

ZahPeterson 2007-05-13 (01 through 03)

PZ: [0:00] -- start talking.

Q1: [0:01] OK. And... you're live. Can you hear yourself?

PZ: [0:03] Yeah. I can hear myself.

Q1: [0:04] OK.

PZ: [0:04] Yeah, this will be good.

Q1: [0:05] OK.

PZ: [0:05] OK. I'll just get going.

Q1: [0:07] All right. You take care. I'll see you.

PZ: [0:08] OK. Yeah.

I wanted to first make a correction from yesterday's conversation, and I want to be absolutely clear on this issue, and then the right amount is also stated.

Yesterday, we talked about the windfall of Navajo revenues during the year after we won the case in the United States Supreme Court. And I think I used the figure \$214 million, was the amount that we realized as extra money coming into the Navajo treasury. Last night I checked my record -- that's 217, so it's a lot better than what I thought. 217 is the number and the figure that we should use.

And the second correction is that as a result of two things that we did, is how we recognize and realized the additional revenue. Number one, of course, is what I talked about yesterday, which is the United States Supreme Court case. And the second one was the renegotiation of mineral leases, such as coal, timbres, lease on land, and right of ways. Oil and gas -- natural gas. All of those things, during the previous administration, they were at an impasse on the renegotiation of those leases through Navajo land. The use of the land by outside companies.

Well, when I came in, I made that my number-one priority, realizing that that's going to generate new revenues. And so, putting all of that together, the Supreme Court case and the renewal of these leases, is what brought about the \$217 million. And those \$217 million was in addition to what the general revenue was for the year for the tribal government. And so I just wanted to make that correction.

And then, I also want to continue with what I was talking about in the area of education. So I'll stop here just for one minute. (pause)

PI: [2:42] Sorry.

PZ: [2:43] Traffic, huh?

PI: [2:43] Oh, it's more trying to do four things at the same time.

PZ: [2:49] Yeah.

PI: [2:50] And getting all my stuff.

PZ: [2:51] Well, we're doing OK.

PI: [2:51] Well, I'm not worried about you. (laughter)

PZ: [2:53] Yeah -- our man was here, so he says, just go ahead and get going.

PI: [2:56] Yeah, good. Yeah, please.

PZ: [2:58] So what I'll do is, I'll just talk about education now.

PI: [3:01] Mm-hmm.

PZ: [3:01] And then, what I thought we should do, Peter, is go from here -- because my voice keeps on --

PI: [3:08] Yes.

PZ: [3:09] -- like yesterday --

PI: [3:10] Yes.

PZ: [3:10] -- go from here to 12:30.

PI: [3:12] OK.

PZ: [3:12] And then at 12:30, let's see --

PI: [3:14] Sure.

PZ: [3:14] Let's see how it is. And we may just go until 1, and then just kind of...

PI: [3:17] Sure. That's fine. Whatever you want is fine.

PZ: [3:20] OK.

PI: [3:20] Do you want me to... (pause) I'll just be, you know, kind of listening and taking notes. And then we can have sort of a discussion after you're done with that? Is that what you'd prefer.

PZ: [3:32] Yeah. We --

PI: [3:33] I think so, because otherwise I kind of interrupt your train of thought.

PZ: [3:35] Yeah. OK.

PI: [3:37] OK. OK. (pause)

PZ: [3:43] Continuation on education. Some of the things that I observed during my lifetime, in looking at the operation of the federal government in terms of Indian education, is that on the Navajo, it was very, very intriguing to me what was going on right about this time. Upon graduation from ASU, going back into Navajo Nation and becoming involved at the Window Rock High School, first as a teacher, and then,

secondly, becoming a member of the Board of Trustees for Window Rock High School. And then all of the problems that I saw and heard as a member of the Board of Trustees, and then what we were trying to do to improve the facilities as well as the teaching and the curriculum and the overall education of the Navajo young people in that community. And Window Rock High School was one of the very few, first institutions on the Navajo. And as a result of the success at Window Rock High School, there came about, subsequently, the other institutions of higher learning, such as Navajo Community College and all the other Indian colleges throughout the nation. And so I wanted to just express that, and then express my opinion about what was happening.

The way I saw from a distance, as an objective viewer in an education, was that the United States wanted to educate the Indian people, Indian students, as fast as they can and try to have them assimilate to their way of thinking. [6:00] And they used all kinds of tactics, some questionable tactics and unethical tactics, to try to bring the American Indian people to the mainstream of American society, and have them begin believing in the system that they believe in. And that was something that was so obvious for me to

see, in terms of what the federal government was trying to do.

And one of the ways to do that was to establish what they called boarding schools off reservation. Excuse me.

