

family and community is the strongest characteristic that we have, and is the most precious thing that we have.

So in terms of how we teach other people that, I think that first of all in the general culture they need to understand that we do have things that we can teach them. I think often that foundations and individuals that work with Native people just see us as hapless victims and as recipients of help, information, and leadership; but they don't ever look at us as people who could lead and people who have things that we can teach the world in general. And for me, one of the things that we can teach the world is how to live tribally and how to keep intact a community. In America now in the general culture, there are people searching for something to hold on to, some sense of community or spirituality or common ground. Tribes have some of that, though perhaps not intact

**Interviewer:**

As we approach the next century, what, in your opinion, are the greatest challenges for the country in terms of community work?

**Wilma:**

For the entire country? I think that one of the most dangerous things is short-term thinking, and the balkanization of people in this country and the alarm, in some sectors of society, over the increase in minority population. For every single social problem that crops up, people do short-term thinking instead of long-term thinking. You can look at the debate that occurred over the crime bill; people want short-term solutions to long-term kinds of problems. That's very, very dangerous, to try to do quick fixes that really don't address the underlying problems. That's a dangerous, dangerous trend.

The other thing that I hate is the bashing of poor people and the lack of understanding of the problems of the people who don't have any resources. It's very trendy right now to bash people who are on public assistance or who are just barely making it. *Also* Some may even