

Vine Deloria, historian and activist, dies

DENVER (AP) — Vine Deloria Jr., an influential advocate of American Indian rights and the author of the groundbreaking "Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto," has died. He was 72.

Deloria, a Sioux Indian, died Sunday, Nov. 13, of complications from an aortic aneurysm, said his son, Phil Deloria.

The author was considered one of the most outspoken — and persuasive — proponents of Indian cultural and political identity.

"I think he opened Americans' eyes to the real history of Native Americans and the injustice of past federal policies," said John Echohawk, executive director of the Native American

Rights Fund in Boulder. "I think what we saw in (Deloria's) generation of Native Americans was this transition of federal policy from termination to self-determination, and Vine, I think, was the real leader in making that happen," Echohawk said.

"Through Vine's leadership, tribes started to stand on their treaties and their right to self-determination," he said.

As executive director of the National Congress of American Indians from 1964 to 1967, Deloria helped forge a united, "pan-Indian approach" in dealing with the federal government, said Patricia Limerick, faculty chair of the Center of the American West at the Univer-

sity of Colorado.

"His role in getting Indian people heard in the last half of the 20th century is unparalleled," she said. "(He was able to) get his message into camps where it had never been heard."

He was born March 26, 1933, in Martin, S.D., and served in the Marine Corps 1954 to 1956. He earned degrees from Iowa State, the Lutheran School of Theology and the University of Colorado School of Law, his son said.

He taught at Western Washington University, UCLA, the Pacific School of Religion, Colorado College, the University of Arizona and the University of Colorado, where he retired in 2000.

Family of inmate files suit against feds

TOPPENISH, Wash. (AP) — The family of a man who committed suicide at the Yakama tribal jail last year has filed a wrongful-death lawsuit seeking \$1.7 million in damages.

Ricky Owens Sampson, 39, used a towel to hang himself from a broken light fixture June 25, 2004. His body was not found for eight hours because the jail was staffed by only one person, who could not conduct

routine cell checks because of a heavy volume of phone calls. Sampson's family argues that his death could have been prevented if the Bureau of Indian Affairs had fulfilled its duty to oversee the jail.

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His parents are Roberta Tufti and Archie Caldera.

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