[cough] Boarding schools off the reservation. So they established these boarding schools -- I think a couple of them in Oklahoma, some in California, some in Utah, one here in the state of Arizona. And they got all of the Indian students off reservation that were of school age, and put them at these boarding school institutions. And the whole idea was to educate them so that they know the basic things -- reading, writing, arithmetic, and the care of the home life and learning some trade, whether that's carpentry work or plumbing, painting -- all of that. They thought that Indian people really needed to get ahead and to begin living in American society. And so basically, that's what the boarding schools were teaching. And there were none of what I would call cultural classes, geared towards Indian beliefs, Indian culture, Indian language, lifestyle, history, and all of that. There was really none of that. It was all learning the American way, learning the American system. And I guess the federal government

was hoping that if we had these boarding schools in a major metropolitan area, like Phoenix and Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, that ultimately the Indian students would graduate from those high schools, and they would just eventually remain there in those cities.

And so basically, that was the mentality of the federal government during that time. And that happened for several years -- that mentality was driven by trying to assimilate the American Indian young people. Of course, what better way to change the lifestyle of American Indians than to go at the youngsters, the children of the Indian elderly?

[9:00]

And so I guess at the end of a certain period, they then evaluated the boarding schools. And the students at the boarding schools then began questioning -- sometimes in the mid-1950s, they began questioning the tactics that the federal government was using. And I remember all of the problems at Inner Martin -- Inner Mountain Indian School in Utah. And what the students and what they were doing, they were protesting some of the tactics that the federal government boarding schools were using. Even in my own

school here at Phoenix Indian School, in my senior year, there were a lot of unrest -- they were questioning the tactics of the federal government. And I remember we had to go demonstrate against the administration for doing what we thought was unethical, in many cases. And then not having the school be conducive to learning new things, and to gain knowledge and be completely educated -- they were failing in those areas. And so we had to put on a little student demonstration to have the administration improve on that. And so there were a lot of unrest during this period.

And the United States Senate then got a hold of what was happening, and I believe it was people like Robert Kennedy and others of his party, the Democratic party, began questioning some of the things that were going on at the boarding schools. And on the Navajo, there was the Marian Report that was produced, how many, many of the Navajo students of school age that were not going to school, and that they should be in school but they weren't. And many of them were overage. And I happened to be one of those individuals that started out late in school, when I was nine years old. And so when I came to Phoenix, I was put

into a Navajo special program. And there, I had to accelerate and go at the faster pace than most students to get into high school. But so many of the students didn't meet that challenge. I was lucky -- extremely lucky to have good teachers that tutored me through that process, and thereby ended up in a high school in Phoenix Indian School.

And so basically, that was what was happening during that period. [12:00] And then, because of the involvement of the United States government at the Senate level and the Congressional level, there were these various hearings, various investigation that was done by the federal government to really decide where we stand on those kinds of issues. And then there came about a gradual -- a gradual transformation, from Indian boarding school into beginning to build schools on reservation, close to the parents, in Indian communities, where the Indian people lived. And as a result, on the Navajo, there were a lot of public schools that were built, and then on the Apache reservation, San Carlos, and then the, in the White Mountain, and then a lot of the other local tribes -- they built those local schools to try to encourage parents to

enroll their children there locally. And then began teaching the parents about how to control school.

And as a result of all of that movement during that time, people like Bob -- the late Bob Russell then got involved with the federal program and started promoting a local control of school by Navajo parents. And he established such an institution at Rough Rock, where the -- there would be a community school completely controlled by the Navajo people. Where it would be completely controlled by the Navajo people. They would become school board members, and ultimately, when they are ready and getting their education, they would ultimately be responsible as superintendents and as principals of those schools.

And Rough Rock was a pioneer in that category, and they decided that what they should simply do is try to get the money the BIA was using to educate the Navajo students in that community, except Bob changed that and just had the federal government give that money to the local school board that was incorporated as an educational institution and as a non-profit corporate entity. And then they ended up doing their own school, and being able to put themselves

in a position to have a lot of say-so as to what curriculum, what kind of teachers and classes that were structured in such a way that they would concentrate very heavily on Navajo-ness. [15:00] Navajo culture, Navajo history, language, and all of that would be taught by that school. And that was the beginning of Navajo- or Indian-controlled schools -- of schools across the nation. And then all of these other schools throughout Indian country then started propping up, designed after what Rough Rock did.

And then, as that was happening, the public schools then also began doing some of the things that Rough Rock demonstration school was able to do. And in the process of doing that, that was highly, highly successful by all indications, through research and studies, either by the government or by the state government or by the tribal government. Every indication was that there was a tremendous amount of improvement. The students were very proud of themselves as Navajo Indians, in our case, and there were a lot of Indian parents, even though they didn't speak English and never had the opportunity to go to school before, [ringing noise] they had their children situated --

PI: [16:21] I can turn it off. [sound of phone powering down]

PZ: [16:31] They had their children situated where they were learning something about their culture, and that gave them a lot of pride -- and the parents were happy. And of course, when you're happy, when you are in full control of the education of your own children, that's going to make you a happy parent. Because you are now giving assistance to the local school in terms of what the kids were learning. And so that was a big success throughout the nation.

