course, I would be there and have written the speech or presentation. In the first year, it definitely helped me to have at least one of those guys come along with me because it so intimidated others. It also gave me the added strength or gumption to say it like it is—to say what needs to be said. I think we have this thing about authority and white-male authority figures. I'm a pretty good arguer, but I probably could have been backed down more easily had I been there just by myself. With time, I didn't need my friend there—or any of the other AIM guys at each presentation. I just gained the confidence that I needed. It took courage to get to that point.

Something that I worked on, or honed my skills in at that time, was working with such a diversity of poor Indian people who couldn't speak up that well for themselves, couldn't express their opinions that well, and others who were definitely more like professional Indians or Indians in a professional capacity. I would just be amazed over and over again at where the ideas would come from for what we needed to do. I would be amazed when someone who had sat quietly for four meetings in a row would all of a sudden come out with this brilliant idea of where we needed to go. Our meetings were very open, very democratic, very everybody-has-a-voice-here. I could feel that somebody had something to say but was afraid to say it. So sometimes I would try to draw them out, or I would talk with them on a break and then I'd repeat their idea to the rest of the group, or after talking with them on the break, they would speak up. You saw people blossom as you drew them out. It made such an impact on me, and it has stayed to this day.



I know I have good ideas, but I don't have a corner on the market of ideas. There are incredible ideas that come from sources that you would never guess. You have to allow everybody to tell his or her opinion at the table. It isn't always the vocal ones, the articulate ones, who are going to have the great idea. That's how I still work with people and lead. It's recognizing the gift that everybody has that's the great leveler. We had people volunteer like crazy, and they were able to get organizations to support our efforts in many ways. That was the first time I realized I had a gift for bringing people together to create change. Whether it's just my enthusiasm for what I'm doing or the fact that my enthusiasm can rub off on other people, I do think it's a gift I was given from the Creator. The Creator has given each of us certain gifts. It is up to us to try to discover them. Recognizing these gifts helps us live life more fully.

I think the whole idea that everybody has a voice is definitely Indian and certainly Iroquoian! I don't think that's common when you see a lot of non-Indian people leading meetings or leading organizations. It's always, "Okay, who's got an idea?" They might take two or three, but really spend the time expounding on their own thing. Many hierarchical leaders don't seem to care that the quiet ones on the team might have some great ideas but are just too shy to bring those ideas up in public. I have always been taught that everyone has certain talents that I've been told are "gifts from the Creator."

My love for Indian people absolutely drives my commitment. There was only one time in my life, when I was in graduate school, when I thought that I didn't want



to work with Indians any more. In 1969, half of the Indians on campus disappeared to go up to San Francisco to help with the takeover of Alcatraz, reclaiming it as Indian land. I was married at that time, so I was being a good little girl and didn't go zipping off to Alcatraz. There was all this stuff going on, on campus rallies, and this and that, and lots of internal bickering, and the usual political eras we were going through with each other and with some of the other groups on campus. I was visiting with an elder one day outdoors, and I said, "You know, I am so sick of Indians! I don't want to see another Indian!" You know, I just had had it with our own internal fighting. She said, "Nope, sorry! It was your fate to have been born an Indian, and there's something you're supposed to do with it." So ever since then, I've been trying to figure out what it is that I'm supposed to do. And I've never again thought about not working for Indians. As Indian women, we work as catalysts or facilitators of change. Sometimes we hold an important position, but more often, we don't. But we work through collaboration, sharing power, interdependence, and sharing visions and goals.

Early on, when I was in college, I knew what a gift having an education was. I knew how poor we were. I knew that no one in my family had ever gone to school before and had that opportunity. Both of my parents pushed hard that I should go to school. I always felt how important it was to them that I should get a college education. I knew how rare that was and what a real gift it was because we didn't have much money. I knew back then that there was something I had to give back. It wasn't like certain scholarship programs, where you have to give two years of

service back or you have to do this or that. I mean, I didn't have any scholarships like that, but I knew there was something I had to do with my education for the Indian community because it was just such a rare thing to have, as an Indian person. I didn't think of it as being an Indian woman, but an Indian person being able to get a college education. I saw my parents give a life of service to Indian people. That was my model. Education changed my life. I know that, and I give thanks for that. I would not have had any of the opportunities I've had if I had not been able to get educated. More young Indian people have to have those kinds of opportunities. That's what I'm deeply committed to.

Education adds to your sense of self-esteem. When I was growing up, mine wasn't that great. Once I got a degree, having it was so unique, that it helped my sense of self-esteem. It is such a shame that our young people don't have that self-esteem earlier. I know what it felt like not feeling good about myself and what a difference it made when I started feeling good about myself. I told myself that it was crazy for this to happen so late in my life. It needs to happen for Indian kids much earlier. They need to know this way early on in their lives. Education can do that.

The kind of education that I received had no Indian culture in it at all. So my vision of education, in the future, would be the kind of educational system that honors Indians as human beings; honors them as children of a particular tribe that has a long, long history; and honors their language and their spiritual beliefs, those that are locally held. What I mean is that my ideal system takes those commonly held Indian values and incorporates them into the normal, natural part of the school

day, so that it's an extension of the home with added learning. It's a place where children can feel comfortable, where family and community can come and feel comfortable. It's not an alien environment, as it is in so many schools yet today, on and off the reservation.

There's a lot of information that you have to keep in mind when one is talking about values. When individual differences come into play, you can't say all Indians believe this way, all White people believe that way, or the average is a certain way, because it's all individual.

Brian T. Hall has done a lot of research on values of people all over the country, all over the globe—cultures all over the globe. He ended up jelling all of the different values he would hear from people down to a core of 125 or 135. It isn't that one is better than another or in any kind of a hierarchy. Rather, it's the priority that each culture puts on it. In our culture, for example, the priority is placed on cooperation, whereas in the dominant society they value cooperation but place an even higher value on competition. Also, our focus is more on the extended family versus the nuclear family. It isn't as if White culture doesn't value the extended family at all. It's just that they place a higher priority these days on spending time on the nuclear family, and we still place a greater priority on the extended family.

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. I think that it's the spiritual direction my life has taken, and having that balance. I have been divorced since I was 27 years old, and I'm 50 now; I never thought I would be living alone this long, ever. But, I also know I am never really alone. I know that, in the depths of my

being, I'm never alone and that the Creator is with me every single step of the way. I also have other spirit guides who are with me, some who help me with my writing, some who help with my health, some who help with my car. I know the work that all of us are about is something that our ancestors want done, so they will do everything in their power on the other side to assist us in succeeding, as long as we do it in a good way, with a good heart. I work very hard, but I also let my brain rest. I do still meditate, and I still use visualizations. I pray daily, in bad times twice a day.

I consider myself to be a good leader, but I say that with great reluctance. Whether ideas come to me directly from another source or another human being, I can see a way to act on them, and then I share those ideas with others, and people generally follow. People will want to be involved in the project or the effort or whatever. Another piece of my definition of my leadership style and why I would say I'm a leader is that it's almost a destiny thing; it's as if I have, like the Blues Brothers, I'm on a mission from God! I know that the Creator has a plan for me, and I'm not arguing with that any more. I'm following that mandate, and if I do what I believe in, what I love doing, and listen to the direction that I'm being given from another source, a source outside of me, a spiritually driven source, things happen, good things happen. People come, funding comes, connections are made that I would never think would happen, and there's a reason for that. You can't help seeing the coincidences, seeing the connections, and saying, "Whoa! This is bigger than me!" And you have to be thankful that you're in a place that you can pull all those pieces together and do something with them because it'll benefit people, benefit humankind.

And my style of leadership has changed with age. I think that, early on, I wouldn't have had the same definition of leadership. Then, it probably would have focused more on strength and a vision and things like that, but not so much the spiritual direction. But that is absolutely what drives me. I know that I am doing the Creator's work.

Things go along, and then you face a major challenge; then after you just jump ahead another level, almost. But while you're going through it, you're groaning and moaning, and saying, "Why are You doing this to me? 'cause you're just grappling with a problem and you can't see what the end result is. Then you have to say to yourself: "This with me for a reason. You've got a plan; I don't know what it is, but I have to have faith, so there's a reason for this, even though I can't see it." Once you're maybe half way through or maybe it's way after you're through the challenge, then you say, "Okay, now I know why He wanted me to go through that because I learned this, I learned that, or I gained these other people's support at that time, or whatever it is."

One of the most important things at the core of leadership, especially in this day and age, is the human connection. As a leader, you have to be able to connect with other human beings. How can you be a leader if you don't have followers? I can be the most courageous woman, but I might not have anybody follow me. I might be seen as a leader in some way, but I'm not going to create much change if I'm not moving other people along with me.

I think that, in the dominant society, leadership means you have to be very verbal and very vocal and bold and all those sorts of things. They wouldn't recognize our style. It takes nonnatives a while to value it. I've seen this for myself in previous positions. My former director appreciated the fact that I was assisting the company to do more within the native communities, but he didn't value me as much as he did some of the other men and women who were more up-front, aggressive types of leaders.

Finally that director started seeing a difference. One of the last events that we had before I left was a roundtable. He made a comment to the whole group that I was a "very quiet, but very strong leader," and I think he said "persistent." It was obvious he respected me, and I appreciated his saying that publicly, but mine was a whole different leadership style for him. He could see that I could be very strong and very determined, and get what I wanted because I knew that "X" had to be done and that I would just battle until it got done. This is a major strategy of mine: Just be persistent and battle it until it gets done. If I believe in something, you're not going to fend me off because I know that this "X", whatever, has to be done. In other ethnic communities, they, too, are accustomed to the up-front leaders and the behind-the-scenes leaders because they know that that happens. The dominant society is more influenced by the visible vestiges of leadership.

When Indian people's lives improve drastically and they are economically, socially, mentally, and physically on a par with the general population, then we can turn our attention to the general population. Until then, we need as many Indian

people as possible focusing on Indian issues, and we need helpers. We need non-Indian friends helping for us to come up to where we should be. What we don't need is Indian people vacating and saying, "Well, enough of this," and walking away. The need is too great. Ignoring that need just doesn't make sense.

It's essentially racist if one believes that the work that is focused on improving Indian education or the lives of Indian people is not important. In fact, teachers will say, "Well, we're doing this Indian week or Indian day, or whatever," and the next class they'll say, "Well, now we'll get back to the regular class or the regular curriculum." It is as if the part of the curriculum that is focused on American Indians is not real education, not real schooling. So your project is not a real project, it's just a pet thing. This is not acceptable! I get irritated because people sometimes act like being involved in Indian education is not enough, that it is less than being involved in education in general. I think it's double the work because not only do I have to know what the current trends, challenges, and research findings are in education overall; I also have to know the research and trends in Indian education and within my own native community. I end up doing double duty to stay on top of the issues.

Recognition as a leader comes when you least expect it. You don't look for it. It comes when somebody whom you really care about, who is a long-time friend or a family member or somebody who means a lot to you--and has watched and observed you--makes a comment to you. That means something! That means I've lived up to what I should be living up to. I have not even tried to get any kind of award. Indian people don't do that a lot.

Quieter things happen to you. There was an older Lakota man who had really watched me for a long time when I lived in California and was trying to move things in that huge school district. He gave me an eagle feather and said, "I've watched you for a long time and over a number of years." He didn't have to explain. I knew what he was saying, and it made me cry. I knew that he had been skeptical of me at first because I was educated, and he wondered where I was coming from and what I was going to do. I know he had his doubts about me early on. I just knew he was really watching me, so when he presented me with the feather, it meant a lot to me. For me, he was saying it was good that I had given my heart and mind to help our people.

There are many Indian women leaders whom I admire. One who really influenced me early on was Janet McCloud from the Northwest. She was so strong and just an incredible speaker and just spoke from the heart. I remember I was so naïve. I asked her—and this sounds so stupid!: "Everything that you say just touches me 'cause you just speak from the heart; how do you do that?" She said, "I just do it. I just speak from the heart." Like, ah, duh! But I didn't know how to do that 'cause I didn't know who I was. I was still this young person in graduate school, and married, and trying to find my own path, and I was still cautious, still worried about other people's thoughts, or rather living up to other people's opinions or their expectations more than my own. I was not as clear about what was absolutely important to me, what drove me. It took my own personal growth to learn how to talk from the heart, how to tell my truths. Now that is the only way that makes sense.

Another strong Indian woman I learned much from is Adele Arcand. The whole concept of us as mental, physical, emotional, spiritual beings was never out of Adele's mind. Maybe she didn't always live it. That's the biggest challenge for all of us, but it was never out of her mind. When she spoke, it always was a very inspirational message; it always brought us back to our spiritual direction and even in very scary situations, like addressing chiefs, she just told the truth. I can't believe some of the things she said to the tribal leaders. But it was always said with such honesty and such directness, and just the truth. Not accusatory or anything. She role-modeled some incredible behaviors that were honest and truth-telling, without fear.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. A whole different leadership quality that Indian people have to have is this role as a translator/interpreter. Non-Indian leaders don't have to have this quality because theirs is the common language. The native leadership role is a dual leadership role because one could be a very strong leader in one's own community among Indian people, but not such a strong leader in the White society, or vice versa. A native leader can be unknown in his or her own community and then write a lot about Indians. We don't like that. We don't like Indians who are Indians on paper and are known by the books they write when they have no connection to the community at all. The other is the dual role as leader in your own community as well as taking on a leadership role in White society. That is often seen as value added, certainly, but also it's much more work. It is a dual or triple role, you know. That is one thing that we have to do all of our



lives--define ourselves, describe ourselves, and interpret ourselves to this other society.

Native women's leadership often is invisible. Yet native women have a gentle way of leading that is very strong. A lot of times they're seen as not being assertive enough or not having leadership qualities because they're not firm. Our leadership is just not recognized or valued. I think it also depends on who's looking. I think that we Indians recognize leadership among ourselves. We recognize our own style. In any group we're real quick to see who the out-front leaders are and who the behind-the-scenes leaders are. In the dominant society, unfortunately, they pay most attention to the up-front leaders, the extroverted authority figures.

Birch Bark's Story

Birch Bark is an Ojibwa woman who serves as the president of a native-controlled private college. When Birch Bark and a small group of friends first conceived of this institution, they were charting new territory. Initially developed to serve the needs of a poor urban Indian community, the college has grown into a multiracial, multicampus institution that now serves both students living in urban areas and those on three reservations.

In establishing the college, Birch Bark challenged the conventional higher education system that for decades had constructed walls around itself. She also challenged the urban Indian community that increasingly distrusted the university and undervalued its relevance to meeting community needs. Over the past 25 years, the original vision of a small group of activists has become the shared vision



of many. With Birch Bark's leadership, the college has developed and expanded. It now serves as a model native-controlled higher education institution that is undertaking a wide array of education-promoting and community-building activities.

Throughout the years, Birch Bark has expanded her spheres of influence by serving as a delegate to the White House Conference on Indian Education in 1992, and as a board member of a number of prestigious national organizations that are involved in securing human rights throughout the world. She continues to serve as a staunch advocate in the area of human services, helping to meet the special needs of American Indians, particularly those living in urban areas.

From my perspective, Birch Bark's story exemplifies several concepts that are critical to effective leadership in native communities: a record of accomplishments, a willingness to take risks, and perseverance. It is the story of a courageous woman who, like birch bark itself, has weathered many storms and emerged from each conflict stronger and more resilient than ever. This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. Boozshu! My Indian name means Star Woman. I spent the early part of my childhood on a reservation in Wisconsin, where I was raised by my maternal grandparents. I have fond memories of spending many hours outdoors with my grandfather, who was a strong influence in my life. He was a very quiet man who showed me a lot about how to live a very simple, peaceful life. I attended a small two-room school on the reservation. I don't recall being poor, but looking back, I guess we were. I remember one time when I didn't have any shoes. A big shipment of shoes donated by some charity arrived,

and everyone in the community who needed shoes received a new pair. Every pair was the same style--shiny and black, with big silver buckles. I have vivid memories of all these Indians walking around in these Pilgrim shoes. We must have been quite a sight!

In my seventh-grade year, I moved to Chicago to be with my mother, who was working in a factory and had just gotten married. There I went to a school where I was the only Native American. I remember being discriminated against a lot when I was growing up. I had a sense that something wasn't right, and a feeling of being made to always feel "less than." It's a feeling that many Indians have and one that is very hard to get rid of. I had a couple of school counselors who encouraged me to go to college. My mother was against it at the time, but I went on and attended Purdue University, in Indiana, where again I was the only Native American student.

Although Indiana was the home of the Ku Klux Klan, I didn't know anything about the Klan. I could tell that on the campus there was a mentality that was very uncomfortable. The only black people on campus were the football and basketball players. They were isolated from the rest of the campus. In my last years of college before I graduated, my social consciousness began to develop. I remember hearing about all of this activity going on in other parts of the country, and feeling a sense of connection. There was the takeover of Alcatraz in 1969 and a takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., in 1970. I was part of the group that took over the Indian Bureau in one of the big cities.

There were pockets of civil rights activity going on around the country. I got involved with a lot of groups, white people mostly, but blacks and Latinos as well. Through my political involvement in the late 1960s, I learned a lot about how other communities organized themselves. There was a much more conscious effort to organize within the black and Latino communities, but it didn't always translate to what happens within native communities. They were always concerned that Indian communities didn't participate with them, and they didn't seem to understand that we were a very different community. On the other hand, I learned a lot about the value of educating the people around me about our issues.

I also learned to take a broader look at issues and see that what has happened or what is happening to Indians has also happened to other people in other ways. We've dealt with it in different ways, but much of the bias, discrimination, and hatred that Indians have encountered has been experienced by some other peoples, as well. I learned that it didn't do us any good to fear each other, and that to overcome this fear I had to be willing to take the time to understand what those other communities were about. I also recognized that I needed to understand the economic system. As I see it, we provide that sense of economic layering that other people need in order to be on top. They need the group at the bottom, and unfortunately, we're it. I think that is why Indian gaming really bothers people--because it begins to demonstrate some signs that the economic system can break apart and not serve them, but can in fact serve other kinds of communities.

I can't remember having any role models when I was young, but I do remember a speech teacher who strongly supported me. He convinced me that I had a strong message to deliver to others. So I joined the speech team at Purdue and traveled with them. I majored in Education but did not choose to teach when I graduated. Instead, I went to work as a caseworker at the Urban Indian Center, where I knew I had friends and family. I found casework to be highly stressful, however, as I wasn't prepared to deal with all the terrible life situations that I found urban Indians to be living in. I quickly burned out and asked to have my job changed, which the organization agreed to. I didn't realize then that my "promotion" to an administrator would be even more stressful! However, it was then that I began to recognize the importance of education.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. We began a college in order to make higher education meaningful to native people. Throughout the years, much volunteer time has been given to build this college. To raise funds, we sold Indian arts, crafts, and books. Then we received some support from an Indian health project I was working for. We linked for a while with Antioch College, which had pioneered the work-study model and nongraded classes.

Our college began in a small space that we shared with another organization. We had 11 students in a class in community health, mostly adults working in the human services field. We looked at programs that involved people in their own healing. That concept was new to nonnatives, we realized, after hearing some of the speakers say it was what Indian people did all the time. We received a grant that



enabled us to bring in people from other parts of the country, such as someone who ran an effective alcohol-abuse treatment program or a Navajo healer. I still remember learning about Navajo ceremonies and how they organized them, calling singers, notifying clan members, getting food together, and collecting money to pay the healer. That Navajo healer talked about healing as a community-owned process.

After a while, people brought their own life experiences into the classroom. My mother had lost most of her Ojibway language in boarding school. She began volunteering and coming to language class. Soon, she was studying traditional child-rearing practices of the Ojibway and sharing what she remembered. There was a sense of continuity for her, for me, and for many others who were away from their families and tribal ties. What you know is part of the wholeness of who you are.

One of our classes dealt with racism. The students who had grown up on reservations remembered being called "dirty, lazy Indians." When they joined a fishing-rights protest in northern Wisconsin, they returned to class saying, "We were down at the boat docks, and they called us timber niggers." Well, I grew up with that. It destroys your self-esteem. While they participated as students in that class, people who had always accepted racism as "the way it is" began to talk about how to change attitudes.

Most of our students come from families in which nobody has a college degree. When you see them working for several years to meet all the requirements, then graduating and taking what they've learned back to their communities, it's



thrilling. We do not all come to the table equally endowed. People of color have to work hard to break through the barriers of poverty and racism, and we are doing it.

