

29
September 6, 1974

Dear Mr. Begay:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of August 29 and for your good wishes. He certainly intends to be as forthcoming and progressive as was the previous Administration in working for interests of the Indian people, not as welfare, as you say, but as obligation and opportunity.

We shall continue to depend on the skills and resources of the United Southwestern Tribes, Inc, and their constituent members to help us identify the priority issues which need attention.

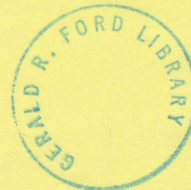
I am particularly interested in your having raised the matter of the Bicentennial. May I make this suggestion: that you and your USET colleagues get in touch directly and promptly with Mr. Wayne Chattin, a Blackfoot Indian who has recently joined the staff of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration and is located in Denver with the specific responsibility of working with Indian groups and leaders on plans for the Bicentennial. Mr. Chattin's telephone number is (303) 234-4291 and I very much hope you can get in contact soon.

Cordially,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

Mr. Eugene A. Begay
Executive Director
X United Southeastern Tribes, Inc.
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Sarasota, Florida 33577

bcc: Morris Thompson (with incoming)
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August 29, 1974

OFFICERS

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Cherokee
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Choctaw

BP
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Mr. President:

On behalf of the United Southeastern Tribes, Inc, I would like to extend to you my congratulations on your ascension to the highest office of our country. The Indian tribes in the Southeast are confident that your administration will maintain a high priority on those issues and concerns that affect all Native Americans throughout the United States. The past administration had been somewhat indicative to me as being open and willing to hear the concerns of Native Americans and to act positively in the resolution of several key issues. To mention a few I recall the settlement of the sacred Blue Lake to the Pueblos and restoration of traditional lands to the Yakima Tribe of Washington.

I believe strongly that the commitment of the federal government to assist in the development of Native American communities through special administrative and legislative actions is a positive indication that this country does indeed honor its treaties and obligations with its first Americans. In that respect, I do not regard such special programs of assistance to Native Americans as welfare but as obligations on the part of our government and an opportunity for Indian tribes to increase their participation as citizens in our society. Our organization, therefore, stands as a resource to your administration to assist in every way possible in implementing those goals and objectives as may be defined by our member tribes.

In conclusion may I request of your office that Native Americans be included as a matter of priority in the planning and implementation of all festivities and recognition as may be necessary in commemorating a successful bi-centennial celebration for this country and for the rest of the world to observe.

Sincerely yours,

Eugene A. Begay
Eugene A. Begay
Executive Director

