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10 ROAD TO HEALING TOUR

11 SHERMAN INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

12 AUGUST 4, 2023

13 AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

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23 Transcribed by:
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24 CSR No. 13456

1 STEVEN ESTRADA: (Foreign language spoken.)

2 I said, good morning, thank you for everyone

3 who has come here today. My name is Steven Estrada from

4 Santa Rosa, and my clan is the (inaudible) People. So

5 I'll be offering this morning's prayer.

6 (Foreign language spoken.)

7 STEVEN ESTRADA: I said, "Our Creator, the one

8 who brought us here, hear our prayer. Watch over all

9 who have gathered here today, our leaders and elders who

10 have come to Sherman on this solemn day. We ask you to

11 make us strong on this day as we share these stories and

12 we ask you to guide any survivors who have come. And we

13 acknowledge the Interior's effort for healing, but this

14 will be a long journey.

15 "The stories our relatives told us are still

16 with us and the stories of hurt, pain, and loss. And

17 while we can't forget what was done, we can work

18 together for a better future and protection of the

19 generations to come."

20 (Foreign language spoken.)

21 LYNN VALBUENA: Well, good morning. We are so
22 happy that everyone is here this morning for another
23 session here with our Secretary Deb Haaland and Bryan
24 Newland. Thank you both for being here. And I will
25 make those introductions real soon.

2

1 But want to give another round of applause for
2 the beautiful dancing today with our bird singers. And
3 it just warms our hearts to see that we have so many of
4 the young singers now learning and knowing the dance and
5 the culture and the language. So that makes us very,
6 very happy. So thank you all for being here today.

7 So I'm going to make some very short remarks,
8 and then we are going to get on with the session.

9 But (foreign language spoken) in our language
10 is hello, a warm greeting to all of you. Lynn Valbuena,
11 chairwoman of San Manuel. And I would be remiss if I
12 did not introduce my two council members that are here
13 with me today. Audrey Martinez our travel secretary.
14 Please stand. She's also my sister. And then also
15 Eddie Duro [phonetic] sitting next to her. He's also on
16 our tribal council. He works with us under our growth
17 pillar and learning a lot now about finance and what we

18 need to do with our money to help others with

19 assistance.

20 So thank you, Eddie.

21 And also I see our cousin here Alexis, Alexis

22 Monzano, former council member for San Manuel.

23 Alexis, please stand and be recognized.

24 Alexis is so involved and one of our committee

25 members on our healing committee for the state and she

3

1 goes to all these meetings here.

2 So, Alexis, thank you so much for being here

3 today. So nice to see so many friends today.

4 So just want to say greeting, warm welcome to

5 all of you for being here today. And also we are very,

6 very honored to welcome you to the part of Southern

7 California here in our ancestral territories. And we're

8 especially honored and privileged to be here, to welcome

9 Deb Haaland, our Secretary of the Interior, to

10 California. And Secretary Haaland, she's on a mission

11 to fully investigate the true history of boarding

12 schools and their effects, as you all know, going on all

13 these tours, on the native people across, you know, all

14 generations. So we thank her for being here with us
15 today.

16 The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians are
17 descended from the ancient Maara'yam people who are the
18 Spanish explorers here in our area, Serrano, which is
19 the word that came into our ancestral territory from the
20 Spaniards. So we are what you call the Yuhaaviatam
21 Clan, we are the People of the Pines. Some of you may
22 not know that Santos Manuel is our great
23 great-grandfather, but the reservation name San Manuel
24 was shortened after his name Santos, so that's our
25 leader back in the 1800s.

1 And also our original ancestry territory was
2 7.4 million acres back in the day. We ended up having
3 only 640 acres on our reservation, which is all
4 mountains and hilltops as most of you know.

5 So there -- I want to share a story about our
6 cousin Frances Morongo who is the great-grandmother here
7 of Alexis who is sitting here with us today. But I
8 wanted to share how she attended the boarding school
9 here and was taken as a young girl from here, from the
10 Sherman Institute to a hospital here because she was

11 homesick and ill, she wanted to go home. And we were
12 told in her story that from the second floor window she
13 could see her home, she could see the mountain where
14 San Manuel is, which is our homeland where we're from.

15 She was a young girl. I'm not sure of her age,
16 but I'm told a very young girl, possibly nine or ten
17 years old. So she could see the arrowhead formation on
18 the mountain here in San Bernardino, and she followed
19 that and she escaped and she left. And she walked for
20 about 20 miles back home to our reservation which is
21 near here in Riverside.

22 So my cousin, our cousin's story is being
23 placed in the schools and also the assimilation methods
24 as recounted by many, many generations of all of us
25 natives in our culture.

1 So the boarding schools is another way for the
2 federal governments to take more Indian lands and
3 resources for a new and growing country for all of us in
4 Indian country. So in all more than 400 Indian boarding
5 schools were operated by the federal government in
6 different areas of the country. The very school where

7 we meet today originally opened in 1892 as the Perris
8 Indian School in Perris, California. The school was
9 relocated here in Riverside in 1903 under the name the
10 "Sherman Institute." Today it is known as "Sherman
11 Indian High School" operated under the authority of the
12 federal government.

13 So San Manuel has been honored to work very,
14 very closely with the Sherman Indian High School for a
15 number of years. The Career Pathways Program is a
16 program that we've partnered here with Sherman many
17 years ago and is one of our favorite projects for more
18 than -- well, more than ten years now, it's been more
19 than a decade.

20 Just kind of wanted to share a little bit of
21 history of that with all of you and how San Manuel is
22 involved. And this program provides career education
23 and training opportunities for the students here in
24 areas of culinary, environmental vocations, emergency
25 medical training, and also the -- the years here spent

1 by the students who participated in all of these ready
2 job skills allows them to move on and to find employment
3 and to assist and help others.

4 So in addition, these students take job skills
5 learned from the program back home to their
6 reservations. And the Career Pathways Program continues
7 to be a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for San Manuel
8 and Sherman.

9 So again, we want to thank you for the
10 opportunity to offer these opening remarks.

11 And then also now it is my great pleasure to
12 welcome Deb Haaland, our Department of Interior
13 Secretary to listen to this listening tour and to hear
14 from all of you and to confront the legacy of boarding
15 schools.

16 And also Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary,
17 thank you so much, Bryan, also for being here.

18 So please join me in welcoming the Honorable
19 Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland.

20 (Foreign language spoken.) Deb.

21 SECRETARY HAALAND: Hello. Thank you,
22 everyone. (Foreign language spoken.) My child (foreign
23 language spoken), I'd like to acknowledge her even
24 though she's not here.

25 Good morning, everyone. I'm so happy to be

1 here with all of you. And I want to say a special hello
2 to my dear former colleague and friend Congressman Mark
3 Takano. Welcome and thank you for joining us today.

4 Thank you.

5 Thank you, Chairwoman. Thank you for
6 acknowledging all the great things that Sherman does and
7 proud of our students and the mark that they'll have on
8 our country and our people. Thank you also for the
9 beautiful blessing and the beautiful songs that opened
10 us today. It's so important and it's an honor to join
11 all of you on your ancestral homelands.

12 I'm not going to speak for a long time because
13 I'm here to listen to you. Your voices are important to
14 me. And I thank you for your willingness to share your
15 stories.

16 Federal Indian boarding school policies have
17 impacted every single indigenous person I know. Some
18 are survivors, some are descendants, but we all carry
19 this painful legacy in our hearts regardless of who we
20 are and how we got here.

21 Deeply engrained in so many of us is the trauma
22 that these policies and these places have inflicted on
23 our people. My ancestors and many of yours endured the
24 horrors of the Indian boarding school assimilation
25 policies carried out by the same department that I now

1 lead. This is the first time in history that a
2 United States cabinet secretary comes to the table with
3 this shared trauma. That is not lost on me, and I'm
4 determined to use my position for the good of the
5 people.

6 I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School
7 Initiative in 2021 to undertake a comprehensive effort
8 to recognize the legacy of boarding school policies with
9 the goal of addressing their intergenerational impacts
10 and to shed light on the traumas of the past.

11 In California alone there were 12 boarding
12 schools leaving intergenerational impacts that persist
13 in the communities represented here today. It is my
14 department's duty to address this shared trauma that so
15 many of us carry. To do that we need to tell our
16 stories. Today is part of that journey.

17 Through the Road to Healing our goal is to
18 create opportunities for people to share their stories
19 but also to help connect communities with
20 trauma-informed support and to facilitate the collection
21 of a permanent oral history. This is the eighth stop on
22 the Road to Healing, which is a year-long tour across
23 the country to provide indigenous survivors of the

24 federal Indian boarding school system and their

25 descendants an opportunity to make known their

9

1 experiences. I want you all to know that I'm with you

2 on this journey, I will listen, I will grieve with you,

3 and I will feel your pain.

4 As we mourn what we have lost, please know that

5 we still have so much to gain. The healing that can

6 help our communities will not be done overnight, but I

7 know that it can be done. This is one step among many

8 that we will take to strengthen and rebuild the bonds

9 with the native communities that the federal Indian

10 boarding schools set out to break. Those steps have the

11 potential to alter the course of our future.

12 I am grateful to each of you for stepping up

13 forward to share your stories. I'm very grateful for

14 the tribal leadership in this room too. Thank you all

15 so much for being here and caring so much about your

16 communities. I know we rely on all of you for a lot.

17 Also, just want to give a quick acknowledgement

18 of the secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee members who

19 are in the room as well. You're helping me to be a

20 better secretary, and I'm very grateful for that.
21 I'm going to turn this over now to our -- my
22 dear friend, colleague, he was -- he -- it took a lot
23 for him to get here with all the plane issues. And I'm
24 really happy that he's sitting next to me today.
25 Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland.

10

1 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: (Foreign language
2 spoken), Madam Secretary. I'm very glad to be here.
3 Planes, trains, and automobiles to get here.
4 I want to say first (foreign language spoken).
5 That is our -- my greeting to you in our language as a
6 Anishinaabe Ojibwe people. Where I come from in
7 Northern Michigan, my name is He Walks Many Paths of the
8 Wolf Clan. And I come from the Place of the Pike. And
9 we are an Anishinaabe people.
10 And I'm really honored to be here with you all
11 here on your homelands and your communities. And also
12 want to make sure I acknowledge, because of the
13 centuries of forced assimilation policies, I also want
14 to acknowledge the large urban native community we have
15 here in Southern California who are not living maybe on
16 their ancestral homelands but are an important part of

17 the native community here in Southern California as
18 well. Thank you all for joining us here at Sherman
19 Indian school.

20 And I want to also extend my gratitude for our
21 singers this morning. When we're talking about
22 important and painful topics like this, it's always a
23 real nice way to start the healing process and to lift
24 our spirits. And so I want to say (foreign language
25 spoken), thank you all for sharing your songs and your

11

1 dances with us. And I also want to thank -- I can't see
2 him -- for the blessing this morning and the prayer.

3 You know, Sherman is a significant place as the
4 first federal Indian boarding school here in California.
5 And when Congress appropriated funding for this
6 institution, the purpose was to assimilate Indian
7 people, but that policy of assimilation wasn't directed
8 at adults, it was directed at kids. And the federal
9 government knew that when it established places like
10 Sherman Indian School and directed this policy of forced
11 assimilation at children here in California and across
12 Indian country, some of them as young as five years old.

13 Today, under the Department of the Interior,
14 Sherman is a place now where Indian students are
15 provided a place to live and study as Indian people and
16 where they can excel and go on to contribute to their
17 families, their tribes, their communities, and the
18 nation.

19 As of now, as the Secretary mentioned, the
20 Department of the Interior has determined there were 12
21 federal Indian boarding schools here in California. As
22 we keep investigating the federal Indian boarding school
23 system and learning about your experience at specific
24 schools, the overall system paints a history that the
25 records alone can't provide.

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1 So in addition to hearing from you today and
2 along this healing tour, our next steps include
3 identifying marked and unmarked burial sites across the
4 boarding school system and determine the total amount of
5 federal funding and support invested in this system.
6 And we also encourage you today and at future stops to
7 raise other considerations you think we need to account
8 for in this initiative.

9 I want to acknowledge our colleagues and our

10 friends from the Department of Health and Human Services
11 who are supporting this conversation with
12 trauma-informed mental health support. I also want to
13 acknowledge our friends from the National Endowment for
14 the Humanities who are helping us to share survivor
15 experiences across the globe.

16 We have a number of folks from the Department
17 of the Interior, our staff, too many to name, but all
18 just doing amazing work over here, and -- yes, we're all
19 over here on this side. And also, since we're at
20 Sherman Indian School, I want to make sure I acknowledge
21 our Director of Bureau of Indian Education Tony Dearman
22 who plays a critical role in this initiative and in the
23 education of Indian kids.

24 And also extend my gratitude to Chairwoman
25 Valbuena for your leadership into the San Manuel Band of

1 Mission Indians for your support of the students here at
2 Sherman Indian School.

3 We appreciate all the tribal leaders here for
4 your support for the survivors in your communities and
5 from across Indian country.

6 So there are a few housekeeping things I want
7 to walk through before we turn the mic over to all of
8 you.

9 I want to first emphasize that these listening
10 sessions are intended to be a venue for survivors and
11 their families to tell us as representatives of the
12 United States about your experiences at the boarding
13 school system.

14 Other people may wish to provide us with
15 comments or statements or views on the boarding school
16 system, including tribal leaders, and we want to
17 encourage that, and you can submit your views to us in
18 writing. We've provided an e-mail address to you. And
19 that will be included in our research for the boarding
20 school report. But first want to make sure that we
21 emphasize that these spaces we want to make sure we're
22 giving space to people who want to talk about their
23 experience and their family's experience at these
24 schools. And we appreciate everybody for giving that
25 space to them.

1 So to make a comment today, you can simply
2 raise your hand. I think we've got some mic runners

3 here, right? Maybe? Okay. And we will bring the mic
4 to you. We'll ask that you state your name, your tribal
5 identity or affiliation, and the name or the names of
6 the boarding schools that you wish to discuss. That
7 information is important for our research as part of
8 this initiative.

9 Also want to make sure you are all aware we
10 have members of the press who are here with us today.
11 They will be with us for the first hour of this event.
12 We want to make sure that we're telling this story to
13 all the American people who may not understand or be
14 aware of this. But we also know that people may wish to
15 give their comments and views without being on the
16 evening news or in the local newspaper. So at the
17 one-hour mark we'll take a short break, we'll
18 respectfully ask our friends from the media outlets here
19 to excuse themselves, and then we will continue this
20 conversation.

21 Also note that we have a court reporter who is
22 recording what's said here today for a transcript. That
23 transcript is useful for us in this initiative, but it
24 may be released under federal law if it's requested.

25 We plan to stay with you today until 3:00 p.m.

1 And I will apologize in advance, due to our travel
2 schedule we have to leave here promptly at 3:00. We
3 will try to make some space during the day for photos
4 and a lunch.

5 And then lastly I want to make sure that I also
6 share that we know that these conversations are painful
7 and difficult and they can be triggering for a lot of
8 people. And so if you want to talk with somebody who
9 can help you with that, we have attendants here outside
10 the classrooms next to the gym. We have licensed
11 therapists and we have people who can connect survivors
12 with follow-up support if needed. We want to make sure
13 you're all taking care of yourself. Take water breaks
14 and fresh air breaks as needed.

15 And lastly, I want to thank all of you for
16 taking your time with us today, especially the people
17 who are coming to share stories about themselves and
18 their relatives. This isn't easy and it's painful. And
19 we are grateful for your courage, for standing up to
20 speak the truth. And we're here to support you in that.