And then ultimately the Navajo Nation wanted to transfer this idea over to the public school. And I believe it was this point that we, from the Navajo Nation, started talking about education policy. And I was just extremely lucky to have the kind of council delegates that we had. Like David Tsosie, who was the chairman of the education committee, bought into the idea, and we produced a Navajo education policy, which was a model at that time for all the other Indian tribes in the United States to follow, and use that as an example in the process of taking control of their own schools by the tribal government. And the tribal

government had finally spoken in terms of what they believed, in terms of the education of their own children.

And so this was something that took place. Now, when we were trying to transfer the same Rough Rock idea and the successes over to the public school, there was a lot of resistance from the public schools. And I remember going to several of those school board meetings where the superintendent would rise to be heard, and one of the things that they almost always said was that if the Navajo Nation government wants to get involved in the education, then they have to produce some money, make some money available so that we can teach a lot of the things that they're mandating us to do. Because the education policy says that Navajo kids have to learn Navajo language -- that Navajo kids should be taught the history of the Navajo tribe, the Navajo nation. And that all these kinds of things that make them who they are, proud Navajo youngsters -- that all of that should be taught and made available at the school.

Well, the school superintendents were indicating that they don't have the money to do that. And we kept on saying

that, of course you do have the money to do that. And it was just a matter of a desire by you and the desire by the school board to go ahead and enhance -- enhance the tradition [19:30] of the Navajo people. And so there was a tug-of-war that went on between the Navajo Nation government and local schools. And we could never get together on... on the -- on the agreement between the two parties as to what responsibilities we had and what responsibilities they had, to teach this new thing that we had mandated the schools to do. And unfortunately, that kind -- those kinds of situations lasted more than four years, and so I just had that little shadow of opportunity for about four years to promote that. And other people that came after me were the ones that had to deal with that also. We'll take a little break?

PI: [20:19] OK.

F1: [20:20] Sorry to interrupt you two.

PI: [20:21] No, no. That --

F1: [20:22] I just wanted to make sure that you were OK? That you were doing OK?

PI: [20:24] We need to -- yeah, we need to turn the power off now, right? Or --

F1: [20:28] Oh, you don't have to. You can let it go -- they'll just...

PI: [20:29] Let it go? OK.

F1: [20:31] It'll just be... a minute.

PI: [20:31] All right, that makes it easy.

F1: [20:33] Yeah.

PI: [20:34] Yeah, I ran late this morning, and I just, I just - - it's one of those mornings when you want, somehow, to be able to divide yourself in four parts and go in four different directions.

F1: [20:40] And it just doesn't work...

PI: [20:42] No... not even if your birthday is 4/4/44.

F1: [20:45] Ahhh...

PI: [20:46] You still don't get much help from that.

F1: [20:49] (laughter) Well, I just wanted to say hi.

PI: [20:51] Thank you.

F1: [20:51] I'm heading out to lunch about 11:30, and I'm not really sure if I'll be back before you all leave, because Matt said you were going to leave around 1 today?

PI: [21:00] Well, it's -- it depends a little on Dr. Zah's voice.

F1: [21:03] Oh, OK.

PI: [21:04] He's been using it rather extensively.

F1: [21:05] That's a lot.

PZ: [21:07] Yeah, yesterday... yeah.

F1: [21:09] It's a lot.

PZ: [21:11] But what we're going to do is probably around a little after 12 -- hour from now, we'll stop, and then Peter's going to ask questions and we'll go over that.

F1: [21:21] Oh, OK. Well, sounds good. Well, if I'm not around, just call Matt and he'll take care of everything --

PI: [21:26] Good.

F1: [21:27] -- and then if I am, then I will. And I heard you're not coming in on Friday, so we won't set anything up --

PZ: [21:32] Yeah.

PI: [21:33] He's been making noises about doing another session pretty soon -- right?

F1: [21:36] OK.

PI: [21:38] Weren't we talking about one... I don't know, sometime, before too long?

PZ: [21:41] Yeah.

F1: [21:42] Well, just let me know. I'm going to be out of town a little bit in July, but Matt's around, and between the two of us we'll get it taken care of, so.

PI: [21:49] Thank you. We're off to a good start.

PZ: [21:51] Thank you, Doris.

F1: [21:51] All right? All right, good. Thank you both.

PZ: [21:52] Yeah, you take care. (pause) OK?

PI: [22:01] OK.

PZ: [22:04] So essentially, the education policy of the Navajo Nation served its purpose during that period of time, and I, as the chairman of Navajo Nation, did what I had to do to help produce the Navajo education policy. We knew all along that that education policy had to be updated -- updated every so often to get in line and be in line with the community's wishes. And so very recently, the Navajo education saw fit to do that, and they passed another act to strengthen the original Navajo Nation policy. And I think at some point I'll have to devote some time to discussing that more specifically.

PI: [23:03] Sure.

