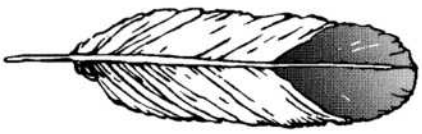
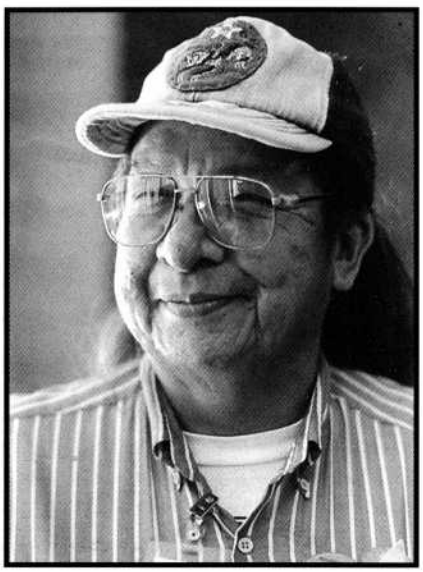
BEYOND THE YEAR OF THE INDIAN



by JERRI CULPEPPER

Serving the educational needs of Oklahoma's Native Americans while preserving their rich cultural heritage is more than tourism glitz at the University of Oklahoma.



J. Pat Carter

Anadarko writer Russell Bates joins Native Americans "Returning the Gift."

As any regular television watcher or newspaper reader knows, 1992 in Oklahoma was "The Year of the Indian." All across the state, the rich culture and heritage of Native Americans were spotlighted in a variety of ways, most noticeably in a series of slick television and print advertisements produced by the state tourism department.

At the University of Oklahoma's Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, a major exhibition of works by the renowned sculptor Allan Houser, a Chiracahua Apache native of Oklahoma, (*Sooner Magazine*, Fall 1992) was part of the celebration. Other special events at OU were a Navajo weavings exhibit at the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History and a gathering of Native American writers at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education.

"Returning the Gift—A Festival of North American Native Writers," co-sponsored by the OU College of Continuing Education, the Greenfield Review Literary Center, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, State Arts Council of Oklahoma, Bay Foundation and New York Times Foundation, was a major national literary conference.

The event, its organizers say, marked perhaps the first time in U.S. history that Native American writers were brought together to discuss and celebrate the incredible survival of those who, observed one of the participants in a poem, "were never meant to survive."

More important than the high-profile events of a single year, however, is the ongoing interest in and concern for the state's Native American culture, which reportedly is much greater in Japan, for instance, than in Oklahoma. Perhaps, but at the University of Oklahoma, interest in Native American culture, heritage and art was a concern long before "The Year of the Indian" and shows no sign of diminishing.

The following are some of the programs, classes and services that focus on issues relating to

Native American learning or preservation currently in place at OU.

OKLAHOMA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Oklahoma Museum of Natural History plays a vital role in preserving Native American history and educating the public about the many contributions of the Native American peoples.

More than 8,500 Native American items are contained in the Ethnological Collection, which is particularly strong in Plains Indian material. Included are beaded and quilled tipi bags, pipe bags, parfleches, gaming pieces, moccasins, fans, rattles, dolls, bows and arrows, cradle boards, buckskin garments, saddles and feather bonnets.

Among the featured items are a complete Seminole man's wedding costume, an Osage bear claw necklace, an 1880s Sioux scalp shirt, and a Mesquakie ribbon-work blanket. The museum also claims two ledger books of Plains Indian art dating to the 1880s, one depicting primarily social relations, the other—attributed to the Southern Cheyenne Chief Whirlwind—dealing mainly with battle scenes.

Other notable items include a collection of nearly 800 baskets representing most Native American cultures, particularly those from the Southwest and Northwest Coast, and more than 4.5 million archaeological artifacts relating to Native American prehistory. Most famous among the latter are objects from Spiro Mounds, North America's richest archaeological site.

