

## Honoring the Ancestors, Strengthening the Future

Just four decades ago in a meeting in Oklahoma City, two American Indians who were involved with the American Psychological Association met to talk about how American Indian psychologists could come together for support, discussion of treatment and scholarship, and to better serve the Native American people. Those two people had each started this journey on their own, but came together for the beginning of the Network of Indian Psychologists or NIP. Carolyn Attneave, a Delaware and Cherokee psychologist, thought that a Network of Indian Psychologists could better serve American Indians' need for culturally competent psychological services and Joseph Trimble, a Lakota psychology student at Oklahoma City University, began an American Indian Interest Group in cooperation with the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), Division 9 of APA. Later the name was changed to Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) since the acronym NIP reinforced the stereotype of the drunken Indian. Under the guidance of Carolyn Attneave, SIP grew from a handful of psychologists and students to nearly one hundred fifty at the time of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of American Indian Psychologists and Psychology Graduate Students in Logan, Utah this past June.

During the conference we were reminded of those who have gone before that the current generation has never heard about including the three American Indian graduate students who worked with Sherif and Sherif during the Robbers Cave experiments on social norms. Very few knew that there was an American Indian theorist, Carolyn Attneave, who developed Networking Theory as it related to families in the 1970s. It was also unknown by many that Logan Wright, president of APA from 1986-1987, was American Indian from the Osage Nation. How much of our history of psychology has omitted these indigenous pioneers from the knowledge of our next generation.

The Society of Indian Psychologists initially met during the APA Convention, however, the cost of attending prevented many of our number who were providing services in Indian Country from attending. In 1987, Damian Vraniak brought together the first meeting of American Indian Psychologists and Graduate Students at Utah State University in Logan, Utah with about 30 participants. Over the past 25 years, the conference has grown to be the home of indigenous psychologists and graduate students who may be working in isolation on reservations, in academic institutions, or as students in programs. This conference continued to grow and develop through the nurturing guidance of Carolyn Barcus adding the retreat before the conference as a time of coming together and rejuvenation. It has become known as the SIP Conference and is the annual gathering of indigenous people in psychology. Many have participated along this road.

Indigenous peoples of the United States make up less than two percent of the population, but over half of the diversity in this country. At this time the APA membership has an opportunity to benefit from the rich culture of our indigenous populations. By passing the bylaws change to include a seat for each of the four ethnic minority psychological associations as part of the Council of Representatives, the leadership would be enriched by the diversity and wisdom that has been offered by our indigenous families for centuries. This diversity will make us stronger, wiser, and richer in our understanding and work to benefit psychology as a discipline.