

# The Carolina Indian Voice

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"Building Communicative Bridges In A Tri-Racial Setting"

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## Questions and Answers about The N.C. Indian Cultural Center

by Dr. Helen Scheirbeck

The following list of questions and answers is provided here in an effort to inform the public about the N.C. Indian Cultural Center and aid in understanding what is happening with the proposed funding of that project.

1. What is the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center?

An educational, cultural, entertainment, and tourist project sharing the history and culture of North Carolina Indian people from 14,000 years ago to the present time.

The Center is a place where people can come and learn about traditional and contemporary Indian life, history, and tradition.

It will have a Visitor's Center/ Museum, seven Indian villages, nature trails and a riverwalk in Phase I, scheduled to open in June 1992.

The Center will boost the local economy by providing 500 jobs at the site, and bringing in 30 million dollars annually to the area, and attracting 500,000 visitors each year when operating at full capacity.

The Center is a statewide project in which all tribes and urban Indian organizations are participating. These groups want their children and grandchildren and the general public to learn about and share their heritage and traditions.

2. Where is the Indian Cultural Center located?

Between Pembroke and Maxton, in Robeson County, North Carolina on U.S. Highway 74. The Center occupies land in the old Red Banks settlement, where "Strike at the Wind" outdoor theatre, LRDA's swimming pool, and Riverside Golf Course currently is located.

3. Whose idea was the Indian Cultural Center?

Indian people in North Carolina have long wanted a place to tell the story of their history and contributions to the state and the nation. They have also wanted a place to come learn more about the past culture and traditions.

In 1981, Governor Jim Hunt and the Commission of Indian Affairs identified the present site for an Indian Cultural Center. The state began purchasing the present lands at the site in 1982 and in 1983, 1984 the remaining lands of what was called the Riverside Golf Course and Country Club area and adjacent land was purchased by the state. In making these purchases, the state officials stated these lands were bought for the development of an Indian Cultural Center.

4. How much will this Indian Cultural Center cost?

Phase I of the Indian Cultural Center will cost \$5 million dollars. These funds will be used to build and open a Visitor's Center/Museum, seven Indian villages, nature trails, riverwalks, and a festival ground. These monies must be raised from federal and state government, private corporations, foundations, and private donors. Opening date for Phase I is June 1992.

5. Who will pay for building the Indian Cultural Center?

Thus far to purchase the land, the state of North Carolina already has paid \$761,000 for land purchase and program operations.

For planning and design work, the state through its Office of State Construction, Department of Administration has allocated \$500,000. Of these funds, \$300,000 has been spent to design Phase I of the Indian Cultural Center.

The federal government has allocated \$350,000 for programs and services at the site from the Administration of Native Americans. More than \$100,000 has been raised from private donors, foundations, and corporations.

The Center must be financed by funds from federal, state and local governments and the private sector (individuals, foundations and corporations). Our goal is to raise 60 percent of the money from private sources and 40 percent from federal, state and local governments.

6. What will be in this Indian Cultural Center?

By June 1992, Phase I will open and have seven Indian villages, a Visitor's Center/Museum, nature trails, riverwalks, festival grounds, a good pavilion, and recreational activities related to water sports, picnic areas, and outdoor sports.

In the next ten years by the year 2000, a historic Civil War town, a year round performing arts theater, a RV and camping area, water park, a restaurant, lodge, arts and crafts producing area, cultural camps, and a large museum will be operating at the site.

7. How much money has been spent to do the development, planning, and design for the Indian Cultural Center?

For: Land-1703,000; Operations- \$350,000; Special Projects-\$52,000; Design and Planning for Masterplan and Phase I Designs-\$350,000-(\$200,000 appropriated but frozen by Governor.) Dollars Spent-\$1,430,000 (\$200,000 frozen by Governor March, 1990).

There have been many friends who have given of their time, energy, and services to the N.C. Indian Cultural Center. Estimates of these contributions are \$450,000 from August, 1987 to April, 1990.

8. Is there a golf course on the Cultural Center grounds? Who owns and operates it?

Yes, the former Riverside Country Club golf course is on the Cultural Center grounds. This golf course was formerly part of a private country club owned by Indians and whites from Robeson County which operated from 1964 to 1983.

This enterprise was in serious financial trouble in the late 1970s and was put up for sale.

The State of North Carolina began buying the property in 1981 and finished purchasing this Riverside Country Club site in 1983. The state bought this property for

\$450,000 and is the owner of the golf course today. This is the only golf course owned by the state of North Carolina. At the time of purchase of the Riverside Country Club property, all the state documents indicate these lands were bought for the development of the N.C. Indian Cultural Center.

