

Tom Maulson, Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe, Wisconsin

Tom Maulson, a tribal judge, activist and tribal chairman from Lac du Flambeau, speaks about his experiences as a leader, the history of Chippewa/Ojibwe treaty rights issues in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and economic development.

I am from Waaswaaganing, or Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. I am from a family of five, and I still have a sister and brother living yet today. I am a twin, and I lost my brother (Jerry Maulson) here a couple years ago. He was very influential in the community in the area of education and trying to work with our people to bring reality back to the community in the education area. It was a sad loss to the community.

I've grown up in my community and can remember the times when the have-nots were a reality here in Waaswaaganing. I can remember the times when the Ojibwe language was not fluent and the opportunity for us to hear that was only in the close confinement of my grandmother's home or every so often listening to our elders in the community gatherings of families.

It was sad that I didn't get to know my Anishinaabe name until just recently -- 10, 15 years ago -- that this was my name (Ojibwe name), which means wind coming. And I had not the opportunity to understand our language and ask those questions. Why mom didn't take time? As we got older we were asking that; why she didn't take time to teach us our Indian language? And the answer was she didn't want us to go through what she went through. That we were lighter skinned than the rest of the community, my father being white and my mother being a full blood, and that she didn't want us going through what she went through and what her mother went through and what her grandma went through. And it was really hard for us to grasp that as kids, so we accepted that, never challenged our elders when they gave that message to us. But as we got older, we saw that a lot of the community was in that disarray, and to see that it was very limited, the Anishinaabemowin, our language, being spoken to our young people. Even in our school systems, we were basically geared to go to the Catholic or to the Presbyterian or to the church over here, the Baptist church here in our community. That was the place of worship for a lot of our Indian people. And not really getting a chance to read the history of our peoples not just in our community, Waaswaaganing, but across this here nation they call America, the history of what America's done to apply the holocaust toward our peoples.

As I got older and read more books and probably created a bitter taste in my mouth for the bureaucracy that imprinted our peoples for all those years. It was really sad to read those history books, or "his-story," and what they've done to our native peoples since Columbus has been here. That is just a small segment of myself being in this here Indian community and not really realizing, growing up, the lack of jobs, the lack of homes where families were. Multi families were put into

small one- or two-bedroom homes. I think our home was like a two-bedroom and had a little loft upstairs where the girls slept and the boys all slept in one bed to keep warm. And this was the ways of Indian communities, and it's still that way to some degree on this reservation. As a leader today, knowing the lack of responsibility of the federal government to us as native peoples, recalling, if we call it hardship, but I guess that's just our way of life, our existence as native peoples, that we can endeavor through what has been put upon us. And I can only recall my boyhood days when once again not questioning our elders, the school system, the things that we had to do as young people growing up in our community. The things that our young people have to grow up in today is completely different than what we had earlier. I probably couldn't really understand the drinking problems or what drinking has done to our community back then because my family was not a drinking family, but I see in a lot of my relations, my aunts, my uncles, other friends, their families, having this drinking problem in our community, and I guess that's due to many problems that have been put upon our peoples. The hardships, the oral histories that have addressed the native community when they sit and talk, I guess it's pretty hard to blame people, because only we can say, no, I don't want to drink. But I can't recall why the community went to drinking.

Our young people feel that they have it so tough today, tougher times than we had it, and we had that opportunity to listen to my mom and the tough time that she had, and we are passing our tough times on to our kids. And I guess as parents, we are always saying we want something better, and I guess that is what my mom wanted for us. So that's one of the trends that we as human beings go, and I guess we learn that from growing up to where we're at here today. But I think we've had the imprint of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the white community and when we had to bring about the annuity payments to native people, when native people started to accept that little bit from the white man. I guess I can only relate that to a story that one of my friends talked about the wolf and how we became that barnyard dog, if you want to call it that, that hang-around-the-fort Indian person because some of the native people didn't take a look at the good time, which was a hard time for our peoples but yet still a rich time back then. Where, as leaders and people today, we're still doing no different than we did way back then, begging for the annuities. When we'd go off to Washington, begging for existence as Indian people to the white federal government and now the state of Wisconsin in reference to the contract with America. But I guess those days weren't that hard because we talk about the good times that we had versus the bad times that we had. And as we grew up in our community, I can only say that I thought it was a good time. And our kids today, we're making it better for them today, our major events in our community if it was sliding downhill on cardboard versus on a snowmobile today. So that's new modern technology, and I guess that was ingenuity during our time. We wanted to make sure things were going to be all right for us, and we wanted to do certain things.

Getting into education, in our school system if we still had the old bureau mentality, Indian people were reluctant to speak out against the system. I think there's some major changes today as tribal leaders like myself and other leaders out there have that opportunity to want what was obligated to us through treaty rights or agreements with the federal government, with different legislators, with the state of Wisconsin and whatever. And I guess that's probably my rule to make that happen for my people. But going back into my past, prior to going into the grade school or being in this here community, there was very limited entrepreneurship here. My father was a contractor coming from the south doing construction work versus native people working for resorts, working for Simpson electric, working for different people. No entrepreneurship whatsoever in our community. We were sort of the people that made the beds, carried the garbage, did all the work for the entrepreneurs, and I guess that stayed that way for some time in this community. We've fell into that rut. Education was just education, I guess. There was not really a lot of thought into what our people wanted to be, who wanted to be who as we grew up. And I guess it was sort of like survival of the fittest in our community as we saw it. But yet the problems we had in our community must still exist today.