21 So with all that said, now we're going to put
22 our mics down up here, we're going to turn the mic over
23 to you. And all you have to do if you wish to speak or
24 share with us is simply raise your hand, and our mic
25 runners will find you. (Foreign language spoken.)

1 Thank you.

2 SALLY THURMAN: Hi. I'm Sally Thurman. I am
3 from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. And I'd be
4 interested in having you take a look at Pierre Boarding
5 School. Three of my grandmother's siblings attended
6 there and many cousins in the early thirties. My uncle
7 served three world wars, Korea, World War II, and
8 Vietnam. And he went back many years later, I have an
9 interview I did of him, where two different deaths
10 occurred there.

11 One was his cousin who was shook to death from
12 her hair by another student. She died from that injury.
13 Her hair came out. I don't think any punishment or
14 consequences ever happened. She even has a death
15 certificate that has an unrecognizable death diagnosis
16 to me called meiphitis, m-e-i-p-h-i-t-i-s. And the best
17 I could decipher, being a medical transcriptionist
18 myself, is that meiphitis means black and white. So I
19 can only assume that means half breed, unless it's an
20 old diagnosis for brain injury that I don't know about.
21 I don't know where she's buried.

22 And then my great -- he's my grand uncle, my

23 grandma's brother was in a hospital room next door to
24 his sister, only he didn't know she was in there because
25 they separated the siblings, and she died. But they

17

1 didn't tell him about it till after she died, and he was
2 in the room next door.

3 So he went back to the school at Pierre in
4 South Dakota after he retired from the military, being a
5 reconnaissance vet, kind of funny, boarding school and
6 then three wars, right, to find his sister's grave their
7 in Pierre, only they don't know where it is. They don't
8 know where she is buried.

9 So I'd love to know where Delilah Menz
10 [phonetic] is buried. He wanted to put a tombstone for
11 her, and that is -- he died last year from COVID, and so
12 did the other two sisters of his, they were 93 and 96
13 years old.

14 I guess that's it for now.

15 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very
16 much for coming and sharing that today. Thank you.

17 KEITH: It's a pleasure to meet you

18 Mr. (inaudible). My name is Keith (inaudible). I'm a

19 65-year-old Blackfoot Indian. (Foreign language
20 spoken), first nations.
21 I have been advocating for the boarding
22 schools, and I am a co-chair of United American Indian
23 Involvement in Los Angeles In-house Service Program.
24 Approximately about two years ago we had some
25 information come about the boarding school through our

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1 people up there.
2 So I'm part of the relocation act with my wife
3 here too, come down here in '63, so I survived that, but
4 it was almost like the second thing. First it was a
5 boarding school, and then coming down here and being
6 taken away from our reservation. Ponytails got cut, the
7 Blackfeet, we wear three, it was almost the same thing
8 as the boarding school. Lot of prejudice, but we stuck
9 together. We bang the drum, which is now the pow wow
10 that we have out here. Our first drum group was Many
11 Trails. And that's where we all come from, Many Trails.
12 The BIA stuck us together in these apartment
13 complexes. And I was just talking to this young man
14 about him riding a skateboard. Well, I learned to ride
15 a skateboard -- they stuck us in Redondo Beach. But we

16 did go home every year for Indian Days, North American
17 Indian Days.

18 I also am a veteran. I have a diagnosis of
19 PTSD. Still struggling with that through groups, but
20 that is war that happens with men. But with children,
21 to do the same thing, that's genocide.

22 After my grandma passed I started getting all
23 kinds of information and documents that she was born in
24 1900. And in 1908 she was in Carlisle until she was 17.
25 She talks about Jim Thorpe. She's seen him play

19

1 football.

2 And then from 17 to 21, she was transferred at
3 17 years old to Chemawa. And then eventually she come
4 home back to the reservation.

5 But I used to stay with her every summer, and
6 she was really disciplined in the way she ran her place,
7 her house. Cleanliness, cooking, and we'd have to go
8 bed at 7:30. And after we took a bath we would come to
9 her room and say the rosaries. And I never knew where
10 this come from until I started growing up and finding
11 out that my grandma was disciplined that way. But it

12 just seemed like she didn't show too much emotion, it
13 was just something that was in her head.

14 I am a traditional counselor with the
15 Department of Mental Health L.A. County, and I do run
16 across a lot of our people through intergenerational
17 trauma. And it still exists in me. I speak about it.
18 But that's one of the coping skills that I have. And I
19 think if we speak about any kind of trauma, we can get
20 through this together.

21 But how do I get the education to the kids that
22 are here or to the other places what these institutions
23 were? Is there a history there about what happened
24 here? The U.S. government has never put what really
25 happened to the Blackfeet; taking away our ghost dance,

20

1 our sun dance, all of our ceremonies. But we stayed
2 with it. We continue on doing it. I continue on doing
3 the ceremonies.

4 But it's this one thing, after I started seeing
5 all the documents coming out, that's why auntie never
6 did talk about things, uncle never. And you know they
7 died with that trauma. And I don't want the next
8 generation to not know the history, even though it's

9 hard; but when you have a wound, you got to let the --

10 you got to let the Creator sun heal it. It becomes a

11 scar. But that's all right.

12 Thank you.

13 FERN CHARLIEBIAS: (Foreign language spoken).

14 My name is Fern Charliebias [phonetic], and I'm

15 originally from Shiprock, New Mexico. I attended public

16 school and mostly off and on reservation boarding

17 schools.

18 The first on-reservation boarding school I went

19 to was in Shiprock, up on the hill they call it,

20 Shiprock Boarding School. And then I went away to

21 Sherman when I was barely 14 years old. And I'm glad I

22 did come to Sherman. There were some things in the

23 beginning when I was 14 that I experienced and I didn't

24 really like.

25 But going back to the -- on reservation -- oh,

21

1 before I say that, thank you for being here to hear our

2 voices because for a long time we had been silenced. We

3 were. We couldn't say anything. As a child -- I'm

4 starting to get emotional -- you couldn't talk about it.

5 If you talked about it you were punished. I mean that's
6 awful. You think about your own kids. They hurt, they
7 can't talk about it.

8 Anyway, going back to the Shiprock Boarding
9 School, I was only nine years old. And there were some
10 experiences that -- that is really cruel, that even the
11 native people were told to -- that they worked there,
12 and they were told that we could not wear our hair long.

13 If we visit with our relatives, I think the
14 gentleman said that, we were separated. My sister's
15 dorm was just next door, and we were told we were
16 forbidden to visit with them. And we went to church, we
17 were forced to go to church, but we had to go to
18 different churches. We couldn't sit with our sisters in
19 the same church.

20 If I -- I remember that experience when they
21 found out that I sat with my sister in church; I was --
22 I was punished. I couldn't eat lunch, I stayed up until
23 midnight to clean the hallways. These are some of the
24 examples that really, like he said, is still a scar.

25 And I'm also writing a -- I'm on my final draft

2 book, but it's about my experiences on and off

3 reservation boarding schools. And it hurts to talk

4 about it. It does.

5 We were forbidden to speak our language. My

6 hair was really long. When I got there, they cut it, it

7 was like straight across and then straight this way.

8 And they didn't ask my parents about it.

9 Then I went to Sherman. The name of my book is

10 going to be Cottonwood Dream -- "Cottonwood Tree Dream,"

11 because that's where my dream started. I sat on this

12 really tall cottonwood tree, I would dream there. I

13 made a little throne up there in the tree, and I sat

14 there and I said, I want to do something for me, for my

15 life. I don't want to be on the reservations, do, you

16 know, manual work. So I thought how can I go and get an

17 education somewhere else, not in Shiprock. It was a

18 small town, it was probably about a thousand people

19 there.

20 I sat there and I thought how can I be -- I

21 could see Shiprock way off in the distance, and it

22 looked like an abandoned ship when it rains. So I

23 thought long and hard and I thought, I got to be -- I've

24 got to go somewhere else.

25 Found out about Sherman through my cousins,

1 nieces and all that -- excuse me, aunts. They told me
2 about an off-reservation boarding school. And I was
3 only like probably nine years old when I started that
4 dream. And then found out that they went there, they
5 came home, they said, hey, there's a really neat school,
6 you can go to Disneyland, you can see the ocean, you
7 know, a lot of neat things. I'm the oldest of three
8 children, I really never had a childhood. And you can
9 do the things you want. You don't have to chop wood.
10 You don't have to cook. So I said, yay, I can go there.
11 So my parents let us go, the three of us, the three
12 oldest.

13 When I came to Sherman I was scared. I saw
14 these trees, palm trees. I said, those are strange
15 looking trees. They just got these little clumps at the
16 top. There's no shade. So all these things was a new
17 world for me. And I said, you know, I know I'm going to
18 get lonely, but I'm going to do it, because my dream is
19 based on that. I want to make something of my life.

20 So I stayed. I wanted to go home. If I tell
21 my parents I'm lonely, they will just bring me home.
22 But there are a lot of strict rules at Sherman. We
23 didn't have to wear uniforms, but we could not speak our
24 language. I'm Dene, and we were -- we speak our

25 language at Sherman. This is way back. And we were --

24

1 they punished us. We were written up. This was one of
2 my first major discipline, was speaking my language.
3 And yet today I am teaching my language proudly in
4 classes.

5 And my second major referral was going to
6 church. We were forced to go to different churches. I
7 didn't go to church one day and I hid in my -- I think
8 it was the Ramona dorm, one of the dorms here. And dorm
9 people found out, and I was punished as well too.

10 But there are a lot of experiences that I would
11 like to share in my book, I just need to get some
12 financial backing on that. Again, like I said, this is
13 no advertisement. But I'm in my final draft, and I
14 think my voice needs to be heard because this is real,
15 this trauma is real, people. And we are the voice. I'm
16 one of the evidence or one of the people that's really
17 speaking out today. Beware. Listen to your children.
18 And communicate with your kids, not just your kids but
19 our -- our relatives. So it's very important.

20 Also, one last thing, my class when I graduated
21 from Sherman, we're the ones that changed the name from

22 Sherman Institute to Sherman Indian High School. Yay.
23 We didn't like the word "institute" because when we went
24 off on outing, working off campus, people would say, is
25 there something wrong with you? You're at this

25

1 institute. You know, that kind of stuff. We didn't
2 like that. So we had it changed.

3 Thanks for your time.

4 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very
5 much.

6 We have a gentleman over here.

7 WILLIAM PINK: My name is William Pink.

8 Sherman had a lot of connection to our family. My
9 mother came here, my uncles came here to school, my
10 brother worked here as a groundskeeper until he retired,
11 my uncle worked here as a groundskeeper until he
12 retired. I had one aunt who was a dorm mother, two
13 aunts who worked in attendance. So we have a strong
14 connection to Sherman itself.

15 When I came back home from Vietnam, I was doing
16 the same thing you're doing today, and I went around
17 because I wanted to find out all the bad about Sherman

18 Indian School. And, you know, I talked to my mother
19 about it. And I went around and I started to -- you
20 know, interviewing various elders.

21 And I got back home to my mother. I says, they
22 don't want to talk to me about it. And she said, that's
23 because you're asking them to say bad things about the
24 school. She says, you got to remember, this is the only
25 thing that they had. You know, it meant a lot to them.

26

1 So I went back around again, and yes, she was
2 right, don't be talking bad about our school. This is
3 what they had. This is what they shared together and
4 the friendship and what it represented; a lot of them
5 met their spouses here.

6 I have an aunt that was from Hualapai, I have
7 two uncles from Pomo, you know, because they met here.
8 And so, you know, in this way the United States failed.
9 They tried to break us up, and eventually they stopped
10 the California Indians from coming here and they started
11 bringing in the other groups of people.

12 My uncle Aloysius, known as Ally, he died
13 fighting fire when he was 15 years old because they
14 would draft the students from here to go fight fires

15 with the forest service, and he went out to fight fire
16 on the Pomo Indian reservation and he was killed
17 fighting fire. So and that affected them quite a bit.
18 My mother's last words were calling out to her brother,
19 "Pull me up, Ally, please pull me up," because that's
20 what she saw, was her brother who was killed fighting
21 fire in the next world, begging him to pull her up.
22 But at the same time, you know, recognize what
23 this represented to a lot of the California Indians,
24 that, you know, one being barred from it, and what
25 happened after that is just as important as during the

27

1 school period itself.
2 I ran into a man -- I was appointed by Cecil B.
3 Andrus to serve on the Desert Advisory Committee back in
4 the day when he was secretary of interior. And so I met
5 a lot of the Indian people. We were tasked with
6 developing a 25 million acre land use plan for the
7 California desert. And I ran into Ed Swick from Parkers
8 Mojave Indian. And he would guide me. He's also alumni
9 from Sherman. And he would tell me when I was wrong.
10 He would take me and lambaste me sometimes in public.

11 But I listened to him; he was a good man.

12 And so I was walking away one time after he

13 berated me one time, and he says, oh, by the way, say

14 hello to your mother for me. And I looked at him and I

15 said, you know my mother? And he says, yeah, say hello

16 to your mother for me.

17 So I went and said hello -- I said, Ed Swick

18 said to say hello. And she turned pale. And she said

19 who? I said Ed Swick. She said, he died 25 years ago.

20 So I said, no, mom, he's very much alive, and he's out

21 at Parker, you know, Colorado River Indian Reservation.

22 And the friendship was so strong between them,

23 the very next day -- they never even asked me where he

24 lived -- they got in the car with her two sisters and

25 they drove out to meet up with him because they had

1 alumni status.

2 Before my mother died, I took her on a tour of

3 California to meet all of her student friends. And the

4 bond between them was everlasting, they're together

5 today. And then to come back every year to the Sherman

6 reunion, these people would travel I think in their old

7 age to come back and meet their old friends.

8 So I think we need to look at both sides of
9 this in terms of what good it did. And I understand the
10 bad it did. My uncle was beaten for speaking the
11 language. And his own brothers and sisters didn't know
12 that until one evening he started speaking and they
13 looked at him and said, you speak the language? And he
14 said, yeah, but they beat me at Sherman for speaking
15 that, and so mama and papa said, don't speak it ever
16 again. So that ended the language for our family.

17 So, you know, then that's what I ask, that you
18 look at both sides of this. There are some good things
19 that happened here; and yes, I understand the bad things
20 that happened here as well, too. But please keep an
21 open mind to that. And thank you.

22 TENSHA CHAVEZ: (Foreign language spoken.)
23 Good morning. My name is Tensha [phonetic] Chavez. I'm
24 Navajo Dene, born to the Meadow People for the Mexican
25 people.

1 I was born and raised out here, so I'm going to
2 tell you two stories that were passed on from my
3 grandfather Andy Yazı [phonetic] and my

4 great-grandfather Andrew Yazi, Sr.

5 So two weeks before my grandfather died, he
6 died in 2012, he was on his deathbed and he was telling
7 me stories. And I remember growing up myself wondering
8 why I didn't know my language, why we were brought out
9 here. And he proceeded to tell me that he thought
10 throughout his life that if he taught us our language
11 that we were going to be beat in school just like him.
12 His hair was cut, he was told not to speak our language,
13 not to practice anything that he learned growing up. So
14 that trauma stayed with him.

15 Throughout my own life I always wondered why
16 things happened to me personally as a young woman. And
17 I realize now more than ever that it's passed down from
18 generation to generation. Sometimes these are things
19 that we don't want to talk about that are trauma. I'm a
20 recovering addict, and from my recovery I realized I've
21 uncovered a lot of things that have been passed down
22 from generation to generation.

