

Jesse Taken Alive - Family Introduction - OSEU 4

My name is Jesse Taken Alive. I'm from Standing Rock and I come from the Running Antelope, formerly called Little Eagle community on Standing Rock and now from the Bear Soldier community. I say that for a reason because it's kind of like a mixture of relatives and friends who've moved into that community over the years from Bullhead, Little Eagle, and the Kennel community in Wakpawa and in some cases from one or two of our communities in North Dakota on Standing Rock and Bear Soldier is my late father's Lakota name so it's dear and near to our heart.

On a map it's called McLaughlin but we like to call it the Bear Soldier community. Been married, going to be married for 40 years here within a month. The creator has blessed us with five children, nine grandchildren thus far and we're looking forward to the second chapter of our life as they say with our grandchildren.

We have the eldest grandchild is 18, just turned 18 and the youngest is two, ironically her brother, and in between are the other seven so it's very exciting, very exciting for us and glad to and honored to be a part of this process of being interviewed to share my thoughts on a number of things. I understand it's going to be about education so I'm honored to do that. I've served in our tribal government here at Standing Rock since 1991. This started my 24th year. I got the honor to serve as a tribal chairman for four years from 1993 to 1997.

Worked at our community college when it was called Standing Rock College, not called Sitting Bull College. Worked at a BIA school, used to be called Little Eagle Day School, it's now called Sitting Bull School. I worked at the McLaughlin School, attended a BIA school, graduated there high school and then went on to school at Black Hill State, at the time called College, now it's University.

So a number of things have changed all for the good, all for the good and again I'm really fortunate to be raised in a home along with my siblings where there was no alcohol and drugs I consider myself one of the luckiest Lakota because we were brought up in that way and my our late father was a school teacher, earned his undergraduate degree to be an elementary teacher back in 1960 and our mother was as they say a homemaker.

Never got a chance to finish high school, she did earn her GED and worked in various areas and just recently passed away within a little over a year but their principles, their foundation is something that we cherish and as she said when it's her time and it is what it is her time now she says promise me that you'll take care of my grandchildren.

So that's what we strive to do, my siblings and I and one of the teachings if you will, one of the things they ask us to do is make certain that they do well in education, make

certain that they can obtain an education. We're seeing a lot of strides and gains with our language coming back to hear young people talk, speak in our language of phrases, sentences, to come up and greet you in that way.

It's very very humbling, it brings a lump in my throat to think that there were policies passed about a hundred years ago by the government, the federal government that didn't allow speaking of our language. It was against the law and of course the joint resolution that the United States Congress passed on August 11th of 1978 adds to that.

Of course that is the American Indian Freedom Religion Act that was passed and when that was done obviously it made it legal for us to practice our form of worship and since that point in time we've been able to enjoy tremendous strides in reclaiming who we are and what we are as indigenous peoples, as Lakota peoples and it's fantastic.