
native women's association of canada

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NEWS LETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be your leader during the coming year. I never imagined that I'd someday see this happening!

I am looking forward to working with our new executive. Team work and team effort is something which I believe firmly in. I have discussed this with your executive and each individual has taken on the responsibility of handling portfolios on those important areas of concern as expressed by delegates at our 7th Annual Convention in June.

Since June 21, 1981, we have attended a number of meetings on your behalf and I expect a very hectic, hard-working term ahead of us. We will be working closely with Secretary of State to improve the funding program for the Native Women's Associations and also with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Department of Health and Welfare. Of course, the joint Canada Employment and Immigration/NWAC Working Group continues their work on an ongoing basis.

At this time I would like to take this opportunity to encourage Native women all across Canada to volunteer their time and efforts towards improving the conditions facing Native people today. We have to start participating to a greater extent in areas such as child welfare, education, health care, etc., etc., so that we can see that changes are made with our input. Then and only then can we hope to see our children and future generations as self-governing, independent nations.

I look forward to my term in office with excitement and anticipation and hope to see many good results that will enhance the Native Women's Movement.

*Sincerely yours,
Jane Gottfriedson,
President.*

REPORT FROM THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

Hi everyone! It is hard to believe that almost three months have passed since the Annual Convention in Regina. It certainly was an exciting, challenging and productive conference and it was just great to see you all there. Indeed it was a learning experience for myself and all our staff members who attended. Your inspiration, encouragement, direction and dedication has rejuvenated and strengthened us to continue the endless but challenging work that has to be done in order to better the conditions for our children of today and tomorrow, our elders, our families and our communities.

Due to illness and extreme fatigue, I took six weeks off during the summer months. I would like to thank Marlyn Kane, who so efficiently had undertaken many of the duties involved to co-ordinate the activities of the head office and its membership. My thanks also go to the NWAC staff and summer students who assisted Marlyn and the executive members during that time.

The executive members have had a busy summer. They met with officials of CEIC on the NWAC/CEIC Joint Working Group report; officials of Secretary of State: Huguette Labelle, Deputy Minister and Dick Saunders, Director of Native Citizens Directorate; Don Goodwin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indian and Inuit Affairs and other DINA officials; officials of Health and Welfare and DINA on the NNAAP research project. Meetings with the Inuit women and National Association of Friendship Centres executive director were also undertaken. The president and staff and executive members attended the IRIW Convention, Ontario Native Women's Association Annual Assembly and NIB Annual Assembly.

Two executive meetings were held and a great deal of work is being undertaken to carry out the mandate we received from the resolutions passed at our 7th Annual Convention.

With the inception of the Communications portfolio, the national office hopes to keep you better informed and that the communication flow from your communities to our office and vice versa will be greatly improved.

Don't forget, we need your support! This support may be given by just giving us a call and letting us know about your association or group and its activities, or by writing an article for this newsletter. The ammunition we use in our representation of the Native women's movement is far more effective when we can give direct input from you.

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for giving me your support and friendship; without your direction, assistance and moral support I could not do my job. I am indeed honoured to have this opportunity to serve you.

My heartfelt thanks again go to the last year's executive and board members who had a great influence and impact on the developmental process of NWAC. They have been, along with the other executive and board members since the formation of NWAC, the true pioneers of the Native women's movement.

I wish the new executive and board members good wishes, strength, success and hope that 1981-82 will be a rewarding and productive year for all of you. The staff of NWAC is behind you one hundred percent.

*Agnes Mills,
Special Assistant to the President.*

— EDITORIAL —

The makings of a good convention were visible early at the 7th Annual Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) Convention.

NWAC's annual convention provided a very refreshing change from the trend of many associations to hold meetings in the biggest, most elaborate hotels in the city.

With the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association (SNWA) as the "volunteer" convention coordinators, they did an excellent job which went far beyond the task of coordinating the convention activities.

Under the capable leadership of Leona Blondeau, the members of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association acquired the use of the facilities at the University of Regina. Delegates stayed at the student residence on campus and enjoyed brisk early morning walks outside to get from their rooms to the cafeteria.

SNWA arranged to have local media coverage and had posted important information sheets, re: NWAC office location, room numbers of executive and staff, at all exit areas.

The national office had reserved rooms for their delegates and guests and surprisingly when you arrived, you had a room. As well, delegates received a complete convention kit. The most important were the executive reports and all were well documented with an itinerary of executive travel in the past year.

Three-quarters of the delegates attending the meeting were pleased with the convention being held at the campus. The other one-quarter is what can be referred to as "conference complainers". These are individuals who attend conventions to complain about one thing or another.

With the recruitment of an excellent person to chair the meeting, no time was wasted due to delegates arguing over issues on the convention floor. In all, the success of any convention lies in the ability of the chairperson to conduct an orderly meeting.

Often the meeting went beyond the nine-to-five working schedule — but that was at the will of the majority of delegates. Indeed these women came to achieve more than registering as a delegate to a national convention.

The 7th Annual Convention's theme, "Decisions Today for our Children Tomorrow" brought young and old together to participate in the conference's activities. There was a feeling of unity and respect throughout the three-day meeting.

Although elections for new executive are held annually at NWAC's conventions, politics in the Native women's movement are quite different than in other organizations.

This was one convention which involved the election of new executive members which was completely void of any politicking in the sense of winning votes or making public accusations against your opponent; as a matter of fact, the opposite was true. When the candidates were asked to make their speeches, they usually put in a few kind words and plugs for their opponents.

Moreover, individuals at the convention displayed human emotions — it was more than a matter of holding the meeting and electing new executives — it was a time for showing gratitude and of honouring the past executives and presidents, of honouring the elders.

These are qualities which enable a national association such as NWAC to survive on a \$90,000 annual budget.