The museum has assumed a special responsibility for the interpretation and exhibit of Native American materials, stressing cooperation and sharing in these joint projects with tribal groups or governments. Traveling exhibits, such as "From Generation to Generation: The Plains Apache Way" and "Native American Games," have helped Native American people in a resurgence of their culture. By taking such exhibitions on the road, the museum has done much to educate the nation about things Native American. Thus far, the museum's exhibitions have been seen by more than 3 million people at 450 sites in 16 states.

This photograph of the Cheyenne Lance society of western Oklahoma, circa 1890, is part of the University's Western History Collections, one of the nation's best.

About 100,000 people annually view Native American materials on permanent display at the museum, located at 1335 Asp Avenue. The museum also presents formal educational programs and workshops on a variety of Native American topics. Past programs have included "Plains Indians," "The Five Civilized Tribes" and "Indian Games." In addition, the museum makes available to schools and teachers a series of teaching guides, audiovisual materials and hands-on materials.

WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTIONS

One of the nation's best collections of Native American history can be found at the University of Oklahoma. "The Western History Collections are among the three best in the United States, the other two being at the Smithsonian and the Newberry Library," says curator Don DeWitt.

DeWitt explains that the collection is unique in its depth. In addition to printed materials, the collections include microfilm, manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and maps of Indian Territory from its beginnings.

Much of the information contained in the collections, DeWitt adds, was created by Indians about Indians, giving the materials an Indian perspective. Two examples are the records of

J. Pat Carter

Writer-poet-tribal columnist Jim Northrup, a Wisconsin Chippewa, displays a sideline occupation, basket making, at the "Return the Gift" conference.

the Five Civilized Tribes and the Cherokee Nation papers, which document the development of the Cherokee Nation from the 1830s to statehood in 1907.

The collections also include oral histories. One set of interviews, with Indians and white pioneers, were collected as part of a Works Progress Administration project in the 1930s. Another set, conducted in the early 1960s through '70s, was funded by the Doris Duke Foundation. OU was one of only seven universities nationwide asked to interview Native Americans for this impressive project, which featured interviews with individuals from some 50 tribes who grew up in the 1930s and '40s.

A third oral history consists of sound recordings of early radio programs, including the "Indians for Indians Hour," broadcast on OU's own WNAD Radio from 1942 until the early '70s.

"The University is playing an important role in the effort to preserve and celebrate Native American history," DeWitt says. "The uniqueness and the scope of the Western History Collections enhance the reputation of the University and the state."

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS

Two University of Oklahoma Press series are dedicated to the exploration and celebration of Native American heritage and culture.

The Civilization of the American Indian Series, now numbering more than 200 volumes, was established by the first director of the OU Press, Joseph A. Brandt. The first volume in the series was *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico 1777-1787*, translated and edited by Alfred Barnaby Thomas. The volume, first published in 1932, is still available.

Many of the volumes in the series have received wide acclaim, including Angie Debo's *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place* (Vol. 142), winner of the Southwest Book Award and the Book Award of the Southwestern Library Association, both given in 1977, and the Western Heritage Wrangler Award in 1978; and Edwin R. Sweeney's *Cochise: Chiracahua Apache Chief* (Vol. 204), recipient of the Southwest Book Award, Choice Outstanding Academic Book and Western Writers of America Spur Award for Best Western Non-Fiction Book.

Recently, the OU Press created the American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series. Gerald Vizenor was named general editor for the series, which includes original novels, edited collections of short stories, imaginative interpretations of tribal myths and the re-expression of traditional tribal stories in modern or urban situations.

The new series features original fiction that includes contact and conflict themes, crossblood and urban tribal identities and the mythic verism of tribal experiences and cultural encounters.

Critical studies include a wide range of contemporary and theoretical interpretations of American Indian authors and literatures, including trickster discourse, new interpretations of myths, critical studies of oral traditions, the problems of translation, critical biographical studies, and comparative studies of tribal literature and the literature of other cultures and nations.