23 My great-grandfather Andrew Yazi, Sr., was at
24 Carlisle, Chemawa, and I believe he was here at Sherman.
25 I'm not sure he was at Chemawa, and he was here. And I

1 remember a story that was passed down. And he said that
2 they ran away from the school, him and three other boys.
3 They were caught. One of them ran faster than the rest
4 of them. And they saw I believe he said dogs chase
5 after them and grab that one. They came back. He said
6 he never saw that boy again.

7 So that always stayed with me. I always
8 wondered what happened to that kid until we heard a few
9 years ago about all the children being buried and
10 they're uncovering their remains that I wondered if that
11 little boy was one of them.

12 So I'm really grateful that you're having this
13 today because for myself and for our future generations,
14 it's time for us to heal. And it's time for us to talk
15 about things that are very uncomfortable in order for
16 our next seven generations to heal.

17 I have two of my kids with me as well, and
18 we're breaking barriers and breaking those traumas
19 today. You know, no more drug addiction; you know, it
20 doesn't have to be passed down anymore. Now my kids get
21 to heal.

22 You know, we talk about being -- like our
23 family -- no one said I love you. And that was
24 something I grew up with. No one said I love you. They
25 might have shown it in their own way. Like when I go

1 back home to the res, my uncles, my aunties, my grandmas
2 and grandpas, it was really hard for them to say those
3 things. It was like they were still traumatized.

4 For myself, I knew I didn't want that, and so
5 I -- everyone knows now when you leave me you have to
6 say I love you, (foreign language spoken), because that
7 to me is very powerful to say those words.

8 And so I just really feel like it's time for us
9 to heal. So thank you for doing this. And thank you
10 for those who are sharing their stories. They're very
11 impactful. And hopefully we can all heal as a
12 community. (Foreign language spoken.)

13 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you very
14 much.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Foreign language
16 spoken.) Hello. It's an honor. And thank you,
17 Secretary Haaland and Assistant Secretary Newland.

18 I met you, Secretary Haaland, actually we were
19 in Rincon. And it's always a pleasure to have your own
20 people in the way you engage with everybody. But I took
21 a picture of you and Assemblyman Ramos. And he said,
22 hey, can you take a picture? I was like, yeah, sure.
23 And he actually asked that of me a couple of days ago --

24 or like months ago.

25 So again, it's just always a pleasure to have

32

1 our own people there and being able to hear our words.

2 And as well as Bryan and knowing him and his previous

3 life. So again, it's always a joy.

4 I was asked to actually send a message from the

5 elder and chairwoman from the (inaudible) committee from

6 the Torres Martinez tribe. She was unable to be here

7 because she's enjoying some chair volleyball. That's a

8 very intense sport here in California and Arizona. But

9 she wanted to send her thank you for coming and

10 listening to the people. But she also said she will be

11 reaching out to the -- your department in regards to a

12 national monument that they're addressing out there

13 under the Chuckwalla national monument. It's a proposed

14 national monument.

15 I wanted to quickly comment I think it's been

16 repeatedly said here that the trauma we all suffer and

17 generational trauma is horrible, but it's not just from

18 the stories that are shared by our ancestors or our

19 elders that have gone -- or our family, it's actually

20 continuous. I'm from the Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians,

21 and Luiseño not being our true name, we're actually the
22 (inaudible) people. And we're a proud people. You
23 know, there's obviously a lot of tribes here in
24 California. There are -- we still sit within our
25 villages in our traditional areas.

33

1 But my uncle was Sam (inaudible). And the
2 story that we heard when we were growing up was that
3 they swooped through the reservations and picked up the
4 kids. The statement was to give them a better life.
5 But they took them from their families. And that didn't
6 make sense.
7 And my uncle was actually supposed to be the --
8 he was to be the fire keeper for our people. That is
9 what was told to me by my uncle. And him being gone had
10 an adverse effect, a negative -- definitely a negative
11 effect to our people. Not to say that we still don't
12 carry many of those things within our -- for Pauma, but
13 he was an essential part of our culture.
14 And then he went and fought in the war. He
15 participated in the Normandy invasion, he marched
16 through Europe. He was wounded and received a Purple

17 Heart. But again, at that time, they didn't give Purple
18 Hearts to Native Americans. He got, I think it was --
19 it's a brown -- anyways, he never received it.
20 So as I talk about the continual influence
21 or -- that it has -- that boarding schools and that type
22 of thing that happened to our people, I'm also a great
23 niece to Pete Calac, great-great niece to Pete Calac.
24 And Pete Calac attended the Carlisle School. And it was
25 interesting because I repeatedly get asked about Pete

34

1 Calac because he played with Jim Thorpe. And this is
2 not a dig at Mr. Thorpe because he was an amazing
3 athlete, but I was told that he was better than Jim
4 Thorpe. Maybe that was my uncle just making me feel
5 good, I don't know.

6 But what it was was it was interesting because
7 the involvement of what the people there at Carlisle
8 had. It was again trying to prove and assimilate the
9 people into society.

10 The Ford Company did an experiment, and I have
11 the transcripts from my great uncle's mother, and
12 Carlisle and the Ford Company about they wanted to do an
13 experiment on 60 native people from Carlisle. The

14 experiment was to see if natives could be more than just
15 laborers. Yeah, it's so -- I read it continuously.
16 And I've reached out to the Ford Company in a
17 letter and trying to express, you know, this is what has
18 happened and to get their thoughts. But what happened,
19 long story to short, is that there were only six people
20 that were successful, six men. And my uncle Pete Calac
21 was one of them. And the six men were shown that they
22 were amazing workers, that they weren't just laborers,
23 and they actually were awarded full gentleman's suits
24 from -- it's called The Gentleman Suit Company out of
25 New York. They were sent there.

35

1 But the story is actually tragic within it
2 because Carlisle was ready to charge my uncle money
3 because he escaped. Well, he escaped because he had to
4 come back to see his mom because his mom was sick. But
5 again, there was just continual issues in regards to his
6 time there.
7 Of course, he -- I think he still worked for
8 Ford once he left, but when I talk about continual
9 effects that it has on us, this affects us even to this

10 day because people still consider, you know, can Indians
11 be something else other than just laborers? I've heard
12 that comment before. I mean, and yes, we can; doctors,
13 lawyers, you know, anything else, you know, here we go,
14 right in front of us, that's who we are.

15 So and I'll just leave with this and I'll reach
16 out to Mr. -- I'm sorry -- Mr. Dearman, I'll reach out
17 to him. I'm actually the founder of an organization
18 called the 7g Foundation. And the 7g Foundation
19 provides an opportunity for our youth to go to the next
20 level, but it's at a holistic approach. But we still
21 within that is the mental health that we're not
22 approaching and we still continuously see the affects of
23 boarding schools and the lack of advocacy and support
24 within our community. So it's something that we're
25 focusing on. We're a national organization.

36

1 But again, I just wanted to share that -- about
2 my two uncles, and actually those are two uncles from
3 two different families. So, you know, it continuously
4 affects us. And again, I can't say that enough. But I
5 really do appreciate you giving us the time and
6 listening to us. Thank you so much.

7 ERICA BEN: Good morning, Secretary Haaland and
8 Secretary Newland. (Foreign language spoken.) My name
9 is Erica Ben [phonetic]. (Foreign language spoken.) I
10 was actually born and raised on the reservation, but I'm
11 actually an alum here of Sherman Indian High School.
12 And I listened to everybody's comment here about, you
13 know, their experiences both negative and positive, you
14 know.

15 So I came actually here to Sherman Indian High
16 School in 2004, and I was just newly fresh from the
17 reservation coming here. And it was -- it was -- I was
18 happy because I got to see different natives. You know,
19 being raised on the reservation, I just knew just my
20 fellow native students, right? So this kind of opened
21 my eyes to know other native cultures. So to me that
22 kind of brought some positivity for me.

23 But on the other hand, my parents were both --
24 they both were part of the boarding school system. So
25 my father, he was -- he was -- he was taken to Fort

1 Sill, Oklahoma, so him and my uncle. And I remember
2 him, he just -- he just passed two years ago. But he

3 used to always tell us how important education was and
4 the sacrifice he had to make by not coming -- you know,
5 by escaping boarding school.

6 So he escaped from boarding school, and him and
7 my uncle made their travel back from Oklahoma to
8 Arizona. I don't know how, you know, but they did. And
9 I asked him why, you know, why that was -- why he did
10 that, you know. And he said that, you know, because my
11 grandfather, he had passed. So there was really no male
12 figure on the reservation, it was just us women. And he
13 told us that he came back to take care of his mother and
14 his sisters.

15 And so he talked about his experience, you
16 know, at Fort Sill about how he couldn't speak Navajo,
17 he would get beaten or get whipped by the nuns at the --
18 when they were doing mass. And so, you know, and we all
19 talked about that, you know, intergenerational trauma.

20 I see that, and I saw that because my
21 parents -- my parents, we knew they loved us, but there
22 was no affection, right? We all -- we all just got that
23 like stern look, like you know already, you know, but
24 they never really acknowledging and telling us, you
25 know, like I love you. It was not until later when my

1 parents got older when they started actually saying, you
2 know, (foreign language spoken.) They used to teach us
3 that.

4 So and in doing so, he had to give up, you
5 know, I guess education. He had very limited education.
6 He didn't graduate from high school. But not getting
7 that education he was able to speak and practice his
8 language, you know, and he was able to pass that on to
9 us, his -- you know, his children.

10 And both my parents have passed just within the
11 last three years. They were -- have been always been --
12 you know, our parents are our number one people that are
13 our rock, right, and that's who we look up to,
14 especially when it comes to traditional teachings, you
15 know, traditional language and stuff like that. And I
16 can see how easily we can forget who we are, where we
17 come from, right? But I've managed to -- I've managed
18 to keep myself connected with my people, with my tribe,
19 with my culture, with my kids.

20 I brought my kids here today, but they're out
21 there, because I wanted them to learn, I want them to
22 know that it is possible, right, and that no matter
23 what, what life throws at us, we have to be resilient,
24 we have to get back up, and we have to look forward, you
25 know, look forward to not just for ourselves but for our

1 people.

2 And I tell my kids that every single day, I
3 tell them that mommy's got to go to work, mommy's got to
4 make -- mommy's got to take care of not just you guys,
5 but I've got to take care of the whole nation, you know,
6 take care of all different -- you know, the different
7 native groups here in Southern California, right?

8 And just recently I changed position. I used
9 to -- I was working for the State of California for Cal
10 State -- Cal Poly Pomona, and along with my mentor, and
11 she's like a mother to me, she's replaced -- she's my
12 mother figure now, Dr. Dixon here, ever since I lost my
13 mom, and she's been guiding me and helping me and, you
14 know, really being there for me because you don't really
15 know what you go through when you lose a parent, you
16 know, and you think that they're going to be there
17 forever, but I just barely got to learn that. So I'm
18 just very thankful for her to, you know, help me and
19 support me and still be here with me.

20 But also I had the great opportunity to change
21 jobs as well, to do something more meaningful rather
22 than just being another invisible native on a campus

23 such as Cal Poly Pomona. So I started working for
24 California Indian Nations College in Palm Desert. So
25 I've been working with them. And we've been working

40

1 with native students and really pushing for them to
2 continue their education because that's -- that's the
3 key, right? That's what we all -- that's what we're all
4 here for. That's what we envision and that's what we
5 tell our children, you know, that education is
6 important.

7 And I finally realized, you know, my parents
8 stressing that on us growing up, and I didn't know that
9 until I actually got into college, you know. And so and
10 my job here is to be a model, to be a role model.

11 And I just wanted to say, Secretary Haaland,
12 you have been a role model, especially for us native
13 women, you know? So I'm just -- I'm working on -- I'm
14 working towards that, I'm working on my doctoral
15 starting this semester, starting to working on my
16 dissertation; so I'm very excited about that. And I
17 just really -- also focusing on our native foster
18 children. And that's kind of where my dissertation is
19 going to be on Indian policy surrounding Native American

20 children. So and being a foster parent here in
21 California too, that really brings a lot of joy to my
22 heart; I love helping children, I love helping people.
23 So if you guys ever see me out there, please
24 don't hesitate to come up to me and say hello or
25 anything, or to help, I'm always here to help, whatever

41

1 which way I can.
2 And I just want to say thank you guys for
3 listening and really putting this out here for us, you
4 know, as to healing. You know, we're talking about it.
5 And I've learned -- I've learned -- it took me a really
6 long time to do that, really to learn because of
7 generational trauma, my parents didn't -- we didn't talk
8 about anything at all. We didn't talk about nothing.
9 So it took me until my adult years to finally realize
10 that.
11 So thank you very much.
12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. I have one
13 thing to say real quick. Just real quick. Sherman
14 Indian Cemetery, total disgrace. \$80 a year for
15 maintenance. Fix it.

16 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

17 So we'll -- ma'am, we'll ask you to be the
18 final speaker for our morning session. And then we're
19 going to take a lunch break after that and we'll come
20 back and hear after that.

21 CINDY DEVERS: Okay. Thank you.

22 Ms. Haaland, thank you for coming. Newman --
23 anyway, my name is Cindy Devers. I'm from the Pauma
24 Band of Mission Indians. I am Luiseño and I am the
25 school board president for Sherman Indian High School.

42

1 And we do welcome you here. Thanks for coming.

2 My concern here is that the generational trauma
3 that we were talking about, my dad went to school here.
4 He was in the Sherman band, he played the tuba. And he
5 always did all the marching things. And I never really
6 heard any bad stuff from my dad about Sherman.

7 The bad stuff came from my mom who never
8 attended a boarding school. But the same thing happened
9 there that happened here. She was not allowed to speak
10 her language when they took her to school. The first
11 day they took her to school, public school, they beat
12 her for speaking her language. It was the only

13 language -- she was bilingual at that time, she was
14 eight, she could speak Luiseño and Spanish. So the
15 first time she went to school, they beat her badly. And
16 she -- she wouldn't even go back to school again. But
17 my grandfather talked her into it.
18 So she went back again. When the teachers were
19 asking her again in English, this time she answered them
20 back in Spanish, and they beat her again. So at that
21 point she's about eight or nine and she just flat out
22 refused to speak the language at all, period. So
23 growing up and asking her, mom, talk to us, teach us.
24 No. But mom -- no. Well, what about Spanish? No. You
25 only need to learn English. That was her thing.

43

1 So I guess my point is is that the generational
2 trauma didn't just come from the boarding school
3 setting. It came from the whole mentality of what was
4 going on at that time. Because even in public schools
5 they were beating the kids for speaking their language,
6 it wasn't just in boarding schools. And that's
7 something that at that time we have to, you know, really
8 think about.

9 This is in the -- see, my mom was born in 1922,
10 so we're talking like maybe in the late twenties, early
11 thirties at that time. That's when they were being
12 really, really hard.

13 I mean my dad, I heard wonderful stories from
14 Sherman from my dad because he's the one that came here.
15 It was my mom that I heard the horror stories from, and
16 I almost didn't want to go to public school after that.
17 It's like, really?

18 You know, so the generational trauma that we
19 have today is the effect that happened not just in
20 boarding school but it happened everywhere that our kids
21 went to school -- or where our parents went to school,
22 whether it was in a boarding school or a public school,
23 they still got the same treatment. And that's my point.

24 So I mean, it's hard to understand that, what
25 happened here, but it was still an ongoing thing, we

1 were never able to get away from that at all.

2 So my thing is I am a strong supporter of
3 Sherman, I really believe in the school. This is the --
4 we need this school, especially here in California. We
5 have kids that have no places to go, they can't cut it

6 in public school or they just need a place to stay or
7 live and grow, that's why we need this school. Okay?
8 We need to focus on taking care of them, those that
9 can't make it in the outside in the public school, but
10 we can do it here with our own kids. That's my goal,
11 that's what I believe, and that's what I'm pushing for,
12 is to make sure that our kids now get what they need to
13 survive in the future.