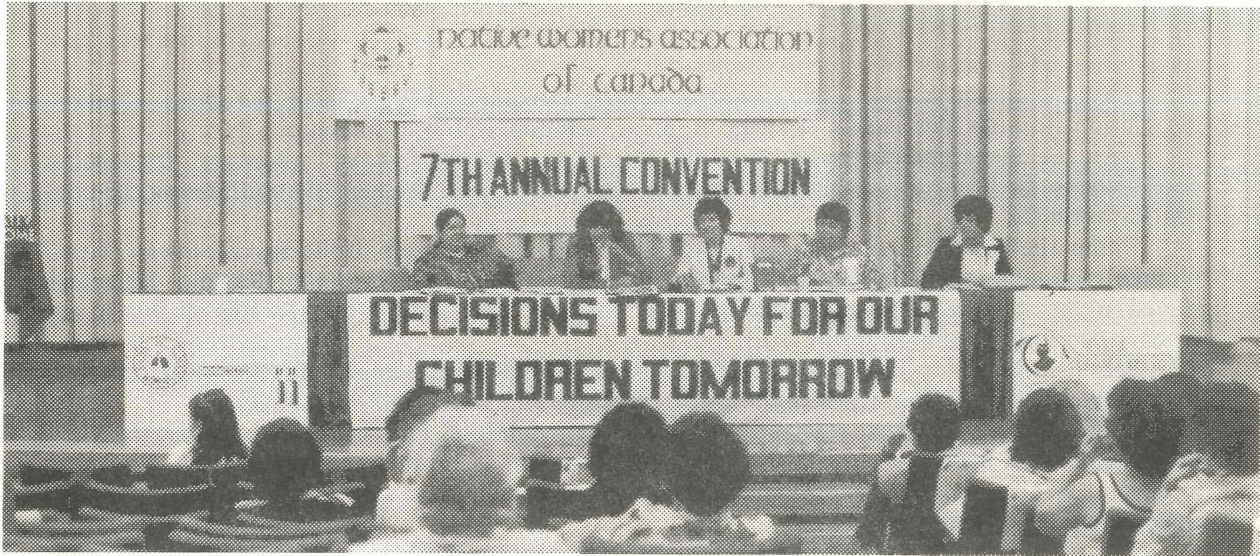
*** THE NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA'S NEWSLETTER ***

We hope you will enjoy this second issue of the NWAC's Newsletter. This issue contains reports on the 7th Annual Convention held in Regina, Saskatchewan.

So much has been happening since our first newsletter was mailed out and we felt we should include brief mention of NWAC's position on some of the events which took place over the summer months; (B.C. Native Women's occupation of DIAND regional office and Restigouche situation). These areas are of vital importance to us all as aboriginal peoples of this land.

We would like to remind you that this is YOUR newsletter and your comments, criticisms and contributions will be greatly appreciated. You can send us poems, news items, letters of concern, jokes and your suggestions for the development of this newsletter.

Contact Marlyn Kane, NWAC Communications Director, 5th Floor, 222 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V9, or telephone: (613) 236-6057.



June 19, 20, 21, 1981, Regina, Saskatchewan . . . The official opening ceremony of the 7th Annual Convention of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) was done in the traditional way of thanking the Creator for bringing everyone to the meeting safely and asking for guidance and a successful convention. Elders Eva McKay and Ernest Benedict did this important part of the meeting.

"Decisions Today for our Children Tomorrow" was the convention's theme and through NWAC's efforts, Native elders and youth were able to attend the meeting. They were asked to share their experiences during the three-day meeting with others in their home communities when they returned.

NWAC received nearly 75 telegrams and messages from the various federal and provincial government departments and Native associations wishing them a successful and productive meeting.

The Saskatchewan Native Women's Association, who volunteered to coordinate the convention, did an excellent job. Every aspect of holding a national meeting was taken care of – accommodations, arrangements for social activities, invitations of VIPs in Saskatchewan and arrangements to have local media coverage. The Saskatchewan Native Women's Association also assisted the girls working for the national office. This was really appreciated.

NWAC was fortunate to acquire the services of Sylvia Maracle from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres who did an excellent job of chairing the meeting.

Marion Ironquill Meadmore chaired the NWAC Constitution Amendments portion of the meeting. For the most part though, it was Sylvia who chaired the meeting. She enforced a previously agreed upon procedure of not paying per diems to delegates who were not present for roll call at the morning or afternoon sessions without a valid reason.

A great deal of work was completed and often the convention began as early as 8:30 in the morning and ended as late as 6:30 in the evening.

There was a workshop held June 19th which dealt with the Native Women's Association of Canada's Constitution. Delegates and guests broke into small groups to discuss and prepare amendments to the association's constitution. The assembly later adopted an amended NWAC Constitution.

On June 20th, a workshop on the Canadian Constitution was held. This was an attempt to exchange information, access current strategies, develop NWAC policy and activities on the issues of the Canadian Constitution, aboriginal rights, the Indian Act and the role of women in each area. This was a workshop which involved too many topics requiring more than one day's workshop.

Mr. Raymond Chenier, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian & Northern Affairs, addressed the assembly. He told delegates that his department is working on a bill which will give Indian bands the option for Indian government.

Mr. Chenier concluded his remarks with some of his personal views on the department's attitude towards NWAC and its member associations. He said, "As you know, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has never requested from Treasury Board that funds be set aside in the Department's annual fiscal expenditures for core funding to Native women's associations. There are probably many reasons for that, the most notable one being that the Indian and Inuit people and its representative associations have always been considered as male bastions."

Chenier gave his personal commitment to the Native women's associations saying, "The federal government, through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, will have to reconsider its funding policy of Indian groups and I pledge to you today that the minister and myself are looking at the possibility of establishing funds to Native women's organizations such as yours, directly from our department instead of through the Secretary of State."