Titles in the series include *Dead Voices: Natural Agonies in the New World,* by Vizenor; and *The Sharpest Sight: A Novel and Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel,* by Louis Owens.

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

American Indian Institute

A department of Public and Community Services within the College of Continuing Education, the American Indian Institute is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Native peoples.

Its goals, according to director Anita Chisholm, are:

* to promote Indian education and research;

* to promote training and career development opportunities;

* to promote and support the development of human and natural resources;

* to promote the perpetuation of tribal/band cultures and traditions and their histories; and

* to facilitate the utilization of OU resources by Indian tribes, bands, organizations and groups.

"Our primary goal is to instruct individuals so that they can return to their tribes and communities empowered with the knowledge and skills needed to take a leadership role in solving the

myriad problems facing Native Americans," she says. Currently, the institute's main areas of concern are child welfare, cultural and historic issues, substance abuse, mental health and the development of school curricula dealing with Native cultures. "We address these issues," she adds, "through conferences, workshops, seminars, on-site consultation and technical assistance across the United States."

Specialists from North American Indian tribes and bands—representing such diverse areas as education, research, evaluation, human services, sociology, psychology, history and economics—are brought together by the institute to provide leadership and strategies on a wide range of social and human programs, she explains.

Additionally, the institute, which now offers programs in Canada as well as throughout the United States, publishes conference proceedings, curriculum guides and training materials.

The office also manages the American Indian Research Information Service, the only computerized database systematically compiling a comprehensive catalog of published and unpublished research focusing on Native American human and economic development from 1969 to the present. The database currently has some 15,000 abstracts relating to a host of Native American issues, including economic development, alcoholism and education. Chisholm hopes eventually to obtain funding to get the database on-line. She notes that the database can be accessed to retrieve specific information of interest to tribal leaders and planners, Indian organizations, governmental agencies, private foundations, researchers and others.

Funding for the institute's programs and services comes from a variety of sources, including grants and contracts with state and federal agencies and tribes, groups and other Indian organizations; state-appropriated public service funds; and participant fees at workshops, seminars and conferences.

HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center offers an eight-week summer program designed to increase the science and mathematics backgrounds and communication skills of Native American students interested in a health career.

Tom Hardy, on-site director for the Headlands Indian Health Careers Program, explains that the program targets students in their senior year of high school or freshman year of college. Participants receive room and board; tuition; round-trip airfare to the Headlands Conference Center in Mackinaw City, Michigan; a $300 stipend; $200 scholarship; and four semester credits.

"Our goal is to increase the number of American Indian health professionals providing health care to reservations and American Indian communities."

The camp, now in its 16th year, consists of mini-block courses in mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology and communication skills. All the courses are designed to increase the students' academic and study skills so that they can achieve levels of performance necessary for demanding college academics.

"The program exposes students to a rigorous scientific and academic environment that equals or surpasses the pace of most state universities," Hardy says.

The program features discussions and special lectures concerning medicine and the healing arts in American Indian culture, led by prominent Native American health professionals who take part in the program as guest lecturers.

Through the program, students are introduced to the many health careers available and learn about the tremendous need for Indian health professionals.

"Our goal," Hardy explains, "is to increase the number of American Indian health professionals providing health care to reservations and American Indian communities. To achieve this goal, we must first increase the number of qualified applicants who apply to health professional schools. The Headlands program is having a significant impact on increasing the number of qualified applicants to these schools by better preparing them for undergraduate pre-health professional programs.

"With a 70 percent success rate," he adds, "the American Indian community considers this the most outstanding program of its kind."

AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENT SERVICES

A part of Student Support Services, American Indian Student Services works with Native American students to ensure that their special needs are met in the classroom. The office also provides academic and financial aid counseling.

