

**Yvette:** We want you to share your opinions and feel free to do that. Tell us your name and how you want to have it spelled out your title.

**Charles:** Okay, Charles Trimble, retired and I'm a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe. Served through pretty much the 1970s as director of the National Congress of American Indians. Prior to that when I first met Lucy, I was the founder of the American Indian Press Association at that time. That was in 1969 or '70. And that was an interesting time because that's when I first met Lucy. It was--I really wasn't involved in Indian affairs very much. I was in the aerospace industry and stuff and I was the editor of a little newspaper called the *Indian Times* in Denver and-- oh, was in touch with a lot of other Indian editors of Indian newspapers because we would exchange subscriptions.

So we decided to start the American Indian Press Association. I went to NCAI Convention in Anchorage. I got to make a short presentation on what we were trying to do with the new American Indian Press Association. Lucy came and she said that she was interested in what I was talking about. She says, "I want you to come up to Spokane because I want to talk to you." [chuckles] I loved it. Then later on I think she called and she said, "You're supposed to come up to Spokane." I said, "Oh, okay." I expected her to offer a ticket, but she never did. I flew off there on my own expense. She met me in Spokane and we went to the Indian Center there.

She told me exactly what she wanted. She described it that she wanted two hands holding the reservation and that was to depict the fact that it's in your hand. Only you can do it. Nobody else can do it. It's up to you. That's where the logo for *Our Heritage* came about and she wanted the paper named *Our Heritage*. She really had pretty much done what she wants. Articles and I think Vine Deloria wrote one of the first articles, big article and it was a newsletter as I recall it was-- it wasn't a full-sized newspaper. She was so specific. I liked her right away.

She never ever offered to pay me anything, but I got to know that she didn't have the money to pay me anyway. You know you do it free. [chuckles] I got my father-in-law involved with his ad agency here at Omaha and we were able to put *Our Heritage* together and publish it, send it out to her. She then started mailing those out to tribal members in Seattle and Portland and Spokane. Mostly to get them to vote and that was that when she was starting that campaign to replace that pro-- it's strange you call it pro-termination- - pro-liquidation. They were the liquidationists. When I first went up there she didn't want me to go out to one of the rallies that they were having.

She said it was too dangerous. They don't want anything to happen to you and at that rally, I didn't go to it but somebody ran a herd of cattle through the rally. [laughs] Scattered everybody, but, oh, that was my first meeting with Lucy. She just kind of captures you. That's what she did. There was a group later on and I was part of it. Melton Tonasket was part of it. There were others. They called us Lucy's litter [chuckles] and I was proud of that.

**Yvette:** That must have been the committee on Indian rights sort of Lucy's letter.

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Charles:** The what?

**Yvette:** Committee on Indian rights. Do you remember that?

**Charles:** I don't remember that, no.

**Yvette:** I think that's what they called themselves. What did termination mean to you at the time?

**Charles:** At that time I was also a close friend to another woman that I had met. Older woman named Helen Peterson and Helen was also a very inspiring leader, but Helen told me pretty much about termination. She was executive director of National Congress in the 1960s and at the end of the 1950s when termination was first kicking in. Joe Garry was the president of the NCAI and Helen Peterson was executive director. She had a very strong knowledge of what termination was doing and what the federal government meant to do through termination. And that was to sever the relationship between the Indian tribes and the federal government so there would be no more trust relationship.

It was a scary thing because a lot of those tribes weren't ready for that or even today. Why should they be? That was their right as much as anybody's of that trust relationship was something-- it wasn't a gift to them, it was an agreement. That is what I understood termination to be and I think that was important because up there in Colville a lot of the tribal members thought it was just a matter of ownership of land that this was all going to be bought from you and you'll be free with a whole bunch of money. That wasn't it at all. That land base was so important that without that land base you really didn't have a tribe anymore. That was what I had learned from Helen and also from Lucy. That termination must be fought. It must be taken on and Lucy was the one to do it, you know, to go up there and defeat the liquidationists and take back the tribe and instill those values, you know, instill that knowledge of what that really meant to them. Those two women were so powerful. So many of the women I met and our leaders in the NCAI were women. I noticed there they worked well behind the scenes, not subversively or covertly, but they did the work in the committees. They were always down there with the resolutions committee and all of these committees. The caucuses and committee that make NCAI work. There was an understanding among women on that and I always really appreciated it because that's where I met so many inspiring leaders and so many of them were women. [laughs]

**Yvette:** They were probably enjoying having you involved with their work. I know and I've seen some of the videos that were done of Lucy at the time. There's one that's done by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Were you involved in that?

