

The Way I See It

by Dr. Dean Chavers, President
Native American Scholarship Fund
Albuquerque, NM



We Need To Read By Dr. Dean Chavers (c) Copyright, 1994

For the past 20 years, I have had the privilege to work with people of many tribes all over the U.S. The more work I do in education, the more sharply do I see the problems, and what to do about them. In the past five years, I have worked with the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Chinle school district, the Kayenta School districts, the Window Rock School district, the Gallup school district, the Ocoee-Missouri Tribe, the Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, and the Duck Valley Shoshone Tribe, among others. If I went back 20 years, the list would have over 75 schools, colleges, tribes, tribal organizations, and national organizations on it. Most of the time, I have been frustrated. For years, I have been preaching that we need to challenge our Indian students to do the best they can in school. Most of the time, that preaching has fallen on deaf ears. It is only in the past five years that I have had any respect from Indian educators. The thing I would push most, and would do full time if I could, is reading. I am convinced that it is

reading which makes a person a real student, or scholar. What we do in school is only practice for a life-long passion for reading.

I am familiar with the facts about illiteracy in the U.S. Almost 50 million people are functionally illiterate, according to the U.S. Department of Education. That is almost 20% of the population.

For Indians, I have not been able to find comparable numbers. But I believe, from what I have seen, that over 75% of Indian adults are now illiterate.

Two Mondays ago, I spent the day working with 18 people from the Jarilla Apache Department of Education (JADE). We concluded that the students there read fewer than one book per year each, outside the school curriculum. Their high school students miss a lot of school, on a typical day, 70 out of 175 of their students are out of school, or 40%.

The big dropout year for Indians is ninth grade, in most reports. The reason is very simple: these students enter high school not knowing how to read well enough to stay up.

What we need to do is get our children reading at an early age. Any young mother who does not read to her three-year-old is cheat-

ing her. Any young father who does not have his six-year-old read to him is cheating him.

Reading cuts across all subjects. Five years ago, I was knocked out by a math teacher in a math lab in the Gallup school district. He had worked out a whole system for students, from addition to negative numbers and equations. I thought his students would excel.

They did well, gaining 1.2 grades during the year. But a lady in another lab had students who gained over 2.0 grades during the year. Her secret: she used a lot of word problems. The man used only com-

putation and drill.

Reading is essential to an understanding of the world. Indian people who leave their communities and go into the world the only choice for half or more of our current high school students without an understanding of what the world is like are like sheep being led to the slaughter. Everyone from furniture dealers to scam artists can take advantage of them.

When we are able as Indian people to take charge of our lives once again, it will be through the power of reading. We need to get our children ready to take their places in the world -- through reading.

Smith and Bullard to Wed



Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. and Edna B. Smith of Maxton, NC announce the engagement of their daughter, Fredia Smith to Ronald Bullard. Miss Smith graduated from Red Springs High School in 1979 and from Robeson Community College in 1981. She is employed by Scotland County Department of Social Services in Laurinburg, NC.

Her fiance is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Daniel W. (Whitehead) and Bessie J. Bullard of Maxton. He graduated from Prospect High School in 1971 and Robeson Community College in 1980. He is employed by Pembroke State University in Pembroke, NC.

The wedding has been set for December 7, 1994 at Mt. Elim Baptist Church in Hoke county at 3:00 p.m. No invitations will be sent but friends and relatives are invited to attend.

Thank You for re-electing me as Your County Commissioner. I will continue to serve the citizens of Robeson County to the best of my ability.

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Report to the Lumbee Tribe From the Chairman

by Dr. Dalton P. Brooks, Chairman, Lumbee Tribe

The White House seemed far away, even though I could it well from Penn. Avenue. I went by several gates until at last I was cleared to go in.

This was my first visit to the People's House-White House to a building called the Executive Building. I was escorted to room 410.

I looked around for people that I might know. My eyes caught a glimpse of Mrs. Arlinda Locklear. Mr. Adolph Blue, Mr. James Hardin, Mr. Cecil Hunt and Mr. Leon Locklear.

Here we were-the Lumbee, the Tuscarora, and LRDA. My thoughts turned immediately to the question-who represents the people and what are we here for.

My first reaction was to get everybody together and let's present the Indian story as we know it. I had such thoughts like: Our people have been going to Washington for 150 years and here we are in 1994. What could LRDA say? What could the Lumbee say? And what would the Tuscarora say?

Having completed the opening ceremonies, which lasted an hour. I left the prayers of all our Ancestors and could feel the anointed smoke that saturated the whole body. Then everybody introduced themselves.

Mr. Blue introduced himself as a member of LRDA and spoke eloquently about the past. He said, "I feel like I'm making history today because back in 1930 my father came to Washington to present the Indian concerns and solutions for our people."

Mr. Leon Locklear was impressive. Mr. Locklear spoke of the many times he has been to Washington for his people. He said, "Why don't you people (BIA, etc.) help us? We have been coming and coming and we haven't got anything yet."

Mr. James Hardin spoke of his LRDA membership and he made contributions for clarification of a specific resolution.

I introduced myself as a member of the Lumbee Tribe.

I left Washington with the feeling that Washington is a place of influence and power. And to make our case, we (the tribe, LRDA and the Tuscarora) must present a strong sense of unity-solidarity.

How could we get together and present our cause for education, for economic development, for cultural expression for ourselves and our children.

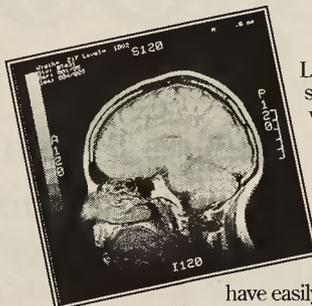
Now the tribal government must find ways to heal and restore the broken relationships that have occurred over the last several years.

So that when collaborative participation with the federal government is required, we present one agenda.

Political activism can pit Indians against each other in re politics of immobility. From Washington I could not see diversity and I saw a nation divided.

The people elected a Tribal Government to address social, economic, moral and academic issues. Let's go forward carrying the burdens of all the Indian people, seeking a united effort from all Indian organizations.

Sometimes The Most Significant Thing Revealed By An MRI Is Peace Of Mind.



When 6-year-old Luke Britt developed symptoms that were typical of a brain tumor, his parents, Johnson and Fordham Britt, were faced with what could

have easily been the most difficult period of their lives.

Peace of mind is hard to come by when you are waiting...not knowing. The period from discovery of symptoms to accurate diagnosis and selecting treatment can be one of the most agonizing phases of the entire medical process.

Fortunately for the Britts, this phase was kept to a minimum, thanks to the staff and advanced diagnostic equipment right here at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. A Magnetic Resonance Image (MRI) alleviated the Britts' worst fears. They are grateful for the results and for the speed with which they were obtained.

"From the initial concerns raised by our pediatrician to the conclusive results of the MRI was less than a week," stated Mrs. Britt. "It's reassuring to know that whatever the outcome of the test, we would have been able to react so quickly...there was great peace of mind in that alone."



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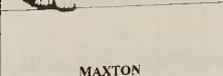
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