

# Naval Academy appoints Athabascan to class of '91

Keith Curtis Stevens, an Athabascan born in Anchorage, has accepted an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., and he is believed to be the first Athabascan to attend, his parents said.

The Stevens' family lives in San Diego, and Keith graduated from Poway High School there last June.

He was born Oct. 19, 1969, in Anchorage at the Alaska Native Medical Center. His birth mother, a teenager at the time, gave him up for adoption.

Stevens was adopted by Richard and Jill Stevens, who were then living in Deering. They enrolled him in the NANA Regional Corp.

Richard Stevens said he hopes Keith's story inspires other youth.

"Most of all we hope some young Alaskan will take Keith's story to heart and reach for the sun and the moon and dare to dream that he or she will also have a chance to make it," Richard Stevens wrote in a recent letter, describing Keith.

Richard Stevens also said the Stevens family has had no contact with Keith's birth mother and that they hope she learns of Keith's success.

In writing about why he wanted the Naval Academy appointment, Keith said he sees it as the beginning of a lifetime of service to his country.

"It will mean a quality education that is directly related to my career goals and will give me a hands on experience," he said. "I am an American Indian and that in itself is considered special by many. I have many God given talents that are waiting to be used."

Keith also wrote that he became self-supporting after his 16th birthday so that he could assist his parents who have four other children to raise.

In addition, he earned membership in the National Honor Society, the California Scholarship Federation, the Society of Distinguished American High School Students, among other honors.

He pointed out that he was one of four adopted children in his family, and that the children came from different ethnic backgrounds and that the others were badly abused before they joined the family.

"I helped each one adapt to a new way of life after being switched from foster family to foster family and feeling not cared about," Keith wrote, explaining that these experiences had made him better understand the problems of others.

Keith was adopted when he was five weeks old when the Stevens were teaching for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Alaska.

In 1985, Keith was selected as the



San Diego County Adoptee of the Year. The only teenager to be nominated, Keith found himself competing with people above the age of 26 for the honor.

Besides the Naval Academy appointment, he was also appointed to the Coast Guard and West Point military academies.

The number of persons applying for acceptance at the U.S. Naval Academy reached the highest level in the history of the school this year. More than 15,300 student had applied by Feb. 14 to enter the Class of 1991, according to the March 2, *Navy Times*. The previous high was 14,700 for the Class of 1988.

The applicants competed for about 1,300 appointments as midshipmen.