PZ: [23:05] But for the time being, if you look at the national level and then contrast that with the Navajo --

PI: [23:11] Mm-hmm.

PZ: [23:12] I think what was happening on the Navajo, which was a little different from what was happening at the national level, was that many of the new things in Indian education was really spearheaded, and we as a Navajo nation and as trailblazers and in education had to produce what we did. And then at the same time, prove what we were doing to be successful. In other words, if you look at what happened at Rough Rock, the original name that was attached to that experimental program was a demonstration school -- Rough Rock Demonstration School. And it was put in place to demonstrate to the federal government and to other people that, yes, these kinds of new innovations could be successful.

But the federal government and all the other people didn't buy into it initially. They wanted a proof -- they wanted a proof. And they wanted some kind of a demonstration project to demonstrate to them that this kind of education, our own way of educating our own children, could be successful. And so all these years that it was giving that title, I think, Rough Rock did a very good job of demonstrating to the powers at hand, whether that's locally

or at the national level, that it demonstrated the success of parental involvement and Indian control of education. And so Navajo is always in the forefront of showing to the federal government and other entities that were able -- were capable of taking our own -- our own... taking care of our own education and our own affairs.

And so basically, that's the way I see it, is that that's what really happened. And we, as tribal leaders, we came along, and all we did was strengthen what was happening. All we did was support what was happening in the local community. And that's at least how I saw my role as a chairman of the Navajo Nation.

OK. Do you want to turn it off a little?

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PZ: [0:01] Yeah. There it goes.

PI: [0:01] Yeah. I think it's OK now.

PZ: [0:04] Yeah. What I would like to also add to some of the points that I made was -- I think it was in the year 1975 when the Indian Self-Determination Act was passed by

Congress. And it's ironic that the Republican administration had to propose that to the U.S. Congress, and I remember it was Richard Nixon who had a great role in understanding the need for such a congressional act for the Indian people to use. And he had some good advisers that - - not necessarily coming from Indian country, or not necessarily having close advisers that were American Indian, but some of the people that was around him, that he was surrounded with, really basically believed in education and self-determination of Indian tribes, Indian nations, and self-governments. That's what they believe in. And so as a result of all of that influence, President Nixon was able to support and propose to Congress the passage of the American Indian Self-Determination Act.

And the Navajo Nation -- they simply -- they simply were the one group that was doing all of that, even before the passage of the act. And one of those good evidence to show that was the establishment of Navajo Community College. And Navajo Community College was really conceived by Navajo Tribal Chairman Raymond Nakai, and then Bob Russell, people like Guy Gorman, and those people really, really believe in education. Ned Hatathli was also one of them. And they

believe in education. And I remember the Navajo Nation Education Committee really being supportive, and they asked Bob Russell to get involved and see if they can produce the first American Indian community college. And so Bob Russell spearheaded that. [3:00] And as we now know, and as history can now say, that was such a tremendous beginning, so far as higher education institutions for the American Indians, to have the Navajo Community College become the first such institution, exercised and created by the largest American Indian tribe in the United States. And that voice, or that kind of program, was needed everywhere. And it was only appropriate that the Navajo Nation did what they did.

And they did all of this at the support of the federal government. And I remember some time, right along or at that point, a meeting somewhere in Tsaile, where you now currently have Navajo Community College located. The Chairman of the -- I believe it was the Ways and Means Committee that the Chair was present at the groundbreaking ceremony. And so he -- I mean, for somebody of that high caliber in the federal government with so much power, for that person to come to a small Indian community where there

was nothing, where they were making the groundbreaking ceremony, to me was really, really something. I forgot the gentleman's name that came, but I'll remember it later. And he said some terrific things about supporting Indian education. And I remember hearing the tribal council, who were members of the Education Committee, really being enthusiastic about this new beginning, where the Indian people nationwide were now beginning to have some of their own community college in their own community with their own tribe, back on those reservations.

And that was really, really something for me to see, and I was just a young man, working at DNA when I saw that. And to me, Dine College, which is now called Dine College, was one of those institutions that -- its potential was unlimited. It could do many things. It could mean so many things to different people. So the way people look at it was different, [6:00] in the sense that it meant a lot to many of the parents on the Navajo Nation. And of course we now know that as Dine College, which was a institution that spearheaded the movements of Indian people to establish their own community college within their own tribe.

All of this was done as the Navajo people were learning how to get involved in the exercise of their voting rights. I believe it was in the mid-1970s that the Navajo people finally realized that by just sheer number, and by voter registration, and by them becoming politically active, where they can elect school board members to control the local schools. Where they can elect people in their own county -- County Board of Supervisors -- and those kinds of positions they could very well control. But they had to be demonstrated by, you know, the first action of any kind of institution-building that can be promoted by the Navajo people themselves.