14 Thank you.

15 ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Cindy.

16 So we're going to take a break now. We will
17 excuse members of the press who are here.

18 The Sherman Culinary Institute here has
19 generously provided lunch, and so I believe that's going
20 to be served in the back.

21 The Secretary and I will be back in after a
22 brief lunch break for some photos and a brief meet and
23 greet, and then we'll continue the session. We're going
24 to try and start up again at 1:00 to hear from more
25 folks that want to speak.

1 Thank you.

2 (Lunch recess.)

3 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Okay. Good
4 afternoon, everyone. First I want to give a special
5 acknowledgement to everybody who helped prepare the
6 lunch for us and served. If you guys can give them a
7 round of applause.

8 Thank you.

9 So we are going to continue with the listening
10 session.

11 Just as a reminder, we are going to have to
12 leave promptly at 3:00, so sometime around 2:30 I'm
13 going to give the warning for one more speaker, and then
14 we'll have some closing comments. And I know many folks
15 often at these events want to come up and share
16 information with us. We're not going to be able to do
17 that today.

18 We do have members of our team who are here.
19 If you have information you want to share with us, I
20 encourage you to hand that over to them because, again,
21 we're on a tight time schedule today, and we do
22 apologize for that.

23 The Secretary being from New Mexico and myself
24 from Canada, we have different opinions on what the
25 temperature should be sometimes. This is cozy.

1 SECRETARY HAALAND: I'm from the desert.

2 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: So we have excused
3 the press, and we'll just simply turn the floor back
4 over to you.

5 Again, if you wish to speak, you may raise your
6 hand. Our runners will find you. We'll start with this
7 gentleman in the front and then the next -- lady in the
8 middle.

9 STEVEN ESTRADA: Hello again. Steven Estrada.
10 I'm from the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians. And
11 what I -- the story I will share with you was, you know,
12 reiterated to me from my grandmother.

13 At that time the Sherman Institute, or Sherman
14 Indian High School, had been closed to California
15 Indians, so my grandparents, you know, never went
16 through that process. My grandfather did work here at
17 Sherman Indian School for over 30 years, you know,
18 retired from here, making the 150-mile round trip almost
19 every day to come do maintenance and other services
20 here. But his mother had passed away when he was about
21 five years old and he was raised by his grandmother.

22 He had an aunt that they would talk about. She
23 was taken to the Sherman Institute when it was in
24 Perris. And it's on the official record with the BIA
25 that something had occurred, I think the superintendent

1 was writing that she went crazy, you know, kind of in a
2 mental state, and that she had passed away.

3 My grandmother said that that wasn't the way
4 that she had passed away, that she had been food
5 poisoned and, you know, she had died. And she was
6 around 12 years old.

7 They took her back up to Santa Rosa in a wagon,
8 and at that time the village had moved to a different
9 camp. And my grandmother said that they brought the
10 body back, but the way she kind of explained it is a
11 mountain lion had followed because the body was
12 decaying. They brought her back to the Sherman
13 Institute in Perris and buried her there. And my
14 grandfather, he remembered his grandmother saying "This
15 is where she's buried, remember this place." There was
16 a row of palm trees.

17 In 2016 the development around the city of
18 Perris was starting to come in and, you know, they did
19 some consultation efforts trying to relocate not just
20 her but many of the other gravesites that were supposed
21 to be there, and they were never successful. So I'm

22 just correcting that record, and, you know,
23 unfortunately that they were never recovered. And now I
24 think it's a Whirlpool distribution center is sitting on
25 top of that site, unfortunately.

48

1 So thank you again for allowing the opportunity
2 for everyone to share.

3 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. So we had
4 a woman in the center was going to go next. In the
5 yellow.

6 KAREN GAIL VASSER: Thank you. Thank you guys
7 for being here. I appreciate it.

8 I disagree with the assimilation attitude and
9 idea. Totally disagree with that. Okay? I disagree
10 with destroy the Indian, save the man, all of that
11 rhetoric, I disagree with it.

12 The federal government was very systematic in
13 how they handled Native Americans in my opinion, because
14 don't forget the Civil War was just over. That life was
15 finished. So they had to have other scapegoats, and to
16 me it was Native Americans. They played the game very,
17 very well.

18 So it wasn't just a matter in my opinion of

19 them taking the land, it wasn't that issue at all, they
20 needed servants, they needed slaves, they needed people
21 to do their bidding. And natives were perfect. Because
22 don't forget the history after the Civil War, gold,
23 California, 1849. They started coming this way. Where
24 were all the natives? They were on this side. They had
25 to do something. They played the game well.

49

1 I am Karen Gail Vasser. I'm from the Bishop
2 Paiute Shoshone tribe in Inyo County. Okay? We have
3 quite a history. From my understanding in Owens Valley,
4 Inyo and Mono County, the natives were gathered together
5 and they were put on Sunland Reservation. Okay? Then
6 Mulholland, he comes along during World War I and he's
7 like, whoa, I need this water. So he goes to Southern
8 California, he gets his crew together, they boogie on to
9 Washington, Congress is like, yo, bud, it's yours, take
10 it.

11 So what they do is all the natives that are at
12 Sunland, what they did is they put them on the Bishop
13 Reservation, Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine. So when
14 in the sixties when the soldiers came through and

15 gathered up all the natives and put them at Sunland,
16 what they did is they separated them. So if you were
17 the furthest, you went to Lone Pine, if you were the
18 northern in Mono County, that was Benton, and then all
19 the other reservations were created in between.
20 So it's my understanding Bishop Reservation,
21 not only but all those others in Inyo and Mono County,
22 they were displaced again because Mulholland wanted the
23 water and he got it, till this day. Everything in the
24 Owens Valley is landlocked between the L.A. Department
25 of Water and Power, the first Forest Service, the

50

1 reservation, and BLM. So you can't buy property there.
2 Okay? Everything is landlocked.
3 Okay. Here we go. My grandma, her name was
4 Ida McBride, and she was born in 1889 at Mono Lake.
5 Mono Lake is still trying to get their federal
6 recognition from the tribe, and this is from our Inyo
7 Register. So that's documented, okay? She died in 1973
8 at 83 from complications from a broken hip.
9 Her dad, he is from Benton, he was a white guy,
10 he was Irish, and my grandmother's mother worked for
11 him. Okay? He impregnated her because that was typical

12 of how white people treated blacks, that was typical of
13 how white people treated natives. She worked for him as
14 a domestic, and he impregnated her. Well, my
15 grandmother's mother died in childbirth, so she boogied
16 back to Mono Lake where she was from, and that was the
17 end of that.

18 Now, I think there's a reason why my gram never
19 went to Benton to put any flowers on his grave, because
20 she was hard-core Memorial Day, real hard-core, okay?
21 And I think she knew that that man didn't care for her.
22 She knew where he was. She never went. She knew.

23 So another thing too, because her mother was
24 native from Mono Lake and her father was Irish, here was
25 another typical thing white people did, they were

1 notorious with black people, notorious, and they tried
2 it on Indians. My grandmother was the color of me, and
3 here's what they did: They tattooed her face from here
4 all across here, all across here to on the other side,
5 and they slit her nose right there. And the reason why
6 they did that is so she could not pass for white.
7 Typical. Typical. Okay?

8 She never talked about it, ever. When I
9 approached my two aunts about it and I told them my
10 theory of the whole thing, when they tried to convince
11 me it was a sign of beauty, I'm like no, no. Okay?

12 My grandma was a domestic. When she was 12
13 years old she went from Mono Lake and she went to work
14 at Bodie. Now, we all know what Bodie was, it was a
15 hard-core silver mining town, okay? So she was 12 years
16 old and went to work there. Anyway, she married this
17 guy named James Worley [phonetic], he was from the Owens
18 Valley, he was born in 19- -- 1896, he was younger than
19 grandma, and he died in 1933 at 36 or 37 years old, and
20 happened to be a year after their youngest child -- my
21 grandma had nine kids, okay? And the father, he died
22 when the youngest one wasn't even one yet. Okay? He
23 was an orphan. He was raised in Owens Valley, and this
24 family raised he and his brother.

25 What is distinguished about him is this, and

1 this is very unusual, because if you picture the Owens
2 Valley in your mind and you look at it nowadays, there's
3 15,000 people in the Owens Valley. That's -- and so
4 when you look at the United States and you think of

5 Owens Valley, 15,000 people, so picture that in your
6 mind, that's how many natives were in World War I,
7 15,000, okay? But here's what he got out of the deal.
8 He became a United States citizen when every other
9 native in America didn't become citizens until 1924.
10 But the 15,000 natives that served in World War I, they
11 immediately got citizenship. So that was -- that was
12 whatever. But he died 15 years later after he served.
13 Then comes my mother. My mother, the fifth
14 child of my grandmother. She was born in 1922, she died
15 in 1970. She started out at Stewart in Carson City.
16 Whatever happened, she ended up graduating from Sherman
17 in 1970. Here's a picture of her graduation from this
18 school. And if you'll notice she's wearing a cross.
19 Okay? So the people who testified that that's what this
20 school did, they were right, because she's wearing a
21 cross. And this is her graduation picture. The sad
22 part about this picture is when you look at it really
23 good, she looks forlorn, she looks lost. There's no pep
24 in her face; nothing. Okay? What a bummer.
25 She graduated in 1940 and she came home to

1 Bishop. And it was in the fall, and this is before the
2 roads were paved, it was still dirt roads. She was
3 riding bareback on the corner of 395 and Brockman, and
4 the wind came up and spooked the horse, and it bucked
5 her off, and she flopped down on her head. After that
6 she had seizures. So the doctors gave her
7 phenobarbital. Phenobarbital is one of the worst drugs
8 any individual could have because it's highly toxic,
9 highly toxic. Well, after that she became a binge
10 drinker in order to satisfy these seizures, okay?

11 Like I said, the feds did a very, very good job
12 when it came to these boarding schools on three levels.

13 Number one, they treated them just like they
14 did black people. They took them when they were young.
15 Then they're there. And what do the guys do? The guys
16 are laborers. What are the women? And my mom was good.
17 My mom worked at dry cleaning, caregiver, cleaning motel
18 rooms. It's a step above from her mom who was a
19 domestic.

20 So the government, they knew what they were
21 doing. They knew exactly what they were doing, because
22 they needed people to serve white people, and this is
23 what my mom did. Whatever.

24 Now, what did I say? My mom died -- my mom
25 died at 48 years old, okay? And she was with six guys

1 in that short period of time she was alive. She married
2 and divorced my dad twice, that's two. She got with
3 this Italian guy from Philadelphia. His name was Chuck
4 Denova. Actually, he was a pretty nice guy; I liked
5 him. He hung around at the Indian bars in L.A.,
6 whatever. That's how she met him.

7 Her third guy was Marty Abeita, and he's Pueblo
8 from New Mexico. Gifted in jewelry work. He gave a lot
9 of nice things to my mom. So when she died I got them,
10 but I gave them to my daughter, so all that's hers now.
11 But he was very, very gifted. He's the one that taught
12 me to play chess. I taught my son, and he plays chess
13 to this day and he plays with people from all over the
14 world, people that don't even speak English. Whatever.

15 Then she married John (inaudible) Paradise.
16 He's native from Nevada. And then her last guy she was
17 with was John Williams, and it was at his house she
18 died. It was on the reservation. And the brick house
19 because -- when they relocated the natives from Sunland
20 to Bishop, they built all these brick houses for people.
21 And at his place he had a cabin in the back, and that's
22 where she stayed.

23 Well, he went in to make some breakfast for
24 them, and my mom had a seizure and she choked on her own

25 vomit and died. So he comes out to give her breakfast

55

1 and he finds her dead. Okay?

2 My mom and my dad had two kids, me and my
3 sister. When -- the reason why my mom and dad got
4 married is she was three months pregnant. Well, my dad,
5 he hung out with the natives on the res, so he knew
6 all -- I know it made his folks really mad because they
7 were real racist.

8 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Karen. Karen, can I
9 ask you to kindly respectfully wrap up your comments.
10 We'd be happy to take your card as a submission.

11 KAREN GAIL VASSER: Oh, no, I'm almost
12 finished.

13 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

14 KAREN GAIL VASSER: Yeah. So anyway, we were
15 Irish twins, and we're nine months and 28 days apart, so
16 for that time we were the same age.

17 The third child, Donald Worley, he went to this
18 school. He was born in 1918. July of 1926 he fell out
19 of a tree. He was eight years old, and he's buried at
20 the Sherman cemetery. So that's one of the things I'll

21 be talking to you guys about.

22 The tribal council's trying to change the name
23 of our cemetery in Bishop right here. So we got a
24 notice. Also, Josie Rodgers right here, she does
25 stories from boarding school kids. She's from our

56

1 reservation. So that's pretty cool. And Laurie who's
2 here at the museum, she gave me some good tips about DNA
3 and a plaque. And our tribal preservation officer spoke
4 to her, she's got a file on Donald. This is what I have
5 on Donald that I gave her preservation officer and I'll
6 be giving it to her.

7 The odds are very high Congress is not going to
8 approve to have Sherman cemetery exhumed, let alone DNA,
9 because those stones you see out there, there's no
10 names. And there's 66 kids out there. So I don't even
11 know which one's Donald. Okay? Plaques, I'm going to
12 have two made, one for Bishop, one for here.

13 So to get down to business, here's the summary:
14 Donald died in 1926, my grandmother's other son died in
15 1930, he got run over by a car at Sunland, and, of
16 course, we all know in 1930 who owned cars in the Owens
17 Valley, and that was all white people. And James her

18 husband died in 1933. So anyway, that's the name of
19 that.

20 The interesting thing is my kids have another
21 history, World War II, their grandfather, their dad's
22 father was a code talker. So they had a chance to go
23 to -- where's the lady with -- they had a chance to go
24 to Washington to get the Medal of Honor.

25 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank

57

1 you. Okay.

2 Can we come to the outside, this lady here.

3 And then also just to ask while we wait, we've
4 got about 90 minutes left and a number of folks who want
5 to speak, so there's not a time limit, but do ask that
6 you try to be concise and respectful of other speakers
7 and other folks who are coming after. Thank you.

8 ALEXIS DURO: (Foreign language spoken.) My
9 name is Alexis Duro [phonetic]. I just want to mention
10 really quick what the boarding schools did to our family
11 but also what they did for our families.

12 So just a little background. So my
13 great-great-grandparents and their siblings, they

14 attended boarding schools in California and they were
15 also like a lot of other families told not to speak
16 their languages. So when they finally came home they
17 would speak in secret, like they were only allowed to
18 talk in the house in their language, and then when they
19 went outside they could only talk English or Spanish
20 just because those are the languages spoken at the time.
21 But that helped contribute to the degradation obviously
22 of the language in our family because they didn't want
23 to teach it. But some of my aunts and uncles were
24 insistent to my grandparents to teach the language, and
25 so that's why some of us still hold it today. But an

58

1 example of -- that's what the boarding schools did to my
2 family.
3 But what they did for my family is I'm a
4 graduate here of Sherman Indian High School. I
5 graduated in 2009. And then I went to the University of
6 California Riverside where I earned my bachelor's in
7 psychology and my bachelor of science in anthropology.
8 I went on to the University of Oklahoma and earned a
9 master's in law, specifically in Indian law. And then I
10 recently graduated from Claremont Graduate University

11 with a master's of education, where here I am giving
12 back as a teacher here at Sherman now, and so kind of
13 making it full circle for me.

14 So that's what the boarding schools did for me
15 and my family, they helped to give me an opportunity and
16 a platform that maybe I otherwise wouldn't have had.
17 And that is going to enable me to pass that on to my
18 kids who I brought with me today. And I'd like -- my
19 kids are home schooled; I like to bring them to these
20 things to show them exactly what it is the government
21 did to natives but what it also can do for natives.