"We serve as a liaison between students and offices on the campus," says Shannon Freeman, who oversees American Indian Student Services. "In addition, AISS serves as adviser for the American Indian Student Association and the American Indian Alumni Society."

The AISS also is involved in recruiting Native American students through high school and college visits and campus tours. "Because it is located in the center of Indian country," Freeman says, "OU offers students a unique college experience. The American Indian community at OU is a very close-knit group and directs its efforts in support of the students. AISS works with tribal offices to ensure that each

student is aware of financial aid opportunities."

AISS also operates the Jim Thorpe Multicultural Center, described as the "heartbeat" of Native American student activities at OU. The top two floors of the facility serve as a residence hall for approximately 30 residents. From its fully equipped kitchen, the American Indian Student Association conducts monthly campuswide Indian taco sales. The first floor is available to all Native American organizations—the American Indian Student Social Worker Association, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Native American Business Society, Native American Law Students Association and American Indian Faculty and Staff Association.

The center also is used by tribes throughout Oklahoma when visiting with Native American students on campus and by several tribes that conduct language classes there.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The OU College of Arts and Sciences has established a national reputation for Native American scholarly research through the past work of such scholars as historians Donald J. Berthrong and Arrell M. Gibson, and the college's association with the publication of the University of Oklahoma Press's Civilization of the American Indian series and the extensive resources of the Western History Collections. The College also claims a strong Native American Studies Program.

Native American Studies Program

"The development of an interdisciplinary program in Native American Studies was an essential element in the College of Arts and Sciences' 'Strategy for Excellence,' "says Arts and Sciences Dean David Young.

"In a state that has the highest Native American population per capita (8 percent of all Oklahomans) and the largest number of federally recognized tribes in the country (35), it is appropriate that the University of Oklahoma emphasize such an academic program." *Continued*

Gil Jain

George Pumpkin, left with graduate assistant Laura Anderson, turns to watch as a student in his Cherokee language class puts a translation on the chalkboard. A practicing medicine man, Pumpkin travels to the OU campus from his home in Tahlequah to participate in the department of anthropology's effort to preserve Native American languages. The classes have an average enrollment of 20 to 30, about half Native Americans with the remaining 50 percent including many nontraditional students.

Currently 773 Native American undergraduates are enrolled at the University, representing 5.2 percent of all undergraduates. Total Native American enrollment, including graduates and law students, is 933, or 4.7 percent of total enrollment. Philip Lujan sees the Native American Studies Program he directs as a means to establish priorities, secure funding to attract Native American scholars and recruit and retain Native American students. He points out that Indian students have an extremely high dropout rate and that female Indians' dropout statistics exceed that of all other minority groups.

A bachelor of arts degree has been proposed as part of a revitalized Native American Studies Program, Lujan says, which would follow the liberal arts model of the University's letters major. He feels that such a major would capitalize on the University's strengths and resources.

"A Native American Studies major legitimizes and values the study of Native American cultures," Lujan insists. "Their history, art and contemporary situation are presented in a scholarly atmosphere. Too often, Indian students view the University and modern American society as not only hostile but also antithetical to their Indian upbringing. Thus, there is a necessity to offer and develop courses that bridge the gap between the Indian students' feelings of isolation and the place of Indians in the history and tradition of this country and state."

Specifically, Lujan says, the curriculum would give students a basic understanding of the historical development that has affected Native Americans and a basic understanding of the contemporary Native American situation in Oklahoma, regionally and hemispherically; provide a Native American perspective on the structure and organization of knowledge; offer analytical and philosophical tools that will enable the student to be sophisticated in dealing with Native American issues; and enable graduate majors to enter graduate academic or professional programs or to function as a resource person in Native American communities.

