The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) has developed innovative approaches to carry out the directives identified by its member Tribes for close to half a century. In 1952, the elected leaders of nine Tribes in Arizona formed a united voice to pursue shared goals. ITCA was tasked with addressing issues that affected the Tribes collectively or individually, which enabled tribal governments in Arizona to combine their efforts and resources towards self-determination.

Since its formation, ITCA and its members Tribes, have been an influential political force in the state and nation. ITCA has been a strong and effective advocate for the tribal governments in Arizona on various federal and state legislative issues and policies and continues to provide a forum for Tribes to come together, address issues and move them to policy development. ITCA does not speak for any specific Tribe, but it enables Tribes to come together as a powerful and coordinated force. Today, twenty-one federally-recognized Tribes are members of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. The highest elected official of each tribe - the chairperson, president or governor - is the member of ITCA.

Legacy of ITCA Project

The 'Legacy of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona' Project (hereinafter referred to as "Project") is analyzing the role of ITCA in the development of national Indian policy from the critical era following World War II to the present. The Project is exploring the role of Tribes in Arizona and ITCA in the development of federal self-determination policy and practices focusing on the perspectives of tribal leaders who founded and led the Association. The Project is also documenting the evolution of ITCA, including interviews with executive staff, identifying the goals and activities from its earliest years, as well as the strategies and tactics used by ITCA's leadership in accomplishing collective goals over time.

The development of the federal self-determination statutes and policies in the 1960's is widely acknowledged as a key turning point in Indian Country in the U.S. Groundbreaking laws that were passed during this era addressed tribal self-determination, healthcare, child welfare, environmental management, economic development, education and housing, among others. Before the 1970's, the state, cities and counties would rarely consider dealing with tribes as governments. The work of ITCA and its member Tribes during the early Self-Determination Era produced innovative methods of dealing with state and federal governments to work together for the betterment of both, catapulting Arizona into the forefront of tribal-state relations.

Overview of the Project: An On-going, Collaborative Effort

ITCA is collaborating with the Arizona State University (ASU) American Indian Policy Institute and Labriola National American Indian Data Center on this project to document the important role of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. The first phase of the project focused on the gathering of historical documents from archives within Arizona and the cataloguing of these and other documents at the ITCA offices. Graduate students working on the Project also scanned and digitized a number of key documents.

First Panel Discussion

On December 6, 2012, the Project sponsored an initial panel discussion at the ASU Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law in collaboration with the Indian Legal Program. The panelists (Veronica Homer, John Lewis and Dr. Eddie F. Brown) and moderator (Dr. Donald Fixico) discussed innovations in Tribal-Federal/State Relations in the 1970's and 80's, the ongoing significance of the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, and the role of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona in coordinating tribal government action. A audio recording of the panel discussion is available at http://repository.asu.edu (key word search: Inter Tribal Council of Arizona).

Panel Discussion: Tribal Leaders Perspectives

On August 15, 2013, the Project sponsored its second and final panel discussion at the Wild Horse Pass Conference center in conjunction with the American Indian Research for Health conference. A number of tribal leaders, who worked closely with ITCA on key issues in the decades from 1970 to 2000, provided their perspectives. The discussion was recorded and will also be available for viewing through the ASU Labriola National American Indian Data Center digital repository.

On-Going Project: Do You Have Information to Share?

The Project is an on-going effort and the project team is interested in documents, photos or information you, your family or your tribe may have regarding the work of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. Please feel free to contact ITCA (info@itcaonline.com) or the ASU American Indian Policy Institute (aipi@asu.edu) if you would like to share your recollections, information or documents with the project. The project team anticipates sponsoring additional panel discussions in the future.

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