22 And like I mentioned to you, Ms. Haaland, when
23 we met you, my daughter's a girl scout and she's very
24 active, and they always display different role models in
25 the Supreme Court, you know, and in the House of

1 Representatives; but most recently when you got on, I
2 said, look, there's somebody that's native, you know,
3 running. And I told my boys too, yeah, she works at the
4 White House. They're like, oh, my God, that's so cool.
5 But I just wanted to show them that there are actually
6 Indian people who have -- who are up there working for

7 like Indian people. And that's why I brought them, even
8 though they've been a little rowdy.

9 But I know if I -- I think I didn't introduce.

10 I'm from the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, also
11 from the Chumash Nation. I have my chief here with me.
12 He came as a representative for our tribe.

13 But I just, you know, a lot of people have
14 negative experiences here, and a lot of the time when
15 they come -- you know, I work with Laurie Sisquoc in the
16 museum, and I try to show them too that there's a
17 positive side to this school, more so recently within
18 the last 30 years it's been extremely positive and
19 really a step forward, you know, for native people in
20 general.

21 I think in my graduating class there was 60 of
22 us, and I think about 25 were all headed to UCs, Cal
23 States, and state universities. So I'm really thankful
24 for that for all my peers that went on to higher
25 education.

1 But again, too, you know, we had the good
2 examples of the native teachers that were here like
3 Ms. Sisquoc, Sandy Dixon, Ms. Townsend, Hathaway,

4 Mr. Johnson, and, you know, now we have Mr. Ortiz here,
5 and we're really grateful to have a native principal
6 here now because it's really important for us, you know.

7 It's hard for students to connect with principals that
8 are not native and don't understand the struggle.

9 And so we're really thankful that we have him,
10 and we have our abundance -- not an abundance of native
11 teachers, but more so now than we did before. And, you
12 know, I'm just looking for more of my peers who have
13 graduated or come after me to pursue higher education so
14 they can come back and help run the Bureau's schools.

15 And that's really important. I know it's something I
16 talked to Mr. Dearman about when we went on our tour
17 last year here.

18 But I just want to say thank you for coming and
19 being here at the school. It's very important. Your
20 representation is much needed. So (foreign language
21 spoken). Thank you.

22 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: So we're going to
23 come to this gentleman over here and then back -- this
24 gentleman in the bleachers and then next --

25 MEL CAMPBELL: Thank you. First of all, my

1 name is Mel Campbell. I'm of Hopi and Pomo decent.

2 My daughter wants to thank and I want to thank,
3 all of us want to thank you, Secretary Haaland and
4 Assistant Newland, for having this event, because you're
5 our voices, you're our voice now in Washington and
6 whatever thereafter.

7 And I want to say, Walter and Margaret
8 Campbell, both retired from Sherman. My father went
9 here. And he used to mention some let's say discipline,
10 but he wouldn't really talk about it much. He wasn't
11 the type to -- I don't know, but over the years now, I
12 never went to Sherman, but we grew up around here as
13 Laurie Sisquoc did, and we, you know, grew up with her
14 mother and so forth and other children of former
15 employees that worked here. We were called the "Sherman
16 brats" when we used to hang around here.

17 But I'm going to say back in the sixties when I
18 used to hang out here with my buddies at Sherman they
19 told me some of the problems. And I'm sure they said it
20 wasn't as bad as it used to be way back like when my
21 father went here, but, you know, discipline, what is
22 discipline? Sure, they had to have discipline, but not
23 to -- only to a certain extent.

24 But, you know, what were boarding school --
25 what were they for in the first place? To control us,

1 colonize us. You know, I'm into that, really anti
2 colony, and so is my daughter in all this. But I just
3 want to say I'm sure things have changed some. You
4 know, they put us on a reservation for a reason, but
5 then over the years, you know, with all due respect,
6 they still won't let us have our own basically freedom
7 even today maybe in some places, but, you know,
8 that's -- that's what it is right now, maybe always be.

9 But I just want to -- my heart goes out to all
10 the students who went here, had some problems. But I
11 think that's changed a lot. And I'm glad. And I'm
12 proud to be a -- you know, a Sherman let's say in my own
13 way alumni because, you know, I'm for everything that
14 Sherman does, you know, right. And, of course, there's
15 always going to be problems, but I know those will be
16 corrected, and that you see and what you're hearing
17 today from all of us, and I salute you for that. And
18 carry on the good work. Thank you.

19 SUNSHINE SYKES: Good afternoon, everyone. My
20 name is Sunshine Sykes. I am a member of the Navajo
21 Nation. My (foreign language spoken) sister, Coyote
22 Pass Clan. Thank you for being here today, both of you.

23 I -- I am going to share a few stories from my

24 grandparents. I'm originally from Tuba City, Arizona,
25 born on the Navajo reservation. My family still lives

63

1 there in Tuba City.

2 Both my grandparents came here to Sherman.

3 They actually -- I know a gentleman earlier said some

4 people found love here; they met each other here at

5 Sherman, although my grandfather was from Red Lake and

6 my grandmother is originally from Wheatfields, they

7 didn't know each other until they came here to Sherman.

8 My grandfather also attended boarding school in Tuba

9 City and he has stories that he shares.

10 I'm fortunate that both my grandparents are

11 still alive. My grandmother was recently able to come

12 here back to Sherman, and Laurie was gracious and kind

13 enough to open the door to the museum for her so she was

14 able to find herself in the yearbook and find my

15 grandfather.

16 They tell me the stories. My grandfather tells

17 me of a story of -- Tuba City boarding school I'll start

18 with. He was living in Red Lake and he remembered the

19 agents coming out to the reservation. And they could

20 always hear them coming. And my great-grandmother would
21 try to hide them. And sometimes she was successful and
22 sometimes she wasn't. So a couple times my
23 grandfather's brothers were taken and they were taken
24 away to Tuba City Boarding School.
25 And he tells the story, because he was the

64

1 youngest, is that my grandmother had a very old sewing
2 machine, one that had a foot pedal, and any time the
3 agents would come, she would hide my grandfather under
4 the lid of the sewing machine, and that's where he would
5 escape.
6 And they knew the routine, they could hear the
7 agents coming down the dirt road. And one day he
8 accidentally hit the pedal, and the sewing machine went
9 off, and he was found. And he can't remember how old he
10 was, he knew he was just little, and he was taken away
11 to Tuba City Boarding School.
12 He tells the story of how hard it was there
13 because he was so far away from his family. It's hard
14 for me to -- to tell this story because I have four
15 daughters and I can't imagine someone coming to my home
16 and just taking one of them away and how devastating

17 that would be to me to not know where they were, not to
18 know if they were eating, not to know if they were being
19 loved, not to know anything about them. And so I just
20 can't -- I can't imagine that pain. And that pain, as
21 we talk about it, it is passed down to us. But there's
22 always strength there that I want to talk a little bit
23 about.

24 So my grandfather tells the story that he would
25 escape, he would always run away. And I think that's

65

1 why they wouldn't let -- I think we know that that's why
2 they wouldn't let the California natives come here to
3 Sherman, because they would know where to hide, they
4 would know how to get back home too easily, so they
5 brought in natives from Arizona or New Mexico, from
6 places far away so they couldn't escape.

7 But my grandfather tells the story like many of
8 your family and your relatives and yourselves about how
9 hard it was there, how he wasn't allowed to speak his
10 language, how his hair was cut, how he was beaten. And
11 he was just a little boy, and how hard that was for him.
12 And then he was taken to Sherman as he got older.

13 And a different side of the story is my
14 grandmother, her mother wanted her to go to Sherman; so
15 she wasn't forced to go here, my grandmother wanted
16 my -- my great-grandmother wanted my grandmother to have
17 an education and she thought the education was the key,
18 was the way to get our family off the reservation, was
19 the way to have our family learn and have our family be
20 able to participate in the world that was changing
21 around her that she saw, because my great-grandmother
22 only spoke Navajo. And I was fortunate enough to know
23 her, and my oldest daughter was fortunate enough to know
24 her too. So at one point there was five generations of
25 native women from my family that lived together.

66

1 So my grandmother wanted that -- my
2 great-grandmother wanted that for my grandmother. So
3 she sent her here to Sherman in hopes that she would get
4 an education and she'd be able to come back to the
5 reservation and do something good for the community.

6 And so education was always very important to
7 my family. It was something that was instilled in my
8 mother, it was instilled in me, and I've instilled it in
9 my children, the importance of education to help

10 ourselves and help our communities.

11 But my grandfather, when he came here to
12 Sherman, he said it was much better than the boarding
13 school at Tuba City. He said although they had to work,
14 he remembers the most -- the thing he remembers most
15 about being at Sherman is that they had to march.
16 Everywhere they went they were marching. And to this
17 day he just hates marching because that's all he
18 remembered, he had to march to class, march to church,
19 march to work because it was based upon a military model
20 of a boarding school.

21 And the same things happened. He had to cut
22 his hair, he couldn't speak his language, and he ran
23 away. And he was able to make it back to the
24 reservation. He said he was going on trains or
25 hitchhiking, he doesn't really remember. So he never

1 graduated from Sherman, he kept escaping.

2 But my grandmother was able to graduate and she
3 was able to go on and get a degree and able to go back
4 to Tuba City and work at the hospital.

5 So although there's great trauma I think that

6 we carry, because my mother had me when she was very
7 young, she was only 17 -- so I heard a lot of people
8 speaking about, you know, not really knowing how to
9 parent some of the kids who went away to boarding
10 schools, not knowing how to show love, not knowing how
11 to say "I love you" and embrace their children because
12 they didn't get that when they were here. They weren't
13 loved. They weren't held. They didn't get tucked in at
14 night and stories read to them.

15 And so that -- that hurt and that pain, it does
16 go across generations, and it's something that when my
17 mother had me at 17 I grew up in a home of -- filled
18 with domestic violence, and it was very hard for me
19 because she didn't know how to parent, she didn't know
20 how to take care of herself let alone taking care of me.

21 But last thing I just want to say is that that
22 trauma may be on one side, but there's also strength.
23 And there's strength that's within each and every one of
24 us and there's strength that allowed us to survive
25 despite the worst odds imaginable, taking our children

1 away from us, taking us far away from home, just trying
2 to assimilate us, trying to get rid of us, all these

3 things I could go on and on about all the governmental
4 programs to try to devastate native communities, but
5 there's strength.

6 And that's the strength that I try to remember
7 every day of my life, is what my ancestors had to go
8 through just for me to be able to exist and live in this
9 world and to have opportunities and be able to tuck my
10 daughters in at night, to kiss them, to tell them I love
11 them. And that's all within us, each and every one of
12 us. And you just have to find it. I'm fortunate enough
13 to have had my grandparents come here and give me that
14 strength, pass that on to me.

15 And this building, this place was built in
16 1903. And I just saw that today; I didn't know that.
17 And I sat in a courthouse, I was fortunate to come back
18 here to this county just by chance and to be able to
19 become a judge here, and the building that I used to sit
20 in in in the state court was built in 1903.

21 So one of the things my grandparents told me is
22 that when they were here they were expected to be
23 homemakers, take care of other people's children, be
24 agricultural workers, fix machines, that's what they
25 were expected. And I know in this room there's native

1 lawyers, there's native judges, there's doctors, there's
2 teachers, there's professors, there's the Secretary of
3 the Interior. I mean it's amazing what we can do. So I
4 know there's trauma there, but there's also strength.
5 So I just want us to remember that.

6 Thank you.

7 GAYLORD TOWNSEND: I apologize for not standing
8 up. Wounded warrior.

9 My name is Gaylord Townsend, and I lived on
10 this campus for 16 years of my life. I was born in
11 1978, December 29, 1978. I was born at the hospital
12 across from Tyler mall, what used to be there, mom
13 brought me home. For the next 16 years Sherman was my
14 home.

15 And this building was not here. At that time
16 they had the kids -- they talked to kids about
17 livestock, sheep, cattle, and they had -- this property
18 went all the way past the freeway, the freeway wasn't
19 there, it went over to the next street up.

20 The thing was since my brother and sister could
21 not attend the school, we had to go to a public school,
22 which I walked down to Liberty Elementary which is about
23 3 miles that way right across from the Tyler mall. And
24 then the -- I can go a lot of my stories what was going
25 on in here, this whole place, but I'll -- I'll be more

1 than happy to talk to anybody who wants to ask me

2 questions back then because (inaudible) brag.

3 Thank you very much.

4 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you.

5 VINCENT RUFO: My name is Vincent Rufo

6 [phonetic], and I'm a descendent of the Kuupangaxwichem,

7 The People Who Sleep in Water. And the Spaniards called

8 our people the Cupeños, (inaudible) caliente.

9 I thank you for what you guys are doing. My

10 family needs a lot of healing. We've had for

11 generations, from my great-great-great-grandmother, her

12 children were removed and put into the boarding schools

13 from Perris to St. Boniface. They took my grandfather,

14 my great-grandfather, his siblings.

15 And I really wanted to start -- I wanted to

16 bring my mother here because she was a survivor from

17 St. Boniface, but she was too frail and I couldn't bring

18 her here. She told me some things that happened to her.

19 She would tell me that they would tie her hands

20 to the tables and slap her hands, make her eat rotten

21 food. And she ran away when she was 10, 11 years old.

22 She jumped into a sewer in Banning and she crossed

23 5 miles to get away from the boarding schools because
24 when they would run away they would send people to bring
25 them back. So she went underground. And I can only

71

1 imagine what was down there.

2 So she escaped. And she's -- I don't know how,
3 but she told me found her home, her home where her mom
4 lived. So she I guess escaped from the boarding school.

5 But getting back to my grandfathers, my great
6 aunts and great uncles, they were also at St. Boniface.
7 My great uncle, my brother -- my grandfather's brother
8 was 16, 15, went healthy into St. Boniface, and he died
9 a couple weeks later. I don't understand how a young
10 kid of that age could die in the boarding school. So
11 because of the boarding schools my family has been
12 decimated.

13 I live in Banning, in Beaumont, and I come to
14 find out in the radius of 5 miles that I have family
15 everywhere that are descendants of my grandfather's
16 brothers and sisters. So I grew up in a foster home
17 since I was nine months old and I didn't know who I was
18 until I started looking for my family in my late

19 twenties.

20 Doing the research of my family, it was the
21 hardest thing to do because the more I would do the
22 research, the more pain I would find. To know that my
23 family come to this kind of trauma, you know, I ran the
24 streets when I was in my youth, went to foster homes,
25 and then when I found my father and mother, I come to

72

1 find out that they were in foster homes too. My father
2 had to go around saying he was an Indian because they --
3 they -- instead of being put into the boarding schools,
4 they put them in foster homes back in the forties and
5 fifties. And the trauma that we went through, my
6 parents were alcoholics, drug addicts.

7 So, you know, I've made it my mission to get to
8 know my family and bring them all back together again.
9 I had a reunion in Banning with -- I went to the BIA and
10 I ran down the descendants of my great uncles and aunts,
11 and we had a big reunion at the park in Banning, and 52
12 people showed up. We barely met each other. And come
13 to find out that they live right around the corner from
14 me, you know.