In 1999 as we talk here in reference to alcoholism, now drugs being more prevalent in this community and in other Indian communities across this country. So we have a hardship in those particular areas, but yet the annuities or the promises from Washington don't fit the big void, don't even scratch the surface of the obligation to us as native people. We're constantly being questioned on our leadership of our people. We still have the big brother concept or the great white father concept. It was ironic that I was afforded to go to the White House in 1992 when I was elected, when the president elect Bill Clinton indicated to all, roughly about 200 leaders, I distinctly heard his words, he says welcome home to us. I talked to a couple leaders and said where were we, like we had gone someplace, so it was sort of a joke. But I think that if we as people allow this to happen, we're going to stay like it was yesteryear, and that we have to kiln the fires of obligation to us as Indian people through whatever effort it takes, or use the ingenuity we have as Indian people and the survival that we've had for hundreds and thousands of years that we as Indian people existed here on Turtle Island, as we call it.

I believe now as the leader of my band: We have to start to tell our stories. We can't let him or her writes our stories. We, as Indian people, have to start to acknowledge the fact that granted it was oral history, we have to talk about our language, we have to tell people, we have to bring that back, and if we don't we're going to fade away just like the mist and the rain when it comes and goes. We have to make people realize that they have to feel good up here in their hearts, that we are no different than the human being when we bleed or want. It's really hard for people to understand why we say we're the Anishinaabe people, the first people of America, why we have to constantly make people well aware of that fact wherever we go, may it be in this here community, in our grade

school, in our high school. And it's a very controversial word, Anishinasbe, meaning we as the first people here. Not the new people, the first people on this here Turtle Island. It's really hard for us, but Indian people really have to start to do that, to be proud about themselves, and I think that can only be done through some of the spiritualities that we've always had. Revival of the Medewin Lodges, revival of the big drums in our community, get our young people to respect our elders, bring those Indian values back to our communities. And maybe that's the way we'll rid ourselves of that spirit water, that alcohol, or that different spirit as they call it, or that marijuana or the cocaine and all the things our young people are into today. I think it takes role models, I think it takes leadership in the families to do that, and I think this is something that different people, such as my brother Jerry, was programming not only himself but some people in the community to strive for that. And it's tough when you lose those type of leaders, but yet we must continue.

I think that being an Indian today is still a hard task because of the lack of information about Indian nations. There's well over 550 Indian nations in this country, and people just through a big ahhhh when you say that for many reasons because when they pledge allegiance to the flag, one nation under God, forgetting about the other 500 plus Indian nations. And we as Indian leaders have to continuously tell our stories, that there are nations, that there is a constitution, not only a Native American constitution that deals with our rights as citizens of Wisconsin or citizens of this country that Congress has identified in it's Constitution, that treaty rights are the supreme law in the land, and that the only persons that have treaty rights in America today are Native nations. So I think those are the types of educational things that we have to go through as Indian people.

As I went off into the service, volunteered -- I wasn't drafted like many native people across the country. We didn't have to go, but we all volunteered to spend our time in the service -- that was an opportunity for me to see not only America but see what the foreign countries were all about. I was very fortunate after a three-year term in the armed forces, in the army, to come back home prior to the Vietnam War. A lot of coaching and things of that nature to keep you in, but I came home, and they said you were a man. But I think just by seeing what was in America and what was happening around the country I came back home and started to build my entrepreneurship as a native person by working for my father, working as a police officer for the town of Flambeau, and just getting evolved in the community and seeing the responsibilities that needn't take place, why things weren't moving.

My political ambition to get on the tribal council was a real testy one, I guess, if you want to call it that. You had to be 25 years of age, you had to live here for a year, and I believed I accomplished all of that but forgetting the fact that was I enrolled member in the Flambeau band. I applied for one of the council positions, I got myself on a ballot, but when I went to vote -- I guess they have to check out if your an enrolled member or not, and I was wondering why they never checked it out -- and apparently I was not enrolled. And this was due to some history with my

grandmother dissatisfied with this band, and her brother Willard Ackley was the tribal chief over in Chippewa Lake. She asked her brother if she could be enrolled there, and I don't know how the paperwork got all goofed up, but the grandchildren went with her over to Mole Lake, never was enrolled in Mole Lake. And after a year, my grandmother got mad and her brother chief over there and asked to come back to Flambeau, and we never even thought of where we were, so we were out there in limbo someplace. So after that was all hashed out and I called for a miss-election because they allowed me on the ballet and it was overruled, that probably lit the fire of more challenge, so I continued to try to become a councilperson. And I believe I succeeded in 1975 and then in '76 and then after one term I chose not to run again, and got myself involved in my entrepreneurship and all the other businesses that I did prior to that being working with my father and so forth.

But I believe what really changed my opportunity, once again I was asked by the tribal government to be appointed as tribal judge I believe in the late '70s. I did some work for the tribe as the grand coordinator for one of our water lines, and I sort of kept an eye on the tribal government and what was going on in our community. Very interested in our endeavor to continue our growth in our community. I became a tribal game warden, worked for a tribal game warden for a few years, and I believe there was an opportunity in the '80s to become a tribal judge. So I was appointed, went to the University of Reno, Nevada, the judicial center, applied myself to become a non-attorney judge along with Judge White, and I became chief judge under the Indian Child Welfare Act and dealt with mostly all of our children, once again identifying the total disregard for our Indian children, where were they at our judicial system, having to take our court system into the Chicago, into the Illinois area just to find our children and identify that these children are not numbers today, that they are human beings, that they have moms and dads and relations and that we wanted our children home again. So this is something that I as a chief judge applied and with the cooperation of the tribal government asserted those types of rules and started to apply more judicial effort on our part as tribal judges to expand that which dealt with our children, our families, our community. So I had an opportunity to take in workshops that were seven days, working long hours and applying these here when I got back home, probably workshops that should have taken three or four months. But yet that is how dedicated I was to make sure that I was going to do the best job for my peoples back home when I came home as a tribal judge.