I think Navajo Community College was only an institution that came about as a result of that. I could remember in Apache County -- there was a lot of controversy in Apache County, because up to that point, there were no County Board of Supervisors that was a member of the Navajo tribe. But yet, in that county, a majority of the voters were Navajo people. And we always did not see that connection between the power to vote and how we can exercise that and learn how to control things within the county. And it was Apache County and the lawsuit that DNA was able to file,

and as a result of what we were doing that came out in the newspaper, a lot of public education was given to the Navajo people through that case. And of course, with the Navajo people winning the right to vote in these various elections at the state level, and the county election also, brought about a tremendous amount of education to the local Navajo youngsters.

And it was at this time, also, [9:00] that the Navajo people were also getting involved in a lot of the state races, where margins of Navajo voters were the deciding factor in electing local officials. And one really good case in point was the office of the Governor in the state of Arizona. I don't remember what year that was, but that was the year that a Democrat, Raul Castro, who won the Governor's seat in the state of Arizona purely on the base of the Navajo voter turnout in that election. And the way the situation was at that point, or at that time, was that when they were counting the votes that came in from the various counties, the last vote at the end of the night came in from Apache County, and Raul Castro had won overwhelmingly in Apache County -- simply because the county was heavily populated with Democratic voters. And

so as a result of what the Navajo Nation did, a Democratic governor was elected.

And that opened the eyes of many, many other candidates, and subsequent to what happened in Arizona, every time we had a tribal fair, each year in September, particularly during the election year, you would see all these politicians heavily involved in the parades at the Navajo tribal affair -- both from Arizona and New Mexico and on some occasions from the state of Utah. And then of course, federal election, when people are facing elections in the federal government from these three states, you always see politicians that are running for the federal office seeking Navajo vote. And I believe, in my own situation, the last time I was in office, Hillary Clinton came to represent her husband Bill Clinton at the Navajo Nation affair, and spoke very highly of the Navajo people's involvement in voter registration and their ability to turn out the vote so that they finally will have a say-so in the election of officials that will work with them. And so basically, that was kind of like the awakening of a political power that the Navajo people can exercise. [12:00]

And while all of these were happening on the Navajo -- across the nation, people -- the Navajo people were looking at, they did not overlook the development of the school board. Where they saw, where they said that we could control the school if we can get a majority of Navajo people, and we can elect them. We can control our own school system. And they were talking about the public school system. And so to me, there was a huge amount of progress that took place during this time, the late 1970s and early '80s, what the Navajo people were doing.

And that was all basically done because of the voter education that the Navajo Nation was involved in. And then from there, it picked up into the county elections. And in New Mexico, all those counties that come into the Navajo Nation, there was always somebody from the Navajo Nation that was running for state office, county seats, and all of that. And so it was a tremendous assertion of political power by the Navajo people.

PI: [13:22] OK. Should I turn off for a minute?

PZ: [13:24] Yeah.

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PZ: [0:01] Good. Yeah.

PI: [0:02] OK.

PZ: [0:04] I guess one of the things that also needed to be raised and to add to my conversation on schools and education on the Navajo is that -- yes, it was hard to transform education from federal boarding schools away from the reservation back to the Navajo Nation on the Navajo reservation. Because what I saw was a gradual parental involvement that grew out of that federal policy of establishing schools on the Indian reservation. And it was a tough time period, where we saw -- for example, for many years, the Navajo people were sending their children off reservation. Many, many years, and I was a product of that. And the parents never really had a role. They sent their kids away from the family environment nine months out of the year. So the parents didn't have a say except for three months out of the year. And so in the long run, who's going to win out in terms of influencing their children? Of course, the federal government -- what they were trying to do is going to win out, because they have us for nine months, and our Indian parents only had us for three months. And so that was kind of a dilemma that took place.

And then all of a sudden for the federal government to turn right around and say, "We're going to get ourselves out of educating the Indian students away from the reservation at boarding school -- we're going to begin building schools back on your own territory, back on your own reservation. Now you have to learn how to participate in the running of schools and the teaching of your own children. And that's your responsibility." And the Navajo parents had a hard time dealing with that issue, because they really didn't know what the non-Indian people were saying to them, and why they were saying that.

I guess on the down side was maybe someone of a Navajo traditional upbringing thinking that that's an insult, because, yes, we love our children, and we'd like -- we'd love to have them here, but why are you still telling us how we should educate our children? [3:00] When on the one hand, you're telling us that we now need to be responsible for our own children, but yet you're still telling us as parents what we should tell them -- how we should teach them what they should learn? So the insult was probably back on the other foot.

So I saw some difficult times with the Navajo parents trying to understand the dilemma. And of course when Navajo Nation began taking full control of their own educational institutions -- the systems and the local community, they went at it 100%, once that was understood. And I guess the best evidence in terms of how the transformation was done was the teaching of Navajo culture, language, and history by the local institution.