15 And this is -- I thought it was -- you know,

16 hearing you guys, you know, your words, we really need
17 healing, our families really need a lot of healing. I
18 don't know if it's anger, and I don't have a way to
19 redirect it to, you know. You know, it was juvenile
20 hall all my life. I was in a foster home since I was
21 nine months old, so you can imagine I was an angry
22 teenager growing up, and then finding out that my
23 ancestors went through all this.
24 And like you said, you know, we can do a lot.
25 I don't want to be a victim of this -- of this boarding

1 school trauma, but we do need healing. And if I can be
2 a part of it, I want to do something to help our people,
3 especially those that were in boarding schools, because
4 we tried going home, we tried going back to our people,
5 we tried going back to the reservations, and we were not
6 accepted.
7 I heard Secretary -- Assistant Secretary said
8 something like urban natives. I guess that's what we
9 are, you know. We're a different class of Indians,
10 Native Americans who, you know, we try to go back to our
11 people, and we're not accepted by. And the worst thing

12 of that is that now we're pitted against our own people.
13 We have the assimilated natives and then we have the
14 reservation Indians. And it hurts that I can't be a
15 part of my people because of that reason. And I do my
16 best to try to learn my culture and be strong and do
17 whatever I can to bring our families back together.

18 So, you know, it took me a while to -- I -- the
19 courage to get up and talk because, you know, these
20 emotions, they come out when we think about the
21 suffering that our people went through, my family went
22 through.

23 You know, it's sad enough that I don't know my
24 own father, but to not know my own relatives, my own
25 cousins, my own uncle, my own aunts, it's just something

1 that I have to learn to live with, but if I can do
2 anything to help our family heal is -- I want to do
3 whatever I can.

4 So whenever you do -- you know, I would
5 contact, whatever you come up with, I heard somebody say
6 that the tribes have their own community outreaches to
7 help people heal that have been to boarding schools, but
8 there's nothing -- I don't know if there's anything for

9 us out here to reach out to us for healing.

10 You know, I do run a talking circle on the
11 reservation in Morongo, and I do that for -- I've been
12 doing that for 12 years because there's a lot of healing
13 for the alcoholism and our people, and so I don't want
14 to be the victim at all, I don't want to be, because I
15 know that our people are resilient and my family -- my
16 ancestors suffered a lot. They ran away from Sherman
17 and they ran away from St. Boniface and jumped on a
18 train. I heard you say a train, I go, yeah, that's what
19 they did, they jumped on a train. And that's how they
20 got away.

21 But, you know, it went down to my -- to my --
22 to my grandfather, my grandmother, my mother. And I
23 think that's all I have to say.

24 Thank you.

25 JULIE HOLDER: My name is Julie Holder. I

1 am -- I was born a Diegueño, I'm called a Mission
2 Indian, I have become a Kumeyaay, and I'm actually from
3 the Epi [phonetic] community of Southern California in
4 the mountains.

5 But I'm an urban Indian, and my history is like
6 everybody here. And what I hear today is I hear blood
7 memory, I hear sorrow, I hear the pain that my
8 grandmother made me promise not to forget. She was
9 taken to Sherman off the streets of old town when she
10 was 10 years old. Her brothers and sisters, they were
11 brought here. They were told their family no longer
12 existed. They didn't own anything. She had an Indian
13 grandmother and an Irish mother.

14 She then ran away, her brother ran away. He
15 ended up in Haskell, she ended up in San Diego. She
16 ended up being outed at 13 from Sherman because, as you
17 said, they were trained to be servants, and my
18 grandmother was nobody's servant. She came back to
19 San Diego and she built a life.

20 When I was 20 years old in 1969 during
21 Alcatraz, when the first voices of our people started
22 making noise, we paid attention. And I sat with my
23 grandmother as we watched the people at Alcatraz for the
24 first time in our history and our life and my lifetime
25 stand up and be proud and talk about their experience in

1 the land they were born to.

2 Now we have today that blood memory, the
3 sorrow, the tears. The heart that you hear in this room
4 is that blood memory. We are no different today than we
5 were in the sixties. We have spent billions of dollars
6 trying to figure out what to do with Indian people. We
7 have our history in the national archives, we have our
8 photographs in the museum, we have our people buried
9 under the lands, and yet we are today these modern
10 Indians that we have become still trying to figure out
11 who we are and how to identify ourselves. We have
12 displacement, and now we have money creating the
13 conflict.

14 My promise to my grandmother was I would never
15 forget her people and I would try to find them. I have
16 been to Washington, D.C., I've been all over California,
17 I've been to libraries and archives. Everybody here has
18 talked about what they've looked for, because that's
19 what they did when they brought my grandmother to
20 Sherman, is they stole her history, they stole her
21 story, they stole her family. And I have been looking
22 for it ever since.

23 Now I'm here with my mother who is 97, and we
24 are at the end of this story; it's a full circle here.
25 I have two grandchildren who are more Indian than I will

1 ever be, so I have a legacy to carry out. I want my
2 stories back, I want my history, I want my pictures, I
3 want my archives. I want the things that the government
4 holds that they won't give back to us to let us tell our
5 own stories and to find out who we are.

6 Everybody here has looked somewhere to find
7 their history because that's what genocide is and that's
8 what has been done to us as a people, and that's what's
9 being done to us today because you haven't -- nobody's
10 figured out how to get our stories back, how to give
11 them back to ourselves, how they belong to us, how they
12 belong to our families.

13 I did what my grandmother promised and I went
14 to the library and I found books and I found pictures.
15 And when I went to publish those, I was told by the
16 people who owned them in the museum that they didn't
17 belong to me. Now, these are my history, this is
18 San Diego, these are my people, but they didn't belong
19 to me, they belong to the museum. So I took them home
20 and I did it and I published books.

21 And I brought these people, these are my
22 ancestors, and I brought them back, and that's what I
23 believe we need to do so that we can have our people
24 back from the past and we can carry them forward into

25 the future because we're not -- we are testament it

78

1 didn't take. Genocide failed because we're still here.

2 And we're going to continue being here. And if we're

3 not careful, if we don't take care of each other, if we

4 don't tell our stories, if we don't bring our history

5 back home, we may not have a future.

6 Thank you.

7 PEGGY FONTENOT: My name is Peggy Fontenot, and

8 I'm Patawomeck and I'm Potawatomi. And -- my moral

9 support here.

10 I heard his name mentioned many times today;

11 Jim Thorpe is my cousin. And many people don't realize

12 that Jim Thorpe was a twin and his brother ran away from

13 the boarding school and he got sick and he died. So at

14 any rate, as Jim got older and he had a family of his

15 own, he sent his daughters to boarding school, which has

16 always -- I've never quite understood.

17 But anyway, Gracie was the youngest at Sacred

18 Heart in Oklahoma, and she said that the nuns used to

19 let her sleep with them. And she said, I don't know

20 why, if they felt sorry for me or what the reason was.

21 But when Jim Thorpe died, he had married a

22 non-native, and his third wife shopped his body around.
23 And there's a town in Pennsylvania called Mauch Chunk,
24 Pennsylvania, and they purchased Jim Thorpe's body and
25 they changed the name of the town to Jim Thorpe.

79

1 And I'm an artist of 40 years, and I was
2 invited to do a show there because of who I am. And
3 they prided themselves on the fact that they had an
4 ironclad contract that we would never get Jim's body
5 back. And we've tried and tried and been unsuccessful.
6 But I believe that native people should not be shopped
7 around and purchased and that we should be able to bring
8 his body home.
9 And the other issue is that his oldest daughter
10 Gail, she had moved to Chicago, and when she came home,
11 she wanted to become enrolled, and I never understood
12 why she wasn't enrolled. Jim's mother was Potawatomi,
13 and his father was Sac & Fox, so they were mostly known
14 as Sac & Fox. So Gail said that the Sac & Fox said that
15 they would not enroll her because why now, why as an
16 adult?
17 And so we went to the Potawatomi chairman and

18 we said -- we told them the story. And he -- and Gracie
19 said, I will relinquish my membership in the Sac & Fox
20 and go to the Potawatomi if they will enroll my sister.
21 And he agreed.
22 So we went, we got all the documents together,
23 and we went back, and he had changed his mind. And Gail
24 died knowing that her father's famous and everybody
25 makes money off of him and that her and her daughter and

80

1 her grandchildren and descendants will never be
2 enrolled.
3 And the other issue that I'd like to bring up
4 is the fact that any of those individuals that would
5 like to be a native artist under the Indian Arts and
6 Crafts Act, they will never be recognized as Indian.
7 And there's a real issue with that as far as I'm
8 concerned.
9 And the other issue is what you were talking
10 about is the fact that we pit each other -- we pit each
11 other against each other. And you've got state tribes
12 and you've got federal tribes. And the very government
13 that destroyed the documents that they now ask for those
14 state tribes to become recognized is the very government

15 that destroyed them.

16 So I just want to put that out there.

17 FAITH MORENO: (Foreign language spoken.)

18 Hello. My name is Faith Moreno. I'm from the Torres

19 Martinez Desert Cahuilla Tribe.

20 And first of all, I want to just share (foreign

21 language spoken). My heartfelt thanks to you for being

22 able to listen and carry these stories to wherever

23 action or plan of action there is to address them.

24 Our federal government's really good about

25 consultation and about listening, but I don't know about

81

1 the following up and action plan of getting our stories

2 back like this woman has shared, like addressing how we

3 are recognized and acknowledged by our government.

4 And I work currently for the California Indian

5 Nations College, one of the first emerging tribal

6 colleges here in California, one of only three with over

7 100 tribes here in California where, you know, one of

8 only three and we're trying to get accreditation. But I

9 see on a daily the impacts that our students don't even

10 realize they're carrying because although we have all

11 these stories that are shared here, there are thousands
12 of untold stories buried, stories of our ancestors that
13 will never be told to us, that we'll never know.

14 We are forced into an education system, and
15 through these institutionalized initiatives, we have
16 really, you know, just dismissed the importance of
17 education because our education was within our families,
18 was within our elders. That's how we were taught. But
19 then our government, if we don't send our kids to these
20 boarding schools or public schools, you know, we are
21 penalized for it. So how do we change that system and
22 making it a more positive outlook for our students to
23 thrive and to succeed? That's the question I deal with
24 every day when I work with our students at the college.

25 Thankfully, you know, my mother, as one of my

1 sisters from Pauma shared, she attended public school.
2 She had gone through the same treatment at public school
3 as most of the boarding schools had. My dad had -- and
4 I've lost both of them, may they rest in peace -- went
5 to St. Boniface. And I feel that although we have
6 California representation here of over -- you know, we
7 have all these tribes here, we know that relocation had

8 ushered in many other tribes, but I don't want that to
9 diminish our California tribal voices in relation to the
10 impact of Indian boarding schools here.

11 Many of our California tribes were affected.
12 And I thank this gentleman for sharing his story,
13 because St. Boniface was one of the major boarding
14 schools that many of our parents had gone to and ran
15 away from. Sherman is another one too. I remember my
16 mom telling about my auntie running away. Every single
17 time they brought her here she'd find her way back home.

18 So, you know, my -- my story is that, you know,
19 my mother was very resilient in that because she was
20 shamed in public school about speaking her language, she
21 never spoke her English until she was like in the fifth
22 grade, she never learned English and never spoke it and
23 to the day has never really spoken in the way -- she was
24 fluent in her Cahuilla language, and that's what she
25 held on to. And when that teacher shamed her in class

1 in front of the other classmates, that was the one thing
2 that she promised herself, was that she was never --
3 they were never going to take that language away from

4 her. They were not going to take that. They could take
5 and make her do everything else, but they were not going
6 to take away her language, the (inaudible) that's in her
7 heart. So she taught us English first.

8 So, you know, through these generations, again,
9 the trauma of all of that has passed down to our younger
10 generations where, you know, they have this confusion
11 about what higher education can be. So it makes it
12 difficult. And not surprising, we don't have that many,
13 I mean we're changing that now, but, you know, why, you
14 know, the education system is failing our Native
15 Americans, you know, and so we're trying to change that.

16 And I just think that it's really important
17 that it is documented, the California stories from the
18 California tribal people with relation to boarding
19 schools and the impacts also of public schools. And
20 then what are we going to do about it.

21 And then, you know, prayers for you all because
22 you're taking in all of these stories, you and your --
23 you know, the people that have to work and transcribe, I
24 mean they're touching, they're deep, they're deep, but
25 we can't forget those untold stories as well that we may

1 never know about, we'll never be able to hear or share
2 with our families. So we want -- we want our stories
3 back, we want that -- I agree with this lady here that
4 we want everything that belongs to us back, you know.

5 Thank you. (Foreign language spoken.)

6 Can I share my time with another relative? Is
7 that okay? She's right here.

8 ELIZABETH PAGE: (Foreign language spoken.)

9 Thank you, Faith.

10 (Foreign language spoken.) My name is
11 Elizabeth Page. I am from a world member of the Torres
12 Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians. My
13 grandmother who I lost in 2002, her name was Frances
14 Lario [phonetic]. She was born in 1923. And when she
15 was a girl she did go to St. Boniface.

16 Now, my grandmother during her later years in
17 life, she would never ever talk about the experiences
18 that she had there and nor would she teach me any -- me,
19 her only granddaughter -- she wouldn't teach me the
20 language, she wouldn't talk to me in -- she wouldn't
21 talk in Indian except to go to doings and things like
22 that. So I remember hearing her making the words, and I
23 cherish those memories that I had of her and the way
24 that she spoke (inaudible) which is our language.

25 But yeah, I just -- I felt compelled to get her

1 story on the record as well because it's not about what
2 she told me or my mom or stories that she shared with
3 us, it's about what she didn't say. And even though she
4 did sometimes talk about the good memories that she had
5 of meeting -- because it was a place where they sent a
6 lot of brown kids basically, so she did make friends
7 with some Indian American kids and Hispanic Americans,
8 but, you know, it was few and far between. And then her
9 silence really spoke volumes about her experience there.

10 She didn't graduate, she went on to be a
11 domestic worker. Her father took her out of
12 St. Boniface.

13 So as she -- like I said, she never talked
14 about it. And I don't -- I don't know, but I just
15 hearing the stories about St. Boniface is very
16 troubling, and I just wanted to share that with you.
17 And I thank you so much for doing this and giving us a
18 voice.

19 I also have another relative from the Cahuilla
20 Nation as well.

21 ROSANNA HAMILTON: (Foreign language spoken.)
22 My name is Rosanna Hamilton, and I'm from all the young
23 and old of the (inaudible) family, and it is the Wildcat

24 Clan, and I'm from Cahuilla reservation, and it's good
25 to be here and it's good to see you.

86

1 I'd like to talk a little bit about my mom.
2 And yesterday I was doing good, you know, I was really
3 strong and thinking about this day today; and anyway,
4 I'm a big cry baby, you know, because I lost my mom in
5 2015, and she was one of our last fluent Cahuilla
6 speakers, mountain Cahuilla speakers. And I also lost
7 my oldest brother before her in 2012, and then again I
8 lost another brother in 2016.

9 But before that I lost my nephew. His name was
10 Nick Hamilton. And he was gunned down on the streets of
11 San Jacinto by sheriffs. After that it kind of
12 destroyed my older brother, and he died in 2019. And I
13 recently lost my older brother, my last brother, Joseph
14 Hamilton, who was also a tribal chairman of the Ramona
15 Band of Indians, Cahuilla Indians, and I lost him to
16 COVID in 2020. So that left me the last of that
17 generation.

18 But what I wanted to tell you is about my
19 mother Anne Hamilton who was born in 1932. And when she
20 was nine years old she was taken to boarding school.

