

Presentation to Cherokee Nation Tribal Council
for Native American National Holiday

I come before the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council this evening the 13th of February at the request of John A. Ketcher, who is the President Council of the Cherokee Nation, to present to Wilma P. Mankiller, Principle Chief to the Cherokee Nation, and the tribal council members a resolution to the federal government to set aside a federally recognized Native American holiday to be recognized by all government employees with a day off from work for recognition of a Native American holiday. This resolution would pertain to Native American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Natives of Hawaii. To this present date, the Native Americans have not been given any recognition for the endurance and hardships that we have endured for more than 200 years.

The federal government has set aside several holidays throughout the calendar year for outstanding individuals and event holidays and religious holidays. A Native American holiday would give recognition to their outstanding leaders in their first fight for equal rights and representation in this the United States of America.

To the majority of Americans their perception of the civil rights movement in this country happened in the 50's and 60's. This is true for the African Americans; but for the Native Americans, civil rights for our people and our land began hundreds of years ago -- long before T.V., camcorders, and radio were around to vividly show the horrors that were being inflicted upon the native people of this great land.