And I guess my ability to be who I was and what I wanted to do and my vision for my people, I became also a representative and also a hunter and fisherman. And that was some of the sustenance that I used to make sure that there was that extra plate for my family and that was how we grew up. We lived off the fat of the land as people call it. We utilized the resources that we had within the reservation boundaries. And I can remember very distinctly one time in December, I think it was, when the state of Wisconsin came on the radio and the television to say leave the Ojibwe Indians alone, that they had the right to hunt, to fish, to gather within the ceded territory. And some

of them just threw a red flag up, an opportunity for this community, because I think at this time of the year the hunting season was not very productive. So a large group of hunters and gatherers from this community went out there to the territories without any type of guidance and control, and went out there and exercised their rights under the 1847 and 32 treaty to take the deer (???) for food for the winter because it was a poor season that year. And that riled up so many white folks within the ceded territory and caused so much chaos and started to bring out hate that I guess we really didn't feel when we were growing up so much. But we didn't know how to cope with, as they call it, racism today. We knew that people didn't like Indians and parents were aggressive to tell us. We really didn't look at racism as we did today. But as I got older and started to understand what it really meant, I could see a lot of racism that really occurred during our time.

Now I was looking at being a representative for the task force for this tribe and started to address long-term goals and needs for Indian nations in Wisconsin. It gave me a lot of excitement to know that this was an opportunity for a little edge for the tribes to have that extra opportunity to hunt, fish and gather, where prior to that we were so-called violators. But in the '80s when that came about, I can remember a meeting over in (???). It was a significant meeting that talked about if we didn't get our act together as Indian people that there could be a lot of major chaos, and that the federal government or the states were going to step in and stop what we were doing. That was in the winter. I remember that. I believe that was the time they started to take a look at establishing what they call the Voight Inter-Tribal Task Force that set together the rules and regulations for the seasons and hunting. And I happened to be there, and I took it upon myself to make many other meetings after that, and finally I became one of the representatives for the Lac du Flambeau band. Still as a tribal judge, I made sure that native people out there sitting at these meetings had that opportunity for sustenance or what they call today need. And I think that was the things that we did as Task Force reps.

And also something to be encouraged by were our attorneys, who said, "You know, if you don't use it, you're going to lose it." So I think we took that very seriously, especially that Lac du Flambeau tribe. So when we had that opportunity to go out and fish, I believe Lac Flambeau was the most adamant tribe to go out there and exercise that 1837 treaty (right). The other tribes didn't do a lot of spearing. We talked about how other tribes use treaty rights versus what they do about them. We in turn sharpened our spears, got our groups together, and went out, roughly 35 people. I still have the photograph of my first group of treaty fisherman off the reservation here. It was sort of like a cat and mouse game in our first years. All we had to do was name seven lakes, didn't have to tell them which lakes we were going to be on, but seven lakes to fish that night.

So the state of Wisconsin got all upset because they didn't want to trust Indians. So they pressured the negotiations to put the state at the boat landings when we came (in) to do the count and the formula came around because of the state saying that native people are going to take too

much fish. And I believe at that time we negotiated 25 walleyes per person. I don't know if that was too much fish or not, but I guess they were scared of the fact that we would calculate those numbers up to address 15,000 Ojibwe people in the northern part of Wisconsin who could calculate up in one night thousands of fish, yet forgetting the fact that once a line goes into the water by the millions of anglers, there's thousands and thousands of fish being caught every day or every hour or whatever. And they were just worried about the native people. The biologists came up with a formula of, I forgot what the formula is now that it's been so long, but they used a formula that dealt with the numbers that could be harvested out there, but yet only for the purpose of native fishing, using the so-called "intensive method" of a spear, forgetting about the fact that people could be just as viable with a hook and line.

So Lac du Flambeau being as we were called, the Yankees of the north, because we were very (???) in taking fish in the spring. We started to get anti-treaty groups all excited because, I think, the state of Wisconsin was a major player in reference to not partaking or identifying that the Indian fisherman can only take x number of fish per night or per season, that they fanned the flames because their numbers that they were talking about was 15 years prior to the start of Indian fishing. That there was a book that was looking at already allocating because of the non-Indian users out there that were taking far greater fish than we would ever think of taking. So in those '80s as we started to fish and the state of Wisconsin got more control on the lakes where we would have to go and fish, we started to get really a large group of anti-Indian sentiment against Indian treaty rights. I believe Equal Rights for Everyone was the first group that reared it's ugly head. I believe it was during the time of the gun season for not only the tribal people but for the non-Indian anglers and one of the guys in the Park Falls area got arrested and started putting this group together Equal Rights for Everybody. So we started to create a very strong understanding in the area of strategizing what our next seasons were going to bring us. We sort of had to plan a war tactical game in reference to survival for our Indian fisherman in those middle '80s and early '90s in the boat landings that we were forced to go to. That now groups such as Sat(?) Wisconsin. I believe even groups as far as southwest spawn(?) and steel(?) and these here groups were heading up the anti Indian sentiment across this nation and trying to take down treaty rights to the bare minimum to say that they were old and they shouldn't be talked about.

And being a party to the Great Lakes organization of our Great Lakes fish and wildlife reservation task force, it was a lot of sleepless nights, it was a lot of education we had to do in order to make people realize that treaty rights were Indian rights, they weren't white rights, they belong to native people because they were a reserve. No different than a contract, if someone wants to come and hug a tree on some property that they sold, that could be written in as some part of a covenant, and they could do that year after year after year if they choose to do so. And the land owner, even though they buy it, couldn't stop that person from doing that. So that's somewhat of the same kind

of contracts that our people reserved for us. Not knowingly, we were misled again prior to the '70s, and hundreds maybe thousands of our native people went to jail because they thought that they were violating off-reservation rights. So today we still exercise our rights in 1990. It's been a vision that I've wanted to see for our peoples where I've wanted to be treated no different than a father or grandparents who'd take his or her child out there on a safe night in our traditional way with a light and spear and take that fish and bring it home for another meal, no different than the sports anglers that wish and wait for their time to come and use their hooks and lines to gather their opportunity.