21 One day the San Franciscan priest came and they picked
22 up all the kids from Cahuilla and put them in a car and
23 took them away. My mom was looking out of the back of
24 the window watching the house and her mother drift away.
25 And it wasn't a year, till a year till my grandma knew

87

1 where she was at. And my grandma's name was Rosinda
2 Apappas [phonetic]. She was a very special woman.
3 My mother's people were very special. They
4 were the medicine people of Cahuilla and they practiced
5 their ceremonies and held a very special sacred bear
6 bundles, they were the people that had the ability to
7 turn to bears, and they were the medicine people and
8 they healed the people up on Ramona reservation. That
9 was their place where they would go from Cahuilla to
10 perform all these beautiful rituals that would heal the
11 people.
12 It's a very, very special place because they
13 predicted the people before the non-Indian man came,
14 they knew he was coming. So what they did is they took
15 the sacred bundles from all the desert Cahuillas from
16 the mountain Cahuilla and the past Cahuilla, they made

17 very big trips, they made four trips collecting those
18 bundles, and they put them away up in the Ramona
19 reservation.

20 I wanted to tell a lot of the young people here
21 that today because it's a very special story and it's a
22 very significant story of power for our people.

23 So my mom was taken into the boarding school
24 system and she -- you know, we never heard English
25 language until we went into town like to Anza or Hemet,

88

1 but it was spoken all the time at home. And so, you
2 know, when my mom went to school, she was there for four
3 years until she was 14 years old. And, you know, she
4 said it was just like a prison, you know. And we've had
5 to live with it, you know, watching her tears. She
6 wouldn't talk about it.

7 She was a very quiet woman, humble woman, very
8 good person, but a very strong person. And she made it
9 through that horrible time because during that time they
10 made them work, scrub the floors, you know, on their
11 hands and knees, and then they were -- prayed from sun
12 up to sundown. They were taught to speak in the Latin
13 language. A lot of them didn't speak any of the English

14 language.

15 So I just always think about that. How did
16 they, you know, learn how to do these things or forced
17 to do these things, were whipped, were reprimanded when
18 they tried to talk to each other. You know, she got
19 reprimanded in different schools, but inside the school
20 herself.

21 So she was a quiet woman and she would watch,
22 by mimicking -- if she didn't know how to do something,
23 she watched. And I think that's how she learned how to
24 do things in the school, was watching what they did,
25 because they couldn't communicate because she didn't

89

1 speak the language.

2 So I don't understand, you know, how we do
3 these things to each other. We talk about healing, you
4 know. It takes me a lot just to come here and talk
5 about these things to you. And people say, well, why
6 didn't they talk about them? Because they're very hard
7 to talk about. They're very personal experiences that
8 we've gone through and we have had to live with.

9 And, you know, I think about my family every

10 day. We talk about healing and the emotional traumas
11 and the cross-generational trauma. It's very real. And
12 then it gets passed over to our children and to our
13 grandchildren. And, you know, the things that we've
14 seen our grandparents, our parents, and our kids go
15 through and have to face, they're not easy, you know.
16 So we live with that. We don't like to see our parents
17 cry, but we witness that, the things that hurt them the
18 most and what's hurt them.

19 So, you know, this healing that we have to go
20 through, I thought about that a lot, you know. One, I'm
21 very -- I like what you're doing here. You know, this
22 is a start, but, you know, the people are gone. Like I
23 mentioned before, I lost my mom. It would have been
24 nice if she could have come and people could have said,
25 you know, we're sorry this happened to you. At least

1 that would be something. You know, but they're all gone
2 now, and a lot of our grandparents and parents are all
3 gone. We just have their memories and their spirits
4 that are in us and around us.

5 But we need to get back to us, hearing each
6 other out, respecting one another, and learning that

7 this is a very, very sacred journey that we're all on.

8 It's not just something that we just, you know, throw

9 here and there, this is the sacred life that we were

10 given by someone, very special, very powerful.

11 And one thing I was taught was to pray, to pray

12 for my people. My mom always said, pray, you should

13 pray every day and be thankful for your life. And

14 that's what's helped me get through the days without my

15 family, the grief that I feel. I get out there and I

16 pray every day to the Creator the way they taught me,

17 and I'm very, very thankful for these teachings of my

18 Creator because they helped me through, they helped my

19 mother through.

20 Everything we need to know to be good people is

21 there. But we need to treat each other in a good way,

22 be good to each other, and learn that this is a sacred

23 journey that we're on and be good people, otherwise

24 we're going to go back and do the same things over and

25 over and over again.

1 You need your spirituality. The people are

2 spiritually starved, that's why we have addiction and we

3 have murder, we have traumas, because we don't have
4 that; we were meant to have that, we have Creators.

5 So thank you for listening to me. We did make
6 a documentary that's called "These are Not Stories," and
7 hopefully -- it's on YouTube, hopefully you will listen
8 to it, but thank you for letting me speak and remember
9 my people. (Foreign language spoken.)

10 NORA POLSCAMP: Hello. My name is Nora
11 Polscamp [phonetic]. I'm a member of the Navajo Nation.

12 My mother attended Sherman back when it was
13 still Sherman Indian Institute. She graduated from the
14 Navajo program in 1961 I believe and started the program
15 when she was about 13 years old, and that was her first
16 time leaving the Navajo reservation, first time learning
17 how to speak English and whatnot.

18 But I'm the youngest of 11 children, I was born
19 and raised in Los Angeles. I am there because my mother
20 came here to Sherman.

21 But I did want to reach a little bit further
22 back to another story in my family that I am just
23 learning more about more recently, but I had always
24 heard that one of my ancestors had been a casualty of
25 the boarding school system and that he had been written

1 about somewhere. When I started to look into it, it
2 wasn't that he was written about so much that there was
3 a case that happened in Arizona.

4 His name was Corn Pollen, it translates to Corn
5 Pollen, and he was murdered by three men who were sent
6 by the Indian agent that was in Tuba City after his
7 daughter ran away from a boarding school that I believe
8 it was located somewhere in Utah, but I don't know the
9 name of it. She ran away during the winter to return
10 home, and he went to find her. And somewhere in the
11 halfway point to bring her home after hearing that she
12 had left school and was found almost frozen to death on
13 her journey home, he brought her home and decided that
14 he would not send his children to boarding school after
15 that.

16 But the Indian agent had sent these three men
17 to his house to retrieve his children. And it's a
18 question about whether or not the order was given to
19 kill him in the process or if that happened kind of in
20 the moment. But he was murdered, shot in the back
21 multiple times in front of -- in front of his children.
22 My grandfather was one of the children there. He was
23 probably about four years old.

24 And this is something that, you know,
25 unfortunately the only reason why we know about this to

1 the detail that, you know, we know now is because it had
2 been written about because the three men were put on
3 trial and were then acquitted, they were found not
4 guilty of murder because they had right -- I guess
5 reason to do that, or that's what it was determined.

6 But yeah, his name was mistranslated in a lot
7 of articles that I found he was called Tatty Tin
8 [phonetic], I think it's because the Navajo name
9 didn't -- wasn't translated correctly, but his name was
10 Corn Pollen, or Tatty Tin.

11 And so my grandfather, my mother's father was a
12 child that was there during that time. And that
13 happened up in northern Arizona near Kaibito. Corn
14 Pollen had also I guess had a reputation because he was
15 probably in his seventies at the time and was not part
16 of the Long Walk to Fort Sumner. He had stayed and
17 remained in that area and had this reputation of being,
18 you know, a disobedient Navajo person because he didn't
19 participate in the Long Walk.

20 Several generations later my mother attended
21 Sherman as I mentioned as part of the Navajo program.
22 And I was hoping that she would attend today to share

23 her own stories, but she didn't want to. And I think
24 that there's a lot of people who have the same feelings,
25 a lot of elders especially don't feel comfortable

94

1 talking about it or who only share their stories if
2 they're positive.
3 And she's shared a lot of very positive aspects
4 about her time at Sherman, the friends that she made.
5 But the things that were not so great were always shared
6 in a way that was funny, there was a lot of humor
7 involved and kind of these funny situations that would
8 occur because of language barriers or, you know, being
9 away from home.

10 But she did mention a couple instances of
11 violence. A fellow classmate that had attacked her and
12 tried to strangle her that was not I guess mitigated by
13 staff at the time. Another moment where faculty would
14 try to embarrass her and sent her to the dining hall in
15 her undergarments while she was sick. And at that point
16 she mentioned that she did consider leaving Sherman,
17 running away and trying to get back home.

18 But as a child of someone who attended boarding
19 school, I did see that her history, my family's history

20 did still affect us. We all run when someone knocks on
21 the door. And I thought that that was just something
22 that everybody did, and I found out later that a lot of
23 my native friends had that same experience, but a lot of
24 my non-native friends -- or none of my non-native
25 friends had that reaction, you know, where the children

95

1 would run when someone knocks at the door. It's only
2 now that you know looking back, we thought it was kind
3 of funny, but we know where that comes from.

4 My mother as I mentioned attended Sherman right
5 around the age of 13 when she was starting to go through
6 puberty, and you can see that disconnect in her own
7 upbringing in the way that she treated her children when
8 they got to that age. She didn't know how to handle us.
9 And I watched that pattern go through my ten older
10 siblings. And, you know, we had to piece that together
11 ourselves to figure out why these things are.

12 So thank you for holding this and giving us
13 time to share.

14 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Okay. Just a time
15 check. We're at about 2:15. Once we get to 2:30, I'll

16 call for our final speaker.

17 Yes.

18 PAMELA JAMES: Hi. My name is Pamela James. I

19 consider myself a relocation baby. My mother relocated

20 to Los Angeles in the fifties. She's full blood

21 Chickasaw. My father had graduated from Chilocco Indian

22 Boarding School. And my father came to Los Angeles,

23 again through the BIA. He graduated from Haskell. He

24 was Sioux and Menomonee. So I'm Chickasaw, Sioux, and

25 Menomonee.

96

1 And my mother's here today. She's a beautiful

2 89 years old. And I want her to share her experience

3 about what it was like to go to Chilocco Indian School

4 in Oklahoma.

5 Thank you.

6 WINDY JAMES: As my daughter said, that I'm

7 Windy James, originally from Ada, Oklahoma. And I lost

8 my mom when I was two. My dad raised me until I was 16.

9 He passed. And I had nowhere to go, so I told my

10 brother, send me away to a boarding school. I didn't

11 know what boarding school, but I thought a lot of my

12 friends, my church members' kids would all go to

13 boarding school when it opened, and so I thought, well,
14 I'll give it a try for one year because I was a senior.
15 So I got -- my brother got me ready to go to
16 Chilocco, so I went to Chilocco for one year. But I had
17 the experience of being in a sadness that (inaudible) it
18 was on account of the Navajo students that were there.
19 And I saw them where the teachers would not let them
20 talk, wouldn't let them go before us, and they would
21 have to go behind us and then have their breakfast or
22 meals or whatever we were having. And I thought that is
23 the saddest thing that I ever seen. I didn't think that
24 our country could ever do that to us, not only the
25 Navajo people but I'm sure some other tribe had some

1 sort of doings too.
2 But I just wanted to share that there is a
3 place that the boarding school is good, and I found --
4 when we found Sherman, I was proud because I could
5 donate my time with them or work with them. So through
6 our United Methodist Church, we work with Sherman,
7 with -- with school -- school supplies before school,
8 we're still gathering now. The pastor said they just

9 brought some more to the church today. So I am just
10 proud to have Sherman here to work with them. And it's
11 just amazing how these Navajo kids from where they come
12 from we don't know, I don't know, that how they survived
13 to get here. But I'm just proud that we have Sherman
14 here to help support our children that come from the
15 reservation.

16 And I don't even know what reservation life is
17 until I went to my daughter's parents -- grandparents,
18 and they lived on the reservation, and that was a sad
19 place. I cried for two weeks when I went there on
20 vacation, because of seeing how they live, how they had
21 to live because there were no other way. But now you go
22 back, they have casino, they have their own schools,
23 they have their own colleges, so you can't beat that,
24 with different tribes that helps our Indian people.

25 So I just want to share that time that, you

1 know, when I did go to Chilocco, I just had a sad time
2 knowing that the Navajo kids was mistreated, and then
3 I -- when I graduated, come through the BIA and came to
4 Los Angeles and there I felt not a lot of Navajo kids
5 again, and then I made friends with them, and then still

6 to this day some of them we still get together or write
7 or Facebook each other. I have a good friend in Fort
8 Defiant, and she sends me the Indian (inaudible) so I
9 can stay up with my health. That keeps me going.

10 So I just want to say thanks to Sherman and
11 thanks for having talk -- let us know what Indian
12 school's about.

13 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

14 So come back here. Then we have a woman in
15 the -- lady in the front who has been asking to speak.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Foreign language
17 spoken.) I'm from the Hopi Nation and, I'm from the
18 village (inaudible), and I am (inaudible) clan.

19 I am here to speak for my ancestors and for my
20 (inaudible) who also came here to Sherman and Stewart
21 Boarding School as well and the experiences that they
22 had, very similar to the experiences that have been
23 mentioned here.

24 My mother never spoke much of it or would tell
25 us a lot, but she would share oftentimes when we'd go

1 home and go to our dances, my uncles would be there

2 doing their part, and you could see when they wore their
3 traditional, that their backs would be shown, and there
4 was the -- the scars from the whips on the backs of
5 them. And but we never spoke about it, and it was never
6 shared, only until later.

7 I then had the opportunity of coming here and
8 working at Sherman. And I was asked three times to come
9 here and work. And the first time I said no, I don't
10 want to come here, I know the history of the BIA and I
11 don't want to come, and I'm happy where I'm at, where
12 I'm teaching in L.A. Unified.

13 I got a call about a week later and was asked
14 to come back. And they said, come with me, I want you
15 to meet some other people. So come back, because we
16 need a special ed person here. So I came back the
17 second time and I said, no, thank you, I appreciate
18 visiting the school, thank you very much, but I'm happy
19 where I'm at.

20 The third time he called, and he said he was
21 the principal, and he said, this is the last time I'm
22 going to ask you. Would you come up one more time? And
23 I want you to meet some others.

24 So when I came up, he introduced me to the
25 students. And I ended up being here at Sherman for 14

1 years and loved every part of it.

2 The good things about Sherman is that the
3 people that work here, we have become family. We know
4 each other, we continue, and I haven't worked here for
5 17 years, 18 years now, but still involved and do a lot
6 with Sherman and the families and the people. And
7 somebody I ran into earlier, I think they already left,
8 but we was talking about how this was a reunion for us
9 because we hadn't seen each other for five, ten, twenty
10 years. And I ran into people that I hadn't seen for a
11 very long time, so it was a nice -- and I appreciate
12 that opportunity, because we don't get this opportunity.

13 Those are the positive things and the people
14 here of what we have.

15 But when we look at the things historically
16 that happened with Sherman is a lot of those things that
17 have happened because of the colonization, because of
18 the assimilation, because of the oppression that has
19 been put on us as native people, is that when we see
20 that these things are fading away, that they still
21 existed.

22 When I was here in the '80s, and I didn't -- it
23 was interesting because many -- we talk about our
24 ancestors and elders, that they did not want to share.
25 I did not want to come and talk until the media left,

1 just did not feel comfortable with having the media.

2 And it's funny because I feel, well, should I share this

3 or not? But I am.

4 When I was here there was still issues of --

5 and somebody mentioned it before about the treatment of

6 the students. And I would teach in the same building

7 across -- over there in the academic building. And I

8 had girls come into my classroom and they would wear

9 hoodies and cover their faces and hiding. You could

10 tell when they came in that way that something was up.

11 And they would pull the sleeves and cover their arms all

12 the way up.

13 And I would ask, what's going on, what's wrong?

14 And they would begin to cry. And then they would slowly

15 show me their hands. And we're not talking that long

16 ago. But the teachers here would hit their hands with

17 the ruler. And there was one ruler that we found later

18 that had a nail that had been driven into the end of it

19 because they were not typing fast enough.

