

Cook Native American  
Ministries Foundation

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# Indian Highways

**Mission Statement:** "In response to the Christian Gospel, Cook Native American Ministries Foundation equips leaders to better serve their churches and communities."  
Educating, Empowering and Equipping Native Americans

## LIFETIME SUPPORTER AND CONTRIBUTOR



*Wepcukú ywiitpe Wéepetes*  
(Speaking Eagle)  
Reverend Dr. Cecil Corbett

At the end of this summer, the Cook Native American Ministries Foundation family lost a lifetime supporter and contributor to the organization. Reverend Dr. Cecil Corbett served as the President of Cook Christian Training School for more than two decades. He continued to play an active role in the affairs of CNAMF and could be found sharing stories and providing guidance during regular visits to the CNAMF offices. We are honored to share this brief overview of his life, as presented by his children. In this issue, guest contributor Ivan Makil honors Cecil's commitment to the arts and Native youth in his reflections of the Cook Christian Training School Music Caravans. We will miss Cecil's bright smile and sharp sense of humor, but know he is in a beautiful and tranquil world with our Lord in His Eternal Kingdom.

On September 6, 2020, Reverend Dr. Cecil Corbett, age 89, made the journey to his Eternal home. Cecil was an enrolled member of Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho. He was preceded in death by his parents Frank and Phoebe Corbett; his wife of 57 years Irene (Blatchford) Corbett; twin sons Timothy and Stephen Corbett; and great-grandson Xander Munoz.

Cecil is survived by two sisters Frances (Corbett) Bokinskie and Lydia (Corbett) Angle; two daughters Esther Corbett and Ruth Corbett-Munoz; son Paul Corbett; six grandchildren (Jeremy Makil, John, Aaron, Noah, and Lydia Munoz and Nekisa Corbett) and three great-grandchildren (Chayton, Caleb, and Trinity Makil).

Cecil was born on March 4, 1931, on the Cherokee Indian reservation in Cherokee, North Carolina and graduated in 1949 from Pierre High School in South Dakota where he was captain of the basketball team.

In 1951, Cecil had a "mountain top experience," while attending Talmaks Camp Meeting on the Nez Perce Reservation, where he found God and felt a call, never believing that it would lead to ministry. He decided to attend Cook Christian Training School in Phoenix, Arizona, where he met his wife Irene, whom he married December 29, 1951.

Cecil graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Huron College in Huron, South Dakota (1957) a Master of Divinity from University of Dubuque Theology Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa (1962); a Doctor of Divinity Honoris Causa from Huron College (1967), University of Dubuque (1970), and Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, B.C. (2005).

After seminary, Cecil worked among the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in Flandreau, South Dakota from 1961 - 1963. He served among the Pima Indians on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona 1963 - 1967. In 1967, he accepted employment with Cook Christian Training School as the Associate Program Director, then the President from 1968 - 1989, and Chancellor 1989 - 1992.

In 1964, Cecil was the first Native American to be employed by the Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church until 1968. In 1968, while employed at Cook School, Cecil established the Native American Consulting Committee to give voice to Native people.

In 1972, Cecil became Executive Director of the National Indian Training and Research Center in Tempe, Arizona, where he worked until 2004. From 1972 through 1978 Cecil served as Vice Chair and member of the General Assembly Council, the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. In 1985, the Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, B.C. invited Cecil to join their Board and establish a summer program patterned after Cook School, which is still in operation today.

Cecil traveled as a consultant to Japan, New Zealand, Brazil, Australia, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Canada. He especially loved to travel to his cabin in Lone, Washington, where he and his late wife Irene spent many summers. He was quite the jet setter, traveling around the nation for meetings, to bring the message at a church, officiate a wedding or funeral, or provide comfort to a grieving family. Cecil always did his best to be there and pray for others especially if they were in the hospital or homebound.

Cecil was a historian with much knowledge and wisdom. Cecil was a visionary and had a gift for seeing the bigger picture and placing all the pieces together. Now, he has an even bigger and better view of that picture.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Throughout the world, I believe we can all agree, this year has been unlike no other in recent times. Our patience and stamina were tested, as we learned to navigate alternative ways of working and learning. Although these are trying times, there remains much to be grateful for and our work at CNAMF remains steady and fulfilling.

