

ZahPeterson 2008-3-20

M1: That's back.

PI: OK.

M1: And the numbers are moving. As long as you can hear it, you're good to go.

PI: We're all set to go? OK. Thanks again, Matt. (pause)
Well, good morning.

PZ: Good morning, yeah. Maybe you can ask some questions --

PI: [00:19] Sure, I'd be delighted to. I think, you know, it's always interesting to think about Navajo history, the past and the present, for that matter, and the future, in comparative context. And one of the things that strikes me is that the Navajos have been very successful in adding to their original land base and forging a kind of culture that is not a museum piece, but it's composed of many values and ideas. And despite all the difficulty, there seems to be an optimism about the future. And -- very different from the attitude that was stressed by so many people a hundred years ago, that's all doom and decline -- all these D words. And I think we've seen a lot of our words, like rallying and so forth and so on, and the realization of goals.

But anyway, if you could speak to that point --

PZ: Yeah, OK.

PI: That would be terrific.

PZ: [1:17] OK. I don't really know the specific acreage that the Navajo people came back to when they signed that treaty in 1868 in Hwééldi --

PI: [1:32] Mm-hmm. It's about three and a half --

PZ: But we could find that out --

PI: It's about three and a half million acres, actually.

PZ: Yeah. And we could insert those.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: [1:39] But whatever it was --

PI: Yes, right.

PZ: -- it was a small reservation where the Navajo people agreed with the federal government that they would come back to that land. You know, right in the Four Corners area there, split in between New Mexico and Arizona now.

That was the reason for the Navajo people coming back, because they at least had some land that they could call

their own, that the federal government was giving to -- willing to give it to the Navajo people if they go back with certain promises. But you know, one of the things that happened during that period was that the Navajo people politically, I guess, really didn't fight. Undoubtedly there must have been some Navajo leaders that said, hey, we should not give in with this many acres. This is a small piece of land. They didn't want to fight over that. Because they knew that when they go back, they have their whole lifetime in front of them, where they can plan things, where they can demand things, where they can increase their land base at their leisure. And the way they really, really wanted to achieve that higher amount of acreage. And for me, in looking back at the history of those traditional Navajo leaders, that was just such a great foresight.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: They had the vision that this was what they wanted to ultimately achieve.

They also knew that they couldn't achieve that at the signing of the treaty. That there were going to be resistance.

PI: Yes.

PZ: So -- and in fact, they were very, very smart in doing what they did.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: When they said that, OK, we may not agree with the small acreage that we'll be getting, but we'll go back.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: We'll go back, because that's our homeland, we're lonely, we're starving here, and if we hold out, there may be more of us that may die. And so while we can, why don't we all agree that we will go back. And so as a result -- as a result, they signed the treaty and they went back.

Now, what developed after that was when the federal government said, "We're going to give each head of the family [4:30] a goat and a sheep. And this is going to be your livelihood -- this is going to be, really, your life.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And even then, they really took that to heart. Because they knew that they were getting something that if they worked hard at it, then they were going to be successful, and they would never have to starve. So even offers that

were made like that, what can you do with just two, three, or five sheep? But they also knew that they could increase that, if they managed that right, and it will take care of themselves, their family -- that would be their livelihood.

They didn't squabble over, "Hey, we want 100, or we want 50," because they knew what they had in mind. Very, very smart move on the part of the traditional leadership back then.

And so as a result, they were too successful.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: Where years later, the government came back and they said, "Hey, you need to reduce your livestock. There's just too many animals around here."

PI: [5:40] And why did they say that at that time, do you think?

PZ: You mean the Navajo?

PI: No, the -- why did the federal government...?

PZ: [5:46] I think the federal government was looking at not only what they thought the Navajo people were doing in damaging the land, but you can always use something like

that to get the sympathy of the decision-makers and some of the people that have to make decisions about the future of the Navajo people, or the land status that the Navajos were holding. But I always think that there was some other underlying objectives, underlying desires. And that was to try to starve out the Navajo people even more.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And that is something that the government took the -- they will certainly hold their position by saying, "Well, they were damaging the land and this is why we did what we did." I don't know if that's the reason, 100% the reason --

PI: [6:55] It's sort of a rationalization.

PZ: Yeah, it was --

PI: Sort of justifies it.

PZ: [6:58] It was just a rationalization that they used to justify what they were doing.

PI: Yeah. Yeah.

PZ: So basically, there were other things that one could assess and say, "This is the real reason." And I always think about minerals --

PI: Yes.

PZ: The federal government perhaps realized at that point that they made a mistake --

PI: (laughter) Yeah.

PZ: Putting the Navajo people back onto the land, where that land was now -- it had oil, it had gas, it had uranium, it had timbers... either fortunately or unfortunately it had uranium. And coal, high-grade, one of the best high-grade coals in the United States. So that --

PI: And oil, too.

PZ: And oil -- and oil was discovered on Navajo land. So when the federal government saw all these natural resources where they had put the Navajo, certainly they wanted to diminish further the land that was given to the Navajo. They also wanted to continue to deal with Navajo people in such a way that they would hold them down from the realization that they have all these mineral resources.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: But the Navajos didn't give in. They said that "You put us back on that land, you thought it was the most undesirable land out in the desert, no resources, no water, no grass, and all of that. And we accepted that."

PI: Yes.

PZ: "And now, after discovering all of these mineral resources underneath the land, then you want it back."

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: So they were very smart to that.

PI: [8:47] Weren't they also being pushed by the livestock interest in -- off-reservation in New Mexico and Arizona?

PZ: Sure. They --

PI: Because they wanted access to that land for their purposes.

PZ: [8:57] They -- I think the ranchers surrounding the Navajo Nation, outside of the Navajo Nation, many of those cattle owners, people who make their livelihood on raising sheep and all of that -- they wanted more land, they wanted more acreage. And so there was probably a conflict between the Navajo people and their traditional leadership and the people from the outside. They started looking at that land as someday they could develop it into nice grazing land.

But Navajo, again, they were very smart to that. They knew what was going on; they wanted to make sure that they hung onto that land, because everything that the Navajo people do, even to this day -- children is the most important thing. The Navajo people just love their children. They -

- if you look at today's world, how much support these young people get from their parents in education, in sports activities -- look at what is going on here in the city of Phoenix during the state tournament --

PI: Mm-hmm. Exactly.

PZ: And how many people drove --

PI: It's amazing.

PZ: -- drove, this past March --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- 300 miles one way, 600 miles round-trip, just to see their kid play. Nobody in America really ever does that.

PI: Yeah. It's true.