So I think the tribes have moved great strides in accomplishing this for their peoples, and that struggle is still ongoing today. But it was no different than the war zones that happened in Vietnam and in these other wars. But it was fortunate that our people never got killed. I believe in my heart the fear, the flashbacks that we get are still with us because at that time, people literally wanted to kill Indian people. They shot at us night after night, as a service man knowing what bullets sound like going over your head. We were fortunate that the creator watched each and every one of our peoples during those times. Our women took abuse, the accusations that were put upon them. It had to take a strong person to endure what Wisconsin and America has done to our peoples. It made me a strong leader. It made me take time to really understand who I was as an Anishinaabe person. Prior to that I was geared towards making a lifestyle for my family, creating another vision for my family to make sure that we had good days down the road. These treaty rights turn me completely around, 180 degrees. It took a lot of maybe not heart out of me, I guess it took a lot of knowing my heart in the area of why people want to hurt us, why they don't want us to be equal, why we have to fight everyday as Indian people to survive. I think we still hold that warrior mentality as Indian people -- to address what happened back then during the hard times as they called it, during still the hard times as leaders today and to try and make people understand our direction for the next seven generations. I make it a point as a leader to (???) who I am and what I need to do. And I think these treaty rights made that of me. It brought spiritual leaders to my side, it brought the Indian-ness out of me in the area of making people believe in who they are and what they need to do and their goals for their peoples.

I think during those time when we were trying to strategize and put together our fishing team and our hunting team and our treaty team, if you want to call it that, it was really tough. We had people like myself that were service-oriented. We knew how to carry weapons. We knew how to do this thing. But yet I believe that we had guys like Eddie Benton, Tinker, a lot of old warriors and medicine men, and we were asked to go to those sweats, we were asked to smoke them pipes, and I guess that's what gave us the encouragement. Plus I think the individual families really inspired the men to go forth and take that stand.

I can remember when I was on Butternut Lake, I forget what date that was, we were really encountering the heat of the dragon's breath, our endeavor to exercise those rights. And we took a

small group of fisherman to Butternut Lake, and as we put our boats in the cars started coming and people were starting to really get belligerent, and the whites that were there were sending their little kids running back to their cars telling them to go get another six pack. And knowing what beer has done to us, we know what it will do to them. The more they drank, the more hate that was really coming out. That was their encouragement. So we took it upon ourselves to try and confront in a good way the loud mouths because there was a two-tier peninsula where the boats had to go into the center part and launch because the DNR wouldn't let them launch on the other side because you had to go certain places and we were very humble people. We wanted to make sure that we did it right. We didn't want anybody to get mad. So we encountered dialog with some of the anti-treaty people or just some confused communities where people really beat the drums to cause that type of chaos and that mentality. That particular night at Butternut Lake was probably one of the turning points of support for treaty rights. Cameras came and visually started to camcorder the hate for Indian people and the things that we try to do in a peaceful way to accomplish our task without getting back in their face and being like them. That particular night was a night that we all thought we might never come home. You had the "timberniggers," the "wagonburners," that "kill a pregnant squaw and save a walleye," "kill them old fucking Indians because they are no good anyway." The hate for Indian people was like a black cloud at that particular boat landing where they abused our elders on the vehicles.

We had George Meyers there, was one of the lead officials for the state of Wisconsin and it was getting so disorganized, it was getting so tense you could just feel it. And I happened to be talking with a police officer from Park Falls, and I told the guy, "Boy I'm really glad that you're here tonight because I says things could really get tough." And he said, "Fuck you, you timbernigger. If I didn't have this uniform on, I'd be out there throwing rocks at you." Wow, and I said, "Well I'm glad someone made you do your job," and I walked away. We were there for six hours held hostage as Indian people with the threats of large rocks bombarding us, the threats of gunfire on the lake, shooting at our guys out on the lakes. The DNR boat had to go out and sort of corral everybody.

In the meantime we waited for George, who was trying to get more law enforcement from different areas -- not from within that area -- because I told him if that was the mentality of other law enforcement people, we better start writing our obituary on what we can right now because we're not going to get out of here tonight. So he came back and told us that they were getting people all the way from Ashland County -- Ashland, Wisc. -- a group of 15 law-enforcement people came and more DNR wardens were coming at that particular time. Well, George's life was just as (???) as mine, but we'd probably be the first to go if things really went. As it got darker the rocks got bigger. We told all our people to stay confined, not to go out by themselves, and we told them to put their tobacco down. And I walked out, way out, on the end of this here point and I put my

tobacco down, and it was just like a wind came up and I could hear this voice. She said, like I said this wind came up and you could hear these voices, and this was my grandmother's voice, and she said just like we're sitting here -- and you get to know those, you don't forget those -- she said, "Don't worry my boy." That's what she used to call us -- my boy. She said, "Don't worry, things are going to be okay." Seemed like just that quick, I sort of really quick turned around and really, wow. I didn't know what to think. Hair stood on the back of my head, I didn't really know because I was starting to, that was my time of getting involved really into the heat of treaty rights.

And so probably about a half and hour later here comes Ashland County, and they started to have crowd control. There was about 500 to 600 people there all drunked up, and the boat landings were all full of busted beer bottles and booze bottles, and we couldn't get our guys out. I had a son on the lake with a couple other friends, and I was worried about where he was. They had turned and pulled the boats out way up on the other end of the lake because they wouldn't be able to bring them out. And on our way home we said, we can't let this bother us, we got to go back, we got to come back. So the next day when I was sitting in my judge's chambers, first of all I went to my mother's house that next morning and I told here what I was going to do, and she says, well, you got to do what you got to do. So I made some phone calls to some different friends and I told them, I said, I need your help. I called different tribal judges, tribal chairman, and I says we need to go back, we need to let the people know that they didn't scare us off, that we are alive as Indian people. I never realized that I would get the response that I did.