Department of Anthropology

Every day, the danger grows that another Native American language in Oklahoma will be lost forever. To address this concern, OU anthropologist Morris Foster has pursued the establishment of classes in Native American languages at the University. His dream became reality in the fall of 1991, when OU's department of anthropology began offering six Indian language courses—Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, Lakota, Comanche and Kiowa—more than any other university in the nation. The classes are taught by Native American speakers, aided by graduate assistants. Morris notes that several of the instructors must travel quite a distance to teach the classes. He cited George Pumpkin, a practicing medicine man from Tahlequah, who leads the Cherokee language class, as one example.

"A number of Native American languages in Oklahoma are in danger of being lost as the remaining elders who speak the language die."

"A number of Native American languages in Oklahoma are in danger of being lost as the remaining elders who still speak the language die," Morris explains. "The younger people just aren't learning the traditional languages. But offering the classes at a university appears to be drawing in some of the younger people."

Morris observed that about half of those who enroll in the classes are Native American and that of the remaining 50 percent, many are nontraditional students.

The classes, which are self-sustaining in that the students' tuition goes to pay the instructors, have been very popular, averaging between 20 and 30 students a class. The Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek classes are the most popular, reflecting the higher numbers of Indians in Oklahoma who belong to those tribes.

The department now is in the process of adding intermediate classes in Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee and Lakota. The OU Regents have approved additional course listings, offered through the College of Continuing Education/Anthropology, allowing students who complete a sequence of three classes in the same language to fulfill the University's core curriculum language requirement.

Morris has found the response from the local Indian communities toward the language classes to be very positive. In fact, he has had many requests for OU classes—which also incorporate topics such as kinship and religious rituals—off-campus, on reservations and elsewhere.

The OU professor also is working with Sandy Garrett, state superintendent of schools, to establish Native American language classes in the public schools. House Bill 1017, he explains, states that children in kindergarten through 12th grade must be exposed to languages other than English, with Native American languages specifically identified as desirable.

The department of anthropology also recently received a grant from the Oklahoma State Historical Society to fund a Native American preservation project. Under the grant, Morris and other language specialists in the anthropology and modern languages departments are working to identify endangered languages and document those in the greatest danger of being lost. Of the 23 Native American languages commonly spoken in the state, Morris cites 16 that are in danger of disappearing in the next decade or so. Currently identified as most at risk are the Caddo and Ponca languages.

Oklahoma Archaeological Survey

The Oklahoma Archaeological Survey is shedding light on the culture and heritage of yesterday's Native Americans.

According to director Don Wyckoff, three general research topics were identified as part of a 20-year plan for research in Oklahoma. The OAS is ap-

proximately halfway through that plan, which was evaluated at its inception by the National Park Service as the second best in the nation.

The first research thrust of the OAS is the identification of archaeological sites that are being lost to modern land uses. "We try to work with land owners to preserve sites that are being threatened by such things as urban expansion, industrial park development and clear-cutting," Wyckoff explains.

The survey is focusing part of its attention on the eastern one-third of the state, the original site of the Caddoen-speaking peoples and their descendants, the Caddoes and Wichitas, who still reside in Oklahoma. The goal? To find clues to the lifestyles of a people who were first sighted by the French in 1719 and may have lived in the area as many as 2,500 years ago.

The OAS also is examining the grasslands area from Edmond south to the Texas line, a part of the historically significant Cross Timbers, the natural boundary between the eastern woodlands and the western plains. "We're looking at the ecological changes and who was living there during those changes," Wyckoff says.

