

Broadsides From The Heart Of Native America

MANKILLER continued
from page 6

that at the first meeting, they did not put a chair out for her. "Instead of starting something divisive," she said, "I pulled a chair up from the audience and sat down."

"I'm not a person who has a great need to be loved," she said.

People say that Indians are supposed to adapt to American culture, she said, "but nobody has ever been able to explain to me what they are trying to assimilate us into. People describe the final episode of *The Survivor* as a great cultural experience," she said, "Is that what you want for your culture? I talk about values."

Among those values is context. Mankiller described the difference between the way the dominant culture looks at a picture and the way an Indian looks at it. The first focuses on the subject. The second focuses on the context in which the subject rests.

"Too much is written about Native people," she said, "and not enough by Native people."

On the mainstream media, Trudell said, "I wouldn't try to reach the majority, just reach out to those you can, and just be as coherent as you can. How much time do we waste because we don't control the media? Use clarity and coherence. Become less reactionary and more thoughtful. It will create its own way of spreading. Reach whoever you can, but don't try to recruit. In a symbolic way, we become the media."

"I agree with something Congresswoman Barbara Jordan of Texas once said," said Mankiller. "If I thought that most Americans really were racist, I couldn't get out of bed in the morning." I have to believe that most people can be educated, and every person has a responsibility to educate themselves and those around them. Always be extending a hand and say, 'Let's talk.'

Related were the pair's answers to a question about leadership.

"I don't like the idea of being a leader," said Mankiller. "I consider

myself a facilitator. You have to never separate yourself from the people. Your only role is that of a spokesperson."

"The danger," she added, "is when people look externally for solutions

are really just expressing how overwhelmed and powerless they feel.

"Listen to people," said Mankiller. "Give them a voice."

And related to that was the question to Trudell about the lessons of AIM. "In AIM, it was fun to be the leader but it came with consequences. I wore that label (political activist) as an identity. Only after I understood how limiting it was. In some ways, it limited us. Recognize it as a tool and not an identity. Be careful of politics. Use it like a tool but don't believe in it. Believe in as little as possible." He pointed again to thinking "clearly and coherently," a term he could have said a hundred

times over the course of the evening. The theme of the day was "Conscious Unity for Our Common Survival."

More specifically, Trudell said, "It isn't about blame. It's about responsibility... I'm not guilty for

what I did but I'm responsible for it. Guilt doesn't teach us to learn, it just produces more guilt."

And as an example, he took down the most common label we hear today. "I don't trust democracy," he said. "(In this society) it means the right of the entitled to rule."

The solution to apathy, Trudell said, is "we need to show some respect to ourselves."

Mankiller agreed. "I don't think people are apathetic. They just need clarity. Charlie and I, we'll sit and talk to people to see what they want to do next. We need to see barriers as challenges. We need to give people an opportunity to express themselves."

Too much of what we hear about Native communities is negative, said Mankiller. "What we need is to celebrate ourselves and our communities. Our languages are still spoken. We still have a strong sense of family, clan and nation. And we're still standing."

Asked what to tell the children, Trudell said, "To think. And it's not enough to tell them. We have to show them."

Said Mankiller: "We survived." ■



Photos by Toby McClary

Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom

to problems when they really need to look within themselves."

"I don't want to be a leader," said Trudell. "I'm paranoid and don't want people behind me." He said that most times when people are objecting about their leaders, they



One People, One Pride — Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy presented Wilma Mankiller and husband Charlie Soap with gifts at a welcoming ceremony held at the University of Oregon's Many Nations Longhouse. "One day, a Supreme Court Justice will be Indian, and it takes this kind of meeting to make it happen," said Kennedy.

No Evidence Of Mechanical Problems In Crash That Claimed Young Tribal Member

By Toby McClary

After nearly a year of investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has developed a hypothesis on an airplane crash near Grand Ronde that fatally injured Tribal member Travis Hofenbredl and two other teens.

In mid-October of 2004, Certified Pilot Ross Havel, 18, Kristi Ward, 16, and Hofenbredl, 16, were on an afternoon elk-scouting trip in the foot hills of the Coastal Mountain Range about seven miles from Grand Ronde. According to a newly released report by the NTSB, an unidentified hunter, who was in the general vicinity of the crash site,

reported hearing an airplane when he looked up to see a light aircraft approaching from a southerly direction toward his position.

"I was a little concerned about his altitude, which seemed to be rather low for the hilly terrain and timber," said the hunter in the NTSB report. "It looked very slow, almost at stall speed. The tail seemed to be lower than the front," he said. "I listened hard for any indication of engine trouble. The engine sounded smooth and powerful. Then it disappeared over the timber to the east," added the hunter.

The airplane was a 1971 Piper PA-28-140. It was a single engine, low wing, fixed landing gear air-



A Piper Cherokee PA-28 similar to the one that the teens crashed in.

plane. It was powered by a four cylinder, air-cooled, normally aspirated Lycoming O-320 engine, rated at 150 horsepower. The airplane was configured to carry a maximum of four occupants.

After further investigation by the NTSB, there has been no evidence of a mechanical or control malfunction that would determine the plane to be uncontrollable. A toxicological screen showed that alcohol and drugs were

not a factor.

The NTSB has not written a final report on this incident, however, low speed and a low altitude seem to play a major role. ■