In late August, staff traveled to Montana to visit the *Celebrating Recovery* Native Chaplain Program. We were honored to observe one of their meetings and so pleased to learn about the important work the graduates of the Chaplaincy program are doing in tribal communities and border towns.

As a reminder, CNAMF is part of the Amazon Smile charitable giving program and encourage you to sign up. Simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and click on Cook Native American Ministries Foundation from the list of charitable organizations. Once you have selected your charity, it is linked with your amazon purchases and CNAMF will earn 0.5% of eligible purchases you make. This is an easy way to give to a worthwhile cause.

Another way to make a gift to CNAMF is through a stock transfer option, in which you donate stock to CNAMF and receive a deduction equal to the fair market value of the stock at the time of the transfer (it increased value), and never pay capital gains tax on the appreciated value of the stock. To learn more about how this program benefits both you and CNAMF, send us a message on [info@cooknam.org](mailto:info@cooknam.org).

We look forward to an exciting new year that will bring opportunities for CNAMF to continue important work with tribal churches and in tribal communities, both urban and rural.

On behalf of CNAMF' Board and staff, we wish you a blessed holiday season and new year filled with good health and positive experiences.

*Wendy Weston*

Executive Director/CEO

Cook Native American Ministries Foundation

## COOK CHRISTIAN TRAINING SCHOOL MUSIC CARAVANS

*CNAMF is proud to present the story of the Cook Christian Training School Caravan Music Group experience that took place on Cook School campus in the 1970's. Ivan Makil, CCTS Alumni, was a member of the Caravan Music Group. Mr. Makil shares his experience participating with the group and acknowledges Dr. Cecil Corbett, then President of CCTS and who organized and promoted the group.*

**By Ivan Makil**

Dr. Cecil Corbett's ideas for spreading the ministry to Native youth populations was innovative and unprecedented in Indian Country. The Music Caravans, Music Workshops and curriculum for the various youth events was a highly effective and creative effort to engage young people through contemporary mediums.

In the 1960s, the world was changing rapidly, the civil rights movement on the rise, global consciousness and young people were making unconventional lifestyle choices. Traditional ministry was losing its appeal to the youth. Many were leaving the church. Dr. Corbett, a visionary, seized the opportunity to introduce the Music Caravans as an ingenious way to ignite a sense of purpose in Native youth, reaffirm their commitment to the Church, bolster their faith and inspire them to become leaders in the communities they served. It gave them confidence, strength, courage and hope. It provided an example of how to reinvest in their communities.

The Music Caravans consisted of Music, multimedia development & presentation, performance art, fellowship, worship and travel. It involved Music rehearsals, photography and photo presentation development, subject matter discussions and consensus building to determine Church/public program presentations, camping, cooking, and all the related duties of travel.

Engaging young people in this process provided a forum for discussions about life, growing up, their belief systems, their families, their futures, their goals, education and the church. Experiencing travel and all the associated responsibilities of travel was truly a great experience of new places, new friends, different views of the world and other cultures. The friendships and fellowship of working together creatively, sharing ideas and developing an artistic meaningful presentation of how we saw the world and then, experiencing the acceptance or sometimes questions regarding our views was educational and humbling.

I believe we all experienced various forms of personal growth and commitment to what we were taught, but it was the faith, confidence and sincerity in the delivery of the messages in the presentations and performances from the young people who participated, that brought a renewed spirit to the youth, church congregations, and organizations they touched.

The messages of the many Music Caravans gave hope to Native young people throughout Indian Country. The experience revealed the importance of cultural relevance as a foundational principle of our spiritual beliefs and our futures. It gave us pride to honor our ancestors and our culture as we engage the various religions and denominational theologies. This was the Music Caravan Experience.





# NEW NATIVE NATIONS NONPROFIT FUNDED BY CNAMF OFF TO A GREAT START

The Native Nations Chaplaincy Alliance (NNCA), a Cook Native American Ministries Foundation funded project, is serving Native families impacted by historical, day-to-day, and COVID-19 trauma on Montana's Indian reservations. The NNCA is a Montana charter organization under the Seneca Community Chaplaincy Corps, Mount Vernon, Ohio. NNCA's goal is to keep Native families together by addressing the causes of the high incarceration rates of Native mothers and fathers and the disproportionate placement of Native children in state/tribal foster care systems in the state of Montana. Natives comprise 7% of the state's population, yet 25% of the men and 35% of the women in state correctional systems are Native and 40% of the children in state/tribal foster care systems are Native.

