

24 Natives Participate In Baha'i Meet

Twenty-four Indians and Eskimos were among the 130 Baha'is at the 12th Annual National Baha'i Convention. The two day Convention was held in Anchorage April 26-27 and was attended by Baha'is from more than 30 different Alaskan communities.

They came such widely separated spots as Meklakatla, Nunivak Island, St. Lawrence Island and Fort Yukon. Among the 16 voting delegates present, four were native.

The two main purposes of the Convention were to elect the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Alaska for the coming year (a nine member board of directors) and to consult with the National Spiritual Assembly on various matters of concern to the Baha'is throughout Alaska and the world.

One of the Indians present, Art Jess of Soldotna, was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the Convention was the evening set aside for special consultation with native Baha'is. The keynote talk for this session was given by Joyce Norman, Tlingit Indian from Sitka.

She pointed out how the Baha'i writings give repeated calls to the original Americans who have been singled out for special service.

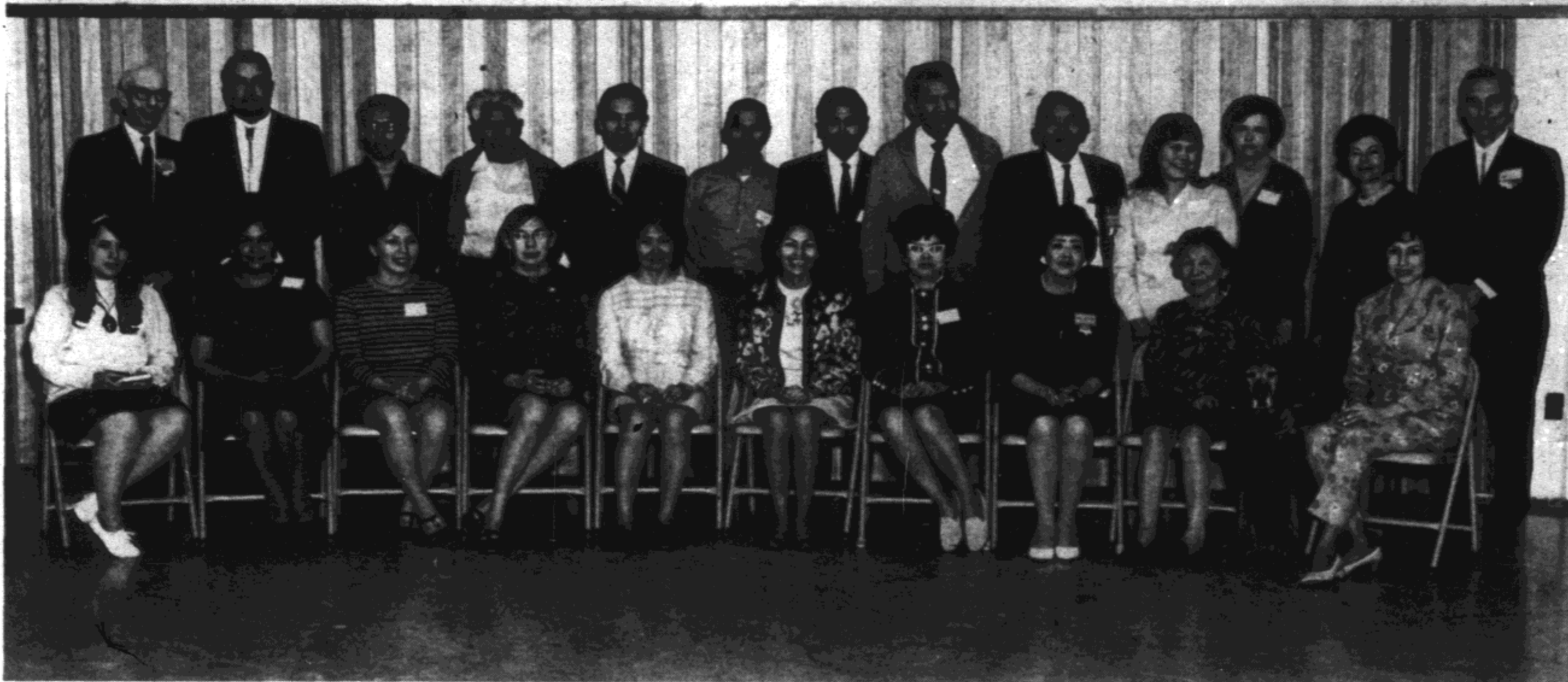
In a time when so many have looked down on us or been patronizing, Joyce asked us to reflect, "Who would call upon our people today to do these great things that have been asked? Only God!"

The keynote was followed by the reading of a long letter from Ruhyyih Khanum, a very prominent Baha'i living in Haifa, Israel.

This beautiful letter was addressed especially to the Indian, Eskimo and Aleut Baha'is of North and South America and started, "My especially loved Brothers and Sisters."

Following the reading of this letter, frank discussion covered the means of bringing the healing message of Baha'u'llah to the sorely tried and troubled natives all over Alaska.

The increasingly important role the natives must play in this vital work was stressed.



BAHA'I CONFERENCE—Twenty-one of the Indian and Eskimo Baha'is who attended the annual Convention of the Baha'is of Alaska. They are pictured with two members of the Auxiliary Board of the Baha'i Faith, Howard Brown from Haines, Alaska (back row left end) and R. Ted Anderson, from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada (back row right end). Art Jess from Soldotna (back row, second from the left) was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Alaska and Joyce Norman of Sitka (front row, 4th from the right) gave the keynote address for the Saturday evening session. Back Row: Howard Brown, Haines;

Art Jess, Soldotna; Sam Ezi, Eklutna; Harrison John, Nenana; Bill Johnson, Metlakatla; Napoleon Bergamashi, Savoonga; Maynard Eakan, Fairbanks - Matanuska Valley; Eugene King, Seattle, Peter Simple, Fort Yukon; Ruth Kolstoe, Fairbanks; Betty Bruning, Soldotna; Jessie Crider, Kodiak; Ted Anderson, Whitehorse, Canada. Front Row: Gai Harrison, Anchorage; Maria Frey, Anchorage; Carolyn Baumgartner, College; Velma Koontz, Savoonga; Maggie Hursey, Eagle River; Joyce Norman, Sitka; Mary Brown, Petersburg; Melba King, Seattle; Sonia Falconer, Anchorage.