

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development
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**The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development Applauds
Students and Recognizes American Indian Business Leaders and Advocates at INPRO 2006**

Los Angeles— Over 240 guests and supporters gathered into the elegant Millennium Biltmore Hotel Crystal Ballroom to take part in an evening of tribute to honor the diversity, economic success & achievement of American Indians at the National Center's 31st Annual American Indian Progress In Business Awards Banquet (INPRO 2006) on September 21, 2006. Northrop Grumman Corporation served as the presenting sponsor of this event that benefited The American Indian Fellowship in Business Scholarship Program and The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED). Other major event supporters included: Lockheed Martin Corporation, The Boeing Company, Raytheon Company, Salt River Project, and KeyBank.

The black tie gala event was kicked off by the National Center's President and CEO, Ken Robbins (member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe) who welcomed the guests. Dinner chair, Gloria Pualani, Corporate Director, Socio-Economic Business Programs for Northrop Grumman Corporation, welcomed guests and opened with comments regarding the business and economic development of Indian Country, outstanding leadership, roles models present in Indian country today, and the many contributions and continued support of numerous corporations. Performances by world renowned musician Quetzal Guerrero and Los Angeles based Eagle Spirit Dancers set the tone for the remainder of the evening as the awards were presented by numerous distinguished guests and corporate sponsors. Ms. Susan Masten, a member of the Yurok Tribe and a member of the National Center Board of Directors, presented the Jay Silverheels Achievement Award, NCAIED's highest honor, to Ms. Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Ms. Benjamin has made significant contributions over the past decade to enhance the Mille Lacs Community. The NCAIED Tribal Sovereignty Award was presented by Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr., a member of the National Center's Board of Directors and Chairman of National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) to CNIGA (California Nations Indian Gaming Association) and the California Gaming Tribes. Accepting on behalf of CNIGA was Chairman Anthony Miranda, a member of the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians. The First American Enterprise Award was presented to the Lockheed Martin Corporation by Mr. David Lester, a member of the Creek Tribe and a member of the National Center's Board of Directors. Accepting on behalf of Lockheed Martin Corporation was Mr. John Hatch, Vice President Global Supply Chain Management. Mr. Hatch emphasized Lockheed Martin's continued commitment to the National Center and to American Indian business and economic development. Master of Ceremonies Elaine Miles closed the show with a stand up comedy routine and thanked the crowd for their continued support of Native Americans and the National Center for all the wonderful work they have done for the economic development of Americans Indians.

Dinner Chair, Ms. Gloria Pualani and Mr. Al Bolden, Sector Director, Socio-Economic Program for Northrop Grumman Space Technology had the honor of presenting five American Indian Fellowship in Business Scholarship Awards to Native American business students: Ms. Penelope Jackson, University of North Dakota, a member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Tribe; Mr. Jon Panamaroff, University of Colorado at Denver, a member of the Sun 'aq Tribe of Kodiak, Alaska and a descent of the Koniag Alaskan Native Cooperation; Ms. Jessica Tyner, Portland State University, a member of the Cherokee Tribe; Ms. Tonya Vanderpool, University of Alaska Southeast, a member of the Native Village of McGrath; and Ms. Natalie Bergquist, National American University in Pierre, and a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. The students were selected from a large pool of applicants and each spoke of their continued commitment to higher education and community involvement. Each student expressed their gratitude to the National Center and to all the respective sponsors who share in the National Center's vision and mission.

During INPRO, Mr. Robbins expressed his gratitude for the support from the corporations, tribes, and Indian businesses which allows the National Center to carry out its mission. Founded in 1969, the National Center benefits from sustained relationships with the public and private sectors. The National Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with nine offices strategically located across the country in Arizona, California, Washington, Montana, Colorado, Washington, DC, and Georgia. These locations allow NCAIED to serve the Native American businesses on a nationwide basis.

For more information on NCAIED Sponsorship Opportunities or The National Center, please call (800) 462-2433, or visit the NCAIED web site at [HYPERLINK http://www.ncaied.org](http://www.ncaied.org) www.ncaied.org.

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