

Chinookans Bring Traditional Plankhouse To Life



Harmony — Members from Eagle Beak as well as members from the Chinook Tribe drummed and sang honor songs to open and close the ceremonial event for the plankhouse. This traditional Chinookan sculpture (right) carved by Adam McIsaac and Tony Johnson stands inside of the house near the back and is about 18 feet tall.

In 2000, the Chinooks gained federal recognition from the Clinton Administration. Then on July 5, 2001, the Bush Administration took their recognition away saying that the Chinooks failed to demonstrate three of seven crite-

rior Department's Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, in a 2003 article in the *Seattle Times*.

"That was a political decision," said Tony Johnson. "In no way was that a fair process."

The Chinook Tribal Council is

Although not recognized, the Chinook still run a Tribal government from their offices in Chinook, Washington.

Professor of Law and former Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior Kevin Gover recently stated publicly, "I remain convinced that the Chinook Tribe is deserving of federal recognition."

For the 2,000 member Chinook Tribe, which has been seeking recognition from the federal government for about a half century, the plankhouse is more than just a link to their past. It could be a valuable tool in proving their identity and like federal recognition the plankhouse will provide groundwork for their future. ■

"Hopefully, due to the plankhouse, people will see that the Natives from this land are still here."

~ **Richard (Bubba) Sohappy**
Yakama Tribal member

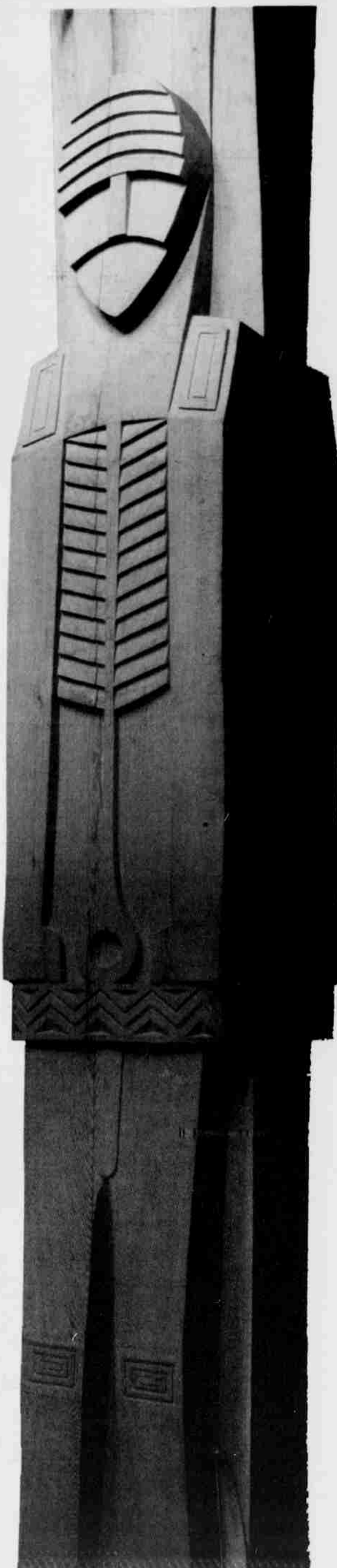
ria required to be acknowledged as a tribe.

"The Chinooks failed to show they have maintained political influence over their members since historical times, a predominant portion of their members comprise a distinct social community, and outside observers have historically identified them as an Indian entity," said Neal McCaleb, the Inte-

rior Department's Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, in a 2003 article in the *Seattle Times*.

"I think our intention is going to be a lawsuit," said Tony Johnson.

Federal recognition for the Chinook Tribe would open the doors to federal funds for health care, business development and education.



Chinook Tribal Chairman Gary Johnson



Tlingit Tribal Elder Anna Haala