It took years for our college to obtain accreditation. We would go to a meeting of college presidents who were mostly white, middle-class men in suits. We would have to explain what the baseline knowledge was for our program, and how we would put it into practice. Without a standard curriculum, it was hard to convey in a meeting. We'd say, "We're not isolated from the rest of the world. We're not separate little enclaves preserving our culture. We are acting out who we are at this time. We interact with different peoples and with government. We have to be the ones to define our needs." Over the last 200 years, our own governments and the legal system have been defined for us.

Indian voices have rarely been heard. Many of these systems have not worked in the past, and they continue to be ineffective. It was our goal to create a higher education system that was responsive and accountable to our community. This passion has driven my work for the past 30 years. I've realized that we need to work at a number of levels--locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

I joined the board of one national organization because I thought we needed to have an impact in institutions that influence public policy. Without access to power, Indian people will continue to remain at the bottom of the economic ladder. The way the economy is structured causes gross inequities. Although Indian people have developed individual entrepreneurial skills, community-based economic development is needed to affect the lives of native people as a whole.

While my son was growing up, I tried to provide him with opportunities that would help ensure that he would feel part of and contribute to Indian communities. He often went back to my home reservation to stay with my parents, who had returned there after they retired. One time when we were there, we went into a restaurant, and all the white people got up and left. We went into a store, and the cashier wouldn't put our groceries in a bag. Instead, she shoved them at me. Even though other Indians just put their food in their arms and walked out of the store, I just couldn't stand that second-class treatment. I would not leave until she put the food in a bag.

I told my son, "You can walk out, you can stand there and scream, or you can find a way to deal with it head-on." Anger is a compelling force that makes you take on issues directly. You just can't view "the others" as powerful and yourself as powerless. It was only recently that people on our reservation set up their own store and boycotted that other store.

My son's generation has had to face racism, but not the same barriers I faced growing up. Today, I see that many of our young people are much more positive than our generation was. They know who they are. Part of that comes from the long-time existence of Indian organizations in cities that have developed programs for youths. As a result, they've grown up with Indian canoe clubs, baseball and other athletic teams, and pow-wows—activities that re-create a sense of tribe and community that, in turn, creates a sense of belonging, connectedness, and meaning.

In 1990, a fellowship enabled me to travel to Africa to see firsthand the struggles of other indigenous peoples trying to break colonial ties. Although Zimbabwe won independence from Britain in 1980, school tests are still sent to Cambridge to be graded. I attended a celebration in Namibia, which finally won its independence from South Africa, but only after thousands of native people were killed. I went to New Zealand, where the Maori women are seeking recognition of their cultural traditions and a national voice, just as we are. It helped me learn that we need to form coalitions; to cross cultural, class, race, and gender boundaries; and to understand how the same issues affect communities of poor people, as well as women, throughout the world. There are common concerns that transcend race and national boundaries.

It's odd to try to answer your question about how I learned to be a leader because I don't have that perception about myself--as a leader. I know that I've been involved in some leadership development programs, but I've found most of them to have a notion of leadership that is very uncomfortable, that does not fit with how I understand leadership.

Indians don't ever say that you are a great leader. You receive a different kind of feedback within the Indian community, a different kind of recognition. Outside of the Indian community, non-Indians give you a different kind of feedback. It's patting you on the back and saying, "Oh, what a good Indian you are." If you don't have that connection back to the Indian community and all you hear is this corporate somebody saying, "We need more Indians like you who are educated,"

you might believe that. However, if you are connected to your Indian community, the surface recognition won't sustain you. You will need to be affirmed by that deeper sense of connectedness.

There is a notion about leadership in the larger society—that leadership is not based on how real and strong your relationships with others are, or how it is that you are one part of a circle, or that you must contribute to something as a whole. Rather, they focus on you as one person who must be able to do certain things for yourself. They tell you that you must dress a certain way, talk a certain way, plan your life every minute of the day.

It is a much more tempting sensation to learn all of this so you can live and work in a world when someone pats you on the back and says, "God, you're the best Indian I ever met! You're a credit to your race," than it is to go home at night and find out that someone has been politically attacking you or trying to undermine something you're doing for the people. That certainly is the easier route in the short term, but, as you well know, the challenge is not in that world. It's in the world of your family, your community, your ancestors because that's the way of Indian communities.

This is not to say that we do not have to learn about others' ways of behaving. We have always had to watch what's going on. That's been a part of how our community has functioned. How do you learn to be good at something, whether it's a good daughter, son, or mother? You do that by watching other people and seeing how they carry out their lives and how they cope with failures, and so we've done

that too with the larger society. We've really watched. How is it that they carry out their values? What are those values, and where do they come from? I think we know a lot about it. We know a lot about the larger society. The temptation to fall into it is an easy one. You are given the sense that you're meaningful to them, however, you are never given any real power. They might listen to you for a while, you might even become their Indian guide, their entree into our community, but you will never have power. You will have to learn to appeal to their good graces, and few will really recognize your strengths for what they are.

My friend and I were talking about the crazy phone calls that we get if non-Indians perceive us as an Indian leader--you know, the "My grandmother was an Indian princess and we want an Indian princess to come visit us" phone call. My friend said someone called her office and occupied a lot of her time asking about Indians. It turned out that he wanted out of our busiest leaders to go to their local Boy Scout Pow-Wow or something like that. She said, "He really is busy and has other things that he has to do. May I suggest someone else in our community who may be able to help you?" The guy said, "Well, I thought it was important to have him here because he is an educated Indian," as if he was the only person in Washington, D.C., who would represent what they think is this model Indian. I mean, a lot of people in these traditional education institutions will try to identify something about you and kind of capitalize on it for the benefit of their own work. When people get recognized for doing something in the native community, it usually is for giving back to our community. It's not because you did all this work for yourself



or that you brought yourself up by your own bootstraps, but rather, how is it that you gave back to the community? How is it that you acted in a way that resulted in something good for the community?

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. Knowing whether or not you have support in the Indian community is difficult. The clues are always so subtle that often I'm never really sure. Through the years, I have gone through some terrible political battles. Indian politics at their worst came into play and quickly got very nasty when I first became the executive director of the center. I had become pregnant by the guy I had been living with, and there were a lot of personal attacks on my character. Talk about painful times! To top it off, the guy I was living with left me, and I found myself having to raise a baby all by myself. Soon after that, a group of my colleagues and I were fired, and I suddenly found myself unemployed.

Last year, however, had to be the most difficult period of my life. For the first half of 1996, I felt that people were really after me. It was just a downright nasty situation as it involved people who wanted my job. To many of us, it seemed like this group wanted not only to oust me as president of the college, but also to find some way that was going to hurt me. They called and sent letters to our funding agencies and our regional accrediting office to complain about me as a person. Their actions were mean and vicious. They did everything they could to undermine what I was doing. It was harmful to me after awhile because I just could not take that kind of stress over a long period of time, on a daily basis.

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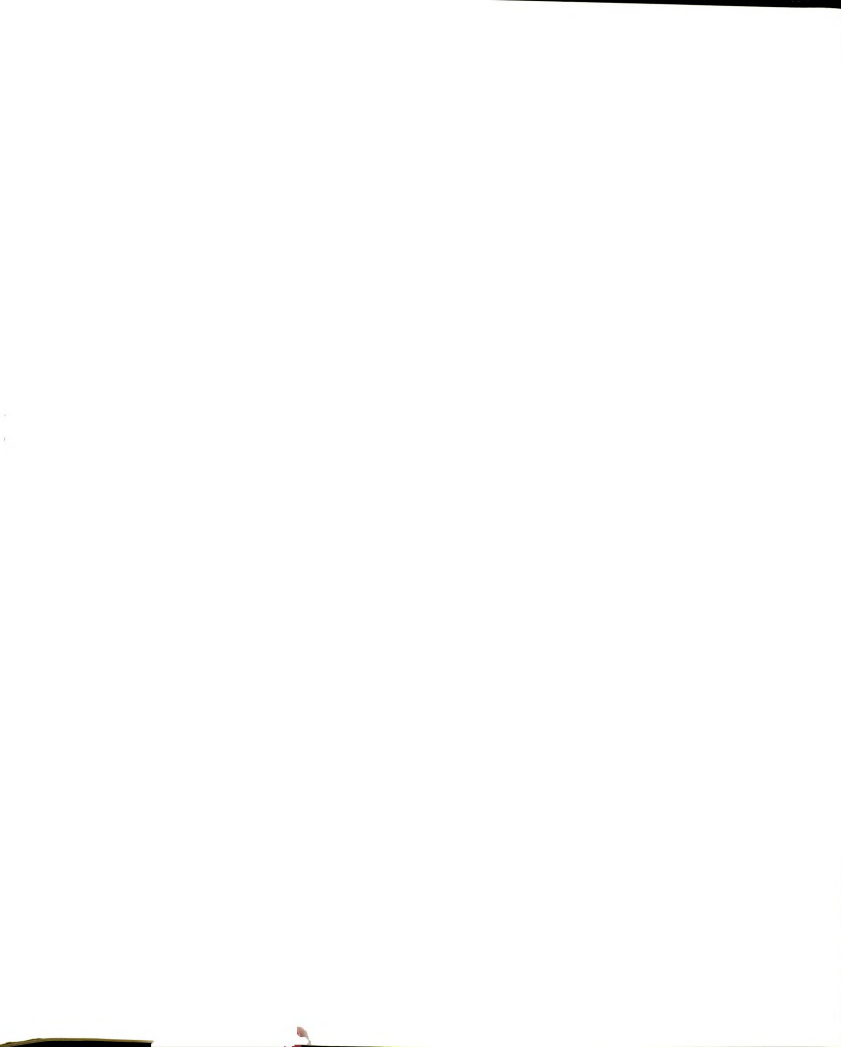
I could feel myself getting sick because the pressure was more than I could take, yet I felt that it was my responsibility to handle the situation because of my position with the college. In retrospect, I wish I had tried to involve others where I thought that they could make a contribution. But I guess I thought the situation that we were in was all my fault. If someone does something bad to you, you have to think, "Did I do something bad? Maybe I did something bad." I tried to take it on myself and didn't rely as much on other people as I should have. A friend of mind called. Finally, all of this conflict began to filter out, and we began to work it out piece by piece. After it was over, people would come up to me and say, "Well, I knew you would be okay." I would just think to myself, "Well, where were you when I needed you?"

What I realized is that there were a lot of people who wanted to help. I had to recognize that there were people who supported me but didn't know how to help me. I mean, this one woman said, "I prayed for you every day." You may not get the sense of support when you're in the heat of controversy. It comes later at different times and in various forms. You don't always know until six months later that someone was actually doing something to try to help you because they're not going to come and say, "I tried to convince so and so not to do what they did." It's a different kind of support that is not always visible or overt. It also involves a different kind of listening to the cues that are out there. It doesn't always involve organizing a committee, setting up objectives, or developing a strategy. It is trying to listen to what's going on, to hear what people are saying, and relying on those

people around you who you know are supportive. It is recognizing that you have friends who are willing to share whatever burdens you've got.

What sustains me? If you look at the way the larger society deals with leadership, it's a very temporary kind of leadership that they allow. It doesn't really let you carry out the full breadth of what you think you need to do as a person. It's kind of like standing on a beach in sand where things are kind of shifting under your feet all the time, and it doesn't seem that attractive. Monetarily, of course, it's very nice because you see those people make money. However, in our community, once you demonstrate that you can create change and stand up for the community, people expect you to stay in that position forever because, obviously, that's one of your gifts and you are just expected to use it by giving it back to the community. No one ever talks to me as if I'm going to be doing something else or doing a different kind of work. They just always assume that I will be helping create educational opportunities for Indian people.

At the college, we've been trying to go through this process of getting people to share what it is they don't like about their work, so we can figure out what it is we're going to do to strengthen our infrastructure. What they are most concerned with is how we are going to strengthen our relationships within the building, within the staff, within the Indian community, and with the non-Indian community. What they're concerned about is that people don't always treat others with respect and dignity like they should, or that we have some people who are a little more crusty than others, so they're a little more difficult to deal with. It's more of those



interpersonal kinds of things that will make or break a person's job here or that will make you feel good about the work you are doing.

Even though the outside may be against you, you need that kind of internal strength and connectives. We wanted to create that kind of working atmosphere so that, together, we could do even more. We got to a point where it seemed that people were holding back. You could feel that there was something going on, so we started having talking circles where we could talk out our concerns. Before the meeting, I asked people to first write down their thoughts. So the entire staff did that, and when we met to talk about people's satisfaction levels, it was like therapy. One woman was going to start reading; I looked at her face, and her lips were beginning to quiver, and her chin was shaking. She couldn't read it, even though she started several times. I said, "We'll wait. We'll come back to you."

When we came back to her, she just couldn't do it, so I said, "If you give me your paper, I'll read it for you." I read her paper out loud, and she talked about people not treating each other with respect, and she talked about our Indian values. It wasn't that my boss makes me do too much work, the pay is too low, or anything like that. It wasn't that I don't get enough personal training, I want to develop, I want to move on to this other job, or people don't recognize my work.

My assumption is that, in the larger society, if someone asked you to identify what gives you job satisfaction, it would be that kind of stuff. But what people talked about was values and how they thought our values were practiced inside the building or inside the staff--that they were not as strong as they ought to be. It wasn't just an

exercise that people went through. You could feel the hurt that people had, or the desire that people had to really make this a strong organization in terms of the values or principles that we set and live by. Why don't I walk away from it? Because there's this group of people who said, "We're going to do what you tell us to do, and we're going to help you. And that's the staff. I can't say, "Well, I want to go work with IBM for awhile" because they would say, "Don't ever come back if you do that!"

I know my staff and some others in the Indian community have really vested their support in me; they have followed, done the work, and rarely complained. We went through periods when there was no pay for six or eight weeks. None of us had any money, so I would borrow from my friends and loan it to them. Everybody was just right on the edge; our toes were right over the cliff. Every day, we brought in food to eat, and we were sharing what we had. It was a really difficult period, during which we had to rely on one another, and we did it! They didn't complain about it. I rarely heard complaints except from my political enemies, who were on my back all the time. But, internally, these people did not complain.

It really is the relationships. If people trust you, you don't want to ever have to tell them that their trust was ill placed. When you look at where people have been, most of those people have grown for a long time. They came from families who came to the city dirt poor, with nothing. They came from families who put their hearts and souls into the Indian Center, or even into community life, and who have worked hard, who really deserve a stable life and a way to go to pow-wows, or to have relationships within the community in a way that's much more positive.

I remember when these attacks happened once before and someone said to me, "Well, we're looking to you. The model you gave us was really important: to keep on, not to be creating chaos in the community or creating that kind of negative presence, but to keep doing the work." So you remember those little bitty things where someone would say something to you, like the woman saying "I prayed for you every day" or someone saying "We watched you when you went through that struggle," and that was very important to me.

When it gets really bad, you don't have time to do anything, although I've been trying to create more time to exercise, or to walk, or to do other things, because you need some other outlet to get rid of all that stuff. But I think it's more about not accepting what it is that's negative and trying to build on what you have that's positive, and trying to focus as hard as possible on what that is.

What do I do for fun? I clean house. No, I don't! I don't ever clean house; that's the problem. I used to do beadwork, and that was great because you have to focus so hard on your colors and your little lines and getting things in the right place that it pushes everything else out, and you need some things that push everything else out. I also read a lot. I read a lot of fiction and nonfiction. When you're under stress, I don't think it's a good idea to be by yourself. I don't think you work it out because you're thinking about it all the time anyway. I think you need that.

Spiritually, I don't do anything. Well, I pray an awful lot, of course, but I don't do ceremonial stuff. I've thought about doing it, but I just don't. A lot of that stuff goes on in my home community now. There has been a real regeneration of it in the

past six or seven years. But when I was growing up, for a long time it was really absent, even from the tribal community. Old people would just die, taking the knowledge with them, and there wasn't the same interest in keeping it alive. Now those societies are beginning to have some real strength and pull people from all over the place. But I haven't really done that, and I don't go to church.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. I don't know if I have a definition of leadership, but I think I have a notion of leadership. Leadership is a collective process that requires different people to do different things that express aspects of leadership in order to accomplish a goal. There are different people who excel in different kinds of areas, and when you work together you have to be willing to step back. You have to be willing to say, "Yeah, I'm going to follow you while you do this." That's not always the case, but it's nice. It's worked for me a lot.

You can lead change in Indian country without having followers because it's more of a group process than an individual who has disciples. I think anyone can demonstrate leadership at different times and in different situations. Only a few can do it well. I think you have to see the end, whatever the end is. You have to keep that clear so there's a notion of having some kind of vision of where it is you think we need to be as a group. You have to listen. You have to be attuned to what's going on. Your self is less important than what the group is experiencing. You have to know what's important and what's not important; a group can get fragmented and torn apart by things that are not important. Many of the leaders that general society looks up to are the Bill Gateses of the world, the kinds of people who are fiercely

competitive, calculating, not afraid to steamroll anything that gets in the way of meeting their goals. Within the native community, a leader must think of more than who is physically present at that time; we must think of people who have gone before us and the ones yet to come. It's having that sense of responsibility that what you do must respect them as well.

Sometimes our leaders are the ones who lead the way. They may be moving into an area where our issues have not been addressed before, our opinions have not been considered, or our knowledge has not been valued. Often, there is a sense of excitement about it. It's not like corporate mergers that have happened over the over, or not like that other kind of leadership that you see. It's often that what you've done results in people beginning to feel that sense of grounding within the native community, or people experiencing new ways of thinking. You know it's old, of course. It goes back a hundred years, but for our generation, it was a new revelation: that we can operate in that way and carry a sense of integrity about ourselves that we're in the game, we're doing the work, we're doing the leadership, or we're helping people find what it is that's important within their community. We're doing it within the style that subconsciously comes out of our own roots, out of our own traditions.

For the next generation there isn't going to be that question that we grew up with: Is it better to go off and be a white person, or is it better to be a part of this Native American community? I see my son growing up with the sense that he is never going to have to question whether he's going to express certain Indian values,



provide leadership in a way that's unique to the Indian community. That question isn't there, and that was one that our whole generation struggled with all the time, of seeing people get dragged off to go to school at Harvard or wherever, or going off to work in the university, and never coming back or giving back.

There's something about learning from failure that makes it possible to say, "I'm either going to stand up, or I'm going to get out of here and not do this." I think that if you fail big, you have to stop and reflect on what's going on. Then you have to stand up and say, "This is who I am," because you have to deal with whatever that failure is and you have to begin to sort it out. You have to ask yourself, "What is it about myself that I am going to stand up for?" whether you fail publicly or not.

I depend a lot on elders for advice. The ones I find helpful are the crusty ol' aunties who have been through the school of hard knocks—you know, boarding schools, relocation policies, survival in the city, and sometimes bouts with alcohol. One time I was talking to one of these elders about failure, and she compared it to one or two hundred years ago when Indians would approach their enemies: "There were two Indians on a horse, and they were enemies. And the one would go as close as he could to the other without being hurt or without hurting the other person, but just to show that he could, that he was stronger." I said, "I don't understand that." And she said, "Well, you have to be able to confront your enemies and not be afraid that they're going to do anything to you, or not think that you necessarily have to hurt them in order to express your own difference. It gives you a sense that there's nothing so special about this person; he's just a human being, too." I



thanked her for her wisdom and asked her where she had learned that as I could really relate to it. She just said, "Oh, I saw it on some old cowboy and Indian movie on TV!" I tell you, those elders can always make me laugh!

When you accept the responsibility to lead, you have to have a strong sense of self and how that self is interrelated to the tribe and the community. You need to recognize that you are an extension of something bigger and better that in some regards makes you better able to handle times of adversity and challenge. You have a comfort zone with yourself as a tribal citizen in your local community.

I love to learn and take risks. Being able to engage a whole wide range of interests nurtures my spirit and helps me to be a better person and to see a better view of the world. I've taken up boxing, and I like to go to classical concerts. I love to travel and meet people from other cultures.

Leadership allows you to contribute to the community. It fosters your sense of self and gives you a set of values that allows you to be who you are today. I have this metaphor of my leadership and my life being something like a rose, where there's something inside the rose, always there from the moment of creation. The rose is really beautiful in its own right, but very few see or really appreciate it. It has taken time to develop inside so that something profoundly beautiful, the outside of the rose, can blossom from it, with it, and around it. It holds a special power; it is the core of this beautiful creation. When the rose fully blossoms, this special pollen comes out, and those who touch it or are touched by it take some of it away with them. For some, the blossom time is a brief, shining moment. For us, it's been our

lifetime, where we've seen significant changes in Indian education. Our roses have helped others grow. Creativity has bred more creativity, more innovation, and more cutting-edge ideas. It's been an incredible era, and we're lucky to have been a part of it.