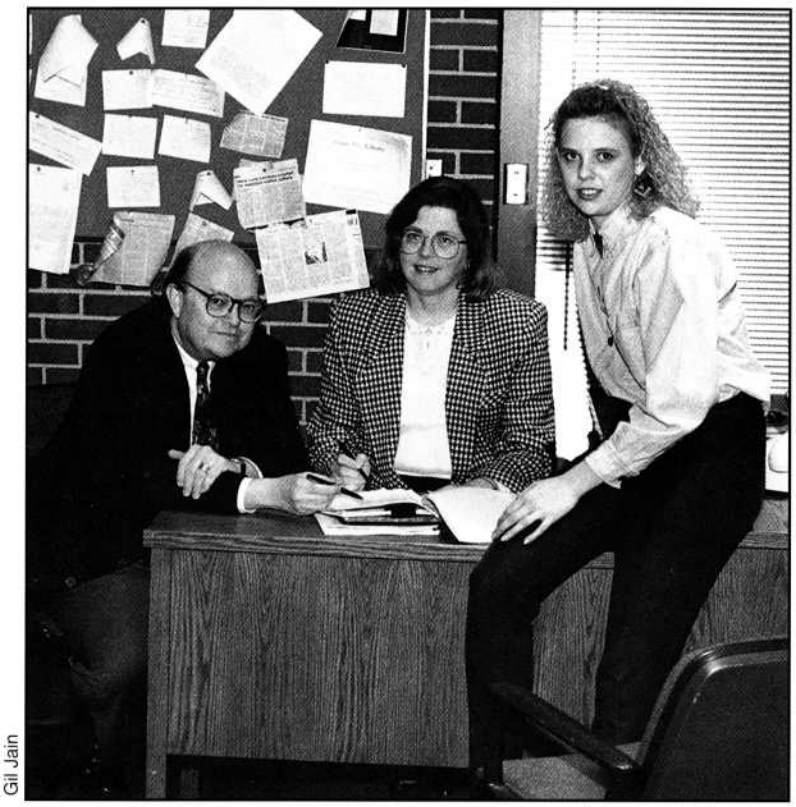
One area of particular focus is the Washita Valley, located north and west of Pauls Valley. Between 1250 and 1400, Wyckoff says, the area was inhabited by farmers and hunters. That land currently is being developed, and, in the process, burial grounds and prehistoric sites are being destroyed.

The third research thrust is to trace the history and prehistory of the peoples who lived in the westernmost part of Oklahoma. Here Coronado's expedition crossed the high plains, encountering nomadic bison hunters. Wyckoff theorizes these nomads were Apaches, although the tribe is not represented thus far in the archaeological sites.

And in Woods County, the OAS is examining startling evidence of perhaps the earliest humans discovered thus far, with remains dating back 20,000 to 25,000 years.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Jerry Bread oversees two programs aimed at increasing the number of Native American teachers in the public schools.



Gil Jain

Rennard Strickland, left, director of the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy, visits editor-in-chief Dena Silliman and managing editor Denise Fletcher at The American Indian Law Review.

The newest effort, launched in the fall of 1992, is the Teacher Corps Program. Initially funded for three years by the U.S. Department of Education, the program targets undergraduate students. The major objectives of the Teacher Corps include recruitment and retention programs, such as mentorships and tutoring services, thereby providing the public schools with Native American teachers as role models for Indian youth.

Bread sees that Teacher Corps participants are informed about various opportunities for teachers and are exposed to outstanding Indian teachers through an advisory board composed of Native American leaders from across the state. Tribal involvement continues to be crucial to the program's success.

The other program, Foundations in Native Education—or FINE—is designed to help identify minority students at the graduate level and encourage them to pursue careers in education through scholarships and other support services.

The five-year-old program has assisted more than 50 Native American students to achieve their graduate degrees, in the process boosting OU's Native American student retention rate to 90 percent—an impressive statistic in light of the discouraging graduation rates of Native Americans at most colleges and universities.

"In comparing and contrasting the past decade," Bread says, "I am impressed with OU's commitment to multicultural diversity. OU has made tremendous progress in recruiting and retaining minorities. This begins with a committed administration."

COLLEGE OF LAW

Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy

The new Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy in the OU College of Law was established to provide a resource on historic and contemporary legal matters relating to American Indians. The center also supports the work of *The American Indian*

After the studies are done, the programs and services in place and the classes listed? How successful are the carefully designed efforts to promote and preserve Oklahoma's Native American heritage?

Law Review and the Native American Law Students Association.