PZ: And I live here in Phoenix temporarily because of my job, and I go to some of these other high school games. They'll be lucky to get 25, 30 people at those games.

PI: Yes. Mm-hmm.

PZ: But with Navajo, during the state tournament, 15,000 of them --

PI: Yeah.

PZ: -- drive all of that distance to see their young ones play the game of basketball. So there's a tremendous pride of

Navajo families in their children. And it's something that is just amazing to see.

So going back all the way to the increase in land base, Navajo wanted to do that because they knew that the Navajo population was going to increase. Probably at a faster rate than the nation's rate. And so they knew that, and so that's why they wanted to really, really increase the land.

They wanted to also increase the land because of the natural resources that people were -- that they were exploring the Navajo land and discovering all of these natural resources on Navajo land. So because of that, you know, they wanted to increase -- increase the land.

PI: [11:56] Just one other thought, real quickly, and that is the role played by the trading post operators in all of this. They really had a vested interest in expansion and in the growth of the weaving industry and so forth and so on. So there were also non-Indian -- there were non-Indian people saying that, you know, the soil is eroding. But there were also other non-Indian people who were saying, you've got to produce, you know, more products off of this land. And they were sort of caught, I think, because if

they did too much of that, then the government would say, "You're doing too much of that." And if they weren't doing enough of it, and then they'd say, "Well, you're not using the land to its full capacity." So.

PZ: [12:31] Yeah, you know, I think those kinds of things were coming at the Navajo people all at the same time.

PI: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PZ: And what is a, I guess, consolation to others is that the Navajo people were really a group --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- that was considering their own future with their own people, with -- particularly involving the young ones. And sure, there were at the beginning many non-Indian people that came to help. And I always say that they aren't all of that -- they aren't all that bad --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- in terms of what their own philosophy and their own agenda, why they come on. Some of those people, they turn in -- they turn around and they turn out to be good individuals --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- that really support --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- what the Navajo wanted.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And one of the things that I think the Navajo people always had in mind was this idea that the only way we can make a meaningful, true progress promoted by the Navajo people is really to involve our own young ones.

PI: Yes.

PZ: Where we can manage our own resources.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Yes, we have entities right now -- outside oil companies, coal companies, maybe even people who run these convenience stores on the reservations --

PI: Yeah. Yeah.

PZ: All of that -- they're there. But they also have to realize that they are only temporary fixtures --

PI: Right.

PZ: -- on the reservation. Because you have all these young ones that are getting their education, and they're beginning to come back. And we're, as Navajo people, beginning to feel the influx of the newly highly educated

Navajo that wants to do their own things in their own way at their own pace, and promoting some of those things.

And so outsiders really have to -- really have to recognize that. And to me, when that day comes, that's a true progress taking place.

PI: [14:55] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. (pause) There are, on a lot of reservations, questions about the legitimacy of the tribal council or the form that it uses or using the majority vote rather than a consensus. The Navajo tribal government has certainly evolved over time -- you were one of the people who spoke consistently and persistently about the representation of the more rural areas. And it must be dif-- it must have been difficult for Navajo people through time to work with this form of government that was not really their idea of how to do it, but to try to make it work as best they could.

PZ: [15:37] I think that also comes in in the same form as when they first came back to Navajo land from imprisonment at Fort Sumner. Where a lot of those things were given to them. Some of them were foreign; some of those ideas did not really agree with them. You know, but they took it with a grain of salt.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And they said that "If this is what they have to offer, we'll take it. We won't bicker amongst ourselves over it, but we'll perfect it -- we'll work with it." And I think one of those things is... some of the things that you mentioned were, they may not have liked it at the beginning, but they also knew that they have the capacity and the intelligence and the desire to change that to a positive model.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: To fit their own needs. And that's something that, I think, the Navajo people have taken that to -- to task among themselves, so that there is some degree of tweaking those things, redoing them so that it really helps the Navajo economy, the Navajo people, the Navajo education, and the political system.

I think the government is the same way, where in 1923 when oil was discovered, the federal government put a government together for them. And they called it the business council.

PI: Right.

PZ: And the main reason behind that was not to create a true Navajo government, because they didn't have the slightest idea what that would mean -- and all they wanted was to respond to what one of the major, major oil companies in the United States wanted, which was to lease the Navajo land where the oil was being discovered. But the Navajo people didn't have a government at that point. So what the Interior Department did was to say, "Hey, why don't we create a business council on the Navajo Nation -- you be the chair, you be the vice-chair, you be the three members negotiating committee on the lease, and we'll call you the Navajo leaders if you all represent the Navajo people. And you're hereby a tribal council." And they may have some people who disagreed with that, but they went along with it, and as a result from that, when the government took that action, whether we liked it or not, [18:30] the Navajo people then looked at it and they said, "Hey, the federal government also wants a government. We want a government too, but let's start working on putting our own government together."

Unfortunately, all of that is taking such a long, long time to develop. And, yes, maybe there may be some young people

out there that may become discouraged that all this process is taking too long. And there's something that only the Navajo people can answer that question. And maybe there are some good things in taking your time --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- thinking about it, discussing it with among the people, and trying to come -- trying to... trying to come up with some kind of a consensus. Maybe there's some good things that will come as a result of all of that. Which is completely different than when you look at the non-Indians: they want to talk about a government one day, and then the next day they want to implement it.

PI: Yes.

PZ: Well, you know, that is too fast.

PI: Yes.

PZ: People's attitudes are different, and you may not do a good job of informing and convincing as many of the people as possible.

And the Navajo are taking their time. They want to reform the present tribal government. There's always that --

there's always that attitude, that it is not the perfect institution. But it's something that we can live with.

And I think that with similar situations with the United States, the United States developed its own government by constitution way back during the Independence Day. And they formed a federal government. Well, so many years went by, and it's still not perfect. So they can't really expect the Navajo people to perfect their government within a period of thirty or forty years, while it's taken them 300 years to get to where they wanted to go, or maybe even beyond that.

PI: [20:58] When you think about -- excuse me -- the criticism about factionalism within Indian governments, but you look at the U.S. Congress -- there's factionalism for you on a grand scale.

PZ: Sure. Sure.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: [21:10] Navajo people don't really have a political party on the reservation that directly affects the tribal government. Yes, we do have some Navajo people who are registered Republicans and registered Democrats. But that only applies to politics outside of the reservation.

PI: Right.

PZ: In the state and federal government. Or state and federal election, I should say. And with Navajo, it doesn't -- it doesn't really apply in tribal politics. And it's something that I hear people discussing it now, where maybe we should have a political system, but then I hear some other people that come out and they say, "What that does is only divides up the people."