**Charles:** No.

**Yvette:** Okay. I was curious about the *Our Heritage* newsletter, when you put that together, how many copies or how many editions did you do? How long did that period last?

**Charles:** Do what?

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Yvette:** When you were helping with editing the *Our Heritage* newsletter, how--

**Charles:** She took over pretty quickly or they did up there. I think that we did the initial and maybe a couple of more, but she took the responsibility up there. I don't know who published it or anything.

**Yvette:** I see. Now we're trying to see if we can get a copy of each of those. Whenever you make available would be really--

**Charles:** I have a file. I look through my files, which are a mess before you came because I thought I could put my hands on it. I also loaned all that material to Mark Trahan and he was very interested in Lucy and everything.

**Yvette:** I can check in with Mark. I know he suggested I get a hold of the University of Arkansas and that's how I found out-

**Charles:** Oh, good. Yes.

**Yvette:** -the copy that I found.

**Charles:** I'll look through and I'll also check my-- The University of South Dakota asked for my papers. A lot of them are entered in their archives up at the University of South and you can call them and just ask for the Charles Trimble archives. They have them pretty well organized and they may have the whole thing done.

**Yvette:** Okay. Sounds good. I know that you worked with other members of the Colville tribe. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

**Charles:** I worked with?

**Yvette:** You had worked with other members of the Colville tribe. I know you had mentioned Mel Tonasket and my father.

**Charles:** Yes.

**Yvette:** Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

**Charles:** Yeah. Initially, when they were part of the team that Lucy was trying to get back on the council or get off onto the council and that's where I met them, but I didn't really work closely with them. I worked directly with Lucy on those things.

**Yvette:** That interaction, how long did that last?

**Charles:** One of them-- Mel Tonasket lasted a long time because he and I worked so closely at the NCAI. He was the president and I was executive director. Andy Joseph, [unintelligible 00:16:04] later on, periodically. I can't remember the others. That's the [unintelligible 00:16:17] I never met again, I didn't think, but it was mostly directly with Lucy that I worked.

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Yvette:** I know when we've talked with Rachel Joseph and with Veronica Murdock, they would talk about how Lucy would meet with them after the committee meetings or they would get together and that she would tell them that she wanted them to do certain things.

**Charles:** Yes.

**Yvette:** She had proposed some strategy, but they sort of figured it out. It's like you said, they use the committee process in the caucus process.

**Charles:** Yes. She was so well respected that she could do things like that. She was living walking hero among a lot of the people-- and among younger people, a tremendous inspiration. Just even today, when I talk around and talk about the old days people like that and I mentioned Lucy Covington, their eyes light up. The name is recognized and was such an admiration.

**Yvette:** Because you were executive director, did you arrange meetings on Capitol Hill for Lucy or for others?

**Charles:** We did whenever we were asked to. A lot of the tribes had their own lobbyists and NCAI-- I would have to say that I didn't consider myself a good lobbyist. NCAI was important in pulling together consensus among the tribes. That was their major value. And so after, let's say, Helen Peterson's days and beyond that, they were set up as a lobbyist organization, but I don't think that they were extremely effective as a lobbyist group. They did try to arrange presentations to Congress and to the administration and everything and did a good job at that but for individual lobbying, no.

**Yvette:** Do you have any stories about Lucy at that time about her interactions with members of Congress?

**Charles:** Yes. Scoop Jackson-- I don't know. He was pushing termination and I always felt she kind of won them over. I don't think there was warfare, political warfare, between them or among them and I think that there was a lot of respect for her on the part of members of congress and including Scoop Jackson, and Lloyd Meads, and other people from the Northwest and throughout the congress, she was pretty much recognized.