It seemed ironic that after he finished his speech, Mr. Chenier had to leave to catch a flight back to Ottawa. Ironic because the convention had received word that another raid had taken place on the Restigouche Reserve by Quebec Provincial Police that very morning. Delegates wanted to know what the department was doing to protect the people living on that reserve and Mr. Chenier could not answer their questions. It was at this point that emotions ran high and Chenier bore the anger and frustrations of Indian people who were wondering if the trusteeship and protection of Indian people ended at 5:00 p.m. Friday afternoon and resumed at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning.

Later in the evening Eva McKay performed a pipe ceremony, assisted by Ernie Benedict. Everyone was asked to join in the ceremony and offer their prayers for the safety of the Micmac Indians at Restigouche. A pipe ceremony was held again at midnight and at dawn.

Mr. Jim Sinclair, President of the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, told delegates that the time had arrived when we should stand up and fight for our rights. He stressed the time factor involved in patriating the constitution saying, "This is the last time to discuss the constitution. We must deal with the main issues sitting across the table from the Prime Minister and leaders."

Sinclair also encouraged the break from the paternalistic past and recommended that training programs for Natives should be used. He stressed that these programs begin in "our communities" and not in the cities.

The last day saw the elections of Jane Gottfriedson as NWAC President; Grace Menard, 1st Vice President; Darliea Slauenwhite as 2nd Vice President; Bernice Dubec as Secretary and Elaine Jessop as Treasurer.

Among the recommendations passed at the convention was the move to request financial contributions for the convention from three departments: Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Secretary of State and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and NOT from the existing Native women's associations' allocations.

NWAC has been given the mandate to develop and recommend the definition of "aboriginal rights". Also, NWAC now has the mandate to lobby on behalf of all women in regards to the Indian Act, Sections 4 to 17, with emphasis on Section 12(1)(b).

Child welfare will be a priority with the NWAC this year. These are a sample of the mandates which came out of the 7th Annual Convention. They will be dealt with by the executive committee and the board of directors at their first meeting in early October.

Individuals whose dedicated work made the convention such a success were presented with gifts by Jane Gottfriedson, the newly elected president, in appreciation for their efforts.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 1981-82 is made up of the following:

Alice Donnessey and Dorothy Smith from the Yukon; Esther McLeod and Marie Alice Hamilton from the Northwest Territories; Mildred Gottfriedson and Jane Gottfriedson from British Columbia; Ruth Gladue and Fran Dion from Alberta; Elaine Jessop and Helen McDonald from Saskatchewan; Grace Menard and Irene Pilon from Manitoba; Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway and Bernice Dubec from Ontario; Evelyn Lamirande and Pearl Jacobs from Quebec; Clara Gloade and Darliea Slauenwhite from Nova Scotia; Martha Francis Solomon and Shirley Bear from New Brunswick and Justine Perkins from Labrador.

NWAC's EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1981-82

If you have any concerns which you wish to bring to the attention of the Native Women's Association of Canada, please feel free to contact any member of the executive committee or NWAC staff.



*Grace Menard, 1st Vice President
Winnipegosis, Manitoba*



*Darliea Slauenwhite, 2nd Vice President
Lunenburg Co., Nova Scotia*



*Jane Gottfriedson, President
Keremeos, British Columbia*



*Bernice Dubec, Secretary
Thunder Bay, Ontario*



*Elaine Jessop, Treasurer
Regina, Saskatchewan*

SOCIAL EVENTS – MOST ENJOYABLE AND WELCOMED

The social events which were also part of the meeting, were most enjoyable, although they were a bit slow getting started. On Friday evening, an Indian feast featuring a cultural presentation to the Youth/Elders Council and a pow-wow sponsored by the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association was held.



Everything remained quite down to earth and very moving . . . the pow-wow, at which everyone danced and the young and the old joined hands, signified where the strength lies for Native people – it's still in the very heart of women who can keep things simple.

On Saturday, June 20th, a banquet sponsored by Mr. Allan Blakeney, Premier of Saskatchewan, was held for the NWAC delegates and guests.

Master of Ceremonies was Ivan McNabb and special guest speaker Walter Currie set the evening off on a joyous note.

Special presentations were made after dinner. These included the Woman of the Year Award to Edith McLeod; the Governor General's Persons Case Award to Agnes Semmler and the Honouring of NWAC past presidents.

Later in the evening a dance was held featuring the Lawrence Joseph Band from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

*** NOTE OF THANKS ***

The Native Women's Association of Canada expresses their sincere thanks and appreciation to the following for their assistance and cooperation at the 7th Annual Convention:

- Saskatchewan Native Women's Association*
- Mr. Larry Schneider, Mayor of Regina*
- Mr. Allan Blakeney, Premier of Saskatchewan*
- The Saskatchewan Association of Friendship Centres*
- All Native people in the province for their presence and participation in the convention activities.*

IN HONOUR OF NWAC PAST PRESIDENTS



(l-r) Marlene Pierre Aggamaway, Bertha Clark Jones, 1981 Woman of the Year Edith McLeod, Margaret Thomson, Donna Phillips.

The past presidents of the Native Women's Association of Canada were awarded gifts in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Native women's movement.

We present you with the following brief profiles of their individual achievements. It is through their hard work and familiarity with the problems facing Native people in Canada which made them good leaders and enabled the Native women's movement to flourish.

* * *

Bertha Clark Jones was chosen as the chairperson of the National Steering Committee at its first meeting in 1971, in Alberta.

The Native Women's Association of Canada was legally incorporated in 1974. At the First Annual Convention in Thunder Bay, Ontario in that same year, Bertha was elected president of the association. She is credited with helping the association through its growing pains of that first year.

