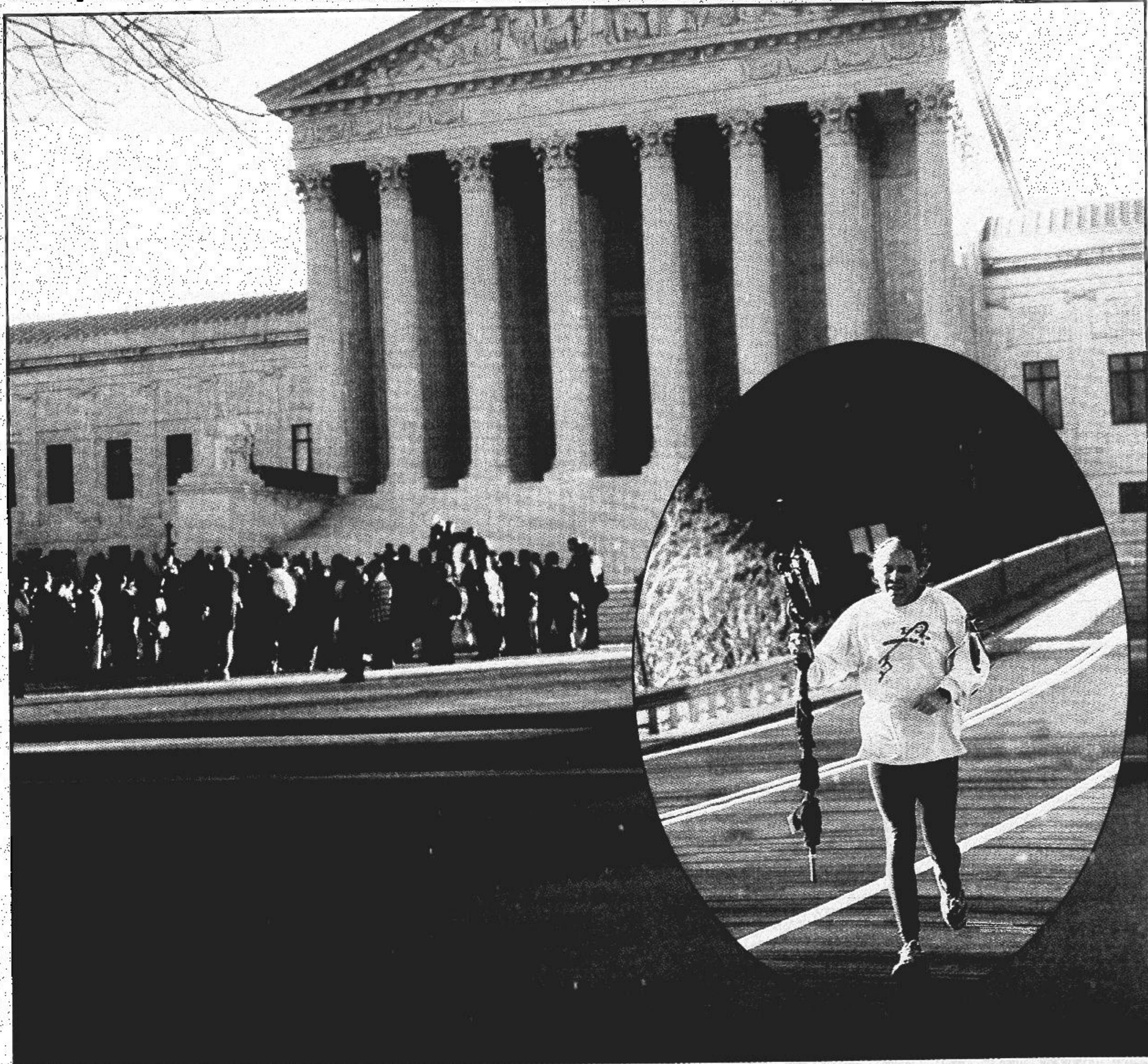


## The Waabanong Run from Wisconsin to D.C. *A prayer in support of treaties*



No one knows exactly when the prayer began; it seems an ongoing prayer emanating from the hearts of Native People, a prayer that has been carried westward in tragic voyages such as the Trail of Broken Treaties, and carried eastward as did Chief Buffalo in his arduous journey to Washington, D.C., taking the prayer and a plea that his people would not be removed from their homeland. And so, the Waabanong runners, carried the Treaty Staff and a prayer, not their prayer, but the prayer of native people whose lives and lifeways stand once more in jeopardy.