So we named that lake that night. That night we didn't go. We named it the next night. We didn't go. And we were generating our groups of people to come here. And all of a sudden we had anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 support people. And we started to see non-Indian people coming to the aid of Indian people and their treaty rights and endeavors. We filled our community center full of people, leaders from all tribes in Wisconsin, old people coming to the call of our fishermen, American Indian Movement came with their drum. It started to become an exciting movement for our peoples. We feasted over at the center just like, I guess just like we were ready to go out to war. We said that we would go there in a non-violent way. I think we must have had 10 to 12 miles of cars. We went to Butternut Lake again with this group. It took hours for our caravans to assemble and put our vehicles in control as we went to Butternut Lake. We did fish that night. We told them we are going to come back another night to fish. We told them that we're still alive as Indian people, that we're not here to cause the problems that people think we're here for. I guess that was one of the most inspiring times, knowing now that we had the support of all our Indian brothers, and we started to get the support of our non-Indian brothers and sisters out there. We started to get families that were in the surrounding areas to come and find out why there is so much hate for us, the witness for non-violence, Linda from Eagle River, the different guides that came and sat in our camps.

It was very hard for us prior to that to even equate ourselves with non-Indian people because of the fear of what was going on with us. And we started to strategize, and with that we became an organization such as the (???) Treaty Association. We formed that group to galvanize treaty rights, to put together a group of (Ojibwe word) to make and to continue our endeavor to preserve what was reserved for us by our forefathers. We went for years knowing that we were going to encounter the unknown, knowing that maybe someone won't come home. We're starting to be a part of the historical part of preserving that -- tribal leaders, spiritual leaders and pipe carriers. And the hate for Indians was just getting bigger in the state of Wisconsin because we wouldn't bow down to the wishes that the state wanted for us as Indian people. We had to preserve what was preserved for us by our forefathers, and we had to carry those extra steps for the next generations to come. We were put on hit lists, barely. I heard that the governor assigned law enforcement to us, or whatever, not knowing that it was true or not. It felt true because we were fired on every night, run off the roads on our way home, spit on our vehicles, not treated like human beings as we treated the non-Indian anglers year after year when they came. These are very trying times for us as Indian people, but I have to say I'm very proud of the group I fished with and the groups that came after that and the organizations that started to work and work on the problems of their people, the Midwest Treaty Organization, the organizations that stood with us in a non-violent way. Those were tough time for us, like I say, as fisherman and gatherers. And when this tribe was beaten down to, say, let's stop fishing, let's sell those treaty rights, and when we as an organization combated this government right here, the people that I sit with today and government, to sell our treaty rights to the state of Wisconsin for a menial amount of money, people around the world were watching what (???) Treaty Association was doing. But we used our cultural values, we used the wisdom of our elders, we continued to put our tobacco down, to use those sacred fires, to smoke those pipes and go into our community and educate that these things we can't sell. These things were not sold by those old people, so these are the things that we can't sell today. So I think we as Indian fisherman, because those mostly heated arguments and confrontations took place, galvanized the treaty rights in northern Wisconsin. And we could go on and on and on and talk about the horror stories of what families in around this here reservation have done to us, but yet today we live side by side. I'm married to a non-Indian gal. That split her family right down the center. That one year her sister's children were spearing fish or in the same boat with my son on the reservation taking fish, and the next year they were throwing rocks and calling "timberniggers" outside the reservation. It's really hard for us to put to understanding how people can change like the wind and yet sit in their churches and say it's all right and read that good book they talk about, the bible, thou shall not kill, love thy neighbor. That hasn't been done to Indian people today. As you see it's very hard for me to bring back those memories.

I think the outcome brought forth an opportunity for Indian people, Indian leaders, Indian organizations, white leaders, white legislators to take a different look at who native people are in this country we call America, that there is more than one nation in this nation, that there is an obligation to us as Indian people, and that they haven't made an effort to fulfill that obligation. And I guess that's why as leaders, myself and many other people take them to task each and every time that we have an opportunity to say that we are a nation, that we have and had rules and had education far before the coming of the white men. We knew how to count. We knew how to exist. We are a part of the equal system, the environment. I think today we're sort of being looked at as the canary as a miner used a canary, that if Indian people go, then so goes this earth because we've used our treaty rights to hold back the holocaust of destruction of the environment. Native people have been sort of the buffer zone, people that lay on the railroad tracks, people that lay in front of moving vehicles, the people that say, stop, this is what you're doing, you'll no longer see those animals, you'll no longer see these type of things, sort of that conscience somewhat. I think as much as we see out there, people are starting to take a different look at who we are as Indian people.

Treaty rights in the state of Wisconsin have brought many people not only to their knees, but it has brought legislators to say yes to more than just the (???). And with that they've enacted laws to get the better northern neighbors, and I can only attribute that to the guys that went and held the spears, the guys that took the blunt end of being called the derogatory names, the women that stood by their men and the children that stayed home night after night, hoping that maybe mom and dad will come home and the grandparents that worked really strong in taking care of those families, making sure that if something did happen that they were going to be that continuous support for those families. So they need to be honored. They're the ones that upheld that reserved right by our elders. So today I think that we use that in our advantage in such a way that as we call the (???) a warrior, is completely different than taking the lance or the arrows. We did it different. We shaped people to be who they are. We had so many non-Indian people say I'm shamed to be white, what's going on? And I tell them only you can help us, only you can educate your own. Only you can help us to continue to survive. I think this is where the organizations that came to support native treaty rights and the people that exercise them have brought the relationship to the Indian communities to the white communities because there was so much mistrust, misunderstanding of these people with us. So I think that these are the types of things that really brought about Wisconsin to take another look at us always being a neighbor. They've always been our neighbor, and we've always been good neighbors.

And I think we'll continue to be that because that's just who we are. We are that canary. We will exist because we've gone through hell as Indian people today. So the trickery that has gone on back then and today, we have to be savvy enough to understand that -- not savage, but savvy enough. So I think we're learning from that, and the governmental people are learning that way too.