Bertha is from Fort McMurray, Alberta and has been active on the provincial Native women's association. She was provincial president for eight years and has served on the national board of directors for a period covering 1967 to 1978.

In 1967, Bertha was employed as a Social Development Officer and soon was involved with issues such as housing provisions for Natives, health care and was involved in the various employment projects.

Today, Bertha continues to be actively involved in these areas as the executive director of the Fort McMurray Friendship Centre in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

* * *

Margaret Thomson, from Ross River, Yukon, served as president of the NWAC from 1975 to 1977. She is a mother of five and has been involved in the Yukon Native Women's Association for a number of years.

During her term in office, Margaret attended the International Women's Year World Congress in East Berlin as a representative of NWAC.

She also attended the Habitat Conference in Vancouver, B.C. and made presentations at informal meetings and lobbied on behalf of NWAC at the Canadian non-government sessions. Margaret was one of three Native women in 1976 to make a presentation to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs.

Margaret now leads quite an active life as a Justice of the Peace in the Yukon and as a freelance journalist for CBC and the YUKON INDIAN NEWS. She is a member of Participation of Women (POW) which requires that she represent all women in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to this she is on the Vocational Educational Investigative Committee as Instructor, which requires her to submit regular reports with recommendations to the Yukon Government.

Margaret is presently pursuing studies for an Instructor's Diploma in Adult Education from the University of British Columbia.

* * *



Born and raised in Old Crow, Yukon, **Bertha Allen** is the third person to hold office as president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Hailing from the Yukon, Bertha moved to Inuvik, N.W.T. in 1956, when it was still a "tent town". She has witnessed the development of the town and has also served as a member of the municipal council.

Bertha was responsible for the formation of the N.W.T. Native Women's Association as she is the one who attended meetings at the national level and began discussing issues with women at her community. Once it was realized that they faced the same situations, the N.W.T. chapter was formed.

One of the goals which Bertha cited as her "dream" was to see the establishment of a Native Arts and Crafts project controlled by Native people. This goal is now a reality with the project's huge success over the past few years.

She helped establish the cross-country ski team in Inuvik, from which the Firth twins emerged and went on to participate in the 1976 Olympics.

During her term in office in 1977-78, she joined with other concerned Indian women and lobbied the federal government for funds for the Indian Rights for Indian Women's movement.

As president, the negotiation and lobby process with the federal government on issues in the areas of Justice, health care and housing were an integral part of her work.

In the future, Bertha said she intends to focus her attention in the area of revitalizing and maintaining Native culture. One of her personal goals is to stress the importance of maintaining Native language. She said, "Native language is dying and without a language the culture is also dead. Unlike other individuals of ethnic groups in Canada, we have no other country to return to to regain our language and culture."

The mother of seven, Bertha said she is looking forward to slowing down and watching as her children take up active roles in the Native community.

* * *

Donna Phillips was elected president of the Native Women's Association of Canada in 1979. She is an Oneida Indian and is presently residing in London, Ontario. As a mother of seven children, she feels very strongly that Native youth be allowed to seek out the knowledge and wisdom which our elders can pass on to them.

Donna first became involved with the Native women's group through a project offered at the London Friendship Centre. The project later grew into a local chapter of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

Since that time she has remained an active member at the local, provincial and national level. She is the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association and is also treasurer of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

In the future, Donna has expressed a desire to devote her time and energy participating in the policy development programs for Native people in Ontario.

She believes we all have to start getting back to the traditional ways of our people – of consulting the elders for direction and guidance in matters which we are attempting to make changes on.

* * *

Marlene Pierre Aggamaway is married and the mother of three children. She is a member of the Ojibway Nation and presently lives in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

She is the founding president of the Thunder Bay chapter of the Native women's group "Anishinabeque".

Marlene has been involved in a variety of volunteer and professional development work which ranges from Advisory Council on Justice, Native Women's Crises House and in 1980 she was appointed to the Educational Task Force on Secondary Schools by the Ontario Minister of Education.

She was elected president in 1980 and became the fifth president of NWAC. During her one-year term in office, Marlene travelled extensively across the country attending meetings and visiting provincial and territorial Native women's groups. This was an important step in opening the lines of communication between the national office and its membership.

She declined to stand for re-election this year, stating that her family needed her at home now.

* * *

*** YOUTH PARTICIPATION ***

Janet Burns, Dorothy Chocolate, Leona Thomas, Rhoda Fisher, Jocelyn Bernier, Lisa Pierre, Dianne Deer, Mona Francis, Betty Campbell and Claire Perkins – who was the youngest youth invited, attended NWAC'S 7th Annual Convention in Regina, Saskatchewan. It was hoped that these participants would return to their communities and tell others about what they experienced at the conference and perhaps share the information which they were able to gather at the convention.

TIME FOR GIFT-GIVING AND HONOURING INDIVIDUALS

The Governor General's "Persons Case Award" was given last fall to Agnes Semmler, from Inuvik.

Agnes was given recognition for her outstanding achievements by the NWAC at their 7th Annual Convention.

The "Persons Case" was decided by the Privy Council in London, England on October 18, 1929 in favour of Canadian women being eligible for appointment to the Senate of Canada. This landmark decision reversed a previous ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada and brought to a successful end a decade of campaigning by five Alberta women.

In essence, what the decision meant was that women were "persons" and could stand for appointment to the Canadian Senate. Since 1931, when the first woman was appointed to the Senate of Canada, eighteen women have been appointed and there are currently nine women senators.

Presenting the gift to Agnes was her niece and past-president of NWAC Bertha Allen.

Agnes is a very active and inspiring person, one can know this from the minute she begins to talk.

She celebrated her 50th Wedding Anniversary on August 15, 1980. The whole regional area joined in the celebrations at the Semmler's store.



