

Institute of American Indian Arts

On the Campus of the College of Santa Fe • St. Michael's Drive • Box 20007 • Santa Fe, New Mexico • 87504 • 505/988-6603

COURAGE AND CULTURE: THE LISA TIGER STORY

Indian Country is still reeling from the tragic news of Lisa Tiger. The AIDS virus has struck this beautiful young Cherokee/Creek woman who comes from a family of acclaimed American Indian artists in Oklahoma. Lisa Tiger, 27, daughter of the famed artist Jerome Tiger, found out she was HIV-positive last summer after she got herself tested on a hunch after seeing her former boyfriend's deteriorating health. Ms. Tiger is as low-risk as statistics predict. She is not homosexual, doesn't inject drugs, doesn't drink alcohol and had two long-term monogamous relationships in seven years.

She is dynamic and powerful as she comes to terms with being stricken with the virus, explaining that she will embrace death to be with family members who have journeyed to the spirit world before her. The time she has left in this world she has dedicated towards carrying a message to American Indians across the United States to warn them about how to protect themselves from the AIDS virus. Because there are so few Indian people, this disease could be devastating to Indian Nations!

Native Images is proud that Ms. Tiger has agreed to let us tell her story. After she reviewed some of our videos, she said we were the group to do it because of our cultural and professional approach that showed in our projects. We will profile her day to day activities as she works in American Indian communities nationwide. We also want to document her story as she grew up under the shadow of her famous father who died when she was five years old. Her closeness with Principal Chief Mankiller, and other tribal leaders who have become a part of Lisa's family. Ultimately, we want to focus throughout the piece on awareness and education of the AIDS virus. Interviews with Indian health professionals will be conducted, as well as tribal leaders and policy makers. There is nothing like this being done in Indian country, teaching us to open up and talk about this viral threat to our low risk and homosexual American Indian and Alaska communities.

We have verbal support for this project from Cherokee Nation, Principal Chief Mankiller, and the support of the Jerome Tiger family. We have received a script outline from Annette Arkeketa (Creek), who wants to write Lisa's story. In the next two months we will finalize our proposal packages and to funders in the film and video world. Initial discussions look very promising. For more information please contact IAIA, Native Images, P.O. Box 20007, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504, (505)988-6420 or (505)473-0469.