**Yvette:** I've heard-- when I worked on Capitol Hill, one of the first members I met knew her and worked with her was Norm Dicks from Washington State. He had met her when he worked for Senator Magnussen.

**Charles:** Oh, yes, Magnussen, I forgot about him.

**Yvette:** He had said that Warren Magnussen would send his limousine or a vehicle to pick her up when he knew that she was coming into the airport. Then they would ride around town in that limousine and stuff because he wanted her to visit and chat. They'd meet up at the Mayflower Hotel and hang out and probably have their Martinis.

**Charles:** Yes, [laughs] I loved it.

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Yvette:** Yes, so they had good times. Did you have any involvement in helping craft the Self-Determination Act? I know there was a lot happening with the task force in tribal. The movements, there was an examination of trust responsibility, the Policy Review Commission.

**Charles:** Yes, American AP. Yeah, I remember those task force were pretty well arranged politically, and with a lot of politics going on. It was kind of an honor to be appointed to that, and so there was a lot of political activity, but we didn't have an awful lot to do with putting those together.

**Yvette:** Was that something that Forrest Gerard had--

**Charles:** Yes, Forrest did an awful lot and Franklin Ducheneaux on the outside.

**Yvette:** I see. I've only read what took place I didn't really know who was all involved in printing the doc. I would anticipate if NCAI was out there, that you, guys, were very involved in helping to at least shape the recommendation.

**Charles:** Oh, sure, yes. It was very important to have the right people on there. It got pretty political too [chuckles] but it's good politics, the right people got on in most cases and Ernie Stevens did an awfully good job heading it up.

**Yvette:** I remember Ernie Stevens and Leon Cook were some of the individuals that Lucy would bring in to also help with the campaign against termination because I remember they were both down in Nespelem for a couple of the different meanings. Anyway, we're curious, I've seen testimony of Lucy on the Self-Determination Act and I was wondering if you were involved in helping.

**Charles:** Yes.

**Yvette:** What were your thoughts about that time?

**Charles:** I think in my mind it was such a good Act, to basically let the tribe take over and let the federal government pay the tribes on a contract basis to do their own governance and to take a lot of the power away from the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the reservations. I thought that was something when I first went to NCAI, I never expected to see all of a sudden the state was shaping, and a lot of people shaped it, but again, Forrest Gerard and people like that had an awful lot to do with it, and I think of the Policy Review Commission-- American-Indian Policy Review Commission, that's what it was--the big silly--and a lot of that came out of there.

**Yvette:** I know when I've seen the testimony, Lucy had been very clear about that we're not asking for more than anybody else, we're just asking for what's due to us. We're just trying to do what we can to address the education and development of our community. I'll shift a little bit towards that discussion around the American-Indian Scholarships and what that was about. I know she didn't have children of her own so she felt like everybody was her child, that she was responsible for everyone. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Charles:** Yes, I served with Lucy on that American-Indian Scholarship Committee. John Rainer put that away and of course, he had such high respect for her and he asked that he invited myself, and Lucy, and him, and I can't remember the other one, Joe Sandow and just a really good group of a small group of people. And I think we were taking over the distribution of about a \$1 million in scholarships that were going out to help graduate students--Indian graduate students. There was another, John Rainer was a strong leader himself down with the Taos Pueblo and the respect that he had for Lucy, it just seemed like if he was going to create that American Scholarship fund or scholarship service that she would be on it. You saw that all across Indian Country was all of those leaders-- she came to mind whenever something like that was coming up because there was such great and widespread respect for her.

**Yvette:** Chuck, I don't know if you know, but they're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the American-Indian Graduate Center now. Have they been in touch with you?

**Charles:** No.

**Yvette:** I suspect that they'll probably be reaching out to you some time.

**Charles:** Okay, yes, that'd be nice.

**Yvette:** We actually interviewed their executive director, Angelique Albert during NCAI and they have been awarding \$15 million in scholarships a year and they said since they started in 1969, 1970, in that period of time that they've awarded I think 16,000 plus scholarships. They have a discrete number of lawyers and physicians that they know that they've awarded scholarships to. I know myself I'm a scholarship recipient.