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And I guess it's the same -- they learn this from what's going on in the United States.

PI: [22:07] What about the absence of a constitution? Do you think there should be a constitution?

PZ: [22:12] A constitution is... a constitution is a controversial one. It's a controversial one on the Navajo. And when you look at -- when you look at the Navajo government, and then contrast what is going on on the Navajo with what took place at the federal level -- in 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act was passed by U.S. Congress, the United States was trying to impose that form of government, and its values, onto the tribal government. The Navajo Nation was one of the Indian tribes that rejected the idea --

PI: [23:02] That was in the '30s, wasn't it?

PZ: [23:04] In the early 1930s. And --

PI: [23:08] Why do you think they turned it down? It was partly linked to stock reduction, wasn't it? Was it the government's involvement?

PZ: [23:13] Well, as I understand some of the people, in talking with them and listening to what they have to say about the issue, it really had everything to do with the imposition on the part of the United States. Where I've heard an elderly person that said, during those kinds of constitutional debate on the Navajo, that -- "Why should we do what the non-Indians want us to do? When they came to this country, they had their own ideas, what they want to do here. And yes, everybody had their eyes on land -- everybody had their eyes on what's inside the land, those natural resources. But they also had eyes on the people. And how can we transform them into what we want them to do and the way we want them to behave and act?" And that goes with what they wanted the tribal government -- their tribal government to look like.

And Navajos was just one of those Indian nations that were stubborn. And they said, "We're the only ones that can

decide that. We really don't know the meaning of a constitution -- that is your form of government, and it comes from your vocabulary. And with us, we're different - - we've been here for more than you have.

PI: Yes.

PZ: We have existed with the present form of government ourselves, which may be kinship system or clan system. And that has been good to us, and we're going to retain that. And so here's what we -- here's what we want.

And so the Navajo people exercised some of that in the local community, in terms of how they were able to govern those groups. And they weren't about to jump -- jump out of there, abandon that system that was so good to them, and then adopt something else that's foreign to them that they don't know about.

And so I always say that the word "constitution" might be not the appropriate expression of what Navajo people want. It has a bad connotation to the meaning of the constitution. And there's some other, maybe, principle that the Navajos want to have [26:00] that will govern their governance activities. But certainly it won't really

be called a constitution. But there's some other word that describes maybe something better than a constitution.

And so I think that's what the Navajo people are groping for right now. And as a result, in trying to have a constitution adopted by the Navajo people went before the general public something like three times. And every time it got rejected. And so we have to find that common ground among the Navajo people, as to what we really, really want our government to look like. And we had to have a lot of communication, and learning, exploring, discussion.

Building consensus among the Navajo people to come out with something that is applicable and acceptable to the majority of Navajo people.

PI: [27:10] You've spoken about your childhood and your growing up in a place like Low Mountain. I'm wondering if you could say what you think about somebody who's ten years old, let's say, and who's living within shouting distance of Low Mountain. How different is his life as a kid growing up from yours?

PZ: [27:35] Low Mountain, Pinon, [Telana?] Springs, Black Mesa -- that center of the Navajo Nation, because they are centrally located on the Navajo Nation, and not being so

close to border towns surrounding the Navajo Nation, we probably represent the most traditional of all the Navajo groups. And certainly discussions about this, about government, about education, about health and all of those kinds of issues, will take a different term, and we'll discuss that in a different context than what other Navajo people may experience that are close to your other -- other rural and urban areas.

And so I wouldn't say it was a difficult things that we evolved through -- let's say in the history of the development of communities like Pinon and Low Mountain and Black Mesa area. Everybody had a hard life, and life was hard. And maybe ours wasn't any harder than the other communities, but we managed. We managed to stick together, we managed to rally around issues to improve our living condition. And I could remember living in Low Mountain, and we practically had nothing. We practically had nothing. And it was just hogans after hogans, people living there without any kind of infrastructure in that community. And it wasn't until some of us that cared enough about communal life and what we want to have -- desires that we have, and we started working on building

those infrastructure that a lot of these developments came to the community. Such as a highway, trading posts, school, clinical people -- health people that come out to the communities; we were one of the very few chapters on the Navajo Nation that had chapter houses built towards the end. And so you can look at all of that. And all of that happened because of the influx of new educated youngsters to those communities. And it's something that [30:30] I take a lot of pride in, in saying that it was done by the people, and it was done at our own pace and our own way. And when you see something like that, you know that that is an express desires by the local people, and when you see that happening, you'll know that the people had taken the time and go through the pains of suggesting those things at such a -- limitless amount of hours that went into those kinds of buildings.

PI: [31:16] When you think about Tom Dodge in the 1930s, and he was talking to Collier and other people, and he says essentially, "We agreed that we have some responsibility in the fact of the current status of the land, but we need time to work on this with the people and find a way to make the situation better." And he would just come in here with this heavy-handed, "you got to do it right now" program, it's not going to work. And, you know, I've always thought

it was too bad that the government was so determined to just sort of have it shoved down everybody's throats right away, because it would have been difficult under any circumstances, but with the language barrier and a variety of other factors that made -- that made things worse. They were so convinced they were right.

I remember going to a conference -- I've probably told you about this -- where Cy Fryer (sp?), who by then was an older man, he had all these Milton Snow photos of "here are sheep before Cy, and here are the sheep afterwards" and so forth and so on, but -- you know, livestock production had obviously had a major importance in terms of the future. And more and more people were saying, you know, "I can't make a go of it out here, the way that I would have liked it."

You think about that some of those people moving to Chinle or whatever, and what a tremendous change that was. And I think...

PZ: [32:40] Well, as I indicated, the Navajo people were pretty smart to those kinds of fixed -- fix this in this way, fix that situation my way. And one suggestion or one program

fits all. They were very smart to that, because they knew that whatever it is that other outside entities or outside people come into the communities, that they had to satisfy our own way of thinking. It had to satisfy our goals. And it certainly had to satisfy what we're trying to resolve here, that it really gets to the heart -- the cause of some of those problems in the community. They were very smart to that. And they didn't always completely reject everything that other people had to offer to them. They took that under advice. They looked at it, and they would critique it. And they never hardly made any decision the same day that those suggestions were made to them. They took the time -- they weighed all of the negatives and the positives to some of those suggestions. And you had to hand it to a community that operates that way. And some people, non-Navajo people, may not like that. They may say it's too long, it's too cumbersome. You know. But in the long run, it's a good thing that they did that. They always wind up doing the right thing if they take the time.