The time when Agnes and her husband served as the medical personnel and won the trust and love of the Inuit in their community is an example of some of her achievements and services. As there was no medical services available to them in the area, Agnes recalls, "We never lost a soul."

Agnes gave birth to two of three children without medical aid and two others died at birth. She adopted one child and personally educated her children through Alberta correspondence courses. She taught her children to respect the ways of Native people. She also taught them how to hunt, fish and trap.

She is presently president of the Trappers Association in the Northwest Territories — a post which she has held for the past eight years.

She has been involved in numerous projects and was the founding member of COPE, the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement. She has served on the Inuvik Village Council and acted on an advisory basis to the federal government.

In 1975, she became the first northern Native woman to be appointed Justice of the Peace.

Agnes was manager of the Inuvik Regional Craft Shop from 1968 to 1972. She was the first manager and was "well known for her insistence that quality work of the area be developed to its fullest potential."

After accepting the award, Agnes offered the following advice to delegates, "Your convention theme

is very appropriate and is what I am working on now. I want all Native people of Canada to think very hard about the future — of what is going to be here for your great grandchildren."

She said that land is the most important thing for Native people and for the future generations.

Agnes said, "I have to give credit to my old man; he has let me go my own way. Honey, do your own thing. And I've done it the best I know how!"

One thought which she left us with was for women to include their men in their endeavors to make social change. She said, "If they see that you are earnest in what you're doing for the future, they'll turn around and help you — like my old man did. At first he thought I was nuts!"

WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Past President Marlene Pierre Aggamaway presented the Woman of the Year Award to Edith McLeod, in recognition for her outstanding endeavors in the Native women's movement.

At present, Edith lives at 403 Grenville Avenue in Thunder Bay, Ontario, which is what we call a community centre. She administers a program for Native women who come into conflict with the law and are sentenced by the courts but instead of going into a penitentiary, they come to her residence where they receive special kinds of counselling and her leadership, plus rehabilitation back into the community.

Born October 15th, 1918, at present she is a widow. "If two people ever balanced each other it was Edith and her late husband," Marlene said. "We often described her as a 'raw diamond' because you can't get them any better, her late husband was the other part of her life — he was a very kind, gentle soft-spoken man, a very strong man, I guess he gave her the ability and the time to be who she wanted to be."

Edith was one of the founding members of the Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association in 1969-70.

She was also one of the volunteer founders of the Ontario Native Women's Association in 1972. Edith held the position of treasurer of ONWA in 1972 and has held that position to date.

In 1973-74 she was elected treasurer for NWAC, in 1975-76 1st vice-president, 1978, elected treasurer. Edith is a financial wizard because she has been one of the strongest promoters of careful and meticulous care of financial records.

She is a board member of the Thunder Bay Friendship Centre and the Native Opportunities Employment Task Force, Health and Welfare, Education, Justice.

Nominated Native Woman of the Year by NWAC in 1977 and also in 1977 by ONWA as Woman of the Year.

Received gold medal on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen to the Throne by Hon. Jules Leger in recognition of the volunteer work she had done for Indian people. Received a Trillian Pin from Frank Drea, member of corrections.

Member of Parole Board, the first of three Native women appointed in Canada.

Marlene said, "Personally speaking, Edith has been a very close friend of mine for many years; she has been a very close friend to all past presidents of this organization and has kept all of us on the straight and narrow. She's had a tremendous impact on us. I think none of us really realize that — only when she says she wants to go and we say no because we need her kind of advocacy."

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award was given to someone who has done a great deal of work for Native people.

Leona Blondeau, coordinator of the 7th Annual Convention, was given this award with much appreciation by delegates and the NWAC office for the superb job she did in coordinating the conference.

Leona is from the Gorden Indian Reserve in Saskatchewan and is the mother of six children and six grandchildren.

Presenting the gift to Leona was Donna Phillips. She gave a brief history of Leona's past achievements. Leona has always been interested in working with people. She worked as a liaison worker and with the Provincial Social Services Department as a protection officer. She is presently on the national CEIC/NWAC Working Group.

Leona stresses the importance of communications between the young and the elders. She says all our people have a strong sense of identity and knowledge which can be passed on to the younger people.

Donna said, "The national board want to express our deepest thanks for the cooperation and coordination we've had from Leona in putting this assembly together."

She also expressed on behalf of NWAC, sincere apologies to Leona for missing one of the most important events in her life. Leona's son graduated on the same night of the banquet and dance.

OTHER AWARDS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

The NWAC also presented gifts to Eva McKay and Christene Joseph, members of the Elders Council, in honour of their role in the NWAC.

Mr. Ernest Benedict, from St. Regis, was also given a special presentation for his participation in the NWAC Annual Convention.

TENTATIVE DATES FOR MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

National

- October 1, 1981Executive Meeting, NWAC
Secretary of State Liaison Committee Meeting
- October 2-3, 1981.....NWAC Board of Directors Workshop
- October 2, 19813:30 - 6:00 – Official opening of NWAC's national office. Elders will perform special ceremony to be followed by a traditional feast.
- October 4, 1981NWAC Board of Directors Meeting
- October 7-8, 1981National Workshop, National Native Alcohol Abuse Program (NNAAP)

Provincial

- October 15-16, 1981.....B.C. Native Women's Society Annual Assembly, Prince George, B.C.
- October 17-18, 1981.....Quebec Native Women's Association Annual Meeting, Levis, Quebec

Others

- October 8-13, 1981.....World Congress of Women, Prague, Czechoslovakia
Jane Gottfriedson will attend on NWAC's behalf.
- October 22-23, 1981.....National Associations Active in Criminal Justice
Fall Seminar to be held at National Native Centre, Ottawa.
- November 13-15, 1981Indian Women's Council of Manitoba Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba

TERRITORIAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES

The Northwest Territories Native Women's Association (NWTNWA) have worked very hard negotiating with the government to obtain funds to run local programs as well as territorial programs. It was pointed out at the Seventh Annual Convention that the Native Women's Association have a very good working relationship with other Native organizations. The NWT Native Women's Association extended special thanks to the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association for putting on a well organized meeting.