And some may say that -- what kind of evidence do you have to show that? One of the outstanding things that I had been seeing during the last several years when I go out and visit the schools -- for example, just this year, I had an opportunity to go into a class, to go into a classroom at the various high schools, starting at Grey Hills High School, Tuba City High School, Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, and Monument Valley High in Utah. Shiprock High School, Window Rock, Ganado, Navajo Prep. Crown Pointe High School, Tohatchi High School, Gallup High. Going into those high schools on the Navajo -- this is only for this year. My only involvement.

One of the things that is so outstanding, that hits you, is that any time you talk to the youngsters, the young people that are going to those institutions, when they introduce themselves, they don't introduce themselves only simply using their names. That's secondary, using your English name. But the first thing they say is, "I am this clan. My father's clan is this, and my grandfather's clan and maternal grandma's clan is this." And that's the first thing they say -- they say to me when they're in the process of introducing themselves. And then they say, "I want to go to your school at ASU and I want to know what kind of classes you offer, and what kind of scholarship and dormitory program do you have?" So that's the first thing that they tell you. [6:00]

And, you know, they're very proud of saying that. Very proud to say that. You could have never heard that thirty years ago. Navajo youngsters wouldn't tell you that -- they wouldn't know. They wouldn't really know. Because the whole educational institution and the system was trying to get them out of their Navajo-ness into modern white ways of life and education that they were imposing on the Indian students.

And so by visiting these schools, that's what I hear. And the second thing they -- they tell you about is these cultural instructions and Navajo history. They'll tell you that. Maybe there's less of that than the clan system, but the fact that they're making an effort -- the fact that they know. They may not know all the details, they may not know the dates, they may not know all the things that happened specifically to the Navajo people, but they know there is a history, Navajo history -- and the Long Walk, Navajo history. And all of these other events that took place.

Now, for me, that's great progress that the Navajo Nation is making. Because if we keep that up for the next ten, twenty, thirty years, you're going to really have a nation unto itself. A nation that is self-determined. A nation that really understands where it has been, and a nation that really, really understands where it wants to go. So I really, really think that the Navajo has a future. Yes, we hear a lot about drug involvement; yes, we hear a lot about alcohol and the meth that has gone onto the Navajo Nation among the youth. You know, those are man-made things.

Those are problems -- they're also challenges. And I think on the meth controversy among the Navajo, the Navajo people really rose up in arms, the last two or three years, and they're really fighting it very effectively. So it's going to take those kinds of community involvement to get these kinds of terrible things that are happening to the Navajo people and local schools and local community -- it's up to them to get rid of that. No one's going to get rid of them for them. And so they're basically involved in effectively dealing with that.

And so there's a lot of community cohesiveness, based on what is happening at the local school. Many, many of the community activities really revolve in many cases around the school, and what the school is able to achieve. And I'll give you one or two good examples. [9:00] In the 1970s and 1980s, when the Navajo people in Tuba City began taking full control of their local schools at Tuba City High, they went all the way to supporting their local sports program. And I remember going to high school basketball games and football games, and I remember going to cross-country and track meets. And those kids were so proud of themselves. And the Tuba City High School women's

basketball team took the state championship maybe four or five times during that twenty-year or fifteen-year period, where Tuba City was number one -- they won the state tournament. And to have that state tournament here, at the America West Arena, where the Phoenix Suns professional basketball team plays -- they had those state tournaments, basketball tournaments, at that gymnasium. And Navajo people would come by the large numbers -- fans, families, relatives -- and they would fill that place up with Navajo supporters. And it was very hard for the people here in Phoenix to understand that. To understand why the Navajo people would drive 300 miles to come to support their high school basketball team.

And so the way I saw that was that there's a big community pride -- there's a tremendous amount of support for the local school in those communities. And Navajo people, you know, love their children. Love their grandchildren. They'll go any distance -- how far they drove didn't matter. How much it cost to get there didn't matter. The fact was that they wanted to support their school and they wanted to support their children. And so that's what happens -- that's what happens when you educate and

motivate the parents enough, so that they go all the way to support the activities of their local sports program.

Now, let's transfer that over to the city of Phoenix. I live in a school district here in Phoenix, and it's a big 5A school. They don't get that number at their basketball games, [12:00] even at the state meet -- the state tournament. They don't get that number. And, you know, there are probably 1,000 or 2,000 at the most that I have seen by non-Indian teams. But with Navajo, it's not unusual to see 14,000 or 15,000 people at these games. And so I think people should just learn from that -- that when you get the Indian people involved in supporting some worthwhile things like basketball games and supporting their children, you know, they go out 100% and support that.

And I'm only using Tuba City as an example. Well, that happened with Window Rock High School, that happened with Monument Valley High School, and this year with Ganado -- the girls' basketball team went all the way and took the state champion. And so it's something that, you know, the Navajo people are very proud of.

And if you look at New Mexico, look what Shiprock High School did back in the '70s, you know, when they had that tremendous basketball team, and the whole community of Shiprock going over to the Pit in Albuquerque, where University of New Mexico Lobo basketball team plays. And, you know, during the state tournament, that place is just full to capacity with Navajo supporters. And it was really, really something to see.