The Treaty Staff and the runners reached Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Supreme Court building, their immediate destination, but the prayer continues, its course endless. The Staff, now back in Lac du Flambeau, awaits another journey to be carried, perhaps, with new hands, new feet, but with an enduring vision and prayer—that the people might be protected and that the outcome of the court hearing be favorable to them.

This is the story of the Waabanong Run and those who carried the Treaty Staff with a prayer. This is a chronicle of one journey undertaken by Anishinaabeg that has no real end, may never have an end...



*"Our great grandfathers and grandmothers walked where you will run. Tobacco will go out every day and we will follow you every day as you run to Washington, D.C."*

*—MilleLacs Chief Executive Marge Anderson at ceremonies on the eve the run at Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin.*

The Waabanong Run was run for a specific reason. The treaty rights of Ojibwe bands in Minnesota and Wisconsin are once again on trial, this time in the United States Supreme Court of Appeals, a body with the power to overturn favorable decisions from lower federal courts. The Supreme Court accepted an appeal of the Mille Lacs case from the State of Minnesota, agreeing to consider three issues. The Court's ruling could deprive one or many of the Ojibwe bands of their cherished off-reservation treaty rights, and it could impact treaty rights held by other Indian nations across the United States.

James Schlender, GLIFWC executive administrator, recognized the need to bring the Treaty Staff to the Supreme Court hearing on December 2nd, but he knew it must be carried in a spiritual way and in an Anishinaabe way. GLIFWC Biological Services Director Neil Kmiecik, a Lakota tribal member and runner, also knew this. The Staff had to be carried in hand, and the miles traveled on foot. The men knew the journey required the support of tribal leaders, spiritual leaders, elders and the continuing prayers of Indian people throughout the nation.

The idea evolved gradually from a sequence of events which sparked the concept of the Waabanong Run. It was like the weaving together of things present and things past, each suggesting the Run. The first suggestion came to Neil, a veteran runner, during a Shaking Tent ceremony at Lac du Flambeau in the summer of 1998. Spiritual people from Canada had agreed to hold a Shaking Tent ceremony because GLIFWC tribal leaders requested guidance and answers.

During the ceremony tribal attorneys were told they would have to put cedar in their shoes when they argue the case. For Neil, this prompted a recollec-

tion from an earlier run called the Peace and Solidarity Run in 1989. An eagle feather had been lost from a Staff, and the runners sought spiritual guidance at Red Cliff. An old man from Red Cliff smudged the legs of the runners with two eagle feathers and told them that when they run they must put cedar in their shoes. The connection between the cedar in the shoes and a run was made for Neil, generating the idea that the Treaty Staff should be run to Washington, D.C.

Tobasonakwut had also told tribal leaders that they must go home and tell the Ogichidaa about the issues at hand so they could respond. To Neil the run seemed to provide a focus for such an effort and also a means of bringing people and communities together. Neil mentioned the idea of the run to Jim Schlender and GLIFWC Chairman of the Board Tom Maulson once, and then twice. Following the second time, the response was "do it."

The Waabanong Run happened with tremendous support from the GLIFWC Board of Commissioners, GLIFWC member tribes, GLIFWC staff, the National Congress of American Indians, HONOR Inc., the National Indian Gaming Association, and many, many individuals who offered housing, food, spiritual support, and joined the run for segments along the way.