Horse Hair's Story

Horse Hair is a Lakota woman who was born on a Lakota reservation in South Dakota. She currently serves as the vice-president of a nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing culturally appropriate economic enterprises in Indian country. She also serves as the executive director of an innovative funder's collaborative that provides competitive grants to strengthen American Indians' capacity to control their assets and resources and solve their social and economic problems. This organization was founded to increase the number of Indian economic-development efforts and to implement a holistic approach that integrates cultural values, human development, education, and environmental enhancement and physical improvements with economic sustainability.

Horse Hair works in all aspects of their programming: finance, marketing, research, policy, education, field visits, training, technical assistance, fund raising, and administration and management. She plays a key role in interpreting and assisting grass-roots community efforts, supervises staff and consultants, and serves on various national and international boards. Before taking her current position, Horse Hair worked in an administrative capacity for the U.S. Indian Health Service for six years working, and two years in grad-school. Her undergraduate

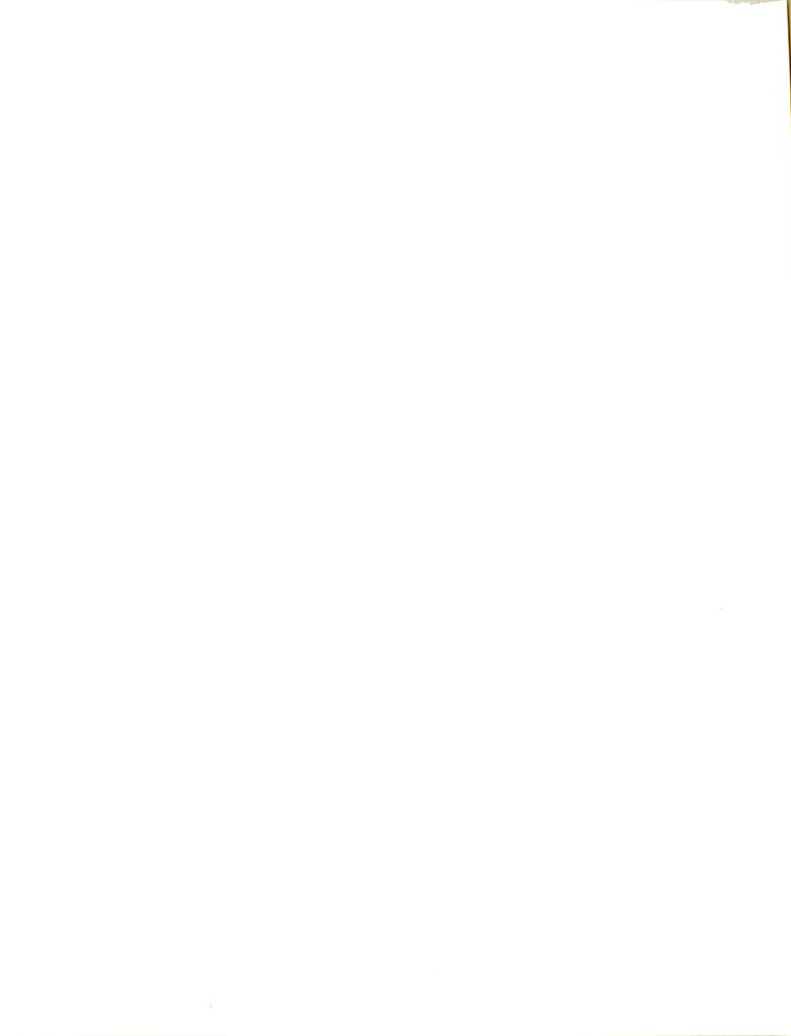


degree is in secondary education, and she earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance.

Horse Hair now lives in a small eastern town; she loves to spend time at home with her husband, who is also Native American. With a hectic travel schedule and multiple responsibilities, she is very fortunate to have a strong support system within her husband's family and her own. In fact, her mother-in-law was one of the first native women in the nation to hold a high-level administration position in the federal government. She has served as a role model of a strong, independent, and brilliant career woman for younger native women, particularly those of us from the baby-boomer generation.

As a result of Horse Hair's contributions throughout the years to various efforts and groups, she has emerged as a role model for coming generations. She represents the new breed of virtual leaders, leaders whom you do not necessarily see, certainly not in one place all the time, but one who nevertheless delivers gifts to the community. Her gifts often take the form of effectively communicating and advocating for culture-based wisdom and knowledge about state-of-the-art concepts about economic development, as well as raising the competencies and motivation of a group.

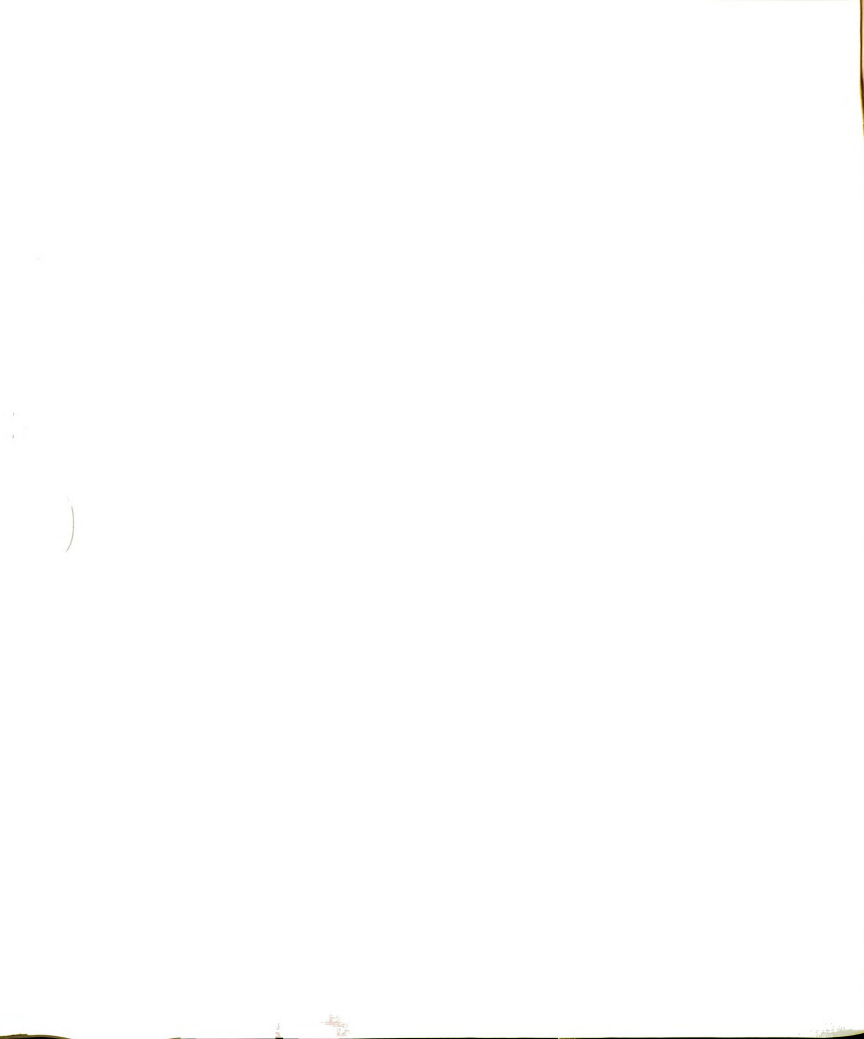
I honor her for exercising leadership by effectively crossing barriers of culture and experience, by engaging others in her visions, and by respecting and valuing individuals and their dignity. Horse Hair is one of those rare individuals who is greatly respected not only by many individuals in the corporate and philanthropic



world, but also by many native colleagues because of her competence and credibility. I, like others, trust, respect, admire, and enjoy working with Horse Hair. Like the baskets made with horse hair, this leader weaves intricate and long-lasting connections and designs that are both durable and stunningly beautiful. One often does not even know that Horse Hair is part of the deep weave. This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. I come from a strong family where I know I was dearly loved. I was the third oldest of four children and one of three daughters. I was also the only child to be born on the reservation where our dad grew up. Shortly after I was born, my family relocated to Pennsylvania, where my parents believed we would receive a good formal education. My father had attended a mission school for Indian children and did not want any of us children to go through the same unpleasant experiences that he had gone through. Because of educational practices at the time, he did not learn to speak his native language. He was from the generation who were taught to believe that it was not important to pass on cultural knowledge to his children. As a result, when we were growing up, we didn't learn a lot of Lakota ways from him. Actually, my mother, who isn't native but who was a nurse on the reservation, seemed to be more willing to share what she had learned or observed about native ways.

My mother worked as a nurse throughout my childhood and served as a role model of an independent working woman. We lived in a small town that was not very diverse and where everybody seemed to know everyone else. In fact, we were the only American Indian family in the town. I am fortunate to have had a very happy



childhood. Looking back, I realize that my parents' world revolved around us kids and our activities, which were mainly sports. My older brother was a star athlete, and my sisters were very bright. All of us grew up knowing that we were expected to go to college. I don't remember being pressured to do well, but I do remember that my parents were always very supportive of what we wanted to do.

We lived with my grandparents when I was a child, and I credit them with being a strong influence in my life. I honestly didn't realize that my parents had an interracial marriage until I was 30 years old. One day, it just hit me—your parents are your parents. I wondered what they had to go through at the time. I was an honor roll student all through high school, and I loved to learn. I graduated in the top tenth of my class, even though I was younger than the other students because my parents had started me in school when I was four years old. In high school, I was involved in student government and all kinds of other extracurricular activities. I don't recall my parents ever saying, "You can't do that because you're a girl."

Unfortunately, being Indian was not really part of my identity at that time. I enjoyed my high school years, but I didn't really know what I wanted to do after I finished college. Following high school, I decided that I wanted to be a teacher in either health or physical education, but I knew even then that I was not passionate about it. I know my mother would have like me to be a nurse—follow in her footsteps—and I was interested in health, but nursing wasn't exactly what I wanted. Health education seemed to be the best choice.



Following high school, I attended a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, where I was active in sports and lived what I call the "all-American college girl's life." I enjoyed my college years very much and made some friends whom I am still very close to today. We were in the same sorority in college. During the first semester of my senior year, I wanted to quit. I had done my student teaching in secondary health education in a wealthy suburb and decided that teaching was not for me. I still remember the day I told my mom that I didn't want to finish college. It was the only time that I made my mother cry. She said, "Just finish college. With a degree you can do anything."

But I decided not to teach and instead took a cross country trip after I graduated. I convinced one of my college roommates to go along. I wanted to spend time getting to know my relatives. I did finish college because it was too hard to disappoint my parents. It was just after Wounded Knee, so I got to see the aftereffects. From October through November, we traveled by bus, train, and plane to Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, California, Rapid City, and Pine Ridge. When we were in Rapid City, we decided to take my aunts out to lunch, but we were refused service. I couldn't believe it! I just couldn't believe that, in the 1970s, Indians were being refused service in a restaurant. What was a tremendous learning experience for me, who basically raised as white in a white society, was that we were being discriminated against. Worse, I felt such pain for my wonderful, kind, and wise aunts who deserved to be treated with respect. It shocked, angered, and hurt me all at the same time.

Then we went to the Pine Ridge reservation. That was another eye-opening experience. The whole reservation was just devastated and had been totally bombed out after the Wounded Knee occupation. I remember going to a relative's homes, and my cousins came in with pistols in their boots. Half of my relatives were called sell-outs by the other half of my relatives, and it was painful to see that my own family had been divided by the whole Wounded Knee incident. It was also the first time that I saw such severe poverty and destruction. I had been excited to return to the land of my birth and early childhood. It was a heartwrenching experience. The whole situation just seemed so hopeless to me. The only positive thing about the experience was that I was able to learn about my family history from my aunts. I really enjoyed listening to them explain it all to me.

In my family, I am the only one involved in native issues. One of the most significant influences in my life was a cousin who attended Penn State University and received a graduate degree there. He was very influential in helping me strengthen my identity as a native. Following graduate school, he worked at a university in the Northwest. His wife was Navajo, and I loved both of them.

One of the most unpleasant experiences in my life was when my cousin was killed in a car accident caused by drunk teen-agers. My aunt wanted him to be buried back in South Dakota—to come home—but because he had converted to another religion, the church wouldn't immediately release his body to the family. Nor would they allow her access to his residence because of the tithing requirement. I was shocked at the hypocrisy of it all.

My cousin and I decided that we would go to Washington, D.C., where we had heard there were "lots of Indian jobs." The only advice that my dad gave me was, "Don't go to Indian bars and don't ever date any Indian men!" Of course, that only made me more curious. The first job I applied for was as a grants specialist, but I also applied for and wanted to get a job as a health educator on a reservation. My cousin got a job as secretary to a famous native leader up on Capitol Hill. I worked with the Indian task force on alcoholism for the Policy Review Commission. I found the Capitol Hill staffers to be very snobbish, and I really didn't enjoy my experience there except for the opportunity to meet and learn from the Indian leaders involved in this cultural review of Indian policy.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. I went to Indian health Service when I was just 23 years old. It was a time when the Indian Health Service, as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was really looking for qualified Indians. Preference for hiring Indians had just been instituted as a policy, and as soon as I came on with a degree, I was hired at a GS5 level. I was immediately shipped all over the country and was put out in front, as if to say, "Here's our Indian woman." The Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Public Law 94-437, had just been signed into law, and I was put on the briefing team to travel around the country because they needed to have an Indian who was out there talking to Indian communities, explaining the law.

That experience provided me with opportunities that people who came after me probably didn't have. I was, in essence, a token Indian but it provided me with

tremendous opportunities. I knew that my bosses during that time really saw a lot of potential in me, and they liked my ability to produce materials. They gave me a lot of opportunities for advancement. Unfortunately, what I saw happening in the Indian Health Service during that time was that Indian people were being placed in positions for which they had neither the experience nor the education. It destroyed them. They virtually sat in corners and didn't do anything. They were the people who gossiped, started rumors, and disrupted the internal working climate. It wasn't their fault. It was just another example of policies that are well-intentioned, but poorly conceived and implemented. Native people were brought in from various tribes, but they weren't given the support and the training, the capacity-building, that they needed. Seeing these negative experiences convinced me that I did not want to be in a position simply because I was an Indian or a woman.

I was constantly trying to do the best work that I could. I forced the system to give me the training I needed. Fortunately, I had two bosses, both white males, who agreed to give me those opportunities. I can remember confronting them, saying, "How do you expect me to know what I need to know if you don't involve me in the meetings where the issues are discussed or decisions are made?" They were shocked at the time, but I think it really led to a recognition that I wasn't going to be their "token Indian" kept in the corner. In our office, we dealt with planning and research, particularly quantitative research. I knew I had to produce high-quality work because I was a native woman. Many people didn't believe that I, as a native woman, would have those capabilities. There was never any doubt in my mind,

however. I might have been able to get in the door because I was Indian, or because I was a woman, but once I got in there, I knew what I needed to know. I had to produce or I would either be fired or be sitting in the corner like many of the others.

At the age of 23, I was promoted to the highest level administrative position in evaluation. Basically, this shows the priority they put on evaluation not so much that I had either the skill or experience to do the job. Unfortunately I had the title and responsibility but not the grade to go along with it. At 23 years old, I was an Evaluation Director for the Indian Health Service. It was really indicative that the Indian Health Service was seriously looking, at the time, for qualified Indians. They were very forthright in their desire to want to have a pool to pick from, and our opportunities for promotion were extensive.

I was able to gain admittance to one of the top business schools in the country, I think in large part because I was Indian and a woman. A little more than a quarter of my class were women and even fewer "minorities." I had no background in business, but because I selected health care administration as a major, my IHS experience made the difference. I was one of only a few people to use a 437 scholarship to get a master's in business. I really struggled academically, but knew I absolutely had to succeed because I couldn't disappoint the folks at IHS who had invested money and time in my education. Being Indian paid for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees, so there was never any doubt in my mind that I had to use my education to help Indian people.

I fulfilled my service payback to the IHS plus an additional year and then was anxious to get out of the federal Indian system. I felt I worked for Indian people and not the bureaucracy—something that must be difficult for all Indian people who work for the government. I felt the system was doing more to squash the creativity and potential of tribes than to assess it. I left to work for a small nonprofit whose mission was to say yes to the ideas of tribes and native people.

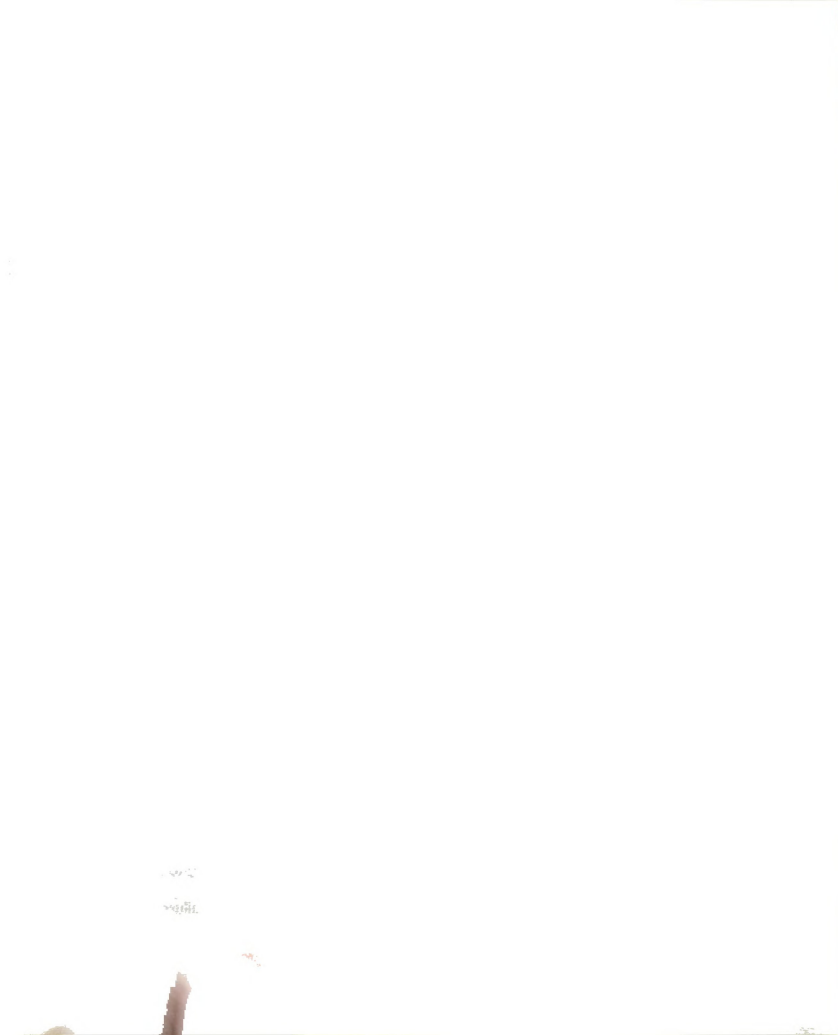
Taking the risk and changing jobs was a good move for me. I feel that I can use my skills in a much more effective way to really help Indian communities. Rather, I believe that tribal leaders evolve. I don't believe that people are born leaders. They may be tribal council people, they may be from the tribal college, or they may be just out of the community. But to identify them and then help them build their capacity to lead is critical.

In this position, the director and I have had a really good relationship. It comes from friendship first, but it also comes from having a real respect for and understanding of each other. We think alike, even though we're different. Whereas she's much more visionary, I consider myself more conceptual. I'm a lot more conceptual with system details, and I think that's where we've complemented each other on a lot of the things that we have done.

One of the things I enjoy most about this job is the diversity of people. What we offer to tribes are ways they can realize what they want to do and how they can take their sense of what is needed and make it a reality. It's not just tribes, but a lot of different groups. We help them think about "the possible." It is very much on the

cutting edge. The other thing is that my job isn't just limited to Indian country. I think what makes us unique is that one of the things that is so critical for us to do is to see what else is out there to bring ideas of new development models back to Indian country and to take the knowledge and ideas from Indian country to others. So much of the past development in Indian country has been that one size or one model fits all. No matter what the model or development strategy, it will only work if that tribe or community "fits" it to their unique culture and circumstance.

Another way we process change is by working in the field, having a discussion on what the economy is on the reservations and asking, "What is working? What assets and resources do we have?" Instead of a different framework, we work from assets. This is part of the development process, too. One of the key areas to learning and making change is learning from your mistakes. Unfortunately, this hasn't been allowed in Indian country. Driven by short-term government funding and unrealistic, ill-fitting expectations, we've lost our inherent ability to problem solve, take risks, decide between options, and realize success rather than always failure. We need the freedom to experiment with our own development. What is working and why? What isn't working and why, and how do we change it? True development occurs when people learn and then make changes from their own experiences and expanded capabilities. You have the ability to change, figure out what went wrong, and then go in another direction. It also involves being able to say, "I'm not a failure; this just didn't work and I'm going to try it another way." Tribes rarely have been able to move beyond mistakes and failures.



