

UNITY: "Braves riding out of the sunset,"

Jim Thomas, a Tlingit Indian originally from Yakutat, will be the keynote speaker when the United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc., (UNITY) meets from April 28 to May 1 in Washington D.C.

Thomas, who now is president of a public relations and management firm, has been actively involved in a number of successful cases in which land has been returned to Indian tribes.

He also was the first American Indian to hold membership in the National Press Club.

Thomas will speak on "In (d)² yn (or Indian Dynamics").

UNITY has been described as a "Band of braves riding out of the sunset," by radio and newspaper columnist Paul Harvey.

The organization is a national group designed for American Indian and Alaskan Native youths.

The youths, ranging in age from 16 to 25, are being selected by their tribes because of their outstanding individual and tribal qualities.

The youths will participate in high level activities which have not been experienced by many tribal leaders.

More than 500 of the young men and women are being selected by their tribes and villages to travel to the nation's capital as their "ambassadors."

Regis Pecos, a recent Princeton University graduate who lives in Cochiti Pueblo and is active in economic development and natural resources for

Americans for Indian Opportunity, will conduct an exercise in which the conference participants will form small groups and assume the roles of tribal councils.

Each imaginary "tribal council" will be given statistical data concerning the "tribe's" natural and human resources and develop a master plan to move their "tribe" toward self-sufficiency.

Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior for Indian Affairs Ken Smith, and Sen. William S. Cohen, (R-Me.), chairman of the Senate's select committee on Indian Affairs, will also speak.

In conjunction with the "Summit Conference," a major national effort will be launched to create a network of "local" and "regional" youth councils which will be affiliated with UNITY.

A special ceremony will be held to formally induct 20-25 very outstanding young Native men and women into the elite "Council of Eagles." The membership of the "Council of Eagles" will serve as official representatives of UNITY and will be instrumental in the formation of "local councils" in their respective geographic regions.

The organization's founder and executive director, J.R. Cook (an Oklahoma Cherokee), stated, "UNITY is unique not only because it addresses the Indians' most valuable resource — the youth, but also because it has received no federal funding for more than five years."