The golf course is being operated by six partners under a month to month lease since 1985. These partners also were members in the former Riverside Country Club. The partners are Grady Oxendine, retired principal; Willie R. Harris, Jr., school counselor; Mrs. Willie R. Harris, Sr., retired teacher; Donald Bruce Oxendine, Toyota Body Shop, owner; Jimmy Hunt, T.V. Repair store owner; Bobby Oxendine, Master Mechanic, Williamson Mazada.

These partners are suppose to give the state of North Carolina ten percent of their earnings.

9. How many people play golf at this course?

According to figures turned into the Commission of Indian Affairs, forty people use the golf course regularly. In the past two years, special causes have seen the golf course get golfers from the high school and the local state university. These tournaments attract around 80 people.

10. Why are these golfers seemingly against the Indian Cultural Center?

There appears to be a small, exclusive group which wants to use the golf course and clubhouse for their own social activities-(reportedly there are closed political meetings, drinking, gambling, and other activities held there. According to reliable sources, this is their hide away from their families and the public eye.)

There are Indian County Commissioners who are elected to work for the good of Robeson County, leading the fight against the Indian Cultural Center. These individuals are elected to work for economic development in Robeson County. When they work against the development of the Indian Cultural Center, they are working against economic development for Indians and other citizens; in my opinion.

11. Some people say the golf course is worth \$1 million. They ask, if that is true, why destroy that much of an investment?

A team of experts was brought in to review the golf course in terms of its layout, value, and potential cost to make it a top notch course. These experts indicated the course was in poor condition, was not a standard 18 hole course, and would need substantial work, a new clubhouse, and effective management. They estimated the current course and clubhouse as it looked two years ago would be worth around \$100,000.

12. Is there any way to include the golf course in Phase I of the Indian Cultural Center?

No. Phase I has been designed to take advantage of the highest points of land owned by the state of North Carolina on the Indian Cultural Center grounds. The entire site owned by the state has severe restrictions as to where buildings can be placed.

According to the architectural design firm, the golf course lands must be used for the Visitor's Center/ Museum, seven Indian villages, nature trails and riverwalks. Lands adjacent to the golf course can be used as festival grounds.

Furthermore, the golf course does not fit into the overall plan for the Indian Cultural Center's Phase I.

The golf course lands are needed to accommodate the visitor's center/museum, the seven Indian villages, nature trails and riverwalks. The Indian villages need contoured lands, with waterways and marsh lands. It will take several years to get these lands back to their natural vegetation.

13. What will happen if the Indian Cultural Center does not get the okay to close the golf course and move ahead with Phase I?

A decision must be made soon to give the Indian Cultural Center the okay to move ahead on Phase I of its plan. This means closing the golf course within the next thirty days.

If this decision is stalled or not made, the Indian Cultural Center cannot move ahead or raise money for construction. This will mean the Center cannot open in June 1992 and possibly may never open.

14. Does the Indian Cultural Center own the rest of the land at the Indian Cultural Center site?

No, the state of North Carolina owns the other lands in the Riverside Country Club tract. It was bought for the development of the N.C. Indian Cultural Center. The state must give the Indian Cultural Center a 99 year lease which says this land is for use of and by the N.C. Indian Cultural Center.

This lease will make it possible for the Indian Cultural Center to raise federal and private construction money.

15. What can I do to make sure the N.C. Indian Cultural Center is saved and can be ready to open in June 1992?

Write to Governor James G. Martin  
Administration Building  
116 Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27611

Tell him-I am proud to be a North Carolina Indian. I want to learn more about my history, tradition and culture. I want to share my heritage with other citizens of North Carolina.

Tell him to give a long term lease to the N.C. Indian Cultural Center and tell them to move ahead on Phase I of the plan. Tell him to close the golf course on the Cultural Center grounds now so the Center's work can stay on schedule.

## Z Smith Reynold Foundation announces Grant to Creative Health Ministry

The Trustees of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation are pleased to announce a \$20,000 grant to the Creative Health Ministry in Pembroke, NC.

The purpose of this grant is to improve the well being of Native Americans in Robeson County through counseling, education and advocacy services.

The Creative Health Ministry is a non profit project of the Greater Pembroke Native American Parish of the United Methodist Church. Its mission is to improve the general well being of Native Americans by providing holistic intervention at the individual, family, organizational and community levels.

Counseling and assessment services are available on a sliding scale fee to individuals and families. Particular areas of concern are domestic discord, family violence and substance abuse.

Planned educational services include classes on parenting skills and child development and substance

abuse awareness.

Advocacy services are for individuals and families needing assistance with dealing with the educational and social services systems. Additionally, advocacy services are intended to promote change in the social conditions of Native Americans.

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was established in 1936 and has made grants totalling more than \$160 million to recipients in all of North Carolina's 100 counties. In recently years the Foundation has focused its attention on improving the criminal justice system in North Carolina, on strengthening public elementary and secondary education, on preserving the environment, and on issues that impact on minorities and women.