They go up to a certain point and feel like they failed even before they actually have failed. We have this in our development framework. It's all about seeing options and choices and a future where we are successful. That's what I think is exciting. We've always tried to create experiences that stretch people's brains and move them to experiment; I think that's really exciting.

The leader might have a vision, but it is his or her ability to bring that out in other people that really counts. To realize the possibilities is absolutely critical in a leader. Education, especially education in native cultures, isn't just about transmitting knowledge to people, but helping them to realize all the knowledge they already have and to validate that knowledge. I think that is absolutely critical, yet so many of our educational systems don't do that. I think Indian people have so much knowledge that we haven't been able to use because the systems haven't allowed it. There has also been a fallacy that Indian people aren't productive or are unreliable. That is so far from the real story. Regardless of the demoralizing socioeconomic statistics, people are productive in ways that aren't measured by mainstream society. We try, as an organization, to first show ourselves how we are productive and how to build on that, and then to show others. Funders are a good example. They may not understand native issues or had a bad experience in the past. We can show them first hand excellent projects completely designed and implemented by the people. They sometimes must be able to step out of mainstream culture to understand different concepts of productivity and success. But it works.

In terms of my own skills, I have always had the ability to work with people. I think that's due to just treating people well and respecting them, no matter who they are. I think that it is recognizing that you can learn from everyone. I think one of the things that's always been exciting about working at the reservation and at the community level is just what you can learn from people. But I also think it's true of what you can learn from people at the other end and that you, too, have something to offer. You have to be consistent.

Learning from failures is difficult, and I have had my share. There was one year when we didn't think we'd make it financially to the next month. Or we have worked with some groups where it didn't work out, but that's a part of innovation and investment. You can't give up.

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. Challenge is a very interesting concept. I think I am challenged every day to be my best--to develop ways to help native people realize their ideas and dreams. One of the fundamental strategies of our work is to help identify barriers or obstacles to development and ways to overcome them so that we can all benefit. Seen in that context, I think I've faced a few barriers in my career and personal development.

First, I know my parents, especially my father, were very hesitant about my decision to pursue a career working on Indian issues. I think they felt that they had moved away from the reservation so that their kids could have more and better opportunities. But once they realized my interest and commitment, they wholeheartedly supported my decisions. When I left a secure job in the federal

government and the health care field to work for a small, new organization with a shaky future, they really worried. I had studied health care and made it a career, yet here I was leaving to help in economic development. I tried to explain that health care was only one part of the solution. IHS could try to deal with health issues in a hospital or clinic, but when people went back to their same environment of poor housing and no job and other problems, the same problems occurred. You had to look at the problems and solutions in a more comprehensive, holistic way. This is the native way of understanding, seeing the relationships and connections to everything else.

I think that the work that I do has made my parents proud. I was able to help my father understand some of the complex issues and barriers that he was confronted with growing up. And he was able to be proud of what I was doing. He died a few years ago, but with the knowledge that I was involved and happy with what I was doing.

Another challenge I face—we all face working on native issues—is frustration and burnout. At times it seems overwhelming and that you aren't able to make a difference because the positive change that is happening is small and takes a long time. But you look for the small successes. That is why it is so important to stay connected to the reservation and communities. It is from the people that you get energy and ideas and motivation. Even though many of us don't work daily or live on the reservation, we need to maintain those connections. It helps to keep us focused on why we do what we do.

I really like to focus more on the opportunities. Being Indian has really given me so many more opportunities than challenges. It's making sure I give back that is the ultimate challenge.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. Leadership is the ability to translate in many different ways to many different audiences. For example, I think I understand what's happening in the reservation economies, and I can define it. I can define it to talk to the people in the reservation economy. I can define it to talk to an economist. In essence, it's the ability to translate that to people, however it needs to be done. It's an ability to translate things into people's understanding so that they can understand better. It's being a culture broker by building a bridge between two cultures, by linking them. One of my strengths is that I'm a good linker.

It's not just translation; there also has to be respect--respect both for oneself and for other people, respect for knowledge that you and others have, and you know that no matter who the others are, they know something and you can learn from them. No one is really better than anybody else, by virtue of a degree or a position. We're all part of this whole thing together.

Part of leadership is the ability to generate other kinds of ideas, thinking, and actions—not just what this one person says, but the ripple effect from it. Leadership is stimulating outward in secondary ripples, not in a linear way. The best compliment to the work that I do is when people think they've done it on their own. This is the hardest thing to do. You're empowering people. Their own ideas and their own capabilities are actualized. Leaders have the ability to pull those things out of other

people. I don't think you can lead with total control. If you're respectful of people's knowledge, then you have to take it into consideration. You have to have the ability to facilitate what people know and their strengths, and guide them to whatever it is that needs to be achieved.

When I think of leadership, I think of an amplifier. I pick up certain bits of important information, and then I give my voice to it and get the word out or put it in a framework that people can understand within their own reality. Whether it's information that I would like the native community to know about economic-development opportunities or indigenous wisdom that I would like to share with the nonnative community, I put my all, my whole being, into getting the message heard by many.

Cedar Roots's Story

In 1984, Green wrote that "in Indian country, maybe the most radical revolution we will ever have is a return to tradition" (p. 62). If this is true, Cedar Roots is a radical revolutionary leader! She has a vision of the future in which native communities in her area in the year 2020 will be healthy, strong communities. Her former students will have led the way as the healing generation. Not only will they have helped their communities heal from the loss of language and culture, and other social ills, but they will have transformed their communities and reclaimed their cultural ways of living.

Cedar Roots's own personal journey has taken many turns. She has overcome tremendous obstacles in her life by believing that the boundaries of pain,

doubt, and fear can be transcended. Her deep commitment to her family has influenced her family-centered, nurturing style of leadership. Cedar Roots is guided by a deep sense of spirituality. I was most impressed by her gentleness, humility, and courage.

Cedar Roots is currently working as the superintendent of federal and tribal schools in the northern part of an upper-midwestern state. Within this area, she oversees a variety of schools that have high enrollments of native students. She enjoys her job immensely and believes that the educators she works with are very talented and committed to improving education by reforming curriculum and providing inservice training to teachers. Cedar Roots has extensive experience in educational administration and has worked at the local, tribal, regional, state, and national levels. This is her story.

Understanding the individual: In her own words. Boozhoo! I am Kiniiqua, an Ojibwa woman, from the Mak-wa (Bear) clan. My spirit name means Golden Eagle Woman and was given to me by a traditional pipe carrier and spiritual leader from my tribe. Throughout most of my life, I have lived on a reservation in the upper Midwest. The area where we lived when I was growing up was called "the bush" because we didn't really have tall trees. What we had was a lot of brush and little trees all over. I remember that we lived in a two-room log house. We didn't have electricity or plumbing. I didn't really know what those things were, so it wasn't until later that I thought they were important. What was important back then remains important to me now. That, of course, is my family. When I was little, I lived with my

mother and father. Our family included 12 children. All of these influences together were important elements in my life that really made a difference in how I view and think about the world today.

Life was so much simpler then. We would pick berries in the summertime; when we needed spending money, we sold the berries. We would have celebrations and buy things with the money we earned from selling berries. We used to help my grandmother gather pupanow sticks. We would have to scrape the bark off of the sticks and then dry the bark. After it was all dried out, we would put it in gunnysacks. Then my grandma would sell them to men who came around in the late summer. It wasn't until years later that I found out that they used the dried bark to make medicine for pharmaceutical companies to sell to hospitals and drugs stores.

We helped my grandma do that and many other things. My life was so intertwined with my grandma's. She had such a wonderful influence on me. To me, she epitomized everything. My grandfather died when I was only about three years old, so I don't remember him very well. But I'll always remember her. She chopped her own wood. She went into the woods to gather her medicine. She used to bootleg, too, making dandelion wine. She also had her own recipe for beer.

There were also parts of life that you just accepted because that's the way it was. I learned early on about death because five of my brothers died. Three of them died as infants; I knew all but one of them. I have always accepted death, and as a result, I have learned to appreciate every day. I had an older brother and sister who went to school before I did, and they were really bright. I always looked up to

them because they could read and they were musical. They played instruments and sang. I mean, they could do everything! Me, I was this sickly little kid. I had tuberculosis when I was very young, so I was at home a lot. My mother had tuberculosis, too, and had to go stay in a sanitorium. My dad took care of us children. Having a father who cared for us while my mother was in the hospital, I learned that men could do everything women could do. My dad took very good care of us, and I was very close to him, so close that when he was away working for a period of time I would get sick. I also had a lot of strong aunties who showed me that women could do as much as men.

When my older brother caught tuberculosis, he, too, was sent away. My older sister and I were located at home. One morning when we woke up, one of my little brothers had died. It was crib death. My cousin, who was living with us at the time, walked with my dad seven miles into town to get somebody who could come out and get the baby. That's the way we lived. People today don't understand that because things have changed so much. The one thing that hasn't changed is how our whole life seems to revolve around our family and relatives, my mother and father, my grandma, and us kids.

Even though my mother went to school only up to the seventh grade, she was really a bright woman. She could read anything and would tell my brothers and sisters, "Check out books from school." They would always bring books home from school. Mother would read to the rest of us from whatever they brought home. I remember being so envious because I couldn't read what those words said, and I

wanted to so badly. That was my motivation, you know. I wanted to possess that skill, and I didn't want to have to wait until my mother read to me. That is one of the main things I always remember. I wanted to learn how to read! It was an obsession, you know.

So my mother, brother, and sister taught me to read even before I went to school, but that created a problem for me because when I did go to school and the teachers started teaching me in phonetic method and with words separated, I didn't know what they were doing. I couldn't make any sense of it. I already knew how to write in cursive because my mother had taught me, but the teacher and I had to practice my letters and print. I stayed with what my mom and family had taught me, so when I was supposed to learn the way they taught in school and I didn't respond, the teachers interpreted my quietness as stubbornness and inability and placed me in special remedial education classes.

When I was in the first grade, they sent me to a room about the size of a hotel room; I sat at a table, and I was really shy. Then an Indian man, who had been hired as a teacher's aide, gave me a book and asked me what it meant. I read him a paragraph. He said, "Well, what are you doing here?" I didn't know what I was doing there. So they sent me back to the regular classroom. The teachers could never figure out what to do with me. I'd go back and forth. I was still missing a lot of school because I was sick all the time. I actually don't remember learning a lot in school.

I do remember that I was really quiet, so they let me read a lot. Even in high school, when I didn't participate in a lot of discussions, they didn't think I was involved or learning, so they let me meet class requirements by reading and reporting on what I had learned. I was an honor student and a class officer, but because I was so quiet, they couldn't figure out how all of that could happen. It's as if you're judged to be competent and leader material only if you're a highly verbal person. Sometimes, people just talk to hear themselves talk. If someone had already said what I was thinking, I sure didn't need to get up and repeat it. As a result, I don't remember a whole lot about my high school classes. I got to read books in school. The teacher would be giving a lesson and I'd be reading. Can you imagine how many native students like this still aren't being reached because teachers haven't figured out that they may have different learning styles or value different ways of behaving?

I joke about it now because I always say I really didn't start learning until I was in graduate school. I learned how to study when I was in graduate school. I learned how to apply myself in graduate school. I learned I was different, not deficient, when I was in graduate school, but it took that long because it was really hard to figure out what I was supposed to be learning and who I was supposed to be. In the minds of educators at the time, being and acting native certainly wasn't the way to be.

It wasn't that I was ever ill-treated or anything. It was just that I didn't know what was important in their minds. Yet I was always so polite and respectful that no one paid attention to the fact that I didn't really get involved in any discussions. I just

did what I was told, and that was it. I started taking home economics when I was in seventh grade. We still lived in our log house and still didn't have plumbing. In my home economics class, we had to learn about the four food groups and what we should be having for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I remember making it up all the time because we never ate like that.

My mother always fixed breakfast for us in the morning. We always had something, but it was usually leftovers from the night before. I could be anything, but it wasn't toast, it wasn't cereal, and it wasn't milk. None of us kids really drank milk. It wasn't something that any of us really liked, and we just didn't eat that way. So I learned to make up menus so I wouldn't appear stranger than they already thought I was. I always knew what I was supposed to say or do. I'd make up our menu, our lifestyle, our appliances, and our furniture according to what was in the book or what I had seen in magazines in the school library. We didn't have a bathroom in our house. We went to an outhouse. We didn't have a bathtub when we were growing up. For our baths, we'd go into the lake, or else we'd wash in a tub in the kitchen—you know, once a week. We'd all use the same water. So a part of it was pretending—not so much pretending, I guess, as telling people what they wanted to hear. You lived your life your way, yet you knew that when you went to school you were supposed to be, act, and live like somebody else. So you became that other person.

We went to what we called the government school. Some of the kids went away to boarding schools, and some of them went to the Catholic school. My dad



had always been told that nuns and priests were mean to children, so he wouldn't let us go to those schools. So we went to the government school. The bus picked us up every day and brought us home at night. Well, we had the teachers' children in our class. They weren't Indians. I remember being envious of their clothes; they looked just like dolls. The girls would have these can-cans on and white socks and those kind of shiny shoes that you wore then. We hardly had any clothes, certainly nothing fancy. I had two sisters who were in school at the same time, and we'd share each other's clothes. When we came home from school, we had to take off our school clothes because we had to wear those clothes all week. My mother washed clothes on a washboard, and we would hang our clothes outside to dry. In the winter they would freeze stiff, and we'd bring them in to thaw out. We would have lines attached to our chimney in the house, and they'd be hanging up there to dry. The thing is, now that I look back, it seems like those were the good days.

I always tell people that to us it was not a hardship because it was our life. We didn't know any other way. We didn't now that things could be easier. When I went to high school, I felt like I just didn't fit in. I supposed I did because I got elected to student government and was student council president. I was also homecoming queen and valentine princes. I ended up getting pregnant by a jerk. Having a baby changed everything for me. All of a sudden, I had someone to live for, to strive for, to make a life better for. My kids have always been my major motivators for getting a higher education.

I graduated from college in 1979. All during that period, my ex-husband continually harassed me. We spent ten years going back and forth in court, and he kept trying to get custody of our kids. He harassed me badly. He'd do all kinds of mean things to us. I had to respond in my own way because the tribal courts wouldn't do anything. That was hard, but I know a lot of other Indian women go through that, too. All you can do is continue to fight. I was forced to allow him to have visitation rights. One day he took my son and hid him. The tribal court wouldn't make my ex-husband give him back. I was working on my master's degree at the time, and I couldn't get any help from the court system. They wouldn't issue a warrant for his arrest, even though he had just taken my son without my consent. My son was eight years old, and I went to find him. Even my ex-husband's dad was trying to keep my son away from me, and I couldn't get him. I went to the tribal council; I went to everybody. I couldn't get any help. The only thing I could do was go to the outside again and see if I could get help from the non-Indian court people to get my son back, but it never went anywhere. The whole irony of it is that when I finished school and was working at my reservation, I decided that I was going to leave. My ex-husband even got the court to issue a notice that I could not leave the reservation because then he would not be able to see his child. I mean, this was just continual harassment.

The only way I could bring any order into my life was through school and through work, so I decided to go back to school and get my doctorate. Then I decided that I missed seeing my son. He told me that things were really bad for him.

I thought the only thing I could do was kidnap him, so I did. I went back to the reservation, took him out of school, and just left the area. We were gone for almost a year. Then I came back to school, thinking things had cooled down, and I ended up in jail for disobeying the custody order of the court.

I was scheduled to do a presentation, and my advisor was looking for me that day, and I was in jail. It's funny when I think of it now. My advisor just couldn't understand me. In fact, he told me that I was an enigma and that he could never begin to understand me. It wasn't so much that I was an enigma, it was just that I was so totally different from anything he was used to, or that he could define. It seemed like no matter what I did, there were always obstacles that were placed in front of me, and all these terrible things happened. I had really good friends and mentors who supported me. First of all, they helped me by building on my strengths and not passing judgment on my life. Then they acted like they were my partners, that this school deal was something we were going to figure out and get through together. They helped me understand that when we follow these paths in life, there are always trials that are put before us. In the end, if you follow the right path, it will all come together.

That same year, when I was in the middle of finishing off all my doctoral projects, I got really sick and almost died. You try so hard, your graduate courses are so difficult, and then you deal with nine different sets of people, including many male professors who really don't think women should be there in the first place. It just didn't seem like they even wanted to try to understand me. They don't even

understand when your children are sick. So, there I was, ending up in jail, getting sick, and having those kinds of things happen in my life. But some things are just meant to be. I think that having a student like me was an awakening for my committee. When I decided to go to graduate school, I went with nothing. I had nothing to live on. I got food stamps and Aid to Families With Dependent Children, and I went to live with my sister, but it all came together. I looked for ways I could be funded, and I ended up getting a graduate opportunity fellowship. Later on, I ended up getting an Indian scholarship.

I realized I could write after I did my master's thesis, one for a specialist degree, and one for my doctorate. Then I wrote a couple of articles along the way. It really helped in building my confidence. I did my internship at the Department of Public Instruction at our state capital. I met people in different positions at the state level, and I worked on curriculum development and financial development at the same time. Fortunately, I was able to use the statistics that I collected for a statewide policy study. When I graduated, I couldn't believe it!

What I wasn't prepared for was all the jealousy and attacks that I got after I received my doctorate. It came from both Indians and non-Indians, and it was a whole new battle all over again. I just came to the realization that as you become more educated, you become more of a threat to others. For a whole variety of reasons, you are always going to create conflict. It's the old bucket-of-crabs syndrome in Indian country. I deal with it by going back to the teachings of the medicine wheel. That is, I have four choices of ways to deal with the conflict: attack,

run, deny, or embrace. Of course, I have to choose embrace. I have just learned to stop and reflect on what thought or action I want to have, be thankful for growing stronger as a result of the experience, and move on. As superintendent, I found this to be especially effective with racist, political school board members.

Dynamics of her leadership: In her own words. After I received my doctoral degree, I worked at a tribal school where I was the superintendent, principal, and school administrator. I did these jobs and was paid what I thought was adequate, considering the area we were in. I was there for three years. Then they hired somebody to replace me and paid that person \$10,000 more than what my ending salary was. This was a man who had just received his doctorate. So, you see how people treat women differently from men.

The first position I applied for was as an assistant principal at the local tribal school. They didn't hire me; they hired a man who had a master's degree. I was offered a position as vice-president at a tribal college in the state. In that position I was treated like a professional. They took my background into account and expected high-quality work, which I produced. Then I was encouraged to apply for a Bush Fellowship, and I was given one for 18 months. With that fellowship I was making more money than I had made at the tribal college! It's amazing. They give you \$3,000 a month to live on.

I just think about all the Indian women who must be going through this same thing. The women's story hasn't been told yet. I think the fact that we appear to be the ones on the forefront who are coming through the mainstream systems, the tribal

colleges, and other community colleges needs to be acknowledged. We're also providing a lot of leadership along with everything else we have to do, not only because it's been thrust on us, but because men are just now finding their way into this educational renaissance. It's more difficult, but that acceptability is still there more for them than it is for us. We still have to fight harder and we have to try harder, sometimes because of the roles that men and women are expected to play, and sometimes because the men will stand in the way of the women because they are resentful or jealous of the attention that it takes away from them.

Yes, we need to talk about the women. We need to talk about our strengths. God knows, enough people talk about our weaknesses! We also need to talk about how we stay balanced, how we use spirit as the essence of our base. We also need to discuss how we learn leadership. One of the best ways would be to talk to our aunties. I have some aunts who have lived life like you wouldn't believe, and they have managed to survive. They just go on despite all these incredible obstacles. They sure could teach us something. If we want to be good leaders, we have to know ourselves better. I've had to really question my own thinking and come up with what it truly means to live through all these negative experiences, to be able to go on and know that you can't do everything, and you certainly can't control everything.

If you could control everything, then, yes, it might turn out differently, but you can't. So you have to let each human being evolve on his or her own, and all you can do is provide the sustenance and guidance. As educators, we really need to learn this and give this away more. We also have to learn to just "be," as opposed

to "do." We need to enjoy being, maybe even more than doing. When I can go to Francis and Rose, our spiritual leaders, and tell them that my life is draining my spirit because I just have too much to do, they will tell me that I need to just stop doing things and just learn to be with the moment. At first, I really didn't know what they meant or how to do that, so I had to reflect on it for a while because they don't really give you more specifics, except to say that the answers are within. I think I know what they mean; at least, they helped me find some answers for myself. Most of the time, they don't even have to talk. We just "be" with each other. Sometimes, that's all you have to do.