PI: [34:31] Yeah. I may have mentioned this -- when I was teaching at the college, you know, [it rankled?] members of the faculty who wanted to just -- [knocking noise]

PZ: Exactly.

PI: -- move right along, you know, and if it carried 51 to 49, then that's how it worked. And we had to learn that that's not the best way to do things. And it extended the life of those individual faculty meetings a lot, but it meant that we really were forced to consider things more fully and more thoughtfully. And that's always a challenge.

But you think about -- you think about somebody like Mr. Nakai. You know, who also used the radio as a way of speaking to Navajo needs, but also to articulate some of his own views and other things. When you think about KTNN today and Navajo Times and so forth and so on.

And there are just a lot of ways in which you see present needs and issues being articulated, and future questions being raised. Because most people don't -- you know, the council meetings are not televised, are they, in any way? Or recorded? When you think about people learn about what's going on, or dealing with important issues, it seems like the radio and the newspaper have been really important in articulating that, because otherwise you wouldn't know what was going on.

PZ: [36:02] There were -- in the history of the Navajo people, there were two people that used the radio very effectively to set out their program -- to advance their ideas, really, for the good. And that was Annie Wauneka, was one of them. Annie Wauneka is a woman that was way ahead of her time. Way ahead of everybody's time. Because she took the council seat, was elected to the council, at such a young age because her father was a tribal chair. And one of the things that she was interested in was the health of the Navajo people. And back in those days when I listened to her talk, the Navajo council, the people would all say, "I want to be on the Budget and Finance Committee."

PI: Yes.

PZ: "I want to be on the Education Committee. I want to be on this committee." No one wanted to sit on the Health and the Alcoholism Committee of the Navajo people. But Annie Wauneka looked at that as a challenge.

PI: Yes.

PZ: She said, "Since nobody wants to do this, I'll volunteer to do this. It's a difficult one, probably one of the most important, but I'm going to take it such a way that I do it with a lot of pride. Not because I'm a woman, but because

I believe I can do just as good a job as anybody else."
And she never really used her woman-ness to her advantage.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: I think she kind of looked at herself as an individual --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- a delegate that was able, that was capable, that was smart enough to figure all these things out. Never really talked about her --

PI: [38:13] She was in it for the long haul.

PZ: Yes.

PI: She was determined to make a difference, you know, for -- not just from month to month, but from year to year.

PZ: [38:20] And she wanted to make a difference.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And she knew that her time was limited when you go into tribal politics. So she wanted to do the best shot that she can possibly do.

So she was one of these individuals that decided that from her position as a chairman of the Health and Alcoholism Committee, that she should take on the task of trying to eradicate tuberculosis on the Navajo Nation. Because at

that time, there were just too many Navajo people that were dying. Suffering from the contagious disease of tuberculosis. And Navajo people really didn't know what they had. And Indian health services was not really equipped in back in those days to --

PI: [39:19] Well, it wasn't the Indian Health Service until the mid-'50s, was it?

PZ: Yes.

PI: I mean, it was the Bureau providing that kind of health service, but --

PZ: [39:26] They didn't have much facility.

PI: Yes.

PZ: And so Annie Wauneka had to singlehandedly come up with some ideas, how to do that. And the use of radio was something that she came up with, where she went to a radio station in Gallup, New Mexico, and other places surrounding the Navajo Nation, and she had those radio stations give her some time to address the Navajo people almost every day. And then she had the tribe also help the Navajo people with the purchase -- purchase of some of those radios that they could have back in their community.

And what Annie Wauneka talked about was people's health. How to avoid -- how to avoid getting and prevent the contacting and getting tuberculosis into their system. And it was just a simple -- a simple way of keeping yourself -- the utensils that you used, the spoons and forks and cups and all the things that you used. And how you should sanitize them. And by boiling them and all of that. And so she also went before Congress, because there were so many people, Navajo people that had contracted tuberculosis, they needed to be in a sanatorium. But they didn't have any facility. So she went before the United States Congress committee and had Congress appropriate the building of a sanatorium here in Phoenix, where many of the Navajo people came to cure their illness. And then she did the same thing and helped acquire money to construct another one in Colorado Springs. So you had two facilities where the Navajos were in bad shape, more advanced in their fight against tuberculosis, those Navajo people were then physically taken to a sanatorium in Phoenix and the sanatorium in Colorado Springs.

And but, she's one of these individuals that when they put those Navajo people out there in those two sanatoriums, she did -- she just did not leave them there.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: She constantly visited with them. She made an effort to visit them at their bedside. She talked to them. She was the emissary between Indian Health Service and the Navajo Nation.

PI: [42:27] Sort of a cultural broker.

PZ: Yes.

PI: As we say.

PZ: [42:30] And that was her job, and as we all know now, because of her effort, she got the Presidential Medal of Honor that was given to her by President Johnson.

PI: Johnson. Yeah.

PZ: And so she's one of these individuals that really took an effective use of radio to send her message out to the Navajo people to improve their help. That was her whole purpose. And it takes an extraordinary person to do that.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And she was one of those extraordinary person -- certainly she was one of my heroes.

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: And I really admire all of the things that Annie Wauneka was able to do for her people.

PI: [43:25] I thought it was interesting how she formed this alliance with Scott Preston. I think Preston was the one to say as a religious leader and as a political leader that Navajos were going to have to take advantage of some elements of the Western healthcare system, because he said, "Our ceremonies are important and they do a lot of good, but they don't -- we don't have anything specifically that works fully against tuberculosis, and we've got to find a way to meet these newcomer doctors and nurses partway, so that it can work." And, you know, having somebody like Preston sort of sign off on that, I think, and articulate that necessity for greater cooperation, you know, I think that really made a difference.

PZ: [44:09] Well, in her alliance with the older Navajo leaders such as Scott Preston, they were all traditional people. And they didn't really have a good command of English language.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: But they were good, dedicated leaders.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Fully, fully dedicated to the Navajo cause, and that was the kind of people those guys were. When they did their work and when they convened a meeting, the last thing on their mind was how much money they would get for those meetings.

PI: Right. Right.

PZ: And the tribal leaders weren't being compensated at such a high rate back then. So it was all based on pure dedication. Just wanting to help, and being dedicated to the Navajo people. And that was the tool that they possessed to get to where they wanted to go. And so they were motivated by the condition of the Navajo people and how they wanted to change that. So she represented that element of the Navajo politics back then.

PI: [45:30] You'd think that the people who, you know, served on the council or were involved in things, if they were living five miles out of Chulchimbito (sp?), or wherever, you know, just getting to Window Rock was a challenge. And where were you going to stay when you got there, and all the rest of it. That kind of juggling is obviously kind of difficult. They had to have been committed just to make those trips --

PZ: Yeah.