* * *

British Columbia Native Women's Societies (BCNWS) activities report for 1980/81 is available from their office for anyone interested in their constitution and bylaws. The report also lists the present executive and board of directors and staff, volunteers and a breakdown of activities from April 1, 1980 to March 31, 1981. The Native Women's Societies are involved with the Child Welfare program and are involved with a Child Welfare Committee. They also have people involved in a Drug and Alcohol Committee. Mildred Gottfriedson has met with John Munro, Minister of Indian Affairs and made a presentation to him on behalf of BCNWS. The BC Native Women's Societies have women that sit on Indian Rights for Indian Women. BCNWS did a survey on child welfare - they are concerned with socio-economic development and Indian women and protection of the Indian child. There is an Outreach Coordinator and they have Sue Rush who sits on the CEIC Task Force. The Society made a presentation to the NDP Task Force on Older Women and also to the Senate Committee on the Canadian Constitution. Mildred Gottfriedson made a presentation to the Canadian Constitution for Native Peoples of Canada.

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Saskatchewan Native Women's Association's (SNWA) provincial coordinator is Leona Blondeau. The provincial organization which now has an office staff, reports that their work is cut out for them. They are involved in child welfare and are concerned with Native women's needs in the constitution. The association is working very hard in the province and have received a lot of cooperation from other organizations.

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Metis Women's Association of Manitoba (MWAM) reports that they have a head office located in Winnipeg and because they did not have a provincial coordinator to manage their office, most of the work was done by the individual board members on a voluntary basis. Some of the activities MWAM have been engaged in at the local level are: education; local and provincial concerns; child care; feasibility study for one year projects; alcohol and drug abuse; local workshops; leadership training workshops and many other workshops and training sessions. All workshops focused on the development of Native women and youth to make them aware of issues and problems that face Native women across Canada. In the coming months, additional board training workshops specifically designed to train the board to start facilitating local workshops are planned. Approximately forty women's groups exist in Manitoba and have opened membership to thirteen-year-old Native women. On June 27, 1981 the MWAM held their 8th Annual Assembly in Swan River.

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*** COUNCIL OF ELDERS FORMED ***

Alice John, Josephine Gregoire, Vicky Wilson, Margaret Head, Edith McLeod, Lena McBride, Veronica Atwin, Sarah Denny, Judith Buggins and Eva McKay were named as the founding members of the Native Women's Association of Canada's Elders Council.

Quebec Native Women's Association (QNWA) opened 28 locals in the province of Quebec last year. They are now working to help solve some problems in the socio-economic field. Quebec Native Women are now sitting on the board of the Native Alcohol Abuse program. They are planning to hold workshops for locals later this year. Quebec Native Women's Annual Assembly will be held on the 18th and 19th of October in Lévis, Quebec.

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Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSNWA) applied for and received funding to hire five researchers on contract to research the problem of Indian children being placed in non-Native foster homes. They have formed Child Welfare committees on the reserves because of this problem and the association has applied for funds to compile the information gathered by the research team into book form. This information will go out to the chiefs, band councils and other Native organizations and also to the government departments. NSNWA were involved in summer student programs and encouraged the locals to apply for their own student programs. NSNWA applied for money to hold a workshop on the effects of the proposed Canadian Constitution on Indian Women and shall be holding this workshop early this fall. All the local women's groups are active and the women participate every year in the summer games and also are involved in different fund raising programs for their reserves and locals.

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The **Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society (VANWS)** held their 14th Annual Conference on May 15-17, 1981 in Edmonton, Alberta. With the theme of "New Dawn", the VANWS this year stressed the importance of Native women gathering together to share needs, thoughts and ideas and to look at working towards the future.

The vice-presidents, community resource workers and chapter presidents and representatives devoted as much time as was needed to inform the delegates about all VANWS activities. The Society was especially pleased to report on the work that had been generated in only a few short months of opening its office in Bonnyville.

Though other issues were raised by the assembly, a major one was Native foster care. Several guests spoke on the topic and a very good film was shown. The women, in sharing their experiences, truly emphasized the need and desire to take action in the area of Native foster care.

The VANWS Executive for 1981-82 are: Hervina Angus, President; Ruth Kidder, Northern Vice-President; Lincolne Bruneau, Central Vice-President; Patricia Smalleyes, Southern Vice-President; Ruth Gladue, Secretary; and Florence Boucher, Treasurer.

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The 7th Annual Assembly of the **Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)** was held in Toronto, Ontario on July 10-12, 1981. In line with the emphasis that ONWA has always placed on channeling available resources to the community level, this year's assembly focused on the provincial programs and policy development in which the association is involved on behalf of its chapters.

By means of reports and guest speaker presentations followed by discussion periods, delegates were brought up to date on all ONWA activities. Particular attention was given to issues of major concern such as: Native Child Welfare and Adoption; Residential Services; the National Native Alcohol Abuse Program; and Training Programs for Native Women.

The ONWA Executive for the period of July 1981 to July 1983 are: Donna Phillips, President; Nancy Recollet, 1st Vice-President; Gloria O'Connor, 2nd Vice-President; Irene Nawagesic, Secretary; and Edith McLeod, Treasurer.

A highlight of the banquet held on the first evening was the honouring of Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway as the ONWA "Native Women of the Year". She was presented with a special award and gifts for her invaluable contributions she has made in the past and continues to make towards the Native women's movement in Canada.