In the fall of 1990, Rennard Strickland left his faculty position at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, to become the new center's director. A national authority on Native American law and legal education, Strickland is also editor-in-chief of *The Handbook of Federal Indian Law.*

The initial effort of the center was the establishment of the Indian Law Library Collection as a basic resource unit able to support an expanded program of scholarly research. Strickland personally donated nearly 3,000 volumes of Indian law and history materials, which have been integrated into the law library.

The American Indian Law Review

Issued by the OU College of Law, *The American Indian Law Review* is a semiannual journal that documents and analyzes legal, cultural and historical issues of interest to Native American communities and aboriginal communities abroad.

The statement of purpose in the review's constitution reads: "*The American Indian Law Review* is published at the University of Oklahoma College of Law to give expression to legal scholarship and to serve the legal profession and the public with timely discussion of legal problems which relate to American Indians. *The Review* is dedicated to providing all students of the College of Law the opportunity to exercise their legal skills and to gain experience in research and writing. *The Law Review* is also dedicated to members of the legal profession, serving both as a source of scholarly analysis of questions of law and as a basic research tool."

Published twice a year, *The Review* averages 300 pages and reaches approximately 700 subscribers in the United States, Canada and abroad.

Interest and participation in *The Review* has grown in recent years, according to its editorial adviser, Michael Waters. From 1986 to 1988, *The Review* included 454 pages of articles, student notes and recent developments. From 1989 to 1991, the same materials amounted to 1,282 pages. A total of 69 volunteer student editors and editorial board members are listed in the most recent issue, compared to 30 in spring 1989.

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art claims one of the best collections of Native American art in the state, including many of the works of the Kiowa Five, a group of students brought to OU in the 1920s by Oscar Jacobson, the first director of the School of Art.

The museum also periodically highlights the works of Native American artists through exhibitions and related programs. The Allan Houser retrospective last summer was viewed by approximately 9,000 visitors, making it the second most popular exhibition in the museum's history. Exhibit visitors came from 38 states and 12 countries.

In conjunction with the Houser exhibit, the museum sponsored a symposium addressing the challenges confronting Native American artists who use non-traditional methods to convey concerns about today's society through their art.

Already scheduled at FJJMA for next summer are two exhibitions dealing with images of the American Indian and his culture as seen and interpreted by white artists, historical and contemporary. A third exhibition will feature American Indian artifacts from the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

Courses in Fine Arts

Two classes offered in the College of Fine Arts' schools of art and music are promoting knowledge of Native American culture.

Mary Jo Watson's art class takes an in-depth look at the aesthetic standards of prehistoric American Indian cultures. "Prehistoric American Indian Aesthetics" addresses this topic through such artistic expressions as painting, ceramics, sculpture, fiber arts and architecture. Students are introduced to concepts and theory of ancient social, economic, government and religious structures. Additionally, geographic and environmental effects on the prehistoric people are examined.

Studies in Native American music were inaugurated in spring 1990 with a grant from the Norman campus Provost's Office. Funding brought experts to the campus and allowed Virginia Giglio and her music faculty colleague Mary Jo Ruggles to do field work.

Giglio, Ruggles and Watson are working together to establish a research center within the College of Fine Arts to maximize the resources of the University in the areas of Native American music and art.

"I see Indian people excited about what we have here at OU," Giglio says. "These resources belong to them. Also, the classes give white and other minority students an opportunity to learn about and appreciate Native American music and culture."

And after the studies are done, the programs and services in place and the classes listed? How successful are the carefully designed efforts to promote and preserve Oklahoma's Native American heritage? Certainly one of the best examples of fostering cross-cultural appreciation through academic means can be found in Giglio's own class, "Native American Music."

Sooner Magazine sharpens the focus on this single part of OU's Native American programs on the following pages as writer Paula Baker visits Virginia Giglio's classroom.

"A Classroom Closeup" follows.