PI: -- you know, and all the rest.

PZ: [46:00] The other person that really used the Navajo radio very well was Raymond Nakai.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Raymond Nakai was working at Belmont, west of Flagstaff, during the Korean War. And he was employed there at what they call the Indian camp, where a lot of the Navajo people lived during that war to do compacting and the assemblage of bombs and sending them overseas. They put it on a train, and then it got shipped across the ocean to Korea. And so a lot of Navajo people worked there. Raymond Nakai was one of those individuals that was in the community with the other Navajo people.

PI: [46:59] It employed a lot of people, didn't it? Thousands, maybe?

PZ: Yeah.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: [47:02] There were thousands of them, yeah.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And he went to the -- I guess he was employed by the radio station, KCLS, in Flagstaff. And every morning -- every morning he was on the, he was on the air. And yes, he told

news, he told current events in the Navajo language across the reservation. But at the end, something like the last five minutes, he would really talk to the Navajo people about what is going on in their tribal government that they may not know about.

PI: Uh-huh. Yeah. That's interesting.

PZ: And so he got famous for that.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: He was a radio person that got up early in the morning and told the Navajo people what was going on with their tribal government in Window Rock. Who did what wrong, and what was really taking place. So the Navajo people kind of woke up to those kinds of news, early in the morning. And so when it was time for a tribal election, all he did was, he put his name on the ballot and that's how he won the election. He was identified as a Navajo person that informed them each morning about some of the things that they didn't know was going on with their tribal government.

PI: [48:36] When you think about you and Mr. Nakai and perhaps Mr. MacDonald, here are people who rise to the top level of responsibility within the tribal government. And they all have associations in one way or another with agencies or entities or bodies that are designed to improve things and

help things and ONEO and DNA and so forth and so on. Don't you think that that made a difference in how we might judge their service after they became chairman or president, but in terms of their rising to the fore and being perceived as possible leaders for the future, your association with -- ultimately, with DNA Legal Services was a plus, wasn't it? It must have -- because here's this -- here's an entity that's representing the people in a variety of ways and speaking to Navajo rights and all the rest, and before DNA Legal Services, you know, nobody was doing that in quite the same way.

DNA is celebrating, as I recall --

PZ: Yeah.

PI: -- roughly its 40th anniversary? Is that -- it's amazing.

PZ: [49:50] Well, when you are one of those individuals involved in that kind of a scenario, you don't really think --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- about where you want to go and why you want to go there. It's just work that you do from day to day. In my own situation, I was only carrying out the work of a legal services program where every individual that came into your

office had a legal problem. And all you do is you sit there and you look at -- you look at the law, and then you have to say, "Yeah, you're right, because the tribal law says you are entitled to this, and this is a right that you have, and it's being abridged by some entity, and your rights are being violated. And why don't you and I work together, and let's do this."

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: That was like kind of like the common advice that you'd give to people. And sometimes there are just too many people who come in with the same identical problem, so when that happens you have to go after the agency or group that's causing all of that. And whether that involves the traders on the reservation, car dealers surrounding the Navajo Nation, merchants, even federal agencies: Indian Health Service, the BIA -- you just have to stand your ground in representing your client to the best of your ability to bring forth some of those wrongs that were committed against the Navajo people. And your job is to correct them.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And so I always look at my job that way. Never did I thought, hey, this is going to get me through the tribal chairmanship.

PI: Yeah, right. Right.

PZ: So you just keep on working and keep on working. But what happened in the process was that there were some good cases that came to DNA.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: That raised the issue that touched the lives of so many people. And one case that I can think of is McClanahan vs. the Arizona Tax Commission.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Where the state of Arizona was taxing an individual, Rosalind McClanahan -- they were taxing her on her income while she was working and residing on the Navajo Nation. The sources of her income was from the Navajo Nation. So we challenged the [53:00] state -- Arizona Tax Commission. And that went all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And at the end we won.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And that raised the issue of taxing rights.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Of the Indian tribes across the United States. And it was a precedent-setting case.

And when you do that -- if your work does that -- that's good work in trying to protect the sovereignty of Indian tribes. Then those cases are affiliated with your name. And so undoubtedly I got the name recognition through that kind of work that I was involved in.

And plus many of the other cases that I was involved in, such as schools --

PI: Right.

PZ: -- protection of sacred sites, fighting for the San Francisco peaks, the water rights -- there was just so many, many assortment of issues that I was involved in that, I guess, came about in such a way that it caused the people to identify those cases with my name. And as a result, you know, when tribal election time came around, there were a lot of pressures exerted upon me to consider running for the Navajo chair. So that's all that I did.

And you don't plan, or you don't come out with a grandiose plan and say, "By this year I should be there, next year I should be there, and then I'm shooting for the tribal chair." You don't plan things that way. Those are already done, perhaps, intuitively by other people away from you. And you just have to go about your work and do the best that you can for people.

PI: [54:59] What -- if you had to name two or three accomplishments or achievements or areas where you think you made significant headway or progress during the time you served as chairman and president, what would those be? A couple of areas that you think...?

PZ: [55:17] The major achievements?

PI: [55:19] Yeah. Just as an example -- I know you can't do the whole list, but if there are things you look back on now and say, "It's a good thing we got involved in this, because it made a difference"?

PZ: [55:34] Yeah. To begin with, there were just too many cases that we were involved in.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: I don't really remember the numbers -- it was not unusual to have thirteen, fifteen thousand cases that you handle in one year, with all of your staff.

PI: That's just amazing.

PZ: And the whole program. So you can take a look at those numbers and then pick out one or two that's outstanding in my mind.

Probably in terms of cases that went to the Supreme Court, at the top of the list is the McClanahan case. And probably the second one is the revamping of the Apache County.

PI: Mm-hmm. Is that --

PZ: The Apache Country was redone -- the redistricting was done by court orders. And as a result, Apache County had to expand its services, physically -- have its offices in Ganado, and then one in Chinle.

PI: [56:44] Mm-hmm. As opposed to just having one in St. John's.

PZ: [56:47] As opposed to having one office off the reservation in St. John's.

PI: [56:52] Considerably off the reservation. (laughter)

PZ: [56:54] Fully controlled by the non-Indians.

PI: Yes. Right.

PZ: So. DNA was able to do that, and later on Joe Shirley, the current Navajo president, became an employee. And not really a commissioner, but a supervisor --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- of the county, stationed in Chinle. So that was a good move on the part of DNA, to do what they did.