**Charles:** Who? Are you?

**Yvette:** Yes.

**Charles:** Wonderful.

**Yvette:** I was able to go to graduate school at University of Denver because of that. They went back and they've been looking, they're trying to get pictures of Lucy and the early board. They'll probably highlight some of that.

**Charles:** I think a few of us are alive. I may be the only one alive from that original group.

**Yvette:** Yes, it might be. Howard or John Rayner's son, Howard is helping them out and a few others that were. Sam Delorian and others have been involved in Capitol Hill. Do you have any particular recollection of Lucy's comments or her thoughts or her concerns during that time on the board? Do you remember anything that stands out from your early experience?

**Charles:** I'm thinking--I'm trying to re-picture her in meetings and, you know, how she conducted herself. And it was always with enthusiasm, with dedication. And it was just a

feeling that she added to the group of her dedication, her interest, how important it was to her. I don't remember any specific thing that she said but it was always encouraging. She wasn't one to gripe. If she had something to tell you, she would tell you, not behind your back. I just can't think of anything but interesting question, you just see her, you kind of feel her spirit or something. Even thinking of it now, just really trying to think of what it was, what did she bring. It was always important, she was one of my first heroes in NCAI and all of those.

**Yvette:** I understood that she went to Haskell. I've met with the archivist from Haskell and she's going back and trying to look at her records and talk a little bit more about her time in Haskell. We're thinking it's probably in the 30s she was there. I know she was involved in the war effort and that's when she met her husband, John. Did Lucy nurture you in your leadership skills?

**Charles:** Pardon?

**Yvette:** Did Lucy nurture you in your leadership skills? Was she helping you to become a better leader? That's what Mel Tonasket says.

**Charles:** I think it's constantly challenging. I think if Mel were--Mel is still alive, isn't he?

**Yvette:** He just got a moose. He and his son both went out. They had permits for moose and they each got a moose. He's still out there hunting and being active. My best friend is my cousin, Jilly, and she's on the Gaming Commission. She's their secretary. She schedules Mel all the time so she's always got almost daily connection with him but I knew he went out to get a moose. **[unintelligible 00:35:22]** We were all wondering if he was successful. By that Sunday night, their friends were posting pictures of his, "His moose looks smaller than his son's moose." Moose are hard to come by so the fact that they each got a moose was pretty amazing. Anyway, he's doing good. When he talks about Lucy, it was really nice.

One of the first times I was working in Washington, Mel took me out to dinner at the Philips Flagship and he [crosstalk] he was saying, he says, "I wanted you to have the same experience that I had with Lucy but she brought me here." He says when she came to DC, she liked to eat dinner here and he says, "So I wanted to bring you here and have dinner."

**Charles:** That's nice.

**Yvette:** He told me about how one of the first times he went to Washington, she just told him to bring a notebook and a notepad and he just followed her all-round DC. He said she told him to take notes of all the meetings and all the conversations. Then she says, "At the end of the day, we're going to get together at dinner and we'll talk about what your impressions were." He said that's how he learned how to deal with all these different members of Congress. He would go over the notes with her and then she'd tell him what he had to do next. He was like the secretary. He says, "I was like her glorified secretary."

He said, "I'd go everywhere but I learned how to understand and she told me what she thought."

He said it was really helpful in understanding how to deal with elected officials.

He was passing it on to me and I said, "Yes, of course, I have to take notes of all the meetings and things like that too." It was good. I know you've served with her on the board of scholarships. Was there ever any advice or any suggestions she had about cultural identity about how students should feel pride for who they are or they should understand who they're descended from, who their family connections are? Did she ever talk with you about that?