But everyday I get up to hear the swishes of the sabers out there. Maybe one day we'll get up and there will be peace amongst our peoples and make things happen for all peoples. I think that's our goal as Anishinaabe people. We want to live in peace and harmony, not only with the animals and the four-legged and the fish that swim, and the birds that fly, but the two-legged, too, that have their right to walk on our paths with our permission.

I think any time there's an attack on treaty rights, we look at this very seriously. We knew that years back because Mille Lacs didn't intervene right away and Mille Lacs didn't institute their treaty proceedings in the Minnesota area that we knew that something of this here nature would somehow come out of it as soon as they started to apply themselves to exercise the treaty rights within that particular area. And it isn't like we didn't know this. We knew that there was a possibility that this could disrupt the treaty issues and this could have a snowballing effect over Indian country. And we needed to take some time in understanding it and asking those grandfathers how to handle this situation. And we asked for the spiritual leaders, the pipe carriers, the wisdom of our elders and the wisdom of not only the creator but those spirits that have guided us to endeavor the hate of that took place in Wisconsin. Didn't need to take that over to Minnesota. And we knew if we were to work with the Mille Lacs band tribes -- which all of Wisconsin tribes did -- we allowed Marge Anderson, president of the band there, we followed their cue, we followed the wishes of the drum, we followed the wishes of our (???) that came to Lac du Flambeau. And we listened to those spirits that particular evening to address and prepare for once again a battle of preservation if we want to call it that. So I think with that process, we felt very comfortable and we felt that we needed to follow up because of the things that happened in the past in Wisconsin, the struggle that we went through as Indian people. We felt that it need not take place in a Minnesota area because there is already too much hurt in Indian country. And the tribes stayed unified and followed the cue of the Mille Lacs band, and the unification was very strong. We were given direction and what we had to do. We needed to stay strong, and I think this is where we as tribal leaders made a major commitment to do what we had to do, and that was to support the (???) to the east again, running back to congress again to acknowledge the fact that you have a responsibility to us as Anishinaabe people and that there's a portion of that contract in their book that specifically reads treaty rights are the supreme law of the land and that they need to be honorable and humble enough to fulfill that.

So I think that we brought our spiritual leaders, we brought our sacred fires all across country. We once again used white man's talent, the phones, the e-mails. We need these things to make people across Indian country and even the non-Indian communities aware that were very supportive of once again putting away the sabers or the guns, that fighting shouldn't take place and the struggle shouldn't take place. I guess that's what we did when we did when we went in to the Supreme Court, their court where we followed the directions of the spirit people that came to the lodges to tell us to put that medicine plant in our shoes, to wear those, and that we couldn't take any

other articles into there, but yet Indian people used their ingenuity by putting that little bit of cedar in their shoes when they walked on that floor to make people realize to keep us all unified in our endeavor to do that. So we followed up on what we did right, and we ended in those songs, and those steps let those people in the black robes make that decision thinking that we were worried about the people in the black robes. We went back home and we all across Indian country were asked to pray and put tobacco down and to send strong vibes to Washington to these people to rule in favor of native people. And I felt good once I came out of that building because -- I guess a question was asked to me what my thoughts were walking into the Supreme Court of America and it was sort of like when you see in the movies about Rome, the big high pillars, the marble floors, the red cloths, the senate I guess if they called it that at that time, the rulers of Rome, and how they were going to punish or rule on the minorities, the people of no significance. But I think with our lawyers, our plan, we seen that we overcame that, and I think it was due to a lot of building the spiritual gatherings that took place for those days. So I think that right there with our beliefs, our cultures and the support of non-Indian people, non-Indian lawyers seeing that would be a travesty to allow the judicial system to break the bond of what great nations did together, and that was to agree that the treaties were the supreme law of the land. So I can only say that much in reference to that, but I feel good today, I think we jumped for joy. We thanked the creator many times over. We gave many, many thanks to the people that took many hours out of their lives to fight for Indians. So I think that is a rejoiceful thing that we've galvanized it to some degree, but yet we still have to protect and maintain the integrity of our beliefs as Anishinaabe people and what we have to do for the next generations to come, that protection. I think that has been what was reserved, and what we have to preserve as tribal leaders is to make sure that Indian-ness will never go away.

I think my fulfill-ness of that was the fact that I was given that opportunity to be with those great leaders of today. And as I sat there, I tried to envision what it was before the houses were there or how that was to be and how it was to come about -- and I still do that today as I sit in the seats of our yesteryear leaders -- and how I need to portray myself as a leader for tomorrow, how we have to be strong. We have to be all of that. We have to have that sorrow in our selves. We have to have that laughter. We have to have that strength. I think we have to continue to take a look at preservation, continue to stand up as native people. And I think that's what the Madeline Island did to me. It gave me a little more history how gatherings as native people, how we move to where we're at today in the reservations such as Waaswaaganing, (???) where native people moved to accommodate their peoples or how the bureaucracy put us where we're at. But yet I think it gave us a lot of strength again to build a bond with our brothers and sisters from the north, the other side of the line that the BIA put or the non-Indians put in reference to borders where these lands were our lands. Really gave a lot of history and was really joyful to sit there and listen to the stories that were taught by older people, taught by our brothers from the north. And I think it brought unity once again back to

the Ojibwe nation. And it included all of Wisconsin, all of Michigan, all of Minnesota, and a major part of Canada. And we need to build on that because as we proceed from where we're at today, we've been relying on those spirits, those shaking tents to give us good direction. And the message I have to bring to Indian people across this country -- and I have to do that every time I see our brothers and sisters -- is that we as Indian people have to do that ourselves, that we have had the opportunity and continue to have the opportunity to be supportive by groups out there that want to help Indian people. But we as leaders have to be in Washington. We have to be at the government-to-government issues. We have to do all these things that Indian people have to do for their peoples. We can't allow the non-Indian person to talk in our behalf. It's time now that the Indians don't look to the ground but look up and be proud of who they are and bring the nations together. So that's the message I bring at all levels of meetings when I go. And I think we are doing that.