The other one that I think, the third one that's very important, is -- for many years there were not all that many high schools on the Navajo Nation. We had something like maybe Window Rock High School. But Window Rock High School was not really a legal high school.

PI: I see.

PZ: It was an elementary school district teaching high school subjects.

PI: Mm-hmm. I see.

PZ: And so they were not -- it was not fully declared by the state as a high school on reservation. We were just an elementary school district given approval to teach high school subjects. But in the community, they called it Window Rock High.

So that was -- that had to be changed. And as a result of working and knowing about those issues, then there came a case called Natanaba (sp?). Natanaba case was developed in New Mexico, where Gallup McKinley County District was the only major high school in that McKinley (sp?) County.

PI: [58:42] Mm-hmm. That's Gallup High School?

PZ: [58:44] Gallup High School.

PI: Right.

PZ: They expected all the other Navajo kids to be bused into Gallup --

PI: Oh, jeez.

PZ: -- for hours to come to school, and then at the end of the school, go back to their home communities. Well, if you did that to students, they were unable to participate in any kind of athletic, extracurricular activity at the school, because they spent all of their time riding --

PI: On the bus.

PZ: Riding, yeah. Riding back and forth. And so you wonder about, when do these kids learn?

PI: Yeah.

PZ: When are they in class, and how long are they in class? So the Natanaba case was developed in such a way that it would

create new schools. And that went to court, and it's a court-ordered schools that were created. Navajo Pine, New Mexico, I believe is one of them. Tohatchi High School, Crownpoint -- certainly the Rema (sp?) High School --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- was the fourth one. So a judge had to order the state and the federal government that they should have these schools, these institutions, out in the Navajo communities. And if that means the building of schools, physical building, then that is the way that they should do it. So the defense by the state was that "it's too expensive."

PI: Yeah. It's always too expensive.

PZ: "It's too expensive." But the judge says, "We're not talking about expense here."

PI: Yes.

PZ: "We're talking about making opportunities available --"

PI: Yes, exactly.

PZ: "-- treating everybody equally that's within your school district. And you've got to extend these facilities to the Navajo people." To me -- to me, that was also a major-impact case.

Now, using the concept of Natanaba in New Mexico, in Utah we did the same thing. And we had a case that we developed called the Tsingine case. And the Tsingine case was designed after the Natanaba case in the state of New Mexico, where we, again, went to court. And as a result, the state of Utah had to build Monument Valley High School on the reservation. They also had to build White Horse High School in Montezuma Creek by court order.

PI: That's interesting.

PZ: They also had to have that third school at Navajo Mountain that was recently built, and so they now have a high school. So all of those were court-ordered, court-forced schools on the Navajo Nation. That had a major, major impact on education and the building of public schools on the Navajo Nation.

PI: [62:00] And it meant Inner Mountain could close, or...?

PZ: [62:03] And that caused Inner Mountain and all of the other boarding schools to close. And the federal government said, "Since they have schools now on the reservation, we're going to close these boarding schools in Phoenix and California, in Utah and Oklahoma."

PI: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PZ: "And we're going to bring all those kids home, and they are now going to go to school on the Navajo Nation."

PI: Obviously --

PZ: So that --

PI: [62:33] That must have been a real accomplishment.

PZ: [62:34] Yeah. That -- those are cases.

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: Those are cases. That is where you use the judicial system of the United States -- the judicial system of a state -- to get what you're looking for. To get what you want. But at the same time as you're working in court with the law to change the way situations are, you also have to work with people. The people have to be on a movement --

PI: Yeah.

PZ: -- with what is going on in court. Because you don't want to go to court all by yourself as a lawyer --

PI: (laughter) Yeah. True.

PZ: -- and win the case and then have your people not know about it.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: So you had to have these simultaneous movements: one by the people, one by your lawyers and your client. Moving

through the court system while you're moving in the community. They had to complement one another, so when you mean the case, it means something.

PI: Right.

PZ: It has a major, major impact. For example, on education.

So that's what we were doing. Now, that's one way of changing things. The second way, that I'm very, very proud of this, was this. We didn't have one single Navajo lawyer.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: There may have been one that went to law school but never got licensed. So I was at DNA when we would recruit. In our budget, we had a position for thirty non-Indian lawyers that we were supposed to have on staff. Well, out on the Navajo reservation, you don't have lawyers walking the streets looking for jobs.

PI: No.

PZ: So you had to be innovative. You had to find ways that you can get lawyers to your program.

PI: Right.

PZ: So every year, I used to take a trip, pack up my bags, my toothbrushes, my clothes, and I would start out at Boston University, Harvard University, Yale, NYU, American University in Washington, D.C., John Marshall in Chicago. And I would comb the whole country for ten days, two weeks at a time during the year. And I would keep a profile on all of the first year, second year students. And the ones that I liked, I'd bring them out to DNA Legal Services Program during the summer to clerk for the program. [65:30] They were the law clerks, working with experienced lawyers.

And so we brought those non-Indians, and we did that for --

PI: Yeah. A long time.

PZ: Maybe -- a long time. Five, six years.

PI: Yeah. Yeah.

PZ: And then one day it dawned on me, and I says, "What am I doing here? We have a lot of non-Indian lawyers that are working across the reservation, trying to change our institutions. Maybe we should try going at producing our own Navajo lawyers."

PI: Yeah. Sure.

PZ: So we set out a program in motion, sometime in the middle of that twelve-year period I was with the program. That what we should do is have Navajo students become interested in seeking a law degree.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And when they become lawyers, we would take them out of that law school upon graduation and take them back to the reservation.

PI: Uh-huh. That's a really good idea.

PZ: And we were so lucky -- I was so lucky that I had some wonderful, wonderful people, students that came out of those law schools. And just to name a few: Claudine Bates-Arthur, who became the first attorney general, female attorney general under my administration [at about?] getting the chair--chairman of the tribe. She was in that group. Louis Denetsosie, who is the current attorney general, was a member of that group. Herbert Yazzie, who is now the chief justice of the Navajo Nation, was a member of that group. Bob Yazzie, the former chief justice, was a member of that group.

So I had a good working relationship with all of these young people. And then as a result of coming out with that

kind of initiative from no lawyer at all, let's say, in 1965 or 1967 to 20 years later, near 1990s, we had something like 30 or 40 Navajo lawyers. Who became judges, who became attorney general, who represented the tribe, who negotiated mineral leases with companies. To me --

PI: Yeah.

