

Best Way to Help Indian: Education (For Whites)

By JOHN DASH

Mrs. Joseph Corcoran isn't interested in going back and fighting the Red Man — White Man wars and treaties all over again. She's far more interested in using education to better the lot of the American Indian.

Mrs. Corcoran, a member of the board of directors of the New York Iroquois Conference, has been spending a lot of time in the last four years preaching that message, most recently at the New Orleans gathering of the National Catholic Educators Association, at the invitation of Sister Callista Aroniond, SSF, chairwoman of the National Office for Black Catholics in Washington, D.C. and Auxiliary Bishop Harold R. Perry of New Orleans.

"I really think it's a matter of educating people," the tiny lady with the flashing eyes told the Courier on her return from the conference, "making them aware of the minorities, making them aware of the problems of the minorities . . . and making them aware of the negative stereotypes they have of us which have been written in history books, in plays and on television."

Mrs. Corcoran addressed a panel on Social Concerns of Today at the Conference and "with Catholic Educators, and with anyone who is an educator I recommend that in teacher training, cultural sensitivity be required."

She realizes that in such training, all of the minorities can't be covered in depth but "when they can they should go out in the field and work with these people, whether it is as a cadet teacher or a part-time job."

She also realizes that there has been a tremendous growth of concern for the cause of the Indian in recent years. But she cites a sentiment of Vine Deloria, noted Indian author, who is skeptical of "understandings" of minority problems and cultures gotten by "osmosis." She asks how a non-Indian "can completely understand the American Indian? It's always from their (white) point of view and not from the Indian's point of view."

Nevertheless, two recent developments give heart to her dream of others understanding the Indian. The first is the fact that she has been invited to address several conferences. "The fact that they were invitational and there was an over-all picture of minorities, with their input into the programming . . . was a kind of a fulfillment of what I as one little speck have been working for."

The second is that "many of us who have been working for our minority group have come to feel that we have reached another plateau or another milestone, and what we find now is that instead of working for our individual groups, we realize . . . we have some very common problems that can be dealt with in a common way."

Sister Judith In National Post

Sister Mary Judith Heberle has been elected vice president of the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. She is superior general of the Sisters of Mercy of the Rochester Diocese.

The election took place last month in Bethesda, Md. Electors were the superiors general and assistant superiors general of the 27 groups represented.

The Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas consists of the Generalate at Bethesda and nine provinces of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union, plus eighteen independent congregations. The Rochester Mercys are independent.

John Mackey is a name that frequently came up in the Courier's conversation with Mrs. Corcoran. He is a Sioux Indian and is the head of the National American Indian Planning Project. He is especially involved in a project called "Operation Image" which Mrs. Corcoran hopes to implement in area schools, ideally next fall.

The project is designed for teachers and attempts to heighten teacher awareness of local minority cultures and problems, and will try to give them the resources and means to respond to those groups.



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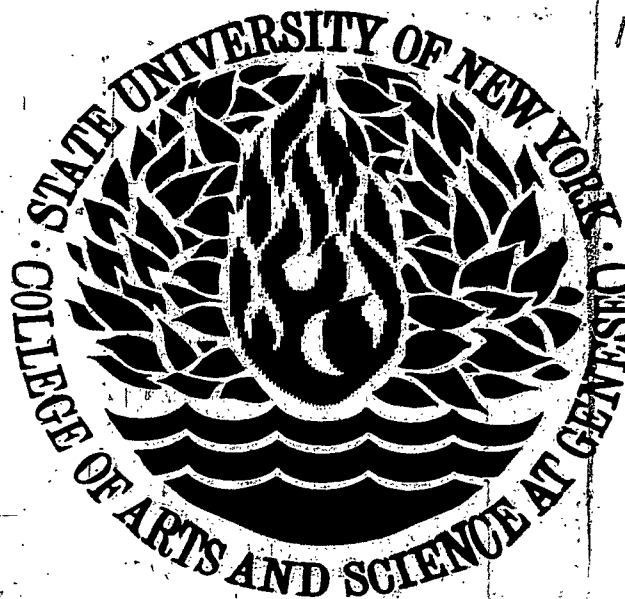
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