This last week I was in Canada. We had an elder tell us where we're at in the seventh generation portion, brought that (prophecy?) out that was made before the coming of the white man. It told in those generations in those proceedings exactly where we were going to meet with the white man, and it told after those generations. We were told long before we ever seen whites that we were going to be with them, told what we have to do, told today that we're struggling to regain our language because of what that white man took from us, the holocaust, they call it today, some of the ethnic cleansing that went on. America won't admit what they've done to native people, and it's going on today throughout the bureaucracy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, making us fight amongst ourselves as Indian people. We have to stop that. We as leaders have to stand up and say that's got to stop because what we're going to do is we're going to destroy ourselves. So this is the spirituality of being native, Anishinaabe, the first peoples here. We have to start to do that. And it's I guess it's our help, helping you to understand who we are. It's my job and it's other leaders jobs to go out there and tell us that you don't let us do it. We know who knows best on your reservation what needs to be done. Washington don't know that. Wisconsin don't know that. Let us tell you what we need and you help us because there's an obligation there.

So it's really hard to be an Indian today, tougher to be an Indian leader because today we have to wear many hats when we sit. We have to listen to our people. We're supposed to be good listeners, and they expect us to be good stewards, good delegates, all of these things. We carry something that corporations don't carry. I have to be, I don't know if there's a word for what I have to be for my people, but I know I have a vision for my people, and that is to make sure that we don't lose our identity as Indian people. I know that we have to bring our religion back to us. That's important. I think we need to bring our language back to us. That's important. I have to do that too. I have to learn that myself so that I can show people that I'm trying to speak or making an effort to understand our moment and making sure that our young people get their Indian names and that we look at these here powwows that go on across this here great nation. They're there for enjoyment,

not to kill our people. The 49ers that have been after that. We have to take a look at condensing that into more serious thought and gatherings and understanding of who we are. We have to start to prepare and make sure that the next generations are going to be there, because that's what that prophecy says. So I'm getting a lot of experience, and I enjoy it. It's very interesting and exciting at times and depressing sometimes to be a leader because sometimes things don't move as fast as you want them to move because we run up against so many obstacles. And it's really sad today that we don't have enough information or enough time to educate our non-Indian counterparts as to who we are and why we do what we do and that if we react or say we're not going to do something we're classified as militants or hell raisers or something completely different so the newspapers can turn it completely around. So we learn to deal with all that, and I think knowledge is power, and power is knowledge. And I think if we as leaders put that all into one place we can definitely make sure that preservation for next generations to come will be what we're supposed to be. So I just feel good everyday.

I take life more serious since I lost my twin brother. I guess I expect to lose my mom and dad as they get older just like us. Our people know that we have to make that long walk one day. I look at it a little bit different. When you lose someone that you really been close to, split apart, was one part of you at one time, it's harder. So I just take it one day at a time, I say (???) in the mornings, which I never used to do before. I take a little more time to take appreciation for my grandchildren now because my kids are grown up, but yet they're still my kids. I see and I share the little bit and I take a little bit more time with, I have sometimes a little time for them. But I think it's time now that we have to do that across Indian country with our children because that's the next generation, the next tribal chairman, the next council people. They are the next ones that have to draw the line in the sand and say, "This has got to stop." This is where we have to make sure that ends meet, and we have to partner up for the betterment of the tomorrows to come. I'm hoping that can be accomplished as we precede in these type of events that we're doing here today, that we can share with the non-Indian people that want to watch us the feelings of myself as a leader, the hurts that we have to endure, the sorrows of the incomplete, may it be from the judicial system or just today in general what's going on. There's so much that we have to do, and so little time to do it in. So I think we have to preserve it on film. We have to make sure that this is put out for our people to see and hear. And I can only say I appreciate what you guys are trying to do to get all this here. I wish we had an opportunity to get our elders. My mom is still here to talk about what Joe talks about what she went through. We didn't have a lot of this stuff a lot of years ago. Now we'll be able to put it on film for someone to see it maybe 100 years from now.

I think when I talk about economic development, it has to be built in you, ground up. I think it has to come from your parents, come from the skills that are taught you. And I think my people have not been afforded that opportunity because the economics that were here in the early '20s,

'30s, '40s was mostly white development, and there was no input by native people other than selling their basketry or beadwork or furs or maybe groceries or maybe a jug of wine. There was no one to take on an Indian mentor, no mentor program. The skills of survival was to go with the flow, to be the people that would rake the yards, make the beds, carry the suitcases. We would be there to call the service runs, do the dirty work. What they do best is fishing, hunting for the men.

I can remember this community over 30-some guides. Most of the resorts were in the northern part of the lakes where the guides would go fishing (???) because they had to enjoy that. And the way the white man enjoyed that many years ago was take him to the bar and had a few drinks, and some of the guys never went home. And today they're all gone, except for maybe one or two Indian guides on this reservation. And it still has that symbolic way of doing things that when they get through their days, the white man's mentality is, "Let's go have a drink. We've got through fishing and having a good time. You caught a lot of fish, or you showed me a good time. Now I'm going to show you a good time." I think that was a downfall of many of our famous guides.