PZ: -- that's a progress that -- that will always be there.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: It has a major, major impact on the life of the Navajo Nation and on the -- on the Navajo, in terms of what the tribal government wants to do. And so it's an extraordinary impact that that concept had on the Navajo people.

PI: [68:29] Was Tom Tso part of that?

PZ: [68:31] Tom Tso was -- Tom Tso was the first chief justice of the Navajo Nation, who used to work with me --

PI: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

PZ: -- at the -- the DNA People's Legal Services.

PI: [68:46] You see that even today, from different angles. I've had several Navajo students say to me, "Your encouragement helped me think that I could do this." You know, that it was important to do this. It's -- you know,

it's really -- it just makes a total difference in... I remember reading some of the testimony in the council by Annie Wauneka in the early '50s. She would look over at Norman Littell and say, "Well, maybe this guy is going to be worth the investment at some point, but in the meantime we need our -- " She called them "law boys."

PZ: Mm-hmm.

PI: "We need our own law boys -- people who are part of us, to represent." And I -- when you think about the forces that were allied against Navajo change and greater self-determination -- I mean, there were a lot of people with a vested interest in keeping the people limited, and what their rights were and all of that stuff. And it must have been a terribly exciting and gratifying time for you to be, you know -- it must have worn you out sometimes. It must have been really satisfying that these things were being addressed.

One person -- and Seda's (sp?) talked to me a lot about it; I don't know if we've talked about it -- is John Rockbridge. You know, he was another important, not as well known as he probably should be, person who articulated the needs that DNA got involved in. Wasn't he the one who

suggested the name of the organization? Among other things?

You know, I think about -- you look back over Navajo history and you think about some people who are very well-known, but a lot of the history is made by people who are not well-known, but who were committed to speaking out for people's rights and better conditions and all the rest of it. And really, these were really important people, it seems to me. You know, who would stand up and be counted, in a sense. It could not have been easy, given that sort of paternalistic and manipulative environment of the times, which was designed to sort of keep Indians in their place, quote-unquote. And that's... you know, there's -- it may not be the best phrase to use, but there is a quote by Gerald Ford, who sometimes did strange things with the English language, but he said -- he said that "If Abraham Lincoln" -- about some issue with the Republicans -- he said, "If Abraham Lincoln were alive today, he would turn over in his grave." It's sort of a strange image, but, you know, I think the Navajos have... sort of like what Darcy McNichols says in his book on the Native American Tribal Association: you know, "What the non-Indian population

doesn't understand is that we may have lost --" certain things or certain issues -- "but we were never defeated." And you see in the Navajo Nation that same thing. They're chipping away at this, eroding that, but in the end, we are going to continue. Even though it's not easy to do that.

PZ: [71:55] Mm-hmm. (pause) Any other thing you want me to elaborate on?

PI: [72:08] Oh, sure, but I don't want to keep you all day. Why don't you -- you don't have to pay attention to that list, necessarily. What are some things that you'd like to -- you know, if you've talked about them to some extent before, we can sort of, you know, splice in a little... you know, to add to it. The things that you think, "Oh, gosh, we should have talked about that and we haven't talked about it."

PZ: The -- what?

PI: Are there things that you feel we should have talked about and we didn't talk about?

PZ: [72:34] Yeah, well, what I'll do is I'll just mention -- mention some of them.

PI: Sure. Please.

PZ: And the first one would be language and culture.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And talk mainly in terms of what that has done to the Navajo people, what the status is right now with that subject, and then what I would like to see --

PI: Yeah, that would be great.

PZ: -- in the future.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: We are one of the very few American Indian tribes where we live, truthfully live, our culture from day to day.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And we certainly use at a high rate our language and communication. And not only among the local people, but really in other institutions like colleges and universities.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And some people may disagree with me, and say, no, that's not really so. But I think there is developing an emergence of revitalizing the language. And the best way I can put my finger on that issue is that here, at ASU, we have over 60,000 students. It's the largest American university. And we've got a lot of students here. Against the background of that many non-Indian students, we have

nearly 1,500 Native American students on campus. And a good 75, 80% of that number are Navajo people.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And when I see these young Navajo people on campus, when they are given an opportunity to make presentations, when they're being asked to say something, they always refer to themselves by clan.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: What clan they belong to. Their father's clan, their maternal and paternal grandma and grandpa clan. They always make that reference. And these are young people who come out of local Navajo high schools. And I don't really see any other group at the national level who do that. And they take pride -- a tremendous amount of pride in doing that. [75:30] The emails that I get, the letters that I get from students. They always start out by saying "My name is such-and-such; I belong to this clan. My father's clan is here, and here's where I come from." They -- they always start with that.

Now, for me that does something. Number one, there's a tremendous pride in that individual. Number two, there's a

great desire to relearn the Navajo language if they were ever in the process of beginning to lose it.

PI: Right.

PZ: Number three, it creates a lot of cohesiveness among the Navajo people. And this is their language, this is their culture, this is their lifestyle. And as long as they know that this is their own people, those things will bring them together -- continue to cooperate among all of the young individuals here.

Now, that, you can see with your own eyes. You hear that all the time. So when I hear that, I have this sense that these kids are very proud. And as long as they have that pride, they're going to continue with that later on in life. And the reason why I say that is, just last week, from Monday to Friday -- last week, for five days, we visited twelve high schools on the Navajo Nation. And I took ten -- ten ASU students.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And every one of them got up before the student body, and they introduced themselves.

PI: Uh-huh. That's -- that's great.

PZ: They were just a powerful, powerful impact.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: In trying to recruit more students to come to ASU. And sitting there, being their adviser, being with them, being their mentor, that was something that was really coming across very strong. And the kids out of those schools, they knew it.

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: And our college kids has really encouraged them to keep on them being the way they are.

PI: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

PZ: Not only with the language, but with their culture.

PI: Right.

PZ: Taking care of the elderly and the young and all of that. And so I see that there's going to be a lot of revitalization movement on part of the Indian people, to do that.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: So I would like to see -- I would like to see that -- more of that in the future.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: [78:30] Because I think it's going to go a long ways -- because if there is anything that we all agree on, it's the language.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: As parents, it's the young kids' total Navajo population, tremendous pride in increasing the reservation land base. Those are something that really keeps us together. And as long as we keep on doing it, I see where the fires --

PI: Yeah.

PZ: -- for the future is very, very bright for the Navajo people. Now, I can't really talk about other Indian tribes.

PI: Sure.

PZ: They have their own ways. They have their own objectives. They have their own life. But I know Navajo best. And when I see those things happening, I know that it is something for the good.

Now, let me say something about women --

PI: Please.