And for me, as an educator and as an observer, what the Navajo people are really, really sold on is this self-determination. And I'm using only sports programs as an example. And I'm following one of the things that's happening in the last two years. For example, last night I was reading about the spelling bee that just took place at the national level here about a week, two weeks ago. And there were some Navajo kids that went all the way -- that went all the way to Washington, D.C. And they participated. Sure, they lost out and they got eliminated in the second round or so, you know, but thing about it is that we're up there. We were up there. We're on the verge

of having one of our Navajo youngsters become a national champion in the spelling bee program and contest.

So it's -- the Navajo people and the Navajo children are the future of the Navajo nation. And they're doing all of these things because the Navajo parents are giving them that desire [15:00] -- that support that they really, really need to do something very well in the community. And they're -- the Navajo kids are very proud of doing all of those things. Look at what happened in the community of Pinon, where you have a young Navajo eighth grade, Garrett Yazzie, and what he was able to invent to help out his mother to reduce her electricity bill by inventing a water heater, and a gadget that he used to heat his home -- his trailer. And then for ABC television to come out in May and build him this nice, beautiful home for him and his mother. And that's going to get a lot of national attention, and people are going to view that in terms of what this young Navajo boy was able to invent, just simply because he was really dedicated to his mother and dedicated to looking at the overall problem that Navajo Nation faces.

And so I look at these different events, and what Gary -- Gary Yazzie -- what Garrett Yazzie has done is not going to stop there. Because the home that they built for him is an all green -- green home. That home is recycling its own water -- self-contained. It's recycling its own water, and the water that they recycle is used to irrigate the little grass and other flowers that the family is growing outside of their home. And then they have solar -- a solar panel that generates electricity. They have a wind panel that also generates electricity. And as I understand it from the engineers that helped design that facility here at ASU, the solar panel plus the wind-generated power, that will produce enough to take care of their home throughout the year. And there's going to be excess power that NTUA is going to buy from him -- the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, the organization that provides electrical services to homes on the Navajo Nation. And Garrett Yazzie, this eighth-grade kid and now a ninth-grade high school student, [18:00] made a commitment by saying that "I would like to have all of my excess electricity to go to my neighbors -- my uncle and my aunts and my grandma and my grandpa." And so even at that young age, he has such a responsibility towards his own relatives and his own community. And whatever he invented, he was passing it

around to get the results of what he was able to come up with.

And when I see something like that happen, you know, that's the future of the Navajo Nation. We don't have any indication right now -- for all we know is that the Navajo Nation may start demanding that their homes be built with solar system. With wind-powered, electric-producing machinery to heat their homes. And so we may see that, and may not necessarily need all that much energy that gets produced by using the coal. Because that's controversial in itself, with all these power plants that we have on the Navajo Nation anyway.

So the invention, and the creation of what Garrett Yazzie did, to me is also unlimited. We haven't really seen the full recognition and the full potential of what this kid has, in terms of what he has in mind and in terms of helping the Navajo people and the way that we live. And so that only indicates to me that the Navajo people really have what it takes to survive -- what it takes to do good and do well in taking care of the other members of their family.

And so I just wanted to add these pieces of information that I observed on the Navajo, and it really goes along the lines of self-determination. And to have a nation that we can be proud of, we need more of the kind of activities that is fully supported by the Navajo parents and Navajo students.

PI: [20:26] OK, very good.

M1: [20:29] OK, twelve o'clock. Turn it off again.

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PZ: [0:00] I wanted to finish out on this talk on the meaning of self-determination. I used the example of basketball success at Tuba City and other schools around the Navajo, and then I also used the success of the spelling bee contestant from Chinle Public School -- a person that went all the way to the national contest in Washington, D.C. And I want to add the third one, which is that we are now beginning to see more and more Navajo students come into colleges and university. And I'll use what has happened here at ASU just as an example -- a shining example of what could be. And that is that in 19... in 1995, '96, when I enrolled here at ASU, we had something like 672 Native

American students. And the president of the university, Lattie Coor, was telling me that we were stuck at that number -- we could never go higher than that. We did everything we can under the sun to try to recruit more people, but we're just failing, or doing something wrong. And we can't seem to add any more to it. And he just gave me the instruction that "let that be your concern. I can't tell you how you should resolve it, but let that be your concern -- worry about it, and see how we can improve."

Well, I got involved in recruitment. And using a completely different model, different tactics, different ways of recruiting. And going to these high schools on the Navajo Nation, getting on the radio, and saying things publicly in the newspaper. And then actually going into the classroom to talk to the students. Those made a big difference. And then on occasion, I would get on the radio to talk to the Navajo parents about how important education is.

As a result of all of that, after something like ten years later, we now have approximately 1,500 -- one thousand five hundred Native American students that attend ASU. That's

almost tripling what was the situation and the case back in the 1995-96 year. And I believe that we're not going to stop there. We're going to keep on going -- we're going to keep on recruiting more Native American students. And my personal goal is to get to two thousand. And once we get to two thousand, that's still not going to be enough.