The Creative Health Ministry is located at 100 Breece Street in Pembroke. Normal office hours are 9 to 5, Monday through Friday. The acting director is Wm. Richard Mathis. For additional information about available services, please call 521-0318.

## PSU Chancellor to speak at Magnolia graduation

Dr. Joseph B. Oxendine, Chancellor of Pembroke State University, will deliver the keynote address to graduating seniors at Magnolia High School's 1990 Commencement Exercises.

A native of Robeson County, Dr. Oxendine holds a variety of earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Catawba College and Boston University. Prior to his appointment as Chancellor, Dr. Oxendine served for 30 years at Temple University as an instructor and as chairman of the College of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Dr. Oxendine's background in Robeson County, his career as a professional baseball player on a Pittsburg Pirates minor league club, and his research and teaching experiences at the university level provided an excellent informational and technical basis for a number of published articles and three different books which reflect upon his heritage and training as a Native American athlete and scholar.

Commencement Exercises will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 8, 1990 in Lewis Auditorium at Robeson Community College.

## Pastor Appreciation Day Held



Friendship Missionary Baptist Church observed Pastor and Wife Appreciation Day on Sunday, May 27, 1990. The church presented an appreciation plaque to Pastor Coolidge Cummings, founder of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in November, 1986. Pastor Cummings and his wife, Mrs. Vanice Cummings, were also presented a gift of money in appreciation. Shown left is Rev. Coolidge M. Cummings being presented a plaque by Donald Lowery.

## Human Relations Commission to meet

On Tuesday, June 5, the Public Relations Committee will meet at 5:30 p.m. and the Executive Committee will meet at 6 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Human Relations Office, 108 Elizabethtown Road, Lumberton, North Carolina.

On Tuesday, June 12, these Committees will meet at 6 p.m. in the Human Relations Office: Economic Development; Government and Justice; Education; Substance Abuse and Health.

Immediately following the committee meetings the Human Relations and Unity Commission will meet at 7 p.m. in the Human Relations Office.

The committee and commission meetings are open to the public. The public is encouraged to contact their district Human Relations representative or the Human Relations office at 671-3155 for further information. Applications for commission membership are available upon request.

## School Care Program Visits Cattle Farms



The After School Care Program at Magnolia School visited Cattle Farms on May 11 to pick strawberries for their mothers as Mother's Day.

presents. The owner of Cattle Farms gave the students 20 baskets of strawberries free! The Magnolia After School Care Program thanks Cattle Farms.

## Warren County Democrats elect first Indian female

Warren County Democrats made history recently by electing the first Native American female chairman of in North Carolina.

Oglethorpe Richardson was unanimously elected county party chairman at a called meeting of the executive committee of the Warren County Democratic Party.

Mrs. Richardson had been serving as acting chairman of the county Democracy Party since the resignation of W.J. Harris in April. She was formerly first vice chairman of the county Democrats.

"Unity is evident within the party. It's a wonderful feeling to be surrounded by such influential, supportive and caring people," she commented, reflecting on the

applause following her election and a greeting by other supporters waiting outside the Warren County Courthouse as she left the meeting.

She also received congratulations from the National Indian Democrats in Washington, D.C.

North Carolina has a Native American population of approxi-

mately 65,000. Mrs. Richardson is a member of the Haliwa-Saponi tribe.

She is employed in the central office of Warren County Schools as director of the Title V and Family Services programs.

She is married to Joseph O. Richardson, principal of Hawkins Elementary School. They have three children: Michael, 21, a junior at Pembroke State University; Brian, 20, a junior at East Carolina University; and Gregory, 12, a sixth grader at Hawkins Elementary.

A native of Warren County, Mrs. Richardson is the daughter of Mrs. Lillie B. Green and the late Allen Randolph Green of the Essex community.

Other officers elected by the Warren County Democratic Party's executive committee Monday night were: Rex Lue-first vice chairman; Brenda Bobbitt-second vice chairman; and Diana Ross Moody-secretary.

The committee also confirmed a recommendation by Mrs. Richardson for Archie D. Williams to serve on the Warren County Board of Elections.

## Send off for planned

A send off for Miss Pembroke State University Kristy Woods will be held on June 22, 1990 at 5 p.m. in the James P. Chavis University

Center. Kristy will be competing in the Miss North Carolina Pageant June 23-30, 1990.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

## Saddletree Residents Visit Florida

Mrs. Rosie Jones of the Saddletree community and her friend Mrs. Iola Strickland recently returned from an extended visit to Cocoa, Florida. They visited Mrs. Jones' daughter, Mrs. Mary Largent, and assisted her

during her convalescence. While there Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Strickland also visited in the home of Mrs. Jones grandchildren, Philip Godwin, Chad Godwin and Jacqueline, Keith and Karl.

Mrs. Largent is recovering satisfactorily from gall bladder surgery and other complications. Mrs. Jones reports they had a pleasant visit with her family. They are looking forward to returning to Florida in the near future.