PZ: -- in Navajo politics. Women in Navajo politics is something that's new, that has been debated among the Navajo people this last election --

PI: Yes.

PZ: -- about two years ago.

PI: Right.

PZ: Before that, it never really did happen. Yes, there were some good, able, capable Navajo women that ran in the last several elections, but they really did not have any major impact on the political system on the reservation. This -- these group of Navajo women took a little different approach than, let's say, Annie Wauneka did.

PI: Right.

PZ: Annie Wauneka really didn't look at herself that way. She knew what she was capable of. She knew who she was. She knew what she could do to effect changes. This other group, the new group, had a little different ideas. They approached Navajo politics in a little different way. And because of their approach, there were a lot of visibility, but they really didn't have a major impact -- maybe because not only one of them made it past the primary.

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: There were several of them that ran; they kind of just nullified each other in the process of doing that.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: But Linda Lovejoy was one of those individuals that... that took a look at what was happening, and then decided to run. Despite all of the pessimism that was passed her way -- that was thrown her way, she [81:30] stuck with her objectives. She was vigilant. She wanted to prove people wrong. And Linda is a fine individual. She's a good thinker.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: But she -- she lacked the experience.

PI: Right.

PZ: She lacked the experience.

PI: [81:52] You could see that in that -- that meeting they had at ASU, when we were both talking.

PZ: [81:57] I only wish that, you know, she would have taken some more time to analyze the situation that she was getting into, and maybe have the benefit of -- I wouldn't say a better or anything like that, but a wise advice.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: From Navajo politicians that really know the business.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: And that she would have been better prepared.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: On the major, major issues. You can know the issues, but you have to know how to say them.

PI: Sure.

PZ: And so she kind of lacked that. And I think she broke the ice --

PI: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PZ: She broke the ice, and from here on out, the Navajo people -- those that may not have supported the women -- their ideas are going to change, and we're going to have more women, probably, running for the top office on Navajo land, and maybe more of them would make a concentrated effort to land in the council. And so I just wanted to say that. And that's in line with what's going on nationally.

PI: Mm-hmm. Yes.

PZ: If you look at the state of Arizona, the last ten years, there has been a lot of efforts made by Indian women that got into these tribal leadership positions.

PI: Right.

PZ: And they're doing very well.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: They're doing very well. And a lot of able, capable young ladies that are commanding those leadership posts out in the community. So I think Navajo is going to follow the same route that those other people are taking.

PI: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PZ: (pause) I think I'm going to conclude by talking about old values and new -- new ideas.

PI: That's great.

PZ: Because that was one of the things that you asked.

PI: Yes.

PZ: The Navajo culture, as we all know, it's not static. It's not going to remain what it is for years and years and years. We should learn from the fact that it has gone through a lot of transformation already. And their -- our belief systems have changed; the way we speak and the way we do business has changed. Our lifestyle has changed. Everything that Navajo people do from day to day has changed. And you can [85:00] point at things like transportation -- we're no longer using horses to get to places, riding horses to get to places.

PI: Right.

PZ: We're no longer using wagons to get where we want to go. We're using pickup trucks; we're using cars, and some of the tribal officials are using airplanes.

PI: Right.

PZ: So their -- our mode of travel has changed. And you can't really knock old ideas. The concept of walking to where to want to go. Because just the fact that we walked because we didn't have the transportation really kept us healthy.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: Where we didn't have to put up with the dilemmas that we're in with diabetes. And so those old ways were good to the Navajo people. Traditional language and lifestyle and history, those were all, all good to the Navajo people. I don't think that we should completely abandon those ideas, because we did -- those certain things for a purpose.

PI: Right.

PZ: And some of them were excellent purpose for why we did those things. And I think that Navajo people have to look at themselves individually and analyze what they're going through, and try to retain some of the good values from those old values. Because it's a salvage for the Navajo people to do that. And it's the Navajo way of life. Anything that was thrown our way, we didn't jump at it. We

never did. But we will certainly look at it, analyze it, find out more information about it, and then decide as to what we want to do. I think we should maintain that kind of attitude on any new things that come our way.

PI: [87:12] Were you -- I'm going to ask you one last question. Are you optimistic about the Navajo future?

PZ: Are -- are doing that?

PI: No, I'm sorry. Are you optimistic, yourself, optimistic about the Navajo future?

PZ: [87:23] I'm very optimistic. I'm very optimistic, perhaps because I work with the young people.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And because when I get into a situation with some of these kids, two or three of them, long discussion, really, really highly intelligent discussion that takes place -- you can't think about any other things except to say, "If we could have ten more, fifteen more, twenty more of those kids --"

PI: Right.

PZ: And I'm pretty sure they're around.

PI: [88:04] I think they're here.

PZ: [88:04] If they're still here, then they're here.

PI: [88:05] I think that, yeah, they're here.

PZ: [88:07] And if they can just put their act together --

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: -- recognize each other as such, and then put those movements and programs together, they'll have a major, major impact.

PI: Yes. I think so.

PZ: So that's what I see.

PI: Right.

PZ: It's just that you don't have anyone organizing them --

PI: Right.

PZ: Organizing them to make that into a concerted effort. Where we need to have a program. And so when I experience that, I am highly optimistic about Navajo. Sure, I see -- I see on streets, I see in places where you don't see that.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: You have Navajo people that do a lot of crazy things. And then you have to think about, why is that taking place? There's a lot of ignorance -- a lot of ignorance. And we should not allow ignorance to continue. And you see that too.

PI: Sure.

PZ: But I think this other group kind of --

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: -- kind of overwhelms all of that. And I think that's what education does.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: And that's why we are all here. Because they have -- they're talking about new ideas.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: They're talking about new ways of doing things.

PI: Yeah.

PZ: The discussion that I heard during the last five days was the environment -- how we had to change our attitude, our ways of living.

PI: Uh-huh.

PZ: How we look at things -- our own ideas has to change if we're going to save ourselves from ourselves --

PI: Yeah.

PZ: We've got to begin doing that. And so when I hear that discussion, really turns me on and makes me happy that our students are beginning to think about that.

PI: Mm-hmm.

PZ: I never really heard those kinds of discussions before.

PI: Yeah. Uh-huh.

PZ: So I just wanted to conclude there.

PI: [90:02] Yes, that's a good -- a good note.

PZ: Yeah.

PI: Yeah. Thank you very much.

PZ: [90:05] Sure. (pause) That was good, Peter.

PI: [90:12] That was a good -- well, I have to say, I'm really excited about the possibility of -- well, let's go with this one, it will possibly -- right.

End - ZahPeterson 2008-3-20