So I think we have to turn a different twist to that, we have to become entrepreneurs. I've learned that from my father, from my mother, my family working hard all it's life, never asking. And I haven't asked today for anything from my tribal government other than the land that I live on. I've always been a self-made person, and I've been damned for that. Because I've always wanted good things for my kids, good things for my family and good things for what we wanted, and we worked hard for that. And we have what we call today the crab syndrome where everybody shouldn't have that because that's the way it was taught here, the Bureau gave you everything. And that mentality has to start to be eroding, and I can see that with today's opportunity for our young people. We're starting to make people feel good about themselves. Just in the last 10 years, our high unemployment rate was in the '70s, today it's roughly around 80 percent. We still have the need to do job creation, ownership. We need to build entrepreneurs so we can build our downtown area, even if it's craftspeople. We need to express the fact that we can do it, too. We don't have to be second-class anymore. We can be first-class, and I think this is what I bring to mind to my people here. You can have a nice car and it's really good because when I buy a new car, I catch hell. But now when I buy a new car, I can hide my new car with all the other new cars so it gives me that good feeling. So our tribal government used our gaming dollars to pump up our young people to make them feel good about going to school, the things that we afforded to the families years ago, that little incentive that cared if you do good in school. There's a little certificate that you can go get some tennis shoes or whatever, \$1,000 to our graduates if they fulfill four years of high school, \$5,000 to our college graduates, that carrot and also helping them when they were in need. We wouldn't have been able to do that if we didn't have the gaming dollars to do that. The federal government didn't live up to their responsibility so now we fill that void and we be crucified for

filling that void. So I'm hoping with our endeavor to keep doing what we're doing, we'll build the economics that we've already started here. We've started to be knowledgeable. We've got grant writers. Because of our fight to bring Indian housing back home, tribes now own their own housing stories, and the federal government finally give up.

The federal government failed us in all efforts. They failed us in obligations to us. Housing was one of them. Treaty rights was another one. I could go on and on in their failure to fill up their (???) to us. But I think because of our persistence, the president of this United States, Bill Clinton, as much as he has been negative in some areas has been very supportive of our endeavors to work from a government-to-government relationship. He's mandated by his order anytime that you start to apply any type of rule to an Indian nation, you must talk with them first. So we've been knowledgeable about that process. We've been trying to get more dollars to come into our reservations for economic gain. We've been starting to teach our young people to become better knowledgeable about the opportunity to become better citizens in our community, to go off and be managers or entrepreneurs. We've been pulling our nurses. We've been filling those uniforms with Indians. That's our goal to do that. We're trying to buy up our land, our land base here. There's just a lot of things that have been very beneficial to me as a tribal leader because I've had that most of my life because of my working skills with my dad and mom teaching us to be very smart and savvy in the business world. So this is where I apply my skills here to my people. To tell people there's no such thing as a free ride out there. You've got to watch out for people that bear gifts. There's no free rides. We've got to work hard for what we get.

We shouldn't have to beg. I shouldn't have to go to Congress and spend five minutes and tell them my needs on my reservation when I've been doing that for seven years. I tell them, come to my reservation and see the hurts that are still here. Even though we have gaming operations we are still the poorest of the poor. We are still 300 homes short. We are still in need of health care in our clinics here. Alcohol killed more of our people than cancer did. We need to start to take a look at maybe a possible lawsuit against the alcohol corporations like they did the tobaccos. So these are the type of things I have a vision that we need to play out. We have to prepare our young people to be good business people, good citizens, to stand up and feel good about themselves. I think if that was to take place, and education being a major part of it, I think we can go a long ways because I'm told on the big drum, I sit as a pipe carrier on a big drum, that there is a spirit there that says we have to cheat that chimookomaan a little bit. Cheat that white man a little bit. By cheating him, I've been told, that is to gain that knowledge on how he or she works in this America. That we have to go out there and get educated and use it to our best ability to come home and help our peoples because that's what those spirits told us. That we have to do it ourselves. So I am hoping that my reign as the chairman of this tribe, president as they call it, that I can accomplish that because I think it is so important that we have to identify that there is so much preservation that needs to be

preserved for the next seven generations that it's time now that we start to fulfill those prophecies that's been afforded us and that people start to listen to them.

I think, like I said, that our children were numbers, that they were insignificant and arbitrary just no different than what the BIA did to our children and our great grandmothers and mothers. How they literally just took them out of homes and stole them because of numbers. I think that was still part of that regime that the federal government or whoever could still do that in this day and age. This is back in the '70s or early '80s that that was still going on. They had no consideration for sovereignty. They had no consideration for Indian families. That they knew best. Forgetting about the bond that Indians families had. That grandmas and grandpas, that if no one was there that they took on that responsibility. Forgetting about that Indian way. Forgetting about that Indian value. I think that's what we brought to the judicial system is the fact that our children want that love. Not by someone else, but by their mother, by their grandparents, by their Indian community. That was what brought the holistic-ness, the Indian community together to protect the next generations. I think that the Act was used for that purpose, and today we still see some judicial systems totally disregard that until we intervene on behalf of the children. That they think that they can just arbitrarily forget about Indian country out there. That there is no such thing as Indian country, and that we have to bow down to the powers that be and we've taken different judges to task. You can't take away the children of an Indian family. You can't do what you did years ago. You have to acknowledge the sovereignty of an Indian nation and their judicial system. That's what the Act did for us. That galvanized the tribal courts that wanted to use the courts in that way. But once again because of lack of experience and lack of knowledge a lot of courts were not aggressive like our court. So I think we took that stand. Well, if you can't come to us then we'll go to you. Judge, these are my people and I'll judge them. I'll deal with them. That's the stance I took as a tribal judge for our young people.

I can't say the future is bleak because I see so much movement in our communities. I can only say the future would be bleak if the leadership in those communities don't stand up and take notice to them. I can say in Waaswaaganing here that I think we can see the light on the other side of the tunnel that we have to continuously follow to accomplish some of the viable tasks that we've put forth. Some of the hard work that my leadership and my support of my council has endeavored to do and that was to accomplish the task of preserving our language, our culture and then once again making sure that the treaty rights is galvanized so that it can't be uprooted. I think with those I think a lot of things can materialize from that because all that does is bring strength to us as Indian people. It builds us up as leaders, and I think when you have all of that energy and that synergy we can bring to the forefront that ingenuity of being who we are as Indian people. I think with all of that at least Waaswaaganing has got some bright lights out there for them.