When you try to lead change, you often can't prevent yourself or other people from learning things the hard way or trying things on their own. It's okay to try things, to take risks, and it's okay to fail once in a while, just so you're able to learn from it. To learn from it and move on is so important. Learning new things is essential, especially in today's world. We should never stop learning, especially since we're teachers and we touch the next generation in so many ways. I would hope that, if I live to be in my nineties or a hundred, I will always be looking for new things to learn about. Learning can bring joy to who we are as human beings.

Relationships are important, too, when you want to make things happen and it's your turn to lead. When we get to really know another person, we carry parts of each other away with us; we're connected. Understanding those connections is so important because it helps you understand how we are all interdependent. What connects us in relationships is things like respect, hope, courage, joy, trust, and love.

That connection over time helps us to build strong, healthy relationships, which in turn help us to get along and work together better.

A deep sense of spirituality is what sustains good people and great leaders. It has enabled me, in spite of all my problems, to be able to go to school, to have a professional life, and to overcome what has happened to me and deal with the issues that have come about as a result. In my life, as I began to know people's stories, as I grew up, I realized that I was extremely lucky. There were times, when I was younger, when I felt ashamed because I was so poor. I felt ashamed because I didn't have the clothes I needed. I think about how I couldn't go to a basketball game because it cost 50 cents and my parents could not afford to pay 50 cents. I can go back and feel that shaming feeling you do when you're young.

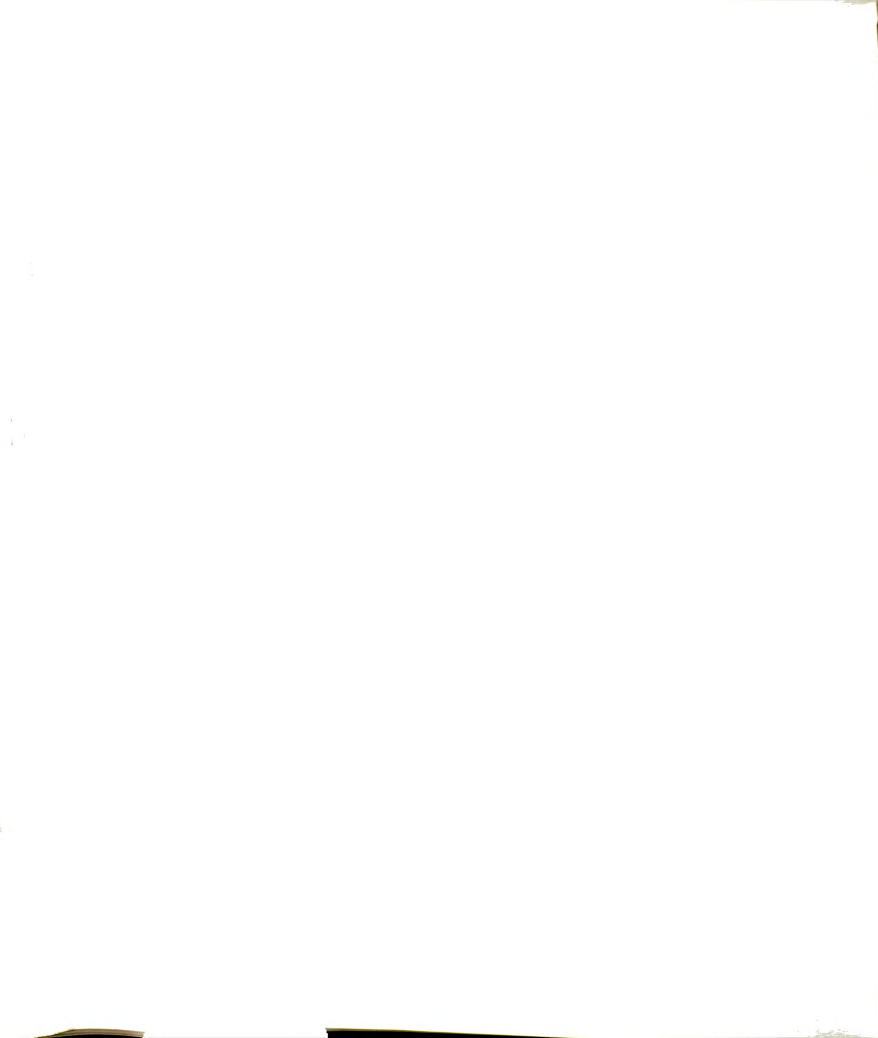
As an adult, I now realize how fortunate I was. I had two parents, I had a large family, and my parents didn't have problems with alcohol. I was always treated special, and I was not abused. I didn't know how unusual that was until I got older. Even within my own cousins' families there was sexual and physical abuse. My family was not like that, for which I am thankful. Being thankful is a key to having a deep sense of spirituality.

My family is a core, always that I go back to, even as an adult. This is where my heartbeat is. With my family, I can be safe; I will always be secure. When my dad would leave, I would get really sick. My mother said that there were about three times when I'd be running high fevers and they wouldn't know what to do with me, and they'd have to send word to my dad to come home because I was so sick. Then



he'd come home and I'd be okay. After he passed away, the thought occurred to me, "I'll never get well if I ever get sick, because he's not here to make me get well." He'd be there and he was strong. Although I'll always think of the women in my family and the women in my life, my dad is always in the background making sure that they could be strong for us. Even now, when I talk about things, even if he doesn't play that large of a part, he is so important to who I am as a person. Even for the stability that I thought I had, the ability to be able to not let emotions show through at crucial times, or to be able to maintain myself, no matter what, I know I got that from my father. The spirituality of our lives guides us to be what we're meant to be.

When people begin to believe again and live in the right way, as my community has begun to do, the culture begins to come back. I found my clan through a ceremony. There are now ceremonies for our children to learn about everything that we do and how we live as a people. We are doing things with our language, and we have brought our Sun Dances back. For a long time, our Sun Dances weren't done because they had been outlawed by the federal government. I think the last ones were in the 1950s. I remember my dad taking us to a Sun Dance when we were little. I remember the place where it was and everything. Back then, we didn't really talk about them because they were against the law. We didn't really have the freedom to practice our religion in the ways that had sustained us for probably thousands of years. But now, the ceremonies are coming back because somebody remembered.



If you have a destiny, you can never really get away from it, no matter what you do in your life. That's how my husband and I ended up together after all those years of knowing each other and being close. No matter where I was or where I was living, he would call me or I would call him, and then the world was okay. By being able to talk and discuss things, we have been so close all of our lives. Now we've been together for ten years.

Challenges to her leadership: In her own words. Like any other couple who hold highly visible leadership positions in the Indian community, we find it difficult sometimes. My husband and I are really humble people. What you see is what you get, that's us. What we do is for the people, so everything in our professional lives is done for somebody else. We do get a lot of criticism and resentment from some people, but we have also learned that you can never please the entire community. Of course, it always gets rough during tribal elections. Indian politics are volatile, and situations get blown out of proportion. Community criticism hurts, especially when it's not true. It hurts a lot. One rumor indicated that my husband paid me \$25,000 to write an evaluation, when actually another person hired me and paid me \$2,500. That was a big difference, but things like that happen and sometimes hurt, but dealing with it and just letting it go are sometimes the only things you can do. We always end up telling our kids that people will do things like this, but it doesn't mean anything. We know who we are, so we do not let it bother us.

What can really hurt, however, is when you create your own problems. One of the decisions I made in my personal life hurt a lot of people. It was when I got

divorced to marry my current husband. After that, I had to rebuild my life. It's almost like you get zeroed out because of what you do in life. As a leader, there are things that I have to make amends for when I fall. When I do something that is not right in my personal life, it really affects how I am looked at as a professional, especially since I am an Indian woman. Somebody else really wouldn't have to worry about how they are seen by others. We have lots of teachers in our system, for example, who have babies with multiple fathers, and fathers with children they don't support, but nobody ever thinks anything of it. For me to make a mistake, however, I don't have that luxury.

I try really hard to live up to the standards that I think a leader should have. It's hard! What makes it tough is that we live in a fish bowl. Both my husband and I have highly visible positions. All we do is work and go home to our family, our grandchildren, my mom and my sisters and brothers, and just tons of kids. We enjoy just being with our kids. Sometimes we'll take about eight hours to clean our house. We'll start from the downstairs and work our way up, and that's relaxing. We love to do it. We have a beautiful house by the lake, so when you come to our house, you're out by the water. That's all you need. When we come home, everything is there. Sometimes we go to another tribal casino and gamble. I play nickels on the slot machine.

What I do, too, is spend time with Francis and his wife, Rose. I go to sweat lodges, and I go to meetings of the people. I do a lot of what whenever I can. Our spirituality isn't supposed to be something you have to do, but I have to do it! I'm so

lost if I don't. It's like I need sustenance and I go into sweat lodges or ceremonies and talk to people about the teachings, about our people, and discuss and ask questions. I gain so much. I have to do that. Sometimes I take my grandson with me, and sometimes my husband comes. That's how I replenish my energy.

I need energy because there is so much that I want to do. What I want to do this year focuses on teacher training and culture. I want the teachers and counselors to take the teachings from the elders and resources that we have and incorporate them into the elementary school, like the other tribe that I told you about does. If they could build these teachings into their themes or lesson plans, the kids would just blossom. I guarantee it! They got so excited about it, too, and we have already started working on that together this year.

There are down sides of leadership. One is that you often end up being removed from people. You do not get to relate to people in the same way that you did before you stepped up to take on a challenge. You can mentor, you can be a confidante, you can be an advisor, but it seems like you're rarely a friend. When I became the a professional, I felt like I lost friends.

It's been painful, painful and sad. I mean, you always have to face realities and they're always changing. So when one of those situations comes upon us, we have to learn ways of dealing with it. I think that you never get over losing a friend or having things change in relationships. You feel sad about it and it's painful, but it's also like you really can't go back, either. You can't go back, you can only continue to be as you are. The terminations of friendships have never really been



on my part. It's been people who pretty much just do not view me as a friend any more. I have felt isolated. But in a sense, too, I think people who are in leadership positions often feel as if they are alone. I know I have always felt alone. I know that I have the respect of many people, but it's different somehow; I just don't have the friendships.

You need to discover something within yourself, and then I guess it's one of the gifts that we get to make up for what we lose. I think you have to learn how to appreciate people more. It's not a decision that you have made; it's just that you're in a position now where people view you differently. This can be true of people whom you've known for years. You can't change that, and as long as you are focused on your vision and your goals, and it's important to you, you can't give that up so that you can go back to the old ways and the old friends. They have to be able to accept you, too. I think that true friendship is when other people can recognize that and still be really good friends with you. But a lot of people have difficulty handling the success of their friends, or the leadership of their friends. Sometimes it is because they have felt left out or sad that you just do not have the time to give them like you used to do.

Definition of leadership: In her own words. Leadership comes from within, like an ability to be there and to help direct people in making the right decisions when the time comes and being able to lead organizations. Also, leadership is being instrumental in having people know the truth without telling them what it's supposed to be. That's all part of leadership. It is like being a guide and facilitator and being

able to bring all types of people together. It's being able to let them see their own strengths and use those strengths so you have the best situation possible. That's what makes leadership, and you have to have other people to be able to do it.

To be a leader you have to have followers, but not followers in the traditional sense. It's not like saying, "Well, let's go swimming," and they're going to go swim, or "Let's go build a school," and they all follow. It's more like people who look at the example that you set and then try to do some of those same things. It is people who see you as a role model in what you do, so they think, "Well, that's a good way to be," and work on it themselves. It's people who will listen, actually listen, and try to incorporate that into what they do and to help improve what they do. That would be the kind of followers that you would have.

I consider myself a leader because I have always had the courage to stand up, speak out, and do things that cost me a lot in terms of courage and consequences. It often does not feel comfortable, but it is what needs to be done. You do not become a leader to make a name for yourself. You take on leadership challenges because it will benefit many others or result in positive change. Leadership is never easy. I ask for courage every day because I don't always like having to be the one to bring up an issue or having to make a decision that's going to make people unhappy or cause dissension. Leadership is accepting responsibility for our people. I am sometimes overextended to the extent that I'm taking care of too many things. It's at times like this that I think about the teachings of the medicine wheel. I reflect, I pray, and I take time "to be."

When I think of a metaphor that describes what leadership means to me, I think about the medicine wheel because it signifies everything in life. It's the continuity of life. We're at the core, and we have the four sections which signify everything. We have the four colors and the four directions. In each one of those places in the medicine wheel, we have our intellectual self, our spiritual self, our social self, and our physical self. In leadership, it's a balance of all four. If your beliefs are rooted in the traditional teachings of your people, you will be able to balance all these areas of your life. If you have these beliefs, you can forward the visions that you have.

Having a formal education doesn't instantly make you a leader in our community. You can take a person who doesn't have any formal education, and really you wouldn't think she is a leader, but she is a leader. Then, on the other hand, you can take someone who has trained her whole life to be a leader. Sometimes she is, but sometimes she is not. I don't think leadership can be defined in scientific terms. I always had problems with the people who got leadership awards in school settings, and everything had to do with whether they volunteered for things and did certain things. If you apply those same standards to Indian women it's really tough because, for the most part, Indian women are raising children and don't have a lot of time to volunteer for things. They do things with their families; they're working and going to school and raising a family, so there's not a lot of time to do volunteer types of things.

Leadership in Indian country is a circle, and the family, the families, the tribe must be the ever-widening core of that circle. To this circle we have other people who are our social influences, and we add our formal education, our intellectual self. But it is the spiritual through which we have obtained leadership. You can't be a whole person without that. All that is the family and the beliefs are rooted in native people.

CHAPTER V

THEMES AND CONCLUSIONS

*For a long time, it seemed
There was war
Everyone was afraid
Many of our people were sleeping
The land, waters, the air, and animals were troubled.
The artist kept on working.
The prophecies are now coming true
Our young are the seventh generation
Making a difference as they prepare
The grounds for the next seven generations to come.
The artist is inspired and stronger than ever
The children have a place in the world again.
Honor the artist.
The basket maker dyes her splints of ash in many colors
They hang on the line to dry
They curl and dance with the wind
There is magic in the air
The children can dream.
The basket maker braids the sweetgrass
It's the hair of our Mother the Earth
There is a fragrance of comfort in the air
The children are strong.
She begins to weave her basket
A new song is heard
There is love in the air
The children feel affection from the Great Spirit.
The basket is round
It holds many sacred feelings
From the hands of the weaver
Beautiful children touch the basket
They receive a vision for the future.
Honor the artist.*

(From Alanis Obomsawin, "Honor the Artist," 1995)

Introduction

Like artists who are weavers of baskets, the Native American women whom I interviewed are weavers of change for this and future generations. For me, this metaphor is deeply imbued with meaning. In this study, I attempted to help others understand the metaphor's special meaning by telling the stories of six women who gently and effectively have led change. It is my hope that the information gleaned from this study will make a valuable contribution to current knowledge about leadership and will be useful in developing a new generation of educational leaders.

As people from diverse cultures increasingly interact in the twenty-first century, leadership that fosters cooperative relationships to solve complex problems is critical. Therefore, it is important to identify new conceptual models of leadership that incorporate diverse experiences and perspectives. In searching for these new models, it is important to examine the ways of leading that are employed by various groups who typically have not been studied, such as Native American women. It may be that the leadership models we use to create change may be particularly useful to our society as we prepare to enter the twenty-first century. The cooperative, empowering model of leadership that these portraits highlight is an example of such a model.

Understanding the traits, styles, or behaviors of individual leaders provides only a one-dimensional perspective that is of little benefit. The understanding will be far richer if one comprehends the history of each individual leader in her tribal and social context: the skills and attributes she uses, as well as the purposes and



meanings she attaches to her leadership. For some individuals, this will require discarding some old ways of thinking about what leadership is and, instead, seeing the portraitures for what they are: rich, extremely varied, viable ways of leading that are equal to any other culture's ways of leading.

The reader might ask, "So what have we learned about leadership for change?" By examining leadership through the *Osah gan gio*, Weavers of Change, model, we are afforded a deeper cultural level of understanding that has produced rich, thick contextual narratives. These narratives, called leadership portraitures, of six Native American women educational leaders offer readers multiple opportunities to question their current knowing about leadership practices and to define native constructs of leadership practice.

In brief, in my contextual model, as my diagram on page 15 suggests, leadership can be likened to the art of basket making. In this model, the artist or weaver is the leader, the facilitator of the process. Just as the weaver develops her craft by gathering materials from her surroundings and learning about the techniques, designs, and forms found in her heritage, the leader must first learn about who she is, gather knowledge about what her heritage means, what skills and strategies work well for her, and what resources might be available. As the weaver dreams her design and determines what fibers, vines, or materials she will use to make her basket strong, the leader envisions what she will change, who has gifts to help her, and develops a plan of action. The weaver knows that a good basket will not be built if it does not have strong beginnings. Similarly, the leader knows that

great change will result only if there is passion to make a difference or the strength of conviction from the very beginning. Therefore, the core of this model is the strength of commitment and purpose with which the effort begins.

In this study, the commitment and purpose of these weavers of change is something they had in common—that is, to improve the lives of Native Americans through quality education. The organic process of weaving, as the model demonstrates, involves forming productive relationships that spiral upward, bonding together, tightening and generating change. It entails the use of various skills and attributes that balance the tensions and strengthen the weave as the basket is being created or as the outcomes emerge. The basket that is constructed is the outcome or change that has resulted from the weaving together of all these dynamics of leadership. In the model on page 15 the arrows represent the internal and external stressors or forces that every leader must contend with. Hence, I present the metaphor of basket weaving as representative of leadership.

As DePree (1989) wrote, "Leadership is an art, something to be learned over time, not simply by reading books. Leadership is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information, and, in that sense, I don't know how to pin it down in detail" (p. 3). Matusak (1997) agreed: "Describing leadership as an art releases us from imposing narrow, fixed definitions on the process. It is continuously evolving. . . . It is a lifetime endeavor" (p. 55). She further explained that, although everyone has the potential to be a leader, that potential must be developed. Leadership, like an art, takes study and practice and is

expressed through action. The most important factors that Matusak believed contribute to successful leadership are commitment, a passion to make a difference, a vision for achieving positive change, and the courage to take action.

As a result of studying these leaders' stories of their own basket making, what can we say we have learned about leadership for change? To respond in a comprehensive way, in this chapter I will address the research questions I posed in Chapter I. To address the first question, regarding how these women talked about their leadership experiences, I will present five compelling themes that were drawn from the narratives. To respond to the second question, I will discuss how these women leaders judged their efforts to create change, how they think about their lives and leadership, and how they find ways of coping with challenges to their leadership. I also will identify how their leadership efforts are assessed in the native community. To respond to the third question, I will situate my findings within the current body of literature on leadership, present implications for future research and for the development of future educational leaders, particularly Native Americans, and end with concluding thoughts.

The research questions posed in Chapter I guided me to inductively study native women's leadership within the constructs of my conceptual model. Addressing these questions builds a deeper understanding of how native leadership might inform current practice. In review, the questions are as follows:

1. How do selected Native American women who have been involved in improving the education of Native Americans talk about their leadership

experiences? What is explicit and implicit in the way they discuss their development and practice of educational leadership?

2. How do these women assess their leadership efforts to effect change in Native American education?

3. What lessons about leadership can be learned from understanding the experiences of these Native American women? What are the implications for preparing Native American women for educational leadership in the future?

How the Women Talk About Leadership

In reviewing the interview transcripts through *Osah gan gio*, I found numerous themes that recurred throughout the women's narratives. I have identified five compelling themes that illuminate how each woman views her leadership. These include:

1. A Commitment to Serving the Community
2. The Emergence and Claiming of One's Native Voice
3. Education as a Key to Cultural Survival and Self-Determination
4. Travelers Across Boundaries
5. The Spirit and Soul of Native Leadership

As I discuss each theme, I will present excerpts from various participants' experiences that further illuminate *Osah gan gio* and connect to the Astin and Leland (1991) model of leadership or to the literature on this subject.

A Commitment to Serving the Community

All of the women in the study expressed a deep passion to make a difference in the Native American community. For some, community was defined as the local members of one's tribe; for others, it meant all Indian residents of a particular city. More often, community was defined from a more global perspective and included the community of all native people in the nation. But regardless of how she defined community, each woman leader had developed a desire to help the community.