**Charles:** No.

**Yvette:** I've seen her offer comments in some of her videotapes where she talks about the importance of our identity. I think she was really worried in termination that if we lost our land, we'd lose our identity and that we would lose our sense of who we were. I'm just curious if--

**Charles:** Yes, I remember.

**Yvette:** I'm photographing. Do you think tribal sovereignty plays a role in the education of our children?

**Charles:** Does it play a what?

**Yvette:** Does it play a role? How do you feel about young people today because part of this Lucy Covington Center is to try to help, transfer and give all these young college students that attend Eastern Washington University a person-- like you said, she was a hero to you. We're trying to help them on a larger basis understand how these leaders, these elected tribal leaders are an important part of what their future holds.

**Charles:** You mentioned sovereignty. I think that word is used so much. I don't think it's overused. It's a fact. Sovereignty is-- We have it. It's not something that can be taken from you. It's yours. They can quit recognizing your sovereignty. That's what they mean to do in termination and stuff, but they don't take it away from you. She understood that, I guess.

**Yvette:** I know, Chuck. I've read where you've written about the kids at-- I think it's at Red Cloud Indian School. You've talked about the importance of their having a good sense of their identity, where they come from and who they are, and the greatness of the people, that it's intrinsic to them, but sometimes, I think they have a hard time finding that or identifying that. I think that's--to me, that was a part of the importance of Lucy, was that she knew that and she was trying to always figure out ways to protect that and promote that. She always felt it was important, participate in the powwow or the dance. Do you have any ideas about that?

**Charles:** All that Indian country meant to her, especially the land base and the identity-- Colvilles are not just Colvilles, are they-- What was she?

**Yvette:** She was Moses, Wenatchee, and Cayuse.

**Charles:** Like a cloud or something you came into Lucy's world and you were that-- It's a spirituality and it's a whole bunch of things that she recognized in-- that you had to recognize in order to fight for termination or fight against termination because those were being threatened. She stopped termination. Ada Deer turned it around, but Lucy stopped it.

**Yvette:** I'd agree. I think when you talked about the *Our Heritage* newsletter--

**Charles:** Pardon?

**Yvette:** When you talked about the *Our Heritage* newsletter, you talked about that she wanted to have the hands wrapped around the reservation and the land, and she was trying to protect that for the children and for future generations.

**Charles:** Yeah, she was very clear on what she wanted. All I did was illustrate what she wanted. I remembered some of those first articles. I think Vine wrote one for her on the value of the land that, if it's sold, it's sold at estate prices-- Estate sale because you're not going to get the value and that's what people were looking at. A lot of money is coming in, but what he was saying in one of the articles that he wrote was that it's not so. They see a dead person, then they're just going after what he left or what she left.

**Yvette:** In your opinion, how important would it be to have printed resources that tell the Lucy Covington story?

**Charles:** I'm sorry?

**Yvette:** In your opinion, how important would it be to have resources that tell the Lucy Covington story?

**Charles:** I think very important. I really can't see-- The leadership of the 20th century, she has got to be up there. They talked about great leadership. She was always in that, always. Peter MacDonald, Phillip Martin, a whole bunch of leaders that came up in the 20th century-- and I can't think of one that would be considered a greater leader than she was. That was recognized. She was always brought up. You asked how important it would be to have--

**Yvette:** Educational resources?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Yvette:** I know we talked about that with Mark Trahan or I'll tell somebody what project I'm working on and they say, "Is there going to be a book? Is there going to be information that will be available to help educate?"

**Charles:** There's no book on her.

**Yvette:** There isn't. There's just a few chapters that have been written, but not much. No book on her, not yet, just the video, the Encyclopedia Britannica video. Are there other tribal leaders that should be part of the Lucy Covington Center, once it's built?

**Charles:** Be featured in it or--?

**[pause 00:47:48]**

All my experience with NCAI, the Northwest was just packed with [chuckles] leaders. It's really difficult. I've been working with another person on a book about the National Tribal Chairman Association. I haven't read it yet. I did a lot of the reading, fact-checking, and stuff. Another on-- This guy is doing the National Congress of American Indians now. There's never a book been done on them really. There's one, but that was in the early years. I don't know, it seems-- I'm surprised that there's not one done on Lucy.