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– NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF UPDATE –

We are pleased to introduce two new full-time staff members: Marilyn Ranville and Susan Sunday.

Marilyn Ranville began work on August 24th as NWAC's Employment Coordinator. She comes to us with several years experience in the area of Native employment, having worked in various capacities with the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission in Winnipeg, Regina and Toronto, from where she and her family recently moved.

In addition to this, Marilyn has worked as a band administrator, teacher and skill development training instructor with the Department of Education and she has also been involved in different capacities with the Native associations in Manitoba.

Through the Canada Manpower Industrial Training Program, **Susan Sunday** was recruited to assume the role of Assistant Executive Director. As of September 14th, she will be working closely with Agnes Mills in all areas of the national office administration.

Susan recently received a B.A. in Psychology and Social Relations from Harvard University and was currently employed by the National Indian Brotherhood as a researcher/statistician.

As of September 14th, **Marlyn Kane**, Special Projects Coordinator, assumed the responsibility of the communications portfolio. Her responsibilities include such things as maintaining ongoing communications with the provincial/territorial member associations, the Elders Council and Youth Council, the NWAC newsletter, the NWAC Task Force on the Needs of Native Women and also Parliamentary Liaison.

Stella Peters, from the St. Regis Band, began a six-month work assignment with us on June 2nd. Her "training-on-the-job" position is sponsored by her band, the Canada Employment Centre in Cornwall, Ontario and the Office of Native Employment, Public Service Commission, Ottawa.

For the past several weeks, **Harold Walters**, Financial Advisor for the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), has been assisting us to establish an efficient bookkeeping/accounting system. His knowledge and expertise in this field was kindly loaned to us by the NAFC.

Employment Report –

The first phase of the Joint CEIC/NWAC Working Group task has been completed and has resulted in a report entitled, "Native Women – Labour Force Development". The report, which has been formally released to the CEIC Minister and to NWAC member associations, will be discussed at the October NWAC board of directors meeting. The discussion hopefully will result in the establishment of an operating plan for the second phase of the Working Group.

Since the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Employment and Immigration, received the report, he has written to NWAC President Jane Gottfriedson indicating that a meeting should be set up to discuss the report and the future of the Joint Working Group. The meeting is tentatively set for sometime in October.

Summer Employment Research Project –

Through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission's Summer Canada 1981 Student Employment Program, the NWAC was able to secure funds to hire three students for eleven weeks. In that short period, from June 8th to August 21st, taking into account their participation in the preparations for the Annual Convention and the six-week postal strike, Judy Cote, Valerie Wright-Auton and Donna Roundpoint worked diligently to produce a draft of an information manual on the NWAC. Data was researched and compiled on such things as the history, aims and objectives, membership and operations of the NWAC and its member associations.

In addition, they attempted to focus on initiatives being undertaken with respect to Native health and the Canadian Constitution in respect to Native status, aboriginal rights and the Indian Act.

Material from the member associations still has to be received and incorporated into the manual before it can be produced in final form.

A small resource centre containing a filing system of the information which the girls collected has been established and should prove to be valuable to us in the future.

– REPORTS FROM C.E.I.C. SUMMER PROJECT RESEARCHERS, 1981 –

During the summer of 1981, I had the opportunity to work at NWAC's national office. Initially I was hired to assist with the preparations for the 7th Annual Convention, but on June 8, 1981, I joined forces with Judy Cote and Donna Roundpoint. We participated in a summer research project which involved compiling a history of the provincial/territorial associations affiliated with NWAC.

My experience with NWAC was very rewarding. There was a wealth of knowledge available to me, both in written and oral communications. The national office employs some very knowledgeable women who are informed and ready to relate their experiences that reflect the welfare of Native people. As well, there is an influx of women from across Canada who are politically, socially and culturally aware of their identity.

It is in this respect that I must offer special thanks to Agnes Mills, Marlyn Kane and Sam Maracle for all the encouragement they gave me throughout the summer and especially for giving me the incentive to learn and become more involved than I have ever been in the past.

Valerie Wright-Auton

Working with NWAC has been influential in establishing my career goals. Researching for this project has opened my eyes to the needs of Native people right across Canada. For this reason, I am determined to use my nurse's training to help my people. I firmly stand behind the objectives of the Native Women's Association of Canada and appreciate having had the experience of working here.

Donna Roundpoint

Our research project into the histories of the PTO's and our national organization has been enlightening and encouraging to me. It is good to see Native women across Canada working together toward similar goals and objectives. I have also been inspired by some of the dedicated women that I have met and gotten to know a bit, who really give themselves for the cause.

It has also been good to work with Donna and Val on this project because of their hard work and cooperation. It made times of pressure much easier to bear.

Hopefully, in future, NWAC will have more summer research projects. I see a real need for a Native Women's Information Centre to be set up in this office so that the questions we are so often asked can be readily answered in detail.

Perhaps future projects can supply and organize this information on such topics as child welfare, education, specific Native women's rights and other concerns that Native women have.

Judy Cote

*****NEWS BRIEFS*****

— INUIT WOMAN APPOINTED SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR EASTERN ARCTIC —

Meeka Kilabuk was appointed as Special Assistant on Inuit Affairs on June 19, 1981 by Indian and Northern Affairs.

Meeka is an Adult Educator and has been involved with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Greenland. She also worked for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the Baffin Region Inuit Association.

A native of Pangnirtung, Baffin Island, Meeka has travelled extensively throughout the Northwest Territories and is familiar with local concerns.

Meeka Kilabuk's appointment is the first time that an Inuit Special Assistant has been engaged by any federal minister.

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**KINGSTON PRISON FOR WOMEN HOSTS
CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE FOR NATIVE WOMEN**

A two-day Consultative Conference on the Rights of Native Women took place September 21st and 22nd in the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario.