I found evidence of this theme in every sphere of the model that I examined. In terms of key formative influences, every woman indicated that her leadership potential stemmed from her roots. Even though they came from various types of communities (reservations, cities, small towns, and suburbs) and varied life situations (extremely poor, middle class, one-parent household, grandparent household), the women all indicated that one or more of their family members loved them deeply, encouraged them in positive ways, and played an instrumental role in instilling a sense of responsibility to use one's strengths, talents, and education to make a difference. Many of their families had modeled strong beliefs and actions in caring for the tribal community and/or securing social justice for the Indian community throughout their childhood. Sweet Grass, for example, said her parents were so involved in an organization for urban Indians that their entire family life revolved around social activities with other Indian families.

Personal experiences were another powerful force that shaped this commitment. When Birch Bark was a caseworker, she saw the detrimental effects



that the federal urban relocation policies had on Native American families who had been relocated to a major metropolitan area in the Midwest from Alaskan native villages or pueblos in the Southwest. These families were given no support. People lived in overcrowded, filthy conditions, had limited or no urban survival skills, could not find jobs, and felt hopeless and isolated. Seeing and experiencing too many injustices motivated Birch Bark to help Indian families in urban communities achieve a better quality of life.

Horse Hair's passion for justice for the Native American community was fueled by her personal experiences of discrimination, powerlessness, and pain. After she graduated from college, she traveled across the country with a roommate and visited her home reservation in South Dakota for the first time as a young adult. Not only was she shocked by the poverty that she saw on the reservation, but when she took her aunts out to lunch in a town near the reservation, they were all refused service. This experience was compounded by an even more intense situation in which an older cousin was killed in a car accident caused by two drunk teen-agers in Utah. The church that he had been attending would not release his body to the family because his tithing to the church was not current. Horse Hair indicated that these events appalled her and triggered her determination to change the life conditions of Native American communities.

The women leaders' commitment to serving the community also came about as a result of their being baby-boomers in the 1960s. This was a period when numerous social movements were occurring throughout the nation: on campuses,

on reservations, and in urban areas. Many of these women were involved in the American Indian Movement's efforts to force the United States government to honor treaty obligations and to stop the oppression of native peoples. Others were involved in peace-movement efforts to end the Vietnam war, in the women's-movement efforts to secure equal rights for women, or in the civil rights movement's attempt to stop racial and ethnic injustice. Several women credited these historic experiences with providing opportunities for them to learn many of their leadership skills and strategies.

Regarding the dynamics of their leadership, each woman had an approach to leadership that was driven by commitment to the group or community, as opposed to individual-centered leadership. For example, Cedar Roots indicated that she operated best when she could focus her professional efforts on meeting the needs of Indian children and creating a culture-based school setting in which elders were brought in as resources to teach. When Birch Bark was offered a high-paying position at a nonnative educational institution, she declined the offer because she felt she would not have been able to continue to serve the native community.

The women indicated that even in their current positions, their passion to make a difference for the community was so strong that it had influenced their leadership. For example, when there was a major decision to be made, they did not assume that they, as individuals, could speak for all Native Americans. They routinely invited community members to be involved as decision makers on educational boards, advisory committees, or task forces. In situations in which they

did not have the means to bring in others or were expected to represent the voice of Native Americans, they took steps to research the issue and talk to native people who were knowledgeable about the particular concern. In the end, whatever action or decision was made benefited the community. The women also indicated that they took steps to ensure that there was a native community voice in arenas where there had not been a voice before. In Birch Bark's case, when she saw that there was no native presence in many of the institutions with which she was trying to work, she worked with others to create a new educational institution that would always be driven by the voices of native students.

Commitment to the community also brought personal tensions. Each woman indicated that failing to advance causes that benefit the community was much more painful than failing one's self. Birch Bark reported that "when our own internal community politics lead to conflict, it can sometimes result in personal attacks on one's character. Because we are so connected to the community, it's agony."

Working in traditional mainstream educational institutions, many of the women indicated that their passion to make a difference in the Indian community sometimes resulted in a supervisor misjudging them as being narrow minded and not concerned with the greater good. Quill commented, "It's essentially a very racist viewpoint. Our kids have the worst educational statistics, and there just are not enough trained native educators to go around. The community often views us as their only hope to help them deal with the system." On the other hand, if one's commitment to the Indian community is not visible, her work becomes highly suspect. Quill also

indicated that she had been teased by other natives who called her an Aunt Tomahawk (the Indian counterpart of an Uncle Tom, or sell-out). She commented,

Rejection by your own community because they think you are just out for yourself and do not represent their interests when you are in a fairly powerful position can hurt your heart and make you question whether you are working in the right job. It makes dealing with your nonnative employer, who thinks you are too focused on native issues, a frustrating but easier challenge to deal with!

The Emergence and Claiming of One's Native Voice

Although each woman told stories of how the loss of culture and language had affected her family, other natives from her generation, and her own identity, the theme of loss and the fact that it led to healing and the development and claiming of one's voice seemed to be a more pervasive theme that influenced her leadership.

The transcript of one of the interviews with Birch Bark reads:

If you don't know who you are, where you came from, what tribe you belong to and who your relatives are, there's no way that the Indian community will allow you to be a leader . . . at least for very long . . . or unless they see you growing in this role . . . or unless they are in desperate need of someone to represent them, and you are the best they have got! (Laughter)

I heard one of our national leaders say that there is a leadership crisis looming in Native America. Too often, the reality is that many of our communities are still reeling from the loss of language and culture, oppressive policies, and destructive education. As a result, individuals, often whole communities, are suffering and searching to find out who they are. Often, when we see someone searching so hard and beginning to find their way, we will let them lead. . . . We will let them grow into their leadership because they seem to be on the right road.

Quill indicated that her voice emerged very early because she had strong role models in her parents, who became national leaders during her teen-age years. At the same time, she recognized that others might have to struggle to find their voice.

Finding one's voice can be a difficult journey, but once individuals find it, claim it, and use it to act for self and community, they are in a position to lead change. Quill discussed her role in training emerging native leaders:

I now serve as an advisor for a program that has been developed for emerging native leaders. One of their first activities in this program focuses on helping young natives with a tremendous potential find their voice. Those of us who advise have already learned through our own experiences that an individual must be aware of her own strengths and be able to assume responsibility for herself before she can lead and share responsibility for our community. One of the first activities that a spiritual leader gets them involved in is understanding where their source of "medicine" is and being able to articulate it to others. Some of them already know the answers and are firmly grounded in who they are. For others, this ends up being a very personal journey of searching their roots, their family and tribal history, meeting relatives, and learning cultural ways. The whole group acts as a source of support by helping each individual begin where she is and then helping her move further along on her journey. In this journey, she learns to take risks, to act for herself and complete the search. For some, this means grieving the loss of language and culture and then healing, while for others, it means recognizing and giving thanks for the gifts of medicine that they were fortunate to receive in their growing-up years. You just see self-knowledge, self-esteem, and confidence grow in all of them as they find that their culture wasn't totally lost. Rather, it was inside them all along, waiting to be tapped into. Their competence as a leader definitely increases. It's proven to be a very powerful leadership-development strategy, not only for these emerging leaders, but also for those of us who serve as advisors.

We look at these young leaders as "diamonds in the rough" who may need to spend some emotional energy looking for their strength. There are lots of competent people out there who are not empowered because they do not yet believe in their own competence. Unfortunately, too many of us have had bad experiences with other national leadership programs that see us as troubled, disadvantaged, or dysfunctional from the moment they meet us. To them, we are just another rock that they throw back onto the reservation when we do not sparkle in the ways they think we should. I know our program has been successful because we look for the strengths and abilities that these emerging leaders, themselves, may not know they possess.

Sweet Grass indicated that she spent many years healing from the loss of culture and redefining for herself what being Indian meant to her. She learned that



it must become part of your everyday activity and behavior. Knowing the ways to work within the community and then acknowledging and claiming her voice to move forward had increased her ability to be a good leader and make things happen:

In order to build my dream, I had to get others involved who had the skills and knowledge that I needed but did not have. Sometimes, I would go out searching for them, like someone who knew how to get money or write good proposals. Sometimes, coincidence would help them find me, like I would run into a good consultant at an Indian education conference, and other times, I'd find them right in front of me, like the elder who always seemed to be watching and supporting whatever we were doing in education, but not talking. When I approached him in the right way (a culturally appropriate way), all this wisdom and good ideas just came pouring out.

I learned an important lesson about building on our ways and the talents of others to accomplish something for our children. We pulled people with all their different gifts into the circle to get things done. None of us could have done it alone; all of us contributed in our own way, and our collective voice emerged. My contribution was that I was the "behind the scenes" organizer and the "voice of reason" when situations got tense.

Whether or not they had grown up being very knowledgeable about traditional native ways, the women indicated that knowing themselves required continuous learning. Identity or self-knowledge was not knowledge that they acquired over a short period of time, nor was it knowledge that had come to an end. All of the women were active, lifelong learners who seemed always to be looking for opportunities to learn and expand their horizons. Although they were aware of their personal strengths, it appeared that they also were trying to discover new talents.

Three of the women indicated that one of the challenges to the emergence of their voice was the fact that often there were different perceptions of what that voice should be. These three individuals indicated that they generally were quiet introverts who not only believed they had found their voice years ago, but also had

found their gentle, behind-the-scenes leadership to be an extremely effective strategy. However, they recognized that their leadership might not be valued outside of the Indian community. As a result, they had nonnative colleagues and supervisors who continued to believe they needed assertiveness training or education to find a voice that would work more effectively in the nonnative community. In Sweet Grass's portraiture, she indicated that once a former supervisor had studied her leadership activity, he realized she was a gentle and highly effective change maker.

Education as a Key to Cultural Survival and Self-Determination

Although statistics vary on the number of Native American women who hold advanced degrees, the most recent statistics released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994) indicated that less than .5% of all native women over 25 years of age hold advanced degrees. The history of educational policies continues its negative impact. According to the American Council on Education's Annual Report for 1995, there is an alarming shortage of K-12 Native American teachers, and the number of Native Americans in higher education administration increased by only nine individuals nationwide from 1981 through 1991. In terms of faculty, the 10-percentage-point gap between the tenure rates of American Indian men and women in 1991 was by far the largest gender gap in tenure rates among the four ethnic-minority groups.

Because of the lack of Native Americans among the teachers and leaders of schools, each woman identified education as the area in which she wanted to concentrate her skills and talents. They had all grown up hearing the message from their parents or elders that education is key to the survival of native cultures and to the development of healthy and sustainable Indian nations. Growing up, each woman received a great deal of support from family members, especially a male, to achieve in school. Those specifically identified included fathers, grandfathers, older brothers, and male cousins. Each woman was encouraged to achieve, do well, and become whatever she aspired to. Sweet Grass indicated that even though her father seemed to dominate her mother, he encouraged his daughter's independent spirit and stressed the importance of education in many ways.

Like other girls of the baby-boomer generation, the women in this study were not only encouraged to become teachers or nurses by their families, but they were tracked into these careers by the schools or by the availability of scholarships for college (Kidwell, 1976). All but one have received a degree in secondary education, all have master's degrees or higher, all have worked as educational administrators, all but one have taught in a classroom, and all but one have worked for the federal government at one point during their careers.

Whereas all of the women indicated that education is critical for the survival of Native Americans, they were critical about the current educational systems and educational status of Native Americans, particularly girls. Although they agreed that some progress has been made in Indian education in the past 30 years, particularly

since they were in school, they all agreed that more reform is needed. The fact that nearly half of the American Indian students who entered kindergarten in the 1970's did not graduate from high school is unacceptable (Bowker, 1993).

Each of the women identified continual learning as a key strategy they employ in their leadership practice today. They all appear to be avid readers and believe strongly in being prepared, doing research, and planning. Willow indicated that she is the "doer" type; that is, she likes to take a good idea, develop a plan, and implement it. Cedar Roots has been researching ways to align native cultures into the curriculum of the schools by meeting with elders and other eminent scholars, and researching what other tribal nations have done to change their curricula.

Although education is important, possessing a college degree does not make one a leader in the Native American community. These women had found that, because their degrees were suspect, they often had to find ways to demonstrate to their communities that their education could serve as a valuable tool. This was often demonstrated in tangible ways, such as writing proposals and securing funding for programs that were greatly needed in the community, or as Horse Hair suggested, serving on educational boards or task forces as the first Native American representative, equal in educational achievement to the other nonnative representatives.

Being well educated sometimes has led to jealousy on the part of other tribal members. Sometimes the women's educational achievement threatened co-workers, particularly native men, often to such a degree that the women felt



ostracized. This happened to Horse Hair after she received a master's degree from an Ivy League institution. The alienation she felt was a major factor in her decision to resign from that job and take a position with a newly formed nonprofit organization.

In conclusion, learning leadership is a lifelong educational process. However, having an educational degree does not guarantee that one will become a leader in and for the native community.

Travelers Across Boundaries

This theme can be interpreted in numerous ways--that is, both physical and spiritual dimensions of traveling. In terms of formative influences, the experience of traveling was one of the forces that shaped each woman's leadership. Traveling broadened their horizons. Willow spent many summers on college campuses with her parents, who were working on teacher recertification. There she had the opportunity to hear many stimulating discussions and conversations that her parents engaged in with colleagues and professors. By the time their careers began, all but one of the women had traveled extensively out of their home communities. Sometimes the women would travel to nearby reservations for ceremonies, pow wows or other community gatherings, and sometimes they would travel nationally or abroad. In one case, traveling involved running away from a life-threatening domestic-violence situation. Birch Bark had the opportunity to travel to Ireland to meet with peace advocates, to Africa to meet with groups attempting to protect their

lands and resources, and to New Zealand to meet with Maori people who were successfully protecting and strengthening their native culture.

In terms of the dynamics of leadership, each woman had special skills related to the spiritual traveling that greatly enhanced her ability to lead. These skills included crossing cultures to promote understanding. In the role of cross-cultural traveler, these women moved from one set of values or world views to another, often on a daily basis. In describing culture brokers, Szasz (1994) indicated that "the fluidity of their cultural movement is almost unconscious. They persist because the two or more worlds are important to them; each helps to define who they are; and each has a claim on part of their identity" (p. 10).

Being a culture broker can sometimes be hazardous when a broker fails to follow the rules of conduct, if she does not learn the cultural cues, or if she indicates that she cannot be trusted. There are also rewards that this traveling role can bring. The women leaders indicated, for example, that relationships between groups may be built where none existed before or where relationships were previously hostile. There appeared to be consensus that this was a role they played well and enjoyed playing, except when one of the groups was staunchly racist or resistant. The greatest reward was being able to view the world through a multicultural lens. Willow indicated that one of her greatest strengths for many years had been that of a cultural translator and that the positive outcome of her translating has increased resources for her tribe and for the tribal college. Horse Hair commented that she especially liked the role of convincing the native side that they had much wisdom or



knowledge to share with the nonnative side. Quill indicated that because she was half Comanche and half Scotch-Irish, she had had many opportunities throughout her life to learn how to be an effective bridge-builder.

When relationships between two cultures become established, even better results, or synergy, can occur. For example, new educational programs can be supported, tribal sovereignty can be protected, or cultures can be perpetuated. Although not all culture brokers are considered leaders, their role as leaders is related to the type of brokerage role that they play. For example, one woman served as a leader by moving outside of her native community and worked with an institution on the other side of the cultural divide. In her position, she was able to secure services for the native community that they needed badly and, in essence, gave back to the community on a regular basis by continuing to do that type of work. Horse Hair learned about the outside culture through personal experiences, and she used that knowledge to help a group of natives work with officials at a bank to secure a small-business loan. As long as her heart remains with the Indian people, her broker skills will continue to help.

The Spirit and Soul of Native Leadership

All of the women whom I interviewed saw their leadership and their lives as inseparable, as totally intertwined. Leadership was seen as part of what they did or gave in their various roles as mother, aunt, grandmother, clan mother, tribal college president, teacher, and/or sister. There was no one model of native leadership.

Rather, there were many models. In these models however, there were numerous commonalities.

At the very core of their being was a native, principle-centered leadership. It was a set of core values and principles by which they chose to live their lives. Values that were similar to those held by many other cultures. The difference was the priority or emphasis that cultures placed on various values. Values and guiding principles that are deemed as priorities in native cultures, or critical to one's growth and development included giving thanks; developing a deep commitment to the community; embracing a passion to make the world a better place to live; living with a joy of being; having compassion, caring, and a positive sense of self; and understanding the past, enjoying the present, and deliberating about the future. In addition, their guiding principles included having good words for others; being generous, sharing, and concerned for the group or tribe over one's self; giving service to the community; treating everyone and everything with dignity and respect; and recognizing that each individual has gifts and a voice given by the Creator. They placed great value on caring for children and elders. Ultimately, to these women, a sense of humor was a precious way of sharing life.

These principles created a strong base for the leader--the weaver of the basket of change. They guided the leaders' actions and relationships, and defined their collaborative teamwork. Native, principle-centered leadership does not require a college degree or a high-level position. Rather, it requires shared power, shared vision, collective action, courage to take action, and empowerment of others to

accomplish change. Such leadership is supported by a deep sense of spirit and soul, in other words, when combined mean spirituality, an inner strength, a sense of balance, and an awareness that one's life work can have meaning and purpose.

Challenges to native, principle-centered leadership are encountered when the principles that natives place priority on clash with those that the more dominant society place priority on. Quill identified how generosity, giving each individual a voice, and sharing power can occasionally result in conflict in work settings when some group members place priority on other values. Cedar Roots uses the medicine wheel as her silent teacher and a reminder of the interconnectedness of her being with the rest of creation. For example, the medicine wheel teaches her that courage must be balanced by wisdom, toughness by gentleness of heart, and perseverance and tenacity by flexibility. If she wants to realize her full potential, she must achieve this balance in her life.

Summary of Themes

When I asked these women to talk about their leadership experiences, I proposed *Osah gan gio*, framed by Astin and Leland's (1991) research, as a conceptual framework. The model identified four key elements for the study of leadership: (a) the leader, (b) the context, (c) the leadership processes, and (d) the outcomes. *Osah gan gio* intertwined these elements in a dynamic process. My aim was to expand the knowledge of leadership as represented by Native American women leaders who had led change in education. I believed that this knowledge could be achieved by eliciting the voices of the leaders themselves.

As the women talked about their leadership, I was able to identify many common themes. Specifically related to leadership, I identified the following as compelling themes:

1. A strong commitment to make a difference in one's native community provides a strong base for leadership. In this study, such commitment developed in the women's childhoods, was supported or modeled by their families, or resulted from experiences with discrimination that had triggered their passion to change the status quo.
2. Claiming one's voice means developing the courage to take action, not only for oneself but also for the community.
3. A strong belief in the value of education, not as a tool for assimilation into the American mainstream but as a key to cultural survival and self-determination, was evident and formed the base of their commitment.
4. Travel broadens one's horizons and allows leaders to take diverse routes to social change by connecting cultures.
5. The spirit and soul of native leadership is based on principles that reflect an inner strength, a meaning and purpose in one's life.

In summary, I used the metaphor of leader as weaver as part of my conceptual model to help make sense of the complex issue of leadership. By using this metaphor to understand the leadership of these women, I found the following. Their leadership, like basket making, is a process that begins with a strong core and builds up and out in a holographic sense, with a circular, spiraling effect, as opposed

to a hierarchical, top-down process. Like the weaver, the leader begins with a strong base if the basket or end product is to be a powerful one. These leaders all had strong beginnings, as they were all deeply loved and learned about care and social justice very early in their lives. Ignited by their passion to create change, these leaders have spent the last 25 years, during the era of Indian self-determination and renaissance, leading and weaving change. As relationships were tightened, visions were shared, dreams were united, and individuals brought their different talents, strengths, and gifts to the circle, these leaders facilitated some of the greatest changes in the education of Native Americans that have ever occurred.

The dreaming of the baskets or, in this case, the women leaders' early vision, was a powerful force for change. As Matusak (1997) wrote, when individuals

believe in the vision and see their own personal goals and dreams integrally woven in, the strength and beauty that evolve are far greater as a whole than they were as individuals [fibers, or vines, or roots]. Likewise, we will discover that the individuals involved will exhibit enthusiasm, loyalty, hard work, and love if they believe that they have contributed a valuable and respected part of the shared vision. (p. 57)

How the Women Assess Their Leadership

Each of the women in this study was chosen because many native educators, including the researcher, believed that she had accomplished meaningful change in Indian education. However, the accomplishments of this group must be assessed in terms of how they evaluated their own contribution. That is, each woman said that even though people attributed some contributions to her, she had not accomplished them alone.

