

Book follows history of Indian media

CARBONDALE, Ill., James E. and Sharon M. Murphy of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale's School of Journalism have chronicled a 150-year history of American Indians through the development of their print and broadcast media.

Their book, "Let My People Know: American Indian Journalism, 1828-1978," documents the history and current status of the Native American press and describes a race stereotyped and often misrepresented in the nation's establishment media.

American Indian journalism began with Sequoyah's development of the Cherokee alphabet and with Elias Boudinot's publication of the first Indian newspaper, the "Cherokee Phoenix," in 1828. Much of its recorded history was lost in the re-settlement of a race in bondage within the land of its heritage.

The spirit of the earliest contributors to American Indian journalism is reflected in excerpts from newspaper philosophies and policies and in historical anecdotes. That spirit was rekindled in the 1970s as regional Native American print and broadcast media groups worked to strengthen the press editorially and financially while continuing to put Indian news in perspective.

Obstacles in researching the book offered a hefty challenge to the authors. Records of many short-lived newspapers were never kept or had been lost. Because of the fluid nature of the American Indian press, existing directories were outdated. To gather accurate data, the couple turned to interviews with persons who edited individual newspapers, visited state historical societies and examined Indian holdings in the archives of Princeton University's library, the Gilcrease Institute in Tulsa, Okla., and other collections.

Research on the book became a family project for the Murphys. For five summers they and their two daughters, Shannon and Erin, traveled in vans to Indian reservations and urban centers throughout the country. Often, to find existing newspapers or to learn of earlier publications, the family would drive into a town and "just ask directions to the newspaper office or the editor's home."

The Murphys said they found American Indian journalists "hungry to know about other tribal newspapers in the country." To assist in establishing communication journalists, they compiled and edited a print and broadcast media directory in 1978 as part of their "continuing saga of research."

The Murphys hold doctorates from the University of Iowa and share years of teaching and newspaper experience. Sharon Murphy is associate professor and head of graduate studies in journalism at SIUC. James Murphy is an assistant professor in SIUC's School of Journalism and is currently conducting research on Alaskan native publications. The two have published several works on media and culture and on minority communications.

"Journalism history texts give little or no mention to prominent minority publications, particularly the American Indian press," Sharon Murphy said. The couple's interest in adding Indian contributions to America's press history stemmed from research for her book, "Other Voices," an overview of the black, Chicano and American Indian press written for summer recruitment programs for high school minority journalists.

Jeannette Henry, an American Indian scholar and journalist, contributed the foreword to "Let My People Know."

She commends the couple for their "vital and welcomed contribution to Native American journalism" and "to the struggle for Indian rights ..."

"Let My People Know" is available through the University of Oklahoma Press in Norman, Okla. The Murphys have earmarked proceeds from the book for American Indian journalism scholarships.

Students trying to transfer credit from one school to another no longer need to be frustrated by the experience. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, responding to a charge from the state legislature, has developed and published *The Alaska Transfer Guide*.

The guide, intended to be used as a tool by college students, reports if and how a given course offered at an Alaskan two-year institution will transfer to a four-year Alaskan institution.

Copies of *The Alaska Transfer Guide* are available from the Postsecondary Commission, Pouch FP, Juneau, Alaska 99811.