20 About 500 feet from my classroom in that same

21 academic building, there was a room that was always

22 locked. And I wondered why. Eventually I ended up
23 getting a pass key to the whole building, the whole
24 campus, so that was kind of interesting. One night I
25 was coming -- leaving the classroom, and it was pretty

102

1 dark, and I went in there. And I said, what's in that
2 room because it's always locked.

3 And in that room was a cell, a 4-by-6 cell that
4 had walls about 10 feet high. And it was built in that
5 academic building for students. It was very difficult
6 to see something like that because we thought those
7 times had passed. And I will say that the people that I
8 was working with here, many of them are here now, that
9 we did things and we talked about these things and
10 worked to get rid of those things and find out why they
11 were here.

12 And then we saw that things were not being done
13 by the administration, it was like looked over. And
14 many people were afraid even to say anything because of
15 what happened of the history of just students being here
16 and faculty and the way that people were sometimes not
17 being treated fairly. Our jobs were lost. And so it
18 was held in. And eventually that there were some that

19 we talked, and it was -- that room was finally removed.
20 But that is not that long ago.
21 And so when we talk about these things and the
22 trauma and the effects of that and when I related to
23 what my uncles and my (foreign language spoken) and my
24 (foreign language spoken) went through when they were at
25 these places, that -- the continuation.

103

1 And so I hope that as we continue looking at
2 the generational effects and what is going to be taken
3 with this information, that we continue to look at the
4 schools here of what is and what is still happening or
5 what is not or the improvements that have been made,
6 because there are some really good people, good native
7 and non-native people that work here and continue to
8 work here and try to make this a place, but they have to
9 have the education of working and they have to have the
10 funds.

11 One of those things that we still saw at times
12 was a few years ago there was a picture being passed
13 around, it went to many of us, I don't know if it was
14 Instagram or not, that showed the meals that students

15 were receiving. It was terrible. And there needs to be
16 enough funds to feed the children that go here. There
17 needs to be enough. They should not have to be settled
18 with a tiny apple and their little tiny plate of
19 something for breakfast. They need to have enough.

20 And so when we talk about the education and
21 with the funding that is needed to make these schools
22 continue so that the people, that the students that go
23 through here that they will be able to receive enough
24 funds, there are people that work here, volunteer and to
25 do things. Our museum person, and Laurie that has

104

1 worked here for so long to create -- they get volunteers
2 to do that over and over and 20 years ago. Father
3 Townsend volunteered much of his hours here to volunteer
4 because nobody offered to pay them.

5 And I really hate to say this, but I wonder how
6 much was spent on everybody that came here, all the
7 hotels, the airlines, the flights, everything that it
8 cost to get people here that could have paid as many of
9 these other people that work here.

10 I will have to give much respect and gratitude
11 to the tribes, the local tribes here that have given so

12 much to help Sherman survive. But if not for the tribes
13 around here, there would be many things that they would
14 not have. And to me, there's so much good that can
15 continue to happen.

16 We always learned and always have said amongst
17 ourselves there's so much potential here at Sherman.
18 But the Sherman students and the Sherman people and the
19 people that still believe in Sherman, we have to
20 remember that we're doing it for them but also for our
21 ancestors and for the voices and for the spirits that
22 are on this campus. And those of you that now work, we
23 have those spirits here.

24 And so I would just say with gratitude (foreign
25 language spoken) to all of you for listening to me, but

105

1 also thank you so much for being here and just really
2 appreciate your time. (Foreign language spoken.)

3 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

4 So we have time for one more speaker. And I'll
5 ask ahead of time if our final speaker can be succinct,
6 and then we'll have a closing program.

7 DAWN: Hi. My name is Dawn. And I'm Mescalero

8 Apache. My father and my two uncles went to St. John's
9 in Arizona in the '40s, early '50s. And I think one of
10 the things that they told me that really, really struck
11 me was that they were so young and they were homesick
12 all the time and they were like six and eight there.
13 And they would sneak in to my dad's, who was older, bed,
14 my uncles did, because they were so sad and homesick and
15 scared, and pull on his ears to fall sleep at night.
16 And that's just something that's always just -- you
17 know.

18 And then my grandmother, their mom, she went to
19 boarding school also, and her story was harder because
20 she said that her and her fellow students were always
21 hungry. And that's just a hard thing to hear as a mom
22 and having kids of my own, that she was hungry all the
23 time; it's just such a horrible thing. And that was her
24 biggest story, was that they just -- they got their
25 three meals, but they were small, and that was all they

1 could have, they couldn't have snacks.
2 And sometimes at the tables they always had
3 peanut butter and bread, and they would sneak peanut
4 butter and stick it in -- cup it in their hands and take

5 it with them back to eat later in their rooms. And it
6 just -- I mean they could have gotten in a lot of
7 trouble for that. And so to think about a bunch of kids
8 who would risk getting in trouble to have a little bit
9 of food --

10 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you for
11 sharing.

12 We had a question here, and then we're going to
13 have a closing program.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Beyond microphone
15 range.)

16 I was wondering if there was going to be
17 another follow-up visit or if there was going to be
18 another team sent to Sherman regarding boarding schools.

19 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Well, as part of this
20 tour, this will be our only stop at Sherman, but we
21 have -- this is my second visit to Sherman --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, thank you so much.

23 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: -- and we'll make
24 sure that, you know, whether it's myself or others from
25 our team, that we stay engaged with Director Dearman and

1 the team here at Sherman. It's one of our four existing
2 boarding schools as part of the BIA.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I do thank you for
4 being here and I hope you sharpen your focus on boarding
5 schools. I have been here 30 years, and I absolutely
6 love working here, I always thought I'd be a Disney
7 artist, but -- the legacy of students that come here,
8 I'm literally grandmothered in here. And I'm grateful
9 for Dr. Sandy Kewanhaptewa-Dixon, sorry,
10 Kewanhaptewa-Dixon, for speaking out too because there
11 is the concern for cronyism, nepotism, those things that
12 go on at all working places. And then, of course, our
13 students' safety.

14 I feel like I put in -- I feel that I'm lucky
15 enough that I can come here and work 10, 12 hours. I
16 feel like I have the freedom to do that with our
17 students. And I feel like I give my best to make sure
18 that they're safe. And I'd like for that continue.

19 So I hope that you do keep your focus on
20 Sherman and all other boarding schools.

21 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank you
22 very much.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd also like to
24 acknowledge that I'm a graphic design teacher here with
25 California Technical Education, our Career Pathways.

1 And I hope you did get a chance to see our facilities
2 because San Manuel has really helped with our students'
3 growth and also helping them go to college. We may have
4 had I want to say guesstimate about 50 students who
5 graduated, but 28 of our students that graduated had
6 college acceptance through CTE. So I hope that you keep
7 that in mind too. Thank you.

8 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank
9 you.

10 SECRETARY HAALAND: We were on a tour of the
11 school yesterday. Just so you know, we were on a tour
12 of the school yesterday, so we had a chance to talk to
13 (inaudible). Thank you.

14 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you.

15 I want to thank everybody who took time to
16 spend with us today as well many of you didn't speak but
17 came to show support for folks that did or just in
18 memory or honor of one in your family or community. And
19 so we're very grateful for that as well.

20 So as we wind down, I'm going to invite
21 Chairman Macaro [phonetic] to give us a closing
22 blessing, and then we'll have the bird singers come back
23 with a song and a few closing thoughts from the
24 secretary.

1 Secretary.

2 Just want to recap real quick that listening to
3 everybody's testimony today, thank you for the courage
4 to step forward and provide the United States with what
5 they need to hear. It's very important for all of us to
6 move forward in this manner.

7 So many did so much to make us disappear as
8 Indian people. Father Serra and the missions, the count
9 there was nine out of ten of our people died from
10 disease in a 40-year period at Mission San Luis Rey.
11 That's the studies that we know of. I don't think it
12 was any better at any of the other missions. There
13 might be about a hundred people in this room, maybe 75,
14 but nine out of ten people, 90 percent population lost.

15 Fast forward to the middle of the next century,
16 we had a treaty-making process, and lands were given to
17 the United States in exchange for different things. And
18 as soon as the treaties got taken back to D.C., they
19 were taken away -- well, they weren't taken away, they
20 were not ratified, put in a drawer for 45 years.

21 But boarding schools continued this attempt at
22 destroying our people. This environment of fear and
23 brutality. It didn't have to happen to every student,
24 but they did it to enough students to create that
25 atmosphere of constant threat, of constant this could

110

1 happen to you. And this person here unfortunately was
2 an example. And so many people took away the lesson of
3 I'm not going to have my kids go through this and we're
4 not going to teach our language to our people, and
5 things continued to unravel.

6 So it's in that context that I want to -- I
7 have said this prayer a few times in public, and it's an
8 ancient prayer, it's a -- actually, I'll translate it
9 first and then I'll say it.

10 We're asking for guidance from the one who is
11 above, we're asking for protection from all bad things
12 and guidance in everything that we do. We're also
13 asking that we should always be able to be together as
14 one people, that we should always be able to laugh with
15 one another, to look at each other straight on and not
16 sideways, and that we shouldn't be hating each other or
17 disliking one another. And if we could do just these

18 few things, then everything would be okay.
19 And it continues by saying, we should also
20 remember the histories and the teachings that we've been
21 given, the powers -- in our case, the powers and the
22 mysteries of the directions, the north, the south -- the
23 north, the east, the south, the west, the center, and
24 sky, the little people, the ancient ones, the islands,
25 Clemente, Catalina, San Nicolas, Santa Barbara. And all

111

1 these things taken together are part of the holding
2 beliefs, the holding beliefs of our people, the things
3 that are still here that we know; and that it's up to
4 each one of us to take these things as we hear them, as
5 we know them, and carry them forward. This is -- this
6 is what we've been given, this is what the ancient
7 people have told us, and we still have with us today.

8 (Foreign language spoken.)

9 Thank you.

10 ASST. SECRETARY NEWLAND: Thank you, Chairman.

11 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you, Chairman, very

12 much. So wonderful to see you.

13 CHAIRMAN MACARO: I just asked if I could say

14 one more thing. I wanted to acknowledge somebody.
15 And don't get mad at me, Sunshine.
16 You know, representation matters, and we're
17 extremely very proud of Secretary Haaland being one of
18 us, being the highest pinnacles of our government here
19 in the United States. And we heard earlier Sunshine
20 Sykes spoke to us. And I want to acknowledge that she's
21 Judge Sunshine Sykes, if you heard that in the
22 testimony.
23 And during this administration, the Biden
24 administration, she was nominated to the federal bench
25 and -- appointed to the federal bench I think is the

112

1 term, and it was confirmed. And you are on the federal
2 bench, you are a federal judge, one of three now.
3 So thank you for being here and thank you for
4 sharing with us. Appreciate that.
5 SECRETARY HAALAND: Thank you. Thank you,
6 Chairman. That was very important.
7 Well, first of all, thank you again,
8 Congressman Takano, for being here and sitting through
9 this entire session. I think you're the first
10 Congressman -- member of Congress to actually sit

11 through the entire event. So thank you. Thank you for
12 that.

13 I am incredibly grateful to each of you who
14 shared. I'm also incredibly grateful for everyone who
15 just felt that their presence was important to support
16 your community members.

17 I know this is a wonderful school because we
18 went for a tour yesterday. You can hear the accolades
19 about the native principal, somebody who the students
20 can look up to and say I see myself in him. We went to
21 the museum, and that was also a really wonderful
22 opportunity to look at photographs and just feel the
23 history that is here.

24 And so -- and I'm proud of the work that, of
25 course, Tony and his team do to lift up the school and

1 make sure that we're doing everything we can to support
2 the students. So we will continue to do that.

3 And incredibly indebted to the Native American
4 professionals, education professionals who realize that
5 their talent, they want their talent, their own
6 education, their knowledge and experience to benefit

7 other native kids. And I think that, you know, when I
8 think about what we're all doing here, why we go to law
9 school and work hard to become a judge, why we get our
10 educations. And if we don't go back to our own tribe,
11 we work for another tribe because we want to lift up
12 Indian people in the work that we do.

13 And it's because -- and I believe, Rosanna, you
14 said it, we are -- we're born with an obligation. It's
15 not -- we're not just people here on this earth taking
16 up space, we have an obligation to honor the legacy of
17 our ancestors so they didn't starve in vain, so they
18 didn't die in vain, so they weren't ripped away from
19 their mother's arms in vain.

20 It's our obligation, we're born with this
21 obligation to help people, to honor our earth and
22 protect our environment for future generations. We're
23 not -- we know that things don't die when we die. We're
24 not here to use up as much as we can and then who cares
25 about our kids and grandkids. That's not who we are as

114

1 people.

2 And I know that -- I've been around the
3 country, I've talked to enough Indian people and enough

4 tribal leaders and heard from enough boarding school
5 survivors and descendants to know that we all think the
6 same on this. So I feel confident today acknowledging
7 that obligation with all of you and thanking you for
8 continuing that.

9 I know that -- I appreciate, sir, when you
10 talked about what is it that we feel. Is it anger?
11 Maybe. Maybe it's anger, maybe it's loss.

12 You know my grandmother was taken away from her
13 family when she was eight years old and for five years.
14 She didn't come back home until she was 13. And her dad
15 only had a horse and wagon. And he only was able to
16 visit her twice in those five years. Eight's a very
17 impressionable age when she could have been home
18 learning all the things she needed to learn from her
19 mother and grandmother.

20 But every single night she said her rosary.
21 She was taken to Catholic boarding school in Santa Fe.
22 She said her rosary, she sent us to church, it was right
23 across the street from her house in Mesita Village.

24 She -- I can never get her to say one bad thing
25 about the nuns at St. Catherine's because she wouldn't

1 dare. In fact, when my daughter was born, she wanted me
2 to name her Genevieve after one of the nuns that she had
3 at St. Catherine's, and I respectfully declined because
4 I loved my grandmother. And I would -- I was silent
5 every night she said the rosary, I never said a word to
6 her, I just let her live her life because she deserved
7 that.

8 So, you know, it's about how do we process the
9 things that we feel, the things that we've heard, the
10 things that we know but our parents and grandparents
11 would not talk about. We know those things happened.
12 And I just think regardless of how you do feel, we can
13 still -- it's still up to us to try to heal our country.

14 And a lot of these stories, you know, I get
15 people come up to me and say, I never heard of that, I
16 didn't know Indians got sent off to boarding school.
17 But this is an American history. And Native American
18 history is American history. So it's up to us to make
19 sure that all those folks who didn't know that boarding
20 schools existed, who honest to God there must be people
21 in California who don't know there's still Indians that
22 live here or that Indians had a strong history and lived
23 all over this state. And so it's up to us to share that
24 history.

25 And by traveling around the country and holding

1 these hearings, we feel we can help spread that news a
2 little bit. And that somehow, even the folks who don't
3 know or understand what it's like for us, will care
4 enough to want to help us heal this country as well,
5 because we -- we can't change the past but we can
6 certainly change the future.

7 So I just thank all of you so much for being
8 here. And I want to acknowledge again my wonderful team
9 at the Department of the Interior, please stand up, all
10 of you. And just know that these are the folks who make
11 all of this work happen. So thank you all. I love you
12 all. Thank you, everyone.

13 (Singers performing.)

14 (End of recording.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, the undersigned, a Certified Shorthand
3 Reporter of the State of California, do hereby certify:

4 That the foregoing electronically-recorded
5 proceedings were transcribed by me to the best of my
6 ability.

7 I further certify I am neither financially
8 interested in the action nor a relative or employee of
9 any attorney or party to this action.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have this date
11 subscribed my name.

12

13 Dated: 08/30/2023.

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Diana Sasseen
CSR No. 13456

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