Furthermore, the women indicated that efforts for which they had been given credit, in reality were efforts for which a group should have received credit. After conducting my pilot study, I concluded that the native women did not indicate that they were leaders because one of the strongest values in our community is that we must be humble about our efforts and not promote ourselves above others. Although I still believe that each of these women has the strength of humility, they were also very honest in saying that they did not do it alone, that these efforts involved the energy and work of many people. I now believe that, when they say an effort involved the work of many individuals, this is a way of working to which they are accustomed. It is a form of true collaboration.

Collaboration is an integral strategy of the women's leadership because the wisdom of experience has taught them that the more one gets people involved in efforts to create change from the very beginning, the more likely it is that change will not only be achieved, but also it will be lasting. In 1995, in an article published in the Harvard Business Review on "Leading Change," Kotter identified the following eight steps that leaders need to take to create change:

1. Establish a sense of urgency
2. Form a powerful guiding coalition
3. Create a vision
4. Communicate the vision
5. Empower others to act on the vision
6. Plan for and create change



7. Consolidate improvements and produce still more change
8. Institutionalize new approaches

When Willow talked about her leadership and the steps she had taken over the years to build a tribal college on her home reservation, these are the steps she had taken. She started out by identifying to others in the community the opportunity they had to control their own education and meet the need for trained manpower in their community. She discussed the current crisis they had with the lack of trained personnel and painted a picture of what was at stake if they did not begin to assert more control. She assembled a group of people with various talents and power to lead the change effort. With limited financial resources, they demonstrated that they could hold college classes even if it meant holding them in an old, dilapidated building whose roof leaked. They demonstrated that they could, if necessary, create their own teaching materials.

Willow recruited many supporters by talking about the freedom of mind that education can bring. She also convinced the group that if they worked together, they could do this. She and another woman who now serves as a dean at the college figured out a way to complement each other's strengths, and both individuals look back and credit the fact that they did this as the key factor that had contributed to their success over the years. Together they reaffirmed that the vision for the college had been handed down to them by their ancestors and tribal chiefs. It was their responsibility to implement the vision. They saw themselves as the carriers of

others' visions, and they saw their role as developing strategies for achieving the vision.

Their next step was to communicate the vision. In my assessment, this has been Willow's gift to our generation and to Indian education during the past 20 years. Through her eloquence coupled with her elegance, Willow has secured the support of literally thousands to donate financial resources and talent to advance and build the infrastructure of tribal colleges and/or the tribal college movement. To put forth her message, Willow has made use of many vehicles: oratory, film and video, radio, mass mailings, talking circles, national forums and dialogues, legislation, litigation, television, newspaper coverage, visits with elders, publications, and teaching by example. She has secured support from wealthy individuals, famous politicians, brilliant scholars, philanthropic boards of directors, spiritual leaders, and movie stars. At the same time, she has secured support from such unlikely candidates as a United Parcel Service delivery man who liked what they were doing and nominated them for a \$10,000 grant. Other notable supporters include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the late Ernest Boyer, former CEO of the Carnegie Foundation, the editor of The Washington Post, Kevin Costner, media star, and Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator.

Hundreds of native educators have become more aware of tribal colleges due to Willow's advocacy. Her vision, although it focused on tribal colleges, in essence, focused on education as the key to our cultural survival and self-determination. It was a vision to which many could relate, and, as a result, others

were empowered to act on that vision. At her home reservation, the college grew in enrollment, size, financial base, and community involvement. With this growth, faculty were encouraged to expand classes and to teach more traditional cultural knowledge.

Once the institution moved somewhat beyond day-to-day survival, Willow began to involve more people in the process at the local level. She and the other tribal college presidents encouraged larger numbers of people to try new marketing approaches, develop new fund-raising approaches, lobby for legislation, and implement innovative programs. At the same time, she worked at the local level to expand course offerings and to further strengthen their infrastructure. More recently, she has worked at consolidating improvements and producing still more change. She has used her increased credibility to change the local system and to change policies at the national level. Willow is known for taking her concerns from the sweat lodge to the White House, and she has done much to reinvigorate the whole system of higher education and the role it can play in helping communities solve society's problems.

Although there is no final step because change is a constant process, Willow continues to build tribal colleges. Most recently, she has worked with a major foundation to build more connections between the tribal colleges and mainstream universities. Today, there are more than 30 tribal colleges in the nation that serve as islands of hope in native communities (Carnegie Report, 1989). Tribal governments reap the major benefits of better trained personnel graduating from

tribal colleges. Recent research by Stein (1996) indicated that tribal colleges are the major factor in increasing the number of native high school graduates living on reservations by offering adult education, as well as increasing the number of graduates from four-year colleges and universities. Tribal college graduates are 75% more likely to graduate from mainstream institutions than are those who have not attended tribal colleges.

This has been one example of how the women I interviewed have led change. Each woman has a similar story, although her gifts to the community may have been returned in a different form. Their contributions have included a decrease in overt forms of discrimination toward native children, increased visibility of native-controlled institutions, and expansion of educational opportunities for Native Americans in public schools—from early childhood through K-12 and from postsecondary education to university research, as well as adult and continuing education. They have also contributed to greater community control and definition of education, the alignment of culture in the curriculum, and increased connections among home, school, and communities to benefit students. These women have improved access by increasing financial assistance and changing policies. They have developed innovative educational programs, conducted sorely needed research, secured the passage of landmark legislation, generated new knowledge, and obtained additional financial support for educational programs and students.

Collectively with others, they have built new coalitions, published and distributed new information, changed existing educational institutions to be more



responsive to Native Americans' needs, and created entirely new institutions that did not previously exist. Again, virtually every effort has involved a group of people. The skill that these women most often have contributed is that of facilitator or catalyst. They indicated that success was achieved through collective action and shared responsibility.

The women leaders also shared stories of challenges, obstacles, and pain, including public character assassination, experiences with domestic violence because of insecure or alcoholic spouses or boyfriends, divorce, lost jobs, physical illnesses, missed personal opportunities, and missed parenthood. Because many of them were treading new territory for Indian women, it was often a lonely existence, with tenuous friendships. Most of them continue to feel they suffer from the lack of time to do everything they want. Each has found a way to replenish herself or cope with the tremendous stress associated with being a leader in the native community. They do this through activities such as reading, gardening, walking, and enjoying family relationships. Those who are married indicated that their current spouses are very supportive of their leadership activities, and each woman either has a strong extended-family support system or has created her own kind of support system. All but one woman indicated that they often relied on a family-like network of native friends to help them address needs on the job.

Most revealing was how the women measured their success as leaders. Although many reluctantly agreed that they were leaders in the native community, every woman indicated that this was not because she personally decided that she

wanted to be a leader. In fact, no one had actively sought to be a leader; the role seemed to be thrust on them by the community. There was no extra compensation for being a leader, no institutional perks, and none of the women indicated that she had assumed the responsibility because she believed it would advance her career or bring her fame and fortune. In fact, the women had received very few tangible rewards or public recognition. In most instances, the women indicated that they knew they were leaders when they were the ones to suffer directly the verbal slings of the nonnative or the native community. No one showed me numerous plaques or certificates she had received, but one woman had received a number of honorary doctorates. Almost all shared examples of various forms of community recognition of their leadership. Examples of what they considered to be high honors included:

1. Being given an eagle feather by those members of the community who are allowed to do so, such as veterans.
2. Being asked to participate in a ceremony with a spiritual leader.
3. Being presented with a blanket, shawl, or work of art during a giveaway ceremony.
4. Having prayers said for them by community members.
5. Being given an honor song or a special name.
6. Honoring others by having a feast or giveaway when something good happened to them.

7. Being told by an elder or someone whose leadership behavior they personally admired, or someone who had followed their career, that they were proud of the woman's actions.

For these women, leadership was not about assessing one's performance in the normative, mainstream sense. As Green (1990) wrote,

Leadership is validated and uniformly informed in our communities, by the invisibility of things that are associated with leadership in mainstream communities. Degrees, lists of achievements, lists of high-powered jobs, the wearing of power suits are nothing. What counts is how much we give to our communities. . . . This leadership can be given in various forms. You can be a peacemaker, an artist, a diplomat, a storyteller, an auntie, a grandmother, and a sister. You do not assess if you are a leader; the community does. (p. 66)

Lessons Learned and Implications

The Native American women whom I interviewed represented voices that have not been heard or identified in the literature on leadership. Current concepts of leadership are shifting from the industrial-age paradigms of leadership that were focused on traditional positional and individual-centered leadership, to the emergent paradigms that are based on connection with others, synergistic collective action, and sharing power. These native leaders present other ways to think about and enact leadership. Although each person's leadership is unique, common leadership patterns and themes also emerged across the group.

In reviewing the responses, I concluded that there are differences in the way the women in this study think about and practice leadership as compared to many of the older, traditional concepts of leadership. There are, however, similarities to



the newer, emerging concepts of leadership, such as transformational leadership.

The findings were as follows:

1. Leadership is focused on a group-centered process that creatively responds to constantly changing forces. Leadership, in this case, is not the purview of an all-powerful individual who controls change. According to the literature, leadership is embedded in the American culture of individualism, as opposed to a group-centered culture (Hofstede, 1991; Yukl, 1989). Leadership is often romanticized as one person against the masses or a Good Samaritan leader at the top of an educational institution who saves us all. Yet there are many cultural groups in the United States that do not operate this way.

The women interviewed for this study either had been socialized in a predominantly group-centered Native American culture as children or chose, on their own, to find the way back to their cultural roots. Because of this, leadership was defined by and connected within a community (Green, 1992). For example, Willow indicated that she knew she was a leader because the community had given her permission to lead; they had supported her in her position as president of the tribal college for more than 15 years. When a disgruntled employee threatened her leadership before the tribal college, the tribal council issues a resolution supporting Willow's leadership.

The leader does not stand above others, but works to develop, nurture, empower, right wrongs, and help make the community a better place to live. The



leader does this work with or for the community. Leaders do not lead to be recognized, to be on top, or to be in control.

Because native leaders are connected to people, they often are not the "front" person. One example of this was when Sweet Grass described how she had learned to be an effective leader by observing her mother's leadership behavior and then modeling her behind-the-scenes leadership. Another example was Horse Hair's description of a native leader's success as being when the community said of a successful outcome, "We did this ourselves." In each of the portraiture, the ethic of care, explored by Gilligan (1982), and the ethic of justice guided each woman's practice. Their "different" voices often challenged traditional organizational structures pressing for "communities" to participate in decision making. In many ways, each woman worked to ensure that the "different" voice, the one that had so often been overlooked, was heard.

2. Leadership is relational, organic, and synergistic. Change is created through relationships (Matusak, 1997) rather than hierarchical structures, position, or power. This relational context is different from traditional views of change. The women in this study did not appear to be concerned about maintaining a formal distance between themselves and people with whom they worked, both those they supervised and those who supervised them. They were not concerned about distancing themselves from others or with maintaining a formal relationship with those around them. They all mentioned colleagues with whom they had good friendships. Traditional frames of understanding leadership suggest that, within a

hierarchical structure, leaders possess power and authority, which they employ to monitor, control, and define activity (Birnbaum, 1992; Bolman & Deal, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1989).

What we have learned from the current literature and the six leadership portraits is that positional leadership does not often move substantive change. In fact, relational leadership has been seen to be more effective than positional leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Schaef, 1992; Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990).

With more emphasis on connectedness, care, collaboration, and shared visions, similar to the work of current leadership theorists (Greenleaf, 1977; Helgesen, 1995; Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Reyes, 1993), each woman sought a collaborative means to initiate change. Rather than "power-over," the women exercised "power-with" (Blackmore, 1989a, 1989b; Desjardins, 1989; Gips, 1989; Ozga, 1993) to effect change. Each woman helped to create change through her day-to-day actions with people.

Even though not all of the women were employed in the top positions of traditional educational institutions, they created change in numerous ways. They transformed individuals by helping them secure an education for themselves, they transformed their communities by helping them take control of their education, and they transformed institutions by making them more responsive to diverse students. Each of them worked collaboratively to change existing institutions or create new ones. This is very different from the historical influence of the "great man theory" of leadership (Bass, 1990; Mainiero, 1994).



3. Power is used as a force that empowers others to change or improvise for change, rather than control others to respond/react to change. The women's view of power is different from traditional views of power. They did not subscribe to the traditional power-over model, in which power is associated with control over others (Caffarella, 1993; Fennell, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1996). Viewing power as power-with, the women came to define means and ends differently than do the more conventional views (Morrison, 1992; Noddings, 1984). Universally, the women were aligned with Astin and Leland's (1991) power-with concepts. This entailed developing a person's capacity, which leads to empowerment of the individual. They did not see power as a commodity to protect or own; rather, they believed that power is increased when it is shared and felt by many. When Quill was the president of a native postsecondary school, she made an effort to hold talking circles that included every single staff person, often to the dismay of the nonnative dean, who thought he was wasting his time listening to the janitor. In a talking circle, everyone has an equal voice and equal power; no one is above the rest. In relation to this, these leaders changed the definition of "means and ends." Products were not ends, but means (tribal colleges, nonprofit organizations, tribal-controlled schools). Products were used as the means of developing the ends: people (healthy children; high school graduates; college graduates; and holistic, critical-thinking citizens).

4. Life and leadership are woven into one. Leadership is deeply entwined with each woman's personal- and private-life experiences. It cannot be studied as a distinctive fragment of a leader's life. Reducing leadership to a set of behaviors,

without understanding the cultural beliefs and values, social conditions, and historic influences and context, as well as the person behind those behaviors, trivializes the meaning of native leadership. Cedar Roots saw an opportunity to be a leader in every role she assumed, including mother, wife, superintendent, grandmother, and daughter. Her leadership and her life gave meaning to each other and were bonded by an inner strength or sense of spirituality. Virtually every woman identified spirituality as her most effective form of replenishment and protection from burnout. These leaders represented a leadership that is defined within a native principle-centered dimension.

In light of current literature and with supporting evidence from these stories, leadership is inclusive of culture. The women's leadership is culture based. Like Sergiovanni (1996) and Hofstede (1991), this study advocates for culture-specific leadership that fits the history and needs of the community it serves. In this case, leadership norms come from traditional tribal teachings. These principles shape each woman's vision and perceptions.

Leadership and the "joy of life" are directly linked. The source and power of an individual's principles and the link of those principles to leadership need to be further explored. The women's portraits suggest that these principles are deeply embedded in one's heart and mind.

Summary of Findings

In summary, leadership is a dynamic process that causes one to improvise, change, and respond to the constantly changing, unpredictable conditions of any

human system. Leadership is synergistic, more than the sum of its parts, and it needs to be studied holistically. We need to look at leadership as embedded in both the person and the context in which he or she operates.

Implications for the Preparation of Native American Leaders

Ada Deer, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has reiterated in many speeches that "there is a leadership crisis looming in Native America." She often pleads with tribes, school systems, and colleges and universities to play a more active role in developing leaders who can deal with the complex issues facing Indian communities and who can lead tribal nations into the twenty-first century.

1. The mission of higher education institutions in the United States is to prepare the nation's leaders. However, the number of Native Americans graduating from colleges and universities is minuscule. Therefore, the primary recommendation is to improve higher education throughout the nation. Higher education institutions across the United States must strengthen their capacity in order to educate a larger cadre of Native American students who will provide leadership in their communities, states, the nation, and the world. These institutions must work more effectively toward (a) increased access and graduation at all levels; (b) provision of excellent scholarly programs that are culturally relevant; (c) development of learning climates that provide assistance and encouragement for professional and personal growth; (d) support for scholarship that advances indigenous knowledge; (e) increased numbers of native faculty, administrators, and teachers; and (f) increased

understanding of and respect for Native American cultures and ways of understanding.

2. Very few Native Americans apply to many of the national leadership-development programs, and of those who do apply, very few are accepted. Often, those who are accepted find that there are great differences in how they understand leadership and how the directors of these various programs understand leadership. Thus, Native Americans' participation in mainstream leadership-development programs should be increased, not just as trainees, but also as trainers, advisors, and selection-committee members. The doors must be opened wider. Program staff need to read and evaluate their application-review processes and recognize that other cultural groups may experience different forms of recognition than those typically asked for on program applications. Finally, internal program staff need to have dialogues regarding other ways of leading, and finding ways to be more responsive, rather than narrowing a program to a particular type of leader based on a definition of leadership that is inclusive. There must be increased recognition that a culture of interexistence must be built, one that recognizes the equal validity of the fundamental premises that inspire different cultural views and values. Finally, programs must be built on the concept of caring about and understanding the trainees who enter programs at their own point of development.

3. Leadership-development programs that have an intergenerational focus should be established by providing opportunities for seasoned, more established leaders to share knowledge and mentor younger emerging leaders. In



addition to providing opportunities for intergenerational leaders to converse with each other, these programs must build in purposeful activities through which group members can learn shared visioning, team building, decision making by consensus, and resolving conflict. Opportunities to test one's courage and take risks, as well as to manifest native principles in today's world, also are needed. Native ways of leading, such as the realization that no one leads alone, must be integrated into the training curriculum. Opportunities to share wisdom, celebrate successes, and learn about disciplined reflection must be built in.

4. Opportunities should be developed to collect the wisdom of elder leaders and create opportunities for them to share their gifts. Too many of the current programs are geared to emerging or student leaders. There is a need to recognize that elders and experienced leaders also need time for disciplined reflection. They, too, need new opportunities to find ways to give back to their communities.

Implications for Future Research

This study was designed to explore the leadership experiences of native women. I have just begun to scratch the surface of the ways our understanding of leadership can be expanded through studying native women's individual thinking and practice. The study findings strongly suggest that there are different ways of thinking about leadership, ways that may be influenced by gender, culture, age, diversity of experience, and position within an educational institution. Future

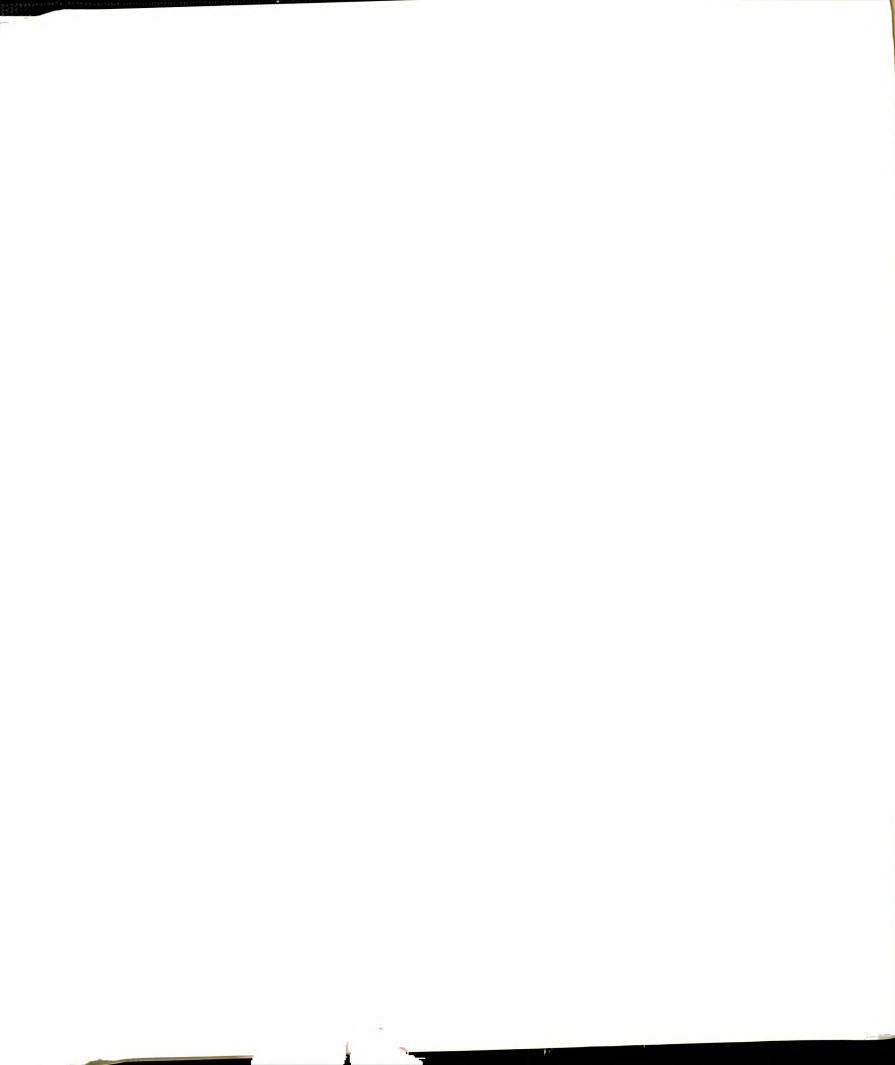


research to expand on the work of this study needs to be undertaken in the following areas:

1. Continue to use leaders' life stories as a methodology for studying leadership. This data-gathering method provided a valuable way of seeing how individuals connect their leadership with themselves. The synergistic relationship between the individual and her leadership needs to be understood better.

