

PROUDLY REPRESENTING OUR TRIBE AT THE 2014

White House Tribal Nations Conference

Aaron A. Payment, MPA
Tribal Chairperson
Representing All Members Everywhere



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Selfie with the Women Warriors (veterans of the U.S. Military) who are also traditional dancers

Ahneen, Boozo, Negee:

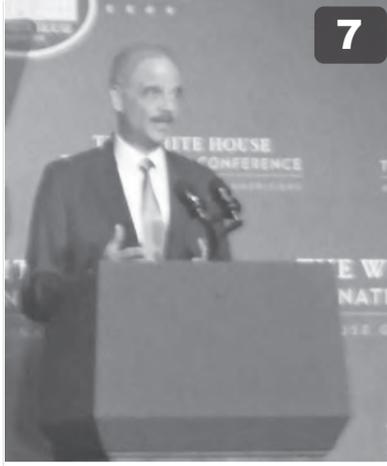
Lots to report this month. I apologize for missing last month but I missed the deadline. It's a good thing because I was planning on ranting about the needless negativity reported by others in our paper who claim the work I do in DC is "begging". I see it very differently. I see that I am holding the federal government accountable for what we "pre-paid" with the blood, sweat, tears and millions of acres of land from our ancestors. It is really too bad that a few on our Board can be so full of hate and so assimilated to lose site of this. I choose to focus on the positive.

This year's White House Tribal Leaders' Conference was the sixth and the best so far. To the far right is a photo (#1) of Cathy Abramson meeting President Obama. I chose this photo as the theme was Indian Education and Youth Development. While our history is full of heroes who paved our educational path like Joseph K. Lumsden, Rosemary Gaskin, Bob VanAlstine, John Hatch and Nancie Hatch and others, I place Cathy up there with this company. She was beaming the entire conference

as she was excited with the increased focus of the President toward our tribal youth. The conference opened with two Anishinabe youth from the *Lac Courte Oreilles* tribe (#3) doing a welcome song and honor song. They sang their hearts out. I am so proud of these boys. See the video at:

<http://www.powwows.com/2014/12/03/two-young-men-sing-flag-song-at-white-house-tribal-nations-conference/>

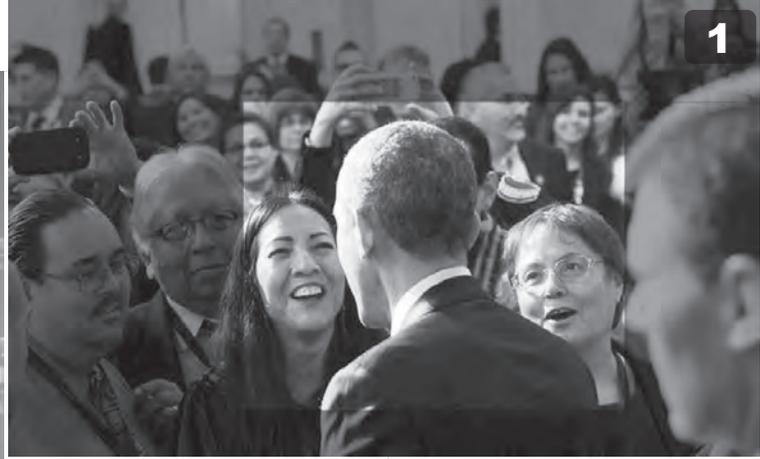
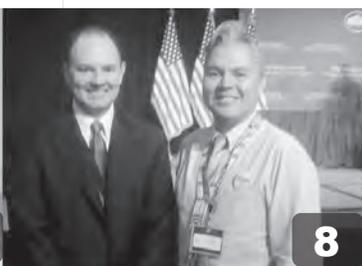
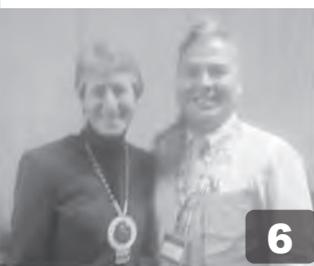
Vice President Biden then spoke about protecting our Indian women per the 2013 Violence Against Women Act which provided a legal mechanism to hold accountable those who would harm our women (#4, echoed by Attorney General Eric Holder # 7). This will require the establishment of



real due process, a separation of powers, and the right to legal counsel. Preliminary comments from some of our Board is that it is too expensive to implement. Stay tuned.

Another recommitment is that of climate change. A panel (# 5) including the EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and *Lac du Flambeau* Chairwoman Karen Diver, focused attention here. I testified during a listening session on Monday at the request of my friend Joann Chase in front of her boss (#10). I was pleasantly surprised when the White House recognized our Sault Tribe Team on our Environmental Strategic Plan that is culturally based and steeped in science and sustainability. I want to congratulate my administrative team for their excellence and for being honored during this session and by the President during his address.

On Tuesday, I gave input on the State of Indian Education and on Wednesday, at the request of the White House, I facilitated a session on this same topic. I am impressed with Secretary Jewell (#6) for her commitment here. She attended the session I facilitated. During this session, I formulated my question that I was invited (by the White House) to ask of U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan during a panel on Indian Education (#11). As you know, I am in the final stage of earning my doctorate in Education, as well as, two masters in education. I asked for a recommitment to Indian



Education and Self-Determination in the form of the creation of an Assistant Secretary for Indian Education to be placed in the U.S. Department of Education. I also asked for a "data driven" approach to a Indian Education School Improvement Plan with specific statistical benchmarks to improve the crisis of a 50% drop out rate which has not improved in twenty years. I also asked for funding to be awarded for a national "stratified random sample" of our people in the public schools to conduct a logistical regression study of factors that predict whether or not our people will graduate high school. With this information, we should be able to craft meaningful interventions. I also emphasized that we need to "mend it not end it" the Bureau of Indian Education which is overseen by Assistant Secretary Interior Kevin Washburn (#8). I opened this session with my question. Look to the Tribal website if you'd like to watch the panel discussion.

I don't usually get star struck but I got to be meet some pretty important people like the *Navajo Code Talkers* (#9). We got to meet the President in a private session just before he spoke. I introduced Dr. Yvette Robideaux, the National IHS Director to Bay Mills President Levi Carrick (#13) and visited with Ernie Stevens, Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association. I introduced the subject of creating an exemption to the "employer mandate" in the Affordable Care Act for Tribes whose team member employees are eligible for IHS. I then presented this formal request to

U.S. HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell (#14). This issue alone could save our Tribe \$5,000,000 annually and shield jobs from being made part time to avoid insurance eligibility.

Finally, I am so happy to



report that I raised nearly \$11,000 this year (including my own \$1,000 & contributions from some Board Members) for our Sault Tribe Children's Christmas Parties. Below is a picture of my nephew Ty at the Kinross Rec Center. Thank you to DJ Malloy and Dee Dee Frasure for your efforts here and to all of our volunteers who put on events for our people. You are angels!

Chi Megwitch, Negee!



Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Safe New Years Eve!



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WATCH SAULT TRIBE BOARD MEETINGS ON LIVESTREAM: <http://new.livestream.com/TOSSABCS2>