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Scanno

Oren Lyons
SUNY Buffalo

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SYMPOSIUM

Scanno

JOAGGQUISHO (OREN LYONS)*

Now, I thank you for being well at our meeting. Scanno. Scanno means peace. The same as health. Same word. So you can't have peace without health, and that seems to be the issue.

I want to thank Pace University for the honor, and for the opportunity to be here, and it's my honor to be amongst you, and to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Davide.

Service, service is what we do. And it's the mandate of the Onondaga Council of Chiefs, the Haudenosaunee Council of Chiefs. Our mandate is to serve, and serve not only our generation, but to serve the seventh generation coming. And really hear that term again and again: "seventh generation."

Over a thousand years ago, a peacemaker came along to our people, warring nations, five nations (the Mohawks, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Senecas) and brought peace and brought a government based on democracy, a government based on the will and the rights of the people, and a government that we passed on to Benjamin Franklin, to the founding fathers, and we see it around the world today.

To appreciate it, I was reminded in 1992 of the words of the leader at the time. He asked if I would explain to him the exact words of that seventh generation, and I did. And he used them in

* Oren Lyons is a Chief and Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy, or the Six Nations, the world's oldest continuously functioning democratic government). Oren Lyons is also emeritus professor of American Studies at the State University of New York (Buffalo). He has been honored with a Doctor of Laws degree from Syracuse University and numerous awards. Pace University was honored to celebrate Chief Oren Lyons' 80th birthday while recognizing him for his extraordinary work for Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations. This statement is from the verbatim transcript of Pace University's honors for Chief Oren Lyons on May 13, 2010. The transcript is on file with PACE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REVIEW and available in the archive collections of the Pace Law Library.

2010]

SCANNO

335

his speech. At the end of his speech, he used an exact quotation that we have.

And I'll tell you what it is. Among all the instructions that he gave the leaders of the time - the spiritual leader is called the great peacemaker - he described it to our people. He said, when you sit and you council for the welfare of the people, think not of yourself, or of your family, or even your generation. He said, make your decisions on behalf of the seventh generation coming, those faces looking up from the earth, each generation waiting its time. Defend them; protect them, so that they may enjoy what you enjoy today.

That's where those words come from. It's a discussion about responsible leadership, about responsibility, long-term thinking. Think not of yourself, nor for your family, nor even your generation. Wouldn't that be wonderful today if the leaders of the world would do this, would think in that direction?

Unfortunately, we're facing serious times, times brought upon ourselves. I'll take a few minutes to talk about it - the crisis of global warming. It is real. It is here. And it is coming faster than you think.

I am appalled at the lack of leadership in the world to meet these issues. I am appalled at the extravagance of business as usual because this is a crisis. We have to change. It is no longer a competition. We have to have cooperation. We have to cooperate now in our own defense. We have to do this fast and we have to do it collectively. We have to put aside and change our values.

The great values that are driving the world today, we have to change them because they've brought us to this crisis. So now, it falls on our generation to make this change. I think it is critical, and I think we're at that point where this the generation will be responsible for the future and what occurs.

So thinking of the future, and not only of human beings, there's life out in this world, in all of the animals, and all of the trees, and all of the fish. They all need to be protected. They all need to be thought about. They all need to be defended. For we human beings, we have a great deal of responsibility, and it's based principally on the idea that we have the afore-knowledge of death. We know ahead of time that death is coming, and so we prepare.

So we can think as a generation, and we understand this great regenerate of power of life that sustains us. It's mysterious. Sciences keep trying to find the essence of the spark, and they'll never find it. They should respect it and they shouldn't take everything apart so you can't put it back together again.

At any rate, we're facing this crisis, and it's real, and so I would say that a message thinking back over the years, the message that the peacemaker said: if you defend what you have today, then they will have what you enjoy. We should think that way.

Over to your left, and my right, third bay down, there is a lacrosse stick there. I was trying to see the lacrosse stick there. And I can tell you, we talk about contemporary times, that stick was the one I made myself, you know? Old times. I've been playing that game for a long, long time.

Well, in Manchester England, on the 12th of July, this year, through the 24th, we have a world contest, a world championship lacrosse contest, and playing in that contest will be the Haudenosaunee. We will have a team, and we will be playing against the USA. We will be playing against Canada, Australia, England, and Japan. It is our game. We invented the game. We're going to have a team out there, and we will do well. The boys are ready, and it is a continuation.

The stick that you see is a little different than this. The stick you see over there, that stick was made for a big field, for a long field. You can throw a long way for that stick. That's a long run. You can throw over two hundred yards with that. Even further. Good arm. And the sticks you see today on the field are shorter, they're tighter, they're smaller, but it's the same. It's the advance of technology.

Indian nations played games all the time. We developed that game. That was a team sport being played a thousand years ago here when people were still knocking each other off horses over there in Europe. Their idea of a contest was to dual and swing swords at one another. We were playing a team sport over here, a team game. It wasn't a sport then.

So, here we are today. Iroquois Nationals will be out there. And keep your eye on them - I think the June issue of Sports

2010]

SCANNO

337

Illustrated will have the story of the Iroquois and I'm talking with ESPN right now and they want to follow up.¹

Finally, we are going to get some kind of publicity for our team. We're currently ranked fourth in the world in the field. . So we're there.

And we're getting ready to - I guess the point I'm trying make here is, yes, we do leave off. I'm sure that the chiefs of three hundred years ago that were sitting at a council would look at me and say, "Who's that guy?" We change. But our principles don't. The Haudenosaunee principles remain the same today as they were when the peacemaker came to us, and what he said was, your first principle is peace. Peace is health. Peace is health for your people, one. The second principle is equity. Equity for the people. With equity comes justice, two. The third principle he said will be the power of the group minds. The collective thought to be of one mind, one body, one heart, one spirit. Power of unity. And that was the beginning of the confederation of five nations (later it became six with the Tuscarora) and our chiefs are meeting today. We're still here. We're the last traditional council still in charge of land in North America, [avoiding] the likely system - control from The Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC, and The Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, Canada.

We are still free. We are still independent and also innovative. So, give me one more statement and I'm through.

Those of you who have the computer, and I'm one of those people who doesn't, just might be the last one, google Plantagon, Plantagon.com, and you will see that [one of] the most traditional nations in the world as of today, Indigenous, still in charge of land, is also in charge of the number one innovation called sky

1. The Iroquois Nationals were to have competed in the 2010 World Lacrosse Championship in the United Kingdom, but the U.K. government would not grant them a visa to travel on their Iroquois National passports, claiming that the U.S. government would not guarantee that they would be readmitted to the United States, ostensibly because of the strict border security rules because of "terrorism." See Thomas Kaplan, *Bid for Trophy Becomes a Test of Iroquois Identity*, N.Y. TIMES, July 12, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/us/13lacrosse.html>; see also Thomas Kaplan, *After False Hope, Iroquois Team Remains in U.S.*, N.Y. TIMES, July 14, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/15/sports/15lacrosse.html>.

338 *PACE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REVIEW* [Vol. 28]

farming, a greenhouse that goes up. So google it and wonder how this too can help in these times.

But it's all about life. It's all about peace. And I thank you all for being so patient with me and I thank Pace University, and especially my good friend Dr. Robinson here, who's a hard working man, and I appreciate his work. Thank you all.