2. Conduct further research on how the cultural values and principles of individuals affect the way they lead. Do further research on the connection between individual-centered and group-centered cultures, and the evolution of leadership concepts and practice in each type of culture. Replicate this methodology with people who represent diverse populations. Possible topics of research include:

- a. Native American men and leadership: Is there a different voice that is culture related?
- b. Individual leaders from specific cultures: Are there culturally based differences in conceptualizing and practicing leadership?
- c. Individual leaders from other generations who have had different kinds of experiences: How did elders from the pre-World War II generation practice and recognize leadership? Are there developmental themes and patterns to an individual's evolution as a leader?
- d. Native American individuals who work at various levels of traditional educational organizations: How is their leadership recognized and practiced, and is it culture related or culture denied?



3. Study leadership from an intergenerational perspective. Can a specific kind of cultural leadership be passed from elders to children?
4. Study the persons whom these leaders identified as significant teachers, mentors, and role models and elicit their views of their own leadership and how it is passed along.

Concluding Thoughts

I am fortunate to have been the granddaughter of the world's best storyteller, David Owl. He and my family taught me how to value all people, as well as how to look for their goodness. To do this, I learned how to question endlessly. This early inquisitiveness has often gotten me into trouble in my own family, but it has also had a positive aspect. It has provided me with the opportunity to continue my exploration of other people's lives and cultures—how they affect me personally and communally.

This particular exploration, my dissertation, has reaffirmed that knowledge and the enactment of leadership are shaped by one's social, historical, and, most important, cultural background. The stories that I have told have been those of an incredible group of women who have made a difference in this world. For years, they have been weaving—weaving yesterday into today for tomorrow. The baskets that they have helped create will carry our traditions, knowledge, and culture far into the future.

Each of the women has a certain style, wit, and charm that is uniquely her own, yet commonly native. I say *nyah weh* (thank you) to them for sharing their

wisdom and their compassion, qualities that must be evident in a leader, according to the many tribal traditions that I was taught when I was growing up.

To honor those who have gone before us, our families and friends who are here now, and the generations yet to come, I would like to end by sharing one of the stories from "a wise old Owl" who was the first person to teach me about these people "of a good heart and a good mind":

The Choosing of a Leader

One time there was a leader who had four children. There came a time when the father had to choose one to be the leader in his place. He couldn't decide which one was the most able. He knew they could do all these other things. They were good protectors and caretakers, he could not make a decision from these things. He wanted to find out what was in their hearts.

This man's children had grown into fine young adults. The time came when the father needed to select one of the children to take his place as leader of the family. It was not always the oldest child who took the father's place, more often it was the one that showed the most ability. The time came to put them to a test to determine which one would take his place. It would be a simple test but one of endurance and perseverance.

Early one morning the father called his children together. He was dressed in his most elegant clothing so they would remember how he looked and would be impressed with the importance of the leader's role. He said, "I want you all to go to the top of the mountain and bring me back a gift." The children had the same upbringing and were instilled with the same ideals. They all started out. Their father watched them until they were out of sight, then returned to his lodge, where he rested and waited.

Early in the afternoon, the first child returned. She brought back a beautiful stone. It was perfectly smooth, an unusual shape and was a beautiful color. She said, "My father, I picked this stone up at the base of the mountain. It is beautiful and I thought you would like it." His father thanked her and accepted the gift.

A short time later, the second child returned home. He brought back a pine branch, taken from a tree that stood tall and stately on the tree line. "Oh, father, I have brought this from high on the mountain. I would like you to have it. It has been a long journey." His father thanked him and accepted it.

The third child returned some time later. He had with him some moss he gathered from up on the snowline. It was green, and soft and thick. "My



father, far up on the mountain I found this moss. I thought you would like it." His father thanked him and accepted the gift.

The fourth child returned after sunset. She walked with a buoyant step, her face was radiant. "My father, I bring nothing in my hands as a gift. Today I stood on the top of the mountain. I gave thanks to the Creator for all that he has given to us--the wind, the plants, the animals, our warriors, I looked in one direction and saw the snow of the north country and felt the cold wind blowing on my face. I turned to the east and saw the place of the rising sun. I looked to the south and saw a big sea beyond the mountains. I turned to the west and I stood there for a long time watching the place where the sun disappears, watching the beautiful colors change as the day disappeared into night. Today I have seen a big world. I bring you this." Her father thanked her and accepted the gift.

To his children he said, "Tomorrow, I will give you my answer. The next day, he called his children together. "The child who brought me no gift at all in her hands is the one that will be the next leader. She has brought me the greatest gift of all. She went to the top of the mountain as I instructed and witnessed and recognized the qualities of the four directions--the north, the east, the south and the west. She has a keen mind. She is sharp and perceptive. She has a heart that is strong, steadfast, and loving. She has used her heart and mind to view the boundless wonders of the Creator. She will make a good leader."



APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT FORM



Letter of Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to hear more about my current research interest. In conjunction with our personal conversation, I am following up with this formal consent form that briefly summarizes the intention of this research project, the voluntary participant status, the intention to retain your anonymity and confidentiality of all data, and your time commitment to this project. Please sign and return the form to me in the attached self-addressed envelope.

Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research project "Keepers of the Vision: Portraits of Native American Women Educational Leaders" conducted by Valorie J. Johnson, Ph.D. candidate, Educational Administration Department, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

I acknowledge that I will be interviewed between three and four times, and one to two hours each time, over a brief period of time. I understand that I will be asked to reflect on both my formal and informal educational experiences, to critically think about how I think about educational leadership, and how I practice educational leadership in my present context. I also understand that if I feel comfortable, I might share any written professional or personal reflections that I might have kept or am keeping in some form (i.e., journal). I know that the interviews will be tape recorded and that I have the right not to answer any particular questions and to ask that the tape recorder be turned off at any time. I also know that all written or artifactual items that I share will be returned to me.

I further acknowledge that I have been informed and I understand that all data and tape recordings will be kept confidential, and that my anonymity will not be disclosed in the final report. However, I know that, due to the small number of Native American women in educational leadership positions today, my identity might be easily identifiable and therefore, only limited confidentiality can be guaranteed. I also know that I have the option to release my tribal identity but must do so in writing. Additionally, I acknowledge that my participation in this project has been freely given and that I may choose at any time not to participate. This withdrawal would not incur any penalty or loss of benefits to me.

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Biographical Questionnaire

Purpose of Biographical Questionnaire:

To establish a starting point for the series of interviews by obtaining basic information about each participant's childhood, family, and educational experiences before becoming an educational leader.

My Role:

To design the questionnaire and use it to pose exploratory questions and provide starting points for probes during the interviews to secure more specific stories about their lives and educational experiences.

Introduction for Participant:

This questionnaire has been designed to provide us with a solid starting point for our first interview. Please respond to the questions and open-ended statements with brief written answers and mail the questionnaire to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope prior to our first scheduled interview. If appropriate, feel free to attach a résumé rather than responding to the questions about professional experience and educational background. At the end of the instrument, you will find some additional assignments that need to be completed during our work together.

Biographical Background:

- What is your full name?
- Tribal background, clan, native name, and English translation (if applicable)
- Primary language
- Date of birth and place of birth
- Type of community in which you spent most of your growing-up years (reservation/farm or rural area/town/village/homestead/city/ suburb, etc.)
- Place of parents' birth. Highest level of education attained by parents
- Father's occupation; mother's occupation



- Birth order/number and names of siblings
- Did you attend public, private, or federal boarding schools? Provide a brief description of that experience.
- Information about educational attainment (or attach résumé)
- Ways of spending leisure time
- Do you have any special talents outside the area of education?
- Current health status. Any major illnesses or health-related issues, now or in the past?
- Spiritual orientation/religious preference (past and current)
- Marital/partner status
- Children (male, female, adopted or biological, ages)
- Present spouse/partner
- Significant adults in your life other than parents

Cultural Background:

- Tell me about your immediate and your extended family.
- How did you experience culture--societal values and beliefs--in your family? In your extended family? In your community?
- What formal cultural education were you introduced to (i.e., language classes in school)?
- What informal cultural education were you introduced to (i.e., ceremonies, pow-wows, lessons from elders)?
- What are the key cultural norms, values, or beliefs (i.e., duty, family roles) that you perceive to be important to you as a person, as a professional, and as an educational leader?
- What are some of the ways that you incorporate these key cultural norms, values, and beliefs into your life today?

- How have you been affected by social forces (i.e., class, gender, race/ethnicity)?

Starting Points:

I will also ask you, at another point, to respond to four open-ended statements about your life, work as an educational leader, and your involvement in this research experience. Therefore, you might want to record thoughts or comments as we go through this process during the next couple of months.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

There will be three 90-minute interviews with each participant, following her completion of a biographical questionnaire that will serve as a starting point for the first interview. The purpose of the interviews is to establish life history, experience and learnings as an educator and leader, and meaning of the connections between that work and life.

I will use the interview protocols developed by Benham (1995) and Colflesh (1995) for each of the interviews and have adapted their protocols for use with Native American women. A variety of probes will be used to expand each participant's responses to the questions in the interview protocol: probing to better understand what the participant is saying; probing for definitions and clarification of the meaning of her response; probing to elicit concrete examples and stories that illuminate her original responses; probing to explore the impact of previous lived experiences on what she is saying about educational leadership, especially her own leadership development; probing to extract how the characteristics most commonly associated with women leaders appear in their talk about educational leadership; and probing to make linkages between and among the interviews.

Participants will be asked to provide and explain three artifacts that depict their own leadership. Last, they will respond to four open-ended statements in a journal format, using metaphorical comparisons to their lives, leadership practice, and this research experience.

First Interview: Focused Life History

Purpose of the Interview:

To put each participant's experience in context by asking her to tell as much as possible about herself and her life up until the present.

My Role:

To pose open-ended questions and to issue invitations for each participant to share her life experiences and educational experiences; to follow up, seek clarification, ask for concrete details, and request stories to illuminate her life events and lessons; to move the interview forward by building on what the participant has begun to share.

Introduction for Participant:

Because I am interested in the biographies of women educational leaders, we will begin with your life story. During this conversation, we will build on the biographical questionnaire and the critical life moments identified by the initial lifeline sketch that you completed. You will also be asked to expand on your life and educational experiences prior to becoming a leader. The focus of my study is on the relationship of women's lived experiences and their thinking and practice as educational leaders. So your life experiences will serve as a starting point for our continued exploration during the rest of the interviews.

Questions

Family Background:

- I am interested in learning more about your background: when and where you were born, who your parents were, stories about your siblings, birth order, your parents' occupations. I will use the biographical questionnaire to pose questions. I would like you to expand and clarify the information with personal situations and stories about your life experiences.
- What was that growing-up experience like for you?
- How did your position in the family affect your sense of who you were during your growing-up years?

- How was that for you?
- How does your own family fit into this picture of your life?

Formal School Experience:

- Tell me about your institutional experiences, i.e., elementary, middle (junior high) school, secondary school, and postsecondary school years. (Talk about language, about peer groups, about talents/skills, about extracurricular programs, etc.)
- Who were the adults who had the most impact on your education? How did they impact you?
- What valuable lessons did you learn about who you were, about your relationship to learning, about your relationship to the educational profession?
- Were there any aspects of your educational experiences that might have conflicted with the cultural norms you were growing up with?
- How did those conflicts work out, and what impact do you think they might have had on how you frame your educational practices today?

Growing Up and Coming of Age

- How did you feel about your self-identity at different stages of your life (i.e., preteen, teen-ager, young adult, etc.)?
- What talents did you discover you possessed, and what did this mean to you?
- What political movements (civil rights, American Indian Movement, desegregation, Vietnam war, etc.) affected your life? How so? What personal meaning did it hold for you?
- What were your perceptions of the roles of men and women Native Americans? What myths and stereotypes affected you? What myths and stereotypes did you hold? Discuss these.

Professional Practice:

- What factors played a part in your entering/departing from the education profession?

- What did you learn about yourself during your first years in the profession?
- How is it that you became an educational leader? Did you have a mentor?
- How is it that you came to your current position?
- What is involved in accomplishing change, and how do you go about mobilizing others to action?
- Were there any stories of other individuals who moved you toward seeking a leadership role? What were they, and how did they affect you?
- How do you define leadership? Do you see yourself as a leader?

Lifeline Probes:

- Continue to discuss those moments not touched upon by the above themes.
- Are there any moments that impeded your progress? What were they, and how did they become obstacles? What did you do?
- What lessons have you learned that you can clearly say have impacted how you think and how you behave as an educational leader?
- What does learning mean to you? What makes it important?

Second Interview: Life History Continued

Purpose of This Interview:

To concentrate on the concrete details of each participant's experience as an educational leader, with special emphasis on a selected group of gender-related and culture-related characteristics from the literature.

My Role:

Similar to my role in the first interview: to encourage each participant to relate incidents, tell stories, and provide concrete details of her experience as an educational leader and to further explore what the participant is saying. To ask the participant to reconstruct those situations and experiences. To peel away the layers of deeper values, beliefs, and approaches to leadership.

Introduction for Participant:

I am interested in exploring your experiences as an educational leader and learning more about who you are as a Native American woman educational leader.

Questions

- Talk more about any of the stories/situations that you mentioned in Interview 1 that you feel are important.
- Are there any other stories about your growing up and coming of age that you feel are important to understanding who you are, particularly as a leader?
- Are there any other stories about your professional practice/career, your work as an educational leader, that you want to share?
- How did you learn to be an educational leader?
 - Can you give me an example of an experience (i.e., in professional development) that has had a visible impact on how you see and carry out your role as an educational leader?
 - What made that experience stand out above the rest?

- What opportunities for learning to lead, in your life and work, enhanced your learning as an educational leader?
 - What opportunities for learning to lead hindered your learning as an educational leader?
- Current work context:
 - Ask the leader to provide contextual information, demographic information, and a description of the political and financial environment of her current work place.
 - Ask the leader to reflect critically on issues of concern that she is currently addressing and how she makes sense of these problems.
 - Encourage the leader to explore, discuss, and analyze her unique role in advancing education and to begin to define her role.

Last Interview: Reflection on the Meaning

Purpose of the Interview:

To encourage each participant to reflect on the meaning of her experience as an educational leader.

My Role:

To continue to pose open-ended questions and to issue invitations for each participant to make connections between her work and her life. To explore details and clarification, encourage further explanation, interpretation, and sense-making, and follow up when additional information is needed. To keep the participant focused on making meaning from her experience and learning. To accept silence.

Introduction for Participant:

During the last formal interview, we will explore the meaning that you have made of your work as an educational leader. We will continue to link characteristics related to women leaders and life experiences with your current work, with emphasis on how it makes sense for you. In addition, we will use some of the time to "tie up loose ends" from the previous interviews.

Questions

Schooling and Education:

- What do you believe the purpose of schooling and the purpose of education is?
- How did achieving a higher education impact your leadership development?

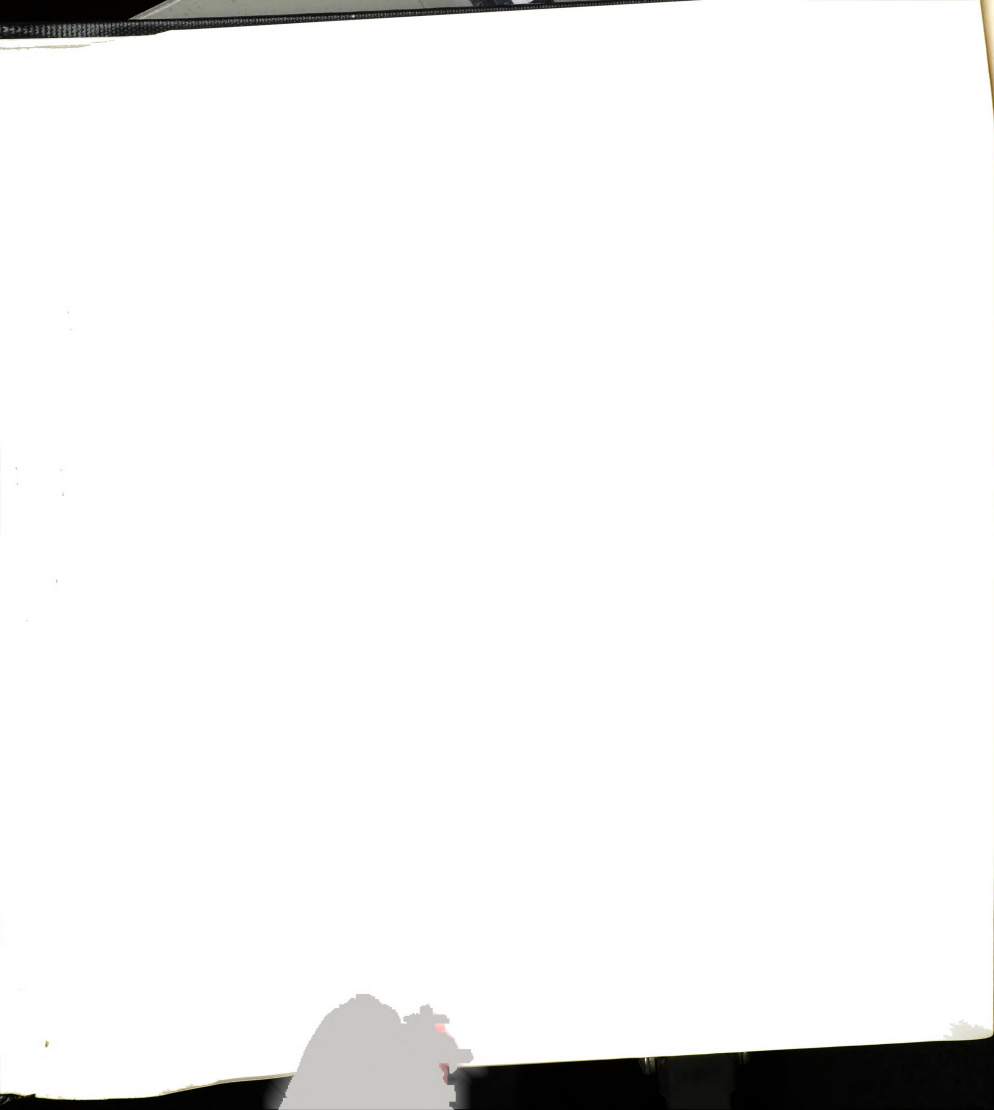
Educational Leadership:

- How did you learn to be an educational leader?
- What does educational leadership mean to you?
- What factors in your life (personal and professional) have enhanced and hindered your work as an educational leader?

- How do you see yourself as a leader? How do you think your professional colleagues see you? How would you like to be seen?
- How do you assess your leadership experiences?
- Has your leadership been effective? How was this determined?
- What skills and strategies have you found to be most effective in your efforts to create change?
- Define culture. What implications does this have on how you view leadership and how you practice leadership?
- What lessons have you learned about educational leadership that are worthwhile to share?

Reflections:

- Given what you have said about your life and your work, how have you come to understand leadership?
- Comment on these characteristics of leadership most commonly associated with women/Native American cultural values: caring/nurturing; accomplishing work through relationships, inclusion, and connections; use of voice to empower others; developing a nonhierarchical view of organizations; balance and integration of personal and professional lives; and learning as an essential quality of leadership.
- What are the challenges that you and other Native American women educational leaders face? Talk a bit about these demands and satisfactions.
- What unique contribution to the education of children and youths do you think you have made? Would like to make?
- As you look back, what have you liked the most about your work, and what have you liked the least? What was an area of your leadership practice that was strong, and what was not strong?
- As you look forward, how might you want to train the next generation of leaders?
- What would you share with an aspiring woman interested in educational leadership?



Open-Ended Statements for Journal Responses/Final Reflections

Purpose of Journal Entries:

To use metaphors to describe the leaders' life experiences, leadership practice, and the meaning that they have made of their life and work, as well as their experience in this study.

My Role:

To provide open-ended statements to which the participants can respond.

Introduction for Participant:

Using metaphors, please respond to the following open-ended statements. We will explore these responses during our final meeting or in a follow-up call after the interview transcripts are reviewed.

Invitations:

- As I look back, my life has been. . . .
- My practice as an educational leader has been. . . .
- Making sense of my life and work has been. . . .
- My experience as a participant in this study has been. . . .
- Additional comments/reactions. . . .

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