**Yvette:** Yeah, I know.

**Charles:** Do you think that your work could lead up to on her?

**Yvette:** I think so. I'm not certain if I would be the one that would write it or there would be another, but there's-- We've gotten some-- This is an annotated bibliography of Lucy in her times. It sort of covers the period.

**Charles:** Beautiful picture.

**[pause 00:49:33]**

One day, she was telling us about her family and stuff like that-- About her parents not being able to understand each other or something. [chuckles] You have extra copies of that or--?

**Yvette:** I can probably leave this one with you because I can print it out again.

**Charles:** Oh, okay. Thank you.

**Yvette:** It's got little smudges on it, but that would probably be a good way to see what she's done. It does have the timeline talking about her life, where she was born, who her father was, who she was married to. When she got elected, she was actually filling the position that my grandfather had. He was George Friedlander. He was getting hit with diabetes pretty hard. It was impacting him and his health, so he said, "You've been doing

this kind of work. It's time now for you to step up. Do you want to run in my place?" That's what she did. That's how she got elected.

That newsletter, it's just a 1970 created newspaper, *Our Heritage*. They just have a time when she was at a conference at WSU with Mel Tonasket, when she testified before the House of Representatives that she and Mel were in a film, the American-Indian, *The Quiet Revolution*, and then that she was in the film 1978 produced by Encyclopedia Britannica. She testified in 1979, 1980, and that she passed in 1982. They've done a pretty thorough research of her and then they do show the article that you did in the *Lakota Country Times* on October 6, 2010. That's in here. Lucy Covington, Termination Dragon Slayer.

**Charles:** Oh, yes, I saw that.

**Yvette:** It shows you with the copy of the newspaper too, in the picture. Are there any pictures or images of Lucy that you recall that should be part of this collection of work?

**Charles:** No, I have a file which I couldn't find and I have a picture, I don't know where I got it of her headstone. She's catholic, huh?

**Yvette:** Yes.

**Charles:** I didn't realize that.

**Yvette:** She was always pretty involved with the church, but Lucy sort of-- I don't know if this is just the family tradition, how it was, but she was picked by her grandmother to stay with her often. Grandmothers would do that, they might pick a grandchild out and be your closest ally or helper. She had that honor for her Grandma Mary-- Mary Moses, who was married to Chief Moses. She lived to be almost in her 100s. Lucy would help her and assist her [inaudible 00:53:54].

**Charles:** What tribe was Moses?

**Yvette:** They were the Columbia-Sinkiuse Band. That's what they were called. They're what's Moses-Columbia band today. They had a dominion around the Columbia Basin, down through Wenatchee, over into almost to Pullman and Moscow, and Lewiston area up to Spokane, and up north to all along the Columbia River. Anyway, Lucy was Mary's hand-picked person.

Lucy, because she didn't have children, then she picked different individuals. She had a young gal who helped with her quite a bit and then she left. She got married. I'm forgetting her first name. Gladys was her name. Then when Gladys was older, she wanted my sister Jennifer to be her ally-buddy. So Jennifer, who is a year younger was that and she would stay with Lucy during the summertime and help her out, do errands and chores. It was nice because Lucy didn't have very much land, but when she passed, then she passed on.

**Charles:** How many cattle did she have?

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Yvette:** Gosh, I think she probably had about 40 or 50 cattle. She didn't have a lot after the termination era because she had to sell them for travel time, but the ranch was pretty substantial. My aunt Barbara inherited that. This Saturday, Barbs-- She's 87 now herself and she's having Thanksgiving dinner for the family. We're all supposed to show up and be there, so that'll be nice.

She's my godmother-- Barb is, but she's the one who inherited most everything. When Lucy passed away, she had two Cadillacs. She liked driving Cadillacs. She gave one of them to Mel, so Mel has a really nice white Cadillac. I don't know if he still has it or not, but we always remember thinking he really lucked out. [chuckles] I wanted to ask you some questions about NCAI.

**Charles:** Sure.

**Yvette:** NCAI, did they-- I know they tended to do memorials to native people, to the leadership. They still do that, they recognize and honor those who passed on in their different years. Was that something that you helped to start in the organization?