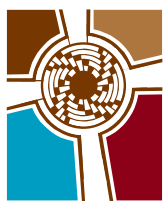
Research has demonstrated that incarceration rates, foster care placements and alcohol and substance abuse rates are related in all Montana communities. Dr. Gabor Mate, a leading Canadian addictions counselor and other addictions experts have found that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) exponentially lead to a greater risk of addiction and runs in certain families. Gabor says, "This is not to say that alcoholism and substance abuse are passed on genetically. Rather, children of any race or culture can be predisposed to abusing alcohol or drugs because they recreate the same conditions in which they grew up. However, this is not saying that everyone who has trauma will become an addict, but research shows that everyone who has an addiction has had trauma."



In November of 2019 NNCA introduced reservation communities in Montana to the Celebrate Recovery® "Life's Healing Choices" curriculum to help incarcerated Native parents and their families recognize, admit, deal with and heal from life's hurts, habits, hang ups and trauma which led to their addictive behaviors.

- On the Blackfeet Reservation, fifty individuals started attending CR groups in December 2019 in the community. The local CR team had just introduced CR curriculum to the Browning jail in February 2020 when the COVID-19 shut down the community.
- On the Fort Peck Reservation CR was started in the jail with twenty people in November 2019 and plans were being made to form CR groups in the community in March 2020 when COVID-19 halted progress.
- On the Rocky Boy Reservation CR groups were started in the jail and in the community in January 2020. Up to seventy inmates were attending the CR groups and thirty family members were attending the CR groups in the community when COVID-19 restricted social gatherings. Now CR "Go-To Meeting" classes are allowed in the jail and in the community through the internet. Seventeen men and eight women are currently attending the online CR groups in the training room of the jail.
- On June 1-3, 2020, the Celebrate Recovery® *Life's Healing Choices* (LHC) curriculum training was introduced to fourteen Chaplaincy candidates at a Chaplaincy Training seminar in Ronan, Montana. On June 18-20, 2020, eighteen Chaplaincy candidates were introduced to the LHC curriculum in Billings, Montana. On August 31, 2020 in Polson, Montana fifteen Chaplains and five community members were trained to use the LHC curriculum.

The NNCA is currently in the process of recruiting chaplain trainees for the Spring of 2021 and will expand recruitment and Celebrate Recovery® *Life's Healing Choices* training to American Indian tribes in South Dakota and Wyoming in the summer of 2021. Short term goal - NCAA will evaluate the effect of the LHC program on each participant's commitment to recovery through pre and post interviews. Long term goal - NCAA will contact the law and justice centers on and off the reservations after the second year of program activities to assess the impact of the project on the recidivism rates of inmates.



# Cook Native American Ministries Foundation

## Leadership for Life

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You may allocate your gift to: Areas of greatest need; scholarships; Endowments; Memorials; or where there is the greatest need.

**Click on the word "Donate" and please encourage others to do the same.**

## IRA Tax-Free Donations

***Did You Know That You Can Donate To Cook Native American Ministries Foundation by Using Your IRA?***

Because of changes in the tax laws there is now a tax-friendly way to contribute to qualifying charities (like a faith-based organization such as CNAMEF). In general, distributions from a traditional IRA are taxable in the year you receive them. But one exception to this rule is the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). A QCD generally is a nontaxable distribution made directly by the trustee of your IRA to an organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. You must be at least age 70 and 1/2 when the distribution is made. Also, you must have the same type of acknowledgment of your contribution as you would need to claim a deduction for a charitable contribution. (You can't claim a charitable contribution deduction for an QCD not included in your income.)

This provision of the tax code may be of interest to taxpayers who are at least age 70 and 1/2 and have a traditional IRA. These individuals must take required minimum distributions from their IRA each year. Seniors in this position can now make charitable contributions while at the same time reducing their taxable income by directing the trustee of their IRA to make qualified charitable distributions (QCD), which count towards their minimum distribution.

For more information see [IRS Publication 590-B](#) and talk to your tax professional.