

Worl decries Reaganomics as war on poor

Well-known Alaska anthropologist Rosita Worl told fellow American Indian women last week that Reaganomics is "an undeclared war against minorities."

Worl, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, said Reaganomics promotes "a system to maximize the economic benefits for the class for which it was designed."

She was the keynote speaker at an Indian women's leader-

ship conference at Seattle's Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center.

More than 300 Indian women from 16 states registered for the conference to discuss opportunities for advancement and to explore leadership development.

She said the Indian people are faced with "overwhelming pressure to disappear into white America."

"Century after century, Indian policies were designed to

benefit the white society," Ms. Worl, a Tlingit Indian, said.

During the 1930s, there were efforts to shift the initiative to the Indian people themselves, she said. But, she said, cultural pluralism is still an ideal and not a reality.

She said the effects of the policies of the current administration threaten the gains of minorities over the past two decades.

"If the Indian people are to survive, we must not just re-

place white faces with brown faces," but must examine the structure of government itself, she said.

"We must participate in the political process to overturn policies (detrimental to the Indian people) . . . We must become the new-wave Natives," she said.

She said the Indian women attending the conference "must learn the skills to protect and perpetuate our culture" and seek "the tools to improve their abilities to serve

their people."

The conference was sponsored by Ohoyo (the word means woman in the Choctaw language) Resource Center, a national non-profit consortium of Indian women administering a grant from Women's Educational Equity Act.

Much of the program was made up of workshop sessions, to give the delegates an opportunity to work with women who are leaders at the state and national level.