**Charles:** No. They were doing that when I first came into NCAI, but usually, it was somebody that died that immediate year. If our conventions were in the fall and if anybody died, they were memorialized.

**Yvette:** Were you involved in anything involving Lucy?

**Charles:** She died in '82. I was out of NCAI quite [inaudible 00:57:33] '78 to '82, four years. Sometimes, NCAI was strange. People who replaced you sometimes didn't want your spirit around or something [laughs]. At times, you get bad-mouthed or they'd leave you out of things and stuff like that. By that time too, I was pretty busy doing other things.

**Yvette:** I hear you on that. When I became the executive director for the National Indian Health Board, that was for eight years from '95 till 2002. I know after I left, there were certain things I thought I put into place because they had a consumer conference, they didn't really have-- they had their annual conference but they didn't have any honor or recognition that they gave to their managers or their prominent tribal leaders or health advocates.

We decided, as a part of the consumer conference, to recognize and have a banquet to honor people from Indian country. Indian Health Services is really good at giving all these awards, mostly for the Commissioned Corps officers, but they don't necessarily recognize the tribes because the tribes were all about 50% 638. We said, "Well, we have to recognize the tribe somehow because some of them are really making some substantial public health efforts and improving health care."

We sort of instituted their annual banquet and their recognition, but we needed to highlight and recognize somebody, so we said, "Well, let's give a lifetime achievement award to someone like Jake, then call it the Jake Whitecrow Award." because Jake was such a long director for NCAI. I worked for him as an intern, so I thought that would be a good--

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

At not NCAI, but NIHB-- person to name the lifetime achievement award after. It was something I set up. Nice thing this year, they gave the recognition to my brother, Andy, for his work in advocacy.

**Charles:** Who was it that was head of IHS for so many years?

**Yvette:** Everett Rhoades?

**Charles:** No, before him.

**Yvette:** Emery Johnson?

**Charles:** That's who it was, yeah.

**Yvette:** Was he there when you were executive director?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Yvette:** That was a long time then. He was pretty interesting. He would have a meeting at his house for all of the budget people, for the people who were making recommendations for the next annual budget. We had instituted-- They had a budget process that was supporting OMB. They would give recommendations to OMB by the end of November for the upcoming budget, but most of it was really, at that time, oriented just to Indian Health and not to the tribes that were 638-ed.

When I was there, we initiated the budget formulation committee. We said, "We should take this and have all of the areas create their own budget recommendations, but we should be steering the process and telling the Indian Health Service that's how the budget should be shaped." We sort of took that process over because it used to be really run by the Feds instead of the tribes. Anyway, that was one of my recommendations. It's still in place, so I'm pretty happy about that, but that's, like you said, behind the scenes, do what you can to change it internally.

**Charles:** Did Emery Johnson start the Indian Health Board?

**Yvette:** I think he worked closely with-- There was a gentleman from Florida and he was one of those really prominent tribal leaders but tribal health administrators. It's not Shore. I can't remember what his name was. He's one of the original board members that incorporated NIHB. Tommie, Howard Tommie, remember him?

**Charles:** He disappeared.

**Yvette:** He sort of did, but I think he was the guy behind all of the success of the Seminole Casinos.

**Charles:** That's what I always thought too. I just thought he disappeared. You didn't see him anymore.

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Yvette:** He's probably a lot like Warren Buffett, kind of behind the scenes.

**Charles:** [laughs] Howard Tommie, I remember him.

**Yvette:** They own Planet Hollywood. I don't know if you've seen their new casino hotel, but it's pretty far out.

**Charles:** Which tribe owns Hard Rock?

**Yvette:** It's the Seminole Tribe. It is the Hard Rock Hotel part [unintelligible 01:03:43] Planet Hollywoods. I am certain Howard Tommie was behind a lot of that. James Billie is the person who's got most of the notoriety around it all because he was sort of notorious, but Howard Tommie, I think, was really behind James Billie.