The conference was arranged by the Native Sisterhood in the prison, who applied to the Secretary of State Department for a funding grant to bring their sisters on the outside in to discuss the rights of Native women.

Approximately thirty Native women from various sectors of the national, local and provincial levels attended the conference which ended with the adaptation of the following resolutions: (1) A working group be assigned to present these recommendations to all Native groups and government officials to produce a plan for developing social, economic and cultural identity of Native peoples and to serve as an advisory body in the problem areas; (2) The Native Sisterhood carry out research for the Native organizations for specialized and specific topics; (3) Funds be made available to enable the Sisterhood to develop a plan for areas of concern that will increase successful integration of members of the sisterhood on release. Also the sisterhood was informed about the types of support groups available to them upon release. A resource committee will be formed to ensure sufficient resources are available to them in order to participate in the Native women's movement.

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— THE INVASION OF RESTIGOUCHE —

On June 11, 1981, 550 riot-equipped Quebec Provincial Police officers and Quebec Fisheries wardens staged a simultaneous land, air and sea incursion of the Restigouche Reserve.

The Restigouche Reserve is situated on the north shore of the Restigouche River estuary which flows into Chaleur Bay. There is a population of 1,600 Micmac Indians who speak Micmac and English. Fishing has been part of their lifestyle since time immemorial. Now the Quebec Government was telling them they had to abide by their fishing regulations as they (Indians) were destroying the salmon spawning.

On June 20, 1981, the residents of the Restigouche Reserve were again raided by government forces.

The violent activities of the Quebec Provincial Police on the Micmac Indians of Restigouche have hurt, abused and threatened the residents.

The following statement was made in a press release by NWAC, "The Native Women's Association of Canada must and does strongly protest the invasion of lands reserved for Indians in Restigouche and any threat of violence towards its inhabitants. We cannot sanction the fact that a government without legal responsibilities for Indians can intervene so dramatically in the lives and economics of our nations. The NWAC would like to make clear its full and continuing support of the people of Restigouche. We interpret this matter to be not an issue of illegal fishing, but it is instead a matter of the rights of the aboriginal people of this land. We support the request of the Indian people from Restigouche for intervention for the protection of Indians and the lands reserved for Indians from this brutal invasion."

The National Indian Brotherhood conducted an inquiry into this situation and has made available their Preliminary Report entitled "The Invasion of Restigouche".

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INDIAN RIGHTS FOR INDIAN WOMEN 1981-82 EXECUTIVE

The new executive for the Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW) are: Pauline Harper, President; Mary Two Axe Early, Eastern Vice President; Barbara Wyss, Western Vice President; Jenny Margetts, Treasurer; Georgina LaRocque, Secretary.

The Annual Meeting was held in Montreal, Quebec.

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— B.C. WOMEN'S OCCUPATION OF REGIONAL D.I.A.N.D. OFFICE —

On July 20, 1981, fifty aboriginal women occupied the British Columbia Regional Office of the Department of Indian Affairs in Vancouver. They were protesting the deplorable living conditions facing aboriginal peoples in the province and the regional office's inability to function.

By the third day, there were 120 women and the group had been physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally solidified.

As countless numbers of supporters phoned, telexed and sent them letters of support, they attempted to negotiate and lobby to have three demands met. These included: a meeting with John Munro in Vancouver; the immediate dismissal of Fred Walchli as Director of the Department of Indian Affairs in British Columbia and that a full and independent public inquiry be conducted into the activities of the regional office. These demands were in a telegram which was sent to the Indian Affairs Minister.

On the eighth day of their occupation, the Vancouver City Police forcefully removed the aboriginal women and men from the office, charging 53 individuals with public mischief and confined them overnight in jail.

As of yet there has been no response by Department of Indian Affairs Minister John Munro and the lawyers representing the group have advised the 53 individuals not to go to their court hearings saying, "Criminal courts should not be used as a forum for having the discussion between the Department of Indian Affairs and Indian people."

The NWAC supported the B.C. aboriginal women at the time of their occupation and plan to discuss this issue at their upcoming board of directors meeting in October.

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NWAC'S POSITION ON SECTION 12(1)(b) AND THE UNITED NATIONS RULING

September 18, 1981 – The Native Women's Association of Canada applauds the recent United Nations Human Rights Commission ruling that Canada's Indian Act discriminates against Indian women. We praise Sandra Lovelace for bringing the plight of Indian women in Canada to the attention of the world and share in her victory.

This association has always and continues to be opposed to the enforcement of Section 12 (1)(b) of the Indian Act which we believe is exclusively discriminatory towards Indian women and their children.

Now, for the first time in its history, the NWAC has been mandated to lobby on behalf of all Native women in Canada in regards to the Indian Act. This came about through unanimous consensus in passing a resolution at the 7th Annual Convention held from June 19-21, 1981, in Regina, Saskatchewan. The association, in the next year, will be channelling its efforts to work on Sections 4 to 17 of the Indian Act with particular emphasis on 12(1)(b).

We are anxious to undertake the challenge to urge the federal government, in cooperation with Indian bands in Canada to rectify the injustices of this Act which so seriously affects the current and future generations of Indian people in this country.

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EH?

Two Indian women were overheard chatting in the laundromat. One says to the other, "I'd still be having kids if it weren't for the welfare people."

The other woman asks, "You mean they put you on birth control pills or something?"

"Well, not exactly," answered the first, "but they gave me this hearing aid."

"I don't get it," said the friend.

The lady explained, "Well, I was having a kid every year for a while there because my hearing was not too good. Every night we'd go to bed my husband would ask, 'Well, are we going to go to sleep or what?' Me not hearing good, I'd always say, 'What?'"

(Summer 1981 Issue MOOSETALK)

