

# INDIAN NEWS NOTES

## **Termination of Catawbas Started Statue of Limitations on Claims, Court Rules:**

A majority decision of the United States Supreme court, issued June 2, said the 1962 termination of the Catawba Indians, ending the tribe's special relationship with the federal government, also may have destroyed their claims to 144,000 acres of land in South Carolina. Dissenting Justice Harry Blackmun had harsh words for this majority view. He said: "Today's decision seriously handicaps the Catawba's efforts to obtain even partial redress for the illegal expropriation of lands twice pledged to them, and it does so by attributing to Congress, in effect, an unarticulated intent to trick the Indians a century after the property changed hands. From any perspective, there is little to be proud of here." Justice John Paul Stevens, in the majority decision, said that once Congress removed federal recognition of the tribe, the "state statute of limitations should apply to its claim in this case." The Court directed the case be sent back to a lower court to determine if the time limit has expired. The attorney for the state told the high court during the arguments that the 10-year state statute of limitations began in 1962, when the termination act took effect for the Catawbas, and expired eight years before the Indians brought suit in 1980. The tribe was awarded the 144,000-acre tract through an agreement signed with the King of England in 1763. In 1840, South Carolina bought the tract from the Indians with a promise of finding them a new reservation. The Indians claim this sale was illegal, however, because it was not approved by the federal government as required by federal law. The land claimed by the Indians includes part of three counties along the northern border of South Carolina and is valued today at more than \$2 billion.

## **Quality of Alaska's Small Rural High Schools is Studied:**

The one-room schoolhouse is alive and working fairly well in Alaska. That is one of the conclusions of a recent study of Alaska's small rural high schools. The study, done by researchers from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, reported that the smallest schools were not the ones with the biggest problems. Alaska's rural high

school system includes 162 schools with less than 100 students and nearly a quarter of those have fewer than 20 students. As might be expected, the researchers found variety in the schools. Some worked well and others had problems. The successful schools had some common traits. One was a clear focus on goals — preparing for colleges, for instance, or maintaining local culture. At the successful schools, there was also a strong community feeling shared by teachers and students. Schools with the severest problems were usually either in conflict with the community or in communities with bad social problems. Generally, the small schools had small drop-out rates — about half the national average; gave the students much individual attention and had high student involvement. For example, almost all the students would be active in a school play or athletic team. Some of the negative factors were limits in course variety, teachers and activities and transition difficulties for students moving out of small, nurturing atmosphere of school. Copies of the report are available for \$5 from the College of Human and Rural Development, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Alaska 99775.

## **BIA's General Assistance Program Helps Families Stay Together:**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' general assistance program "is rarely recognized for its most valuable aspect," said Dr. Eddie Brown, chief of the BIA's social service programs. It keeps Indian families intact and children at home. In a report published in *Linkages*, he contrasted the program to state programs of aid for dependent children (AFDC) which prohibit payment of families in which two parents are present in the home. The BIA does not use family composition as a criteria and may provide assistance to families with both parents in the home. The general assistance program supports the integrity of the Indian family unit, Brown said, because the father does not have to leave home to make his family eligible for assistance.

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