**Charles:** He worked kind of silently, didn't he?

**Yvette:** Yes. I think he's since passed on, I think, but I'm not certain. I'd have to check. A friend of mine, her uncle was one of their leading attorneys. His last name is Shore. James Shore. It's just almost like a mafia story in a way. He was a--

**Charles:** Consigliere? [laughs]

**Yvette:** Yes. It was sort of that way, but he was blind. He worked from home, and he always had to have help because he's blind, so he had people who were helping him, but in the '90s, he was shot upon. He was at home and somebody came along and was trying to shoot him because I think they thought he knew too much information or something. Anyway, that's why I say it's kind of almost mobster-like. But it's not how the tribe has operated, it's just a certain facet of the tribe. He was always above the board and always very honest and very dedicated to this community.

Anyway, National Indian Health Board was an interesting group to work with, but I was in Denver and we were in our 30th year and they wanted to move the whole operation. I started out with three staff and when I left, there were 12. They wanted to move all 12 of us to Washington and I didn't want to go back. I was determined not to go back because my kids were too young and I just didn't want them to have to be back there. That was when the war was starting in Iraq, [inaudible 01:05:56] that kind of thing. Anyway, I understand what you're saying about being the CEO for an organization.

**Charles:** [chuckles] Pardon?

**Yvette:** When you're the lead executive of an organization and then you leave, and they're not necessarily going to support you-- They want to clean your fingerprints off everything.

**Charles:** Right, right. [wiping sounds]

**Yvette:** [chuckles] Anyway.

**Charles:** I'll tell you what, I'm really--

**Yvette:** Hungry?

**Charles:** No. I've been ailing and I'm very uncomfortable, hard to discomfort.

**Yvette:** I can appreciate that. I'm down to the last question, and it was just, is there anything that you'd like to share?

**Charles:** Pardon?

**Yvette:** Anything else that you would like to share?

**Charles:** About Lucy?

**Yvette:** Yes, or if there's a vision that you have of what a center would be.

**Charles:** You don't think of these things for a long time, but as we talk here, so much comes back. I can't picture any leader in the 20th century as great as Lucy Covington. I just can't. The whole influence, the whole spirit that she left with everything she did-- That's it. I can't picture a greater person.

**Yvette:** That's very nice to hear.

[silence]

**Charles:** Can I look into the camera and say that again?

**Jeff:** [laughs] Of course. You're welcome to say whatever you want.

**Charles:** I'm sorry.

**Yvette:** No, I understand.

**Charles:** I'm getting old.

**Yvette:** It's probably hard to do everything that you used to do.

**Jeff:** Can I ask you something?

**Charles:** Pardon?

**Jeff:** Can I ask you something?

**Charles:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Yvette, she mentioned that Eastern Washington University wants to build Lucy Covington Center, dedicated to Lucy Covington. Was that the first that you heard of that?

File name: Charles Trimble interview with Yvette Joseph and Jeff Ferguson

**Charles:** Yes.

**Jeff:** What do you think about that? How does that make you feel?

**Charles:** I think, very appropriate. It stands for a whole bunch of things. First of all, Indian leadership-- Indian women leadership, which is very important in-- greatness. I couldn't picture-- I don't know what the politics up there is, of anybody objecting to it. I think it'd be a great idea. I remember Joe DeLaCruz very well. I like the Northwest. They really produced a lot of great leaders. I didn't know Billy Frank very well. NCAI wasn't involved in the Fish-ins and stuff like that. If it were, it was before my time. I know Ramona Bennett.

That big report done by 11,000 great scientists around the world and another one that was done by 40 great scientists of this country, and Donald Trump says, "I looked at it, but I don't believe it". You can say that, but that's very selfish because what you should be doing is how that's going to affect everything from here. All those farmers that were out here in these fields, up to their ass in water, and their fields are not going to ever grow a crop again, that's going to be the new normal. It'll come back in a year, and yet this man doesn't want to recognize it, so they don't plan for any levees, they don't plan for sea walls. New York City is going to be [laughs]-- It's just, it's awful. It's totally irresponsible to just flake it off and say, "I don't believe it, so we're not going to do anything about it."

**Jeff:** Thank you. We appreciate it. We're not going keep you too long.

**[01:12:48] [END OF AUDIO]**