[3:00] And so someone has to continue doing what we started here.

And I see a lot of young Navajo people that are going to school -- the recent graduates of ASU that are kind of following suit, that I'm working with. That are fully committed to this. And those -- those young people, they really make me happy, because I know at some point I'm going to be, perhaps, ret--start thinking about retirement. And it's good to look back and see that these young people are really, really serious about the continuation of getting more Native American students, more Navajo students to come into these colleges and universities.

And my prejudice is not only to ASU -- I always told people that any university, whether it's NAU, U of A, community college, BYU in Utah, Oklahoma, USC -- doesn't matter, as

long as they get the experience. And that's what we're looking for. So that was something that is also, I think, in line with the self-determination movement exhibited by the Indian students, and more particularly the Navajo students.

And the second point I wanted to make under that is this: where when I came on campus, the retention rate of Native American students was so low. And I remember the president telling me that "for every 100 students we get one year, the following year, we lose one-half. We only have 50% -- about 50% retention rate." And he was saying that on a bad year, we lose 60% of the students that we gained the year prior. And so that's a big concern.

And so then, not necessarily using any new monies, but just reprogramming some of the existing staff at ASU, we began a Native American achievement program, and then started working with students in a different way. Providing a different attitude. And then doing a lot of work -- not so much with the students, but with our faculty, with our staff, and professors. And having them understand the American Indian students here. And that added tremendously

to the retention rate of the American Indian students. And then with the Native American Achievement Program, getting more mentors, and getting more help -- Indian help. [6:00] American Indian graduate students helping the undergraduates. Those kinds of activities are of necessity in having your program succeed in terms of retaining your Indian students, so they end up receiving their degree and graduating with, in many cases, with honors. And then they're very, very happy to come back to their reservation to help out their own people.

And so on some years during the last ten years, we got the retention rate all the way up to 78%, from 50%. So that's a huge increase. Unfortunately, that 78 goes up and down. Some years we may have 70%, some years we may go back down to 68%, but then some years it goes back up to 77, and so... And we're trying to evaluate the program, and what we do from year to year, and why that -- why that number goes up and down. And at some point, we'll come up with an answer.

And the last thing -- the third thing that I wanted to say under this scenario and under this project is this: I

believe it was in nineteen ninety... 1996 or 1997, or it may even have been in 1998, and I'll come back with more specific numbers on this point. But the point was that we asked for all those Navajo students who made 3.00 or above during that year -- after we put the Native American Achievement Program into practice the year that they was starting, our number of Navajo students that were doing very well was somewhere in the 20s. It may have -- it may even be below 20 that was making above 3.00 grade point average. And somewhere along 2003, we asked for the same number from the department that deals with those issues here on campus. And they gave us an increase of American Indian students who are making 3.00 and above. And that number that they gave us was 144. So that's a tremendous increase. That means that the American Indian students that are on campus here, by and large, were doing very, very well. [9:00] And 144 -- I don't know how much it represents in terms of the percentage of increase. Students that are doing better. But just looking at that number, 144, that's a tremendous progress for the American Indian students.

And when I look at -- when I look at these three points, working here at ASU, the future just looks bright. And if we can do that for the next ten years, the real progress is going to start happening on the American Indian reservation here throughout the Southwest, and more particularly, the Navajo, because we have so many Navajo students that come to this institution. And when I look at and talk with the faculty and staff at U of A and NAU, essentially, they may not be that high in numbers, but they are also experiencing the same thing.

So this whole thing about self-determination, about having your local schools back in your home community, on your reservation, and having the Indian people come back into those classrooms as teachers, as model teachers, as a mentor and role model -- those seems to be working very, very well. And by having people that all of a sudden pop up with, let's say, a championship basketball team from Gamado High School or Monument Valley or Window Rock High or Tuba City High, and how the students look at them, and they mirror themselves in those kinds of accomplishments -- and then lately by what Garrett Yazzie was able to do. And many of these students that I talked to -- even what

happened at Pinon -- students are really, really thinking to themselves now, well, if that person can do that, I'm pretty sure that I can do likewise -- but only in other matters and other fields.

So I see those bright eyes every time I go into a classroom, and I always think to myself, my God, these are the students that are so smart, that are going to go back to those Navajo Nation. And they're going to be more equipped -- fully equipped than I ever was. And when I went back to the Navajo Nation, I wasn't fully prepared. I was not ready. I didn't have the ammunition that they now have. And so these kids that are going back onto the reservation, or even that are going to be here in the city, they're fully equipped. And they're going to have a wonderful life.

And as a grandfather, that really encourages me and is an inspiration, and, you know, [12:00] energy that I look towards from day to day, coming from the young people, that's what really makes my job interesting. And you just want it to do more. It's the inspiration that I get from the young people.

PI: [12:15] Very good. Well...

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