The Waabanong Run happened because eleven individuals committed themselves as the core team to make sure the Treaty Staff traveled from Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin to Washington, D.C. in time for the December 2nd Supreme Court building. It was their energy, physical power, and determination that carried the Staff; it was their spiritual power that carried the prayer and the prayers of many people within their hearts over mile after mile after mile.



*GLIFWC Executive Administrator James Schlender, above, and Neil Kmiecik, GLIFWC Biological Services Director, coordinated the Waabanong Run.*



*Put cedar in your shoes.*

### **Waabanong Run core team members**

Eva and Gene Connors from the St. Croix Band  
 Don Graves, Joel Shaugobay, and Erik Gahbow from the Mille Lacs Band  
 Larry Miller, Randy Miller, George (Budman) Morrow, and Bo Hammond from the Lac Courte Oreilles Band  
 Jim Schlender, Lac Courte Oreilles Band and Neil Kmiecik, Standing Rock Lakota, from GLIFWC  
 (Jim Schlender and Gene Connors were core team walkers)

### **The Treaty Staff**

The Treaty Staff came to the Anishinaabeg in 1990 during a run organized by Mitch Walking Elk which started from Pipestone, Minn. At that time, runners carried the Staff from Pipestone to the Lac du Flambeau reservation in Wisconsin as a response to the racial hatred being expressed in protests of Chippewa treaty rights. Mitch wanted to do what he could to help the people in their struggle, and it was the Staff that he gave.

It was said that the Staff should be brought to Court whenever the treaty rights of the Ojibwe are on trial and it would bring a favorable outcome. It has been carried into federal court twice in Minnesota. The Treaty Staff is kept at the Lac du Flambeau reservation.



*Jim Clark, elder from Mille Lacs, was one of several elders to participate in ceremonies before the run and in D.C.*





## The Gift of a Song

November 10th, the eve of the Waabanong Run, brought elders, spiritual leaders, and tribal leaders from a number of tribes to the Lac du Flambeau reservation to start the team off in a good, spiritual way and provide them the strength needed to complete the journey.

The words and gifts from tribal leaders instilled the purpose and power needed to carry the Staff and the prayer the long distance of unknown miles and time that stretched before the team.

Each team member knew that they would carry the Staff, not for themselves or fulfillment of personal goals, but the well-being of the Anishinaabe people, for all the families who stayed at home and whose prayers joined together to be the prayer in the hearts of the runners.

That evening spiritual leaders spoke of the need of the people and the purpose of the run and called upon the spirits of the Four Directions and the Creator for support and strength. Spiritual men, Jim Clark and Raining Boyd from the Mille Lacs Band; Joe Chosa from the Lac du Flambeau Band; Jack Chambers from the Grand Traverse Band; Archie McGeshick from the Lac Vieux Desert Band; and Tobasonakwut Kinew from the Ojibways of Onigaming, Ontario, each gave spiritual support and strength to the team.

From Tobasonakwut also came the gift of a pipe-loading song, to be sung by the runners as they began each day with a talking circle and smudging and ended each day with a pipe ceremony, talking circle and smudging. Also came the gift of Eagle Feathers to be worn along the journey as a source of strength and spiritual awareness.

And so the Waabanong Run carried a song, and the song became part of the Run as was the morning ceremony, the Staff, the Pipe, the Eagle Feather, the sage smoke, the medicine, and the prayer of the people both now and before—all were one with the Run. And the team was ready to begin the journey back to the East, the Waabanong Run, a journey much like Chief Buffalo had done in 1852.

## Day 1—A strong beginning

*“Winds were brisk out of the west signifying that spirits from the west were with and watching over the core group.”*

November 11th dawned chilly, but clear. The strong west wind persisted through the night and brought the spirits of the West to the outset of the run. An eagle perched nearby as the core team, spiritual leaders, and supporters gathered at Lac du Flambeau’s Bear River Pow-Wow ground for pipe ceremonies and the start. The core team was smudged by Tobasonakwut. They put asemaa (tobacco) on the Fire and said prayers for the families being left at home. The pipe-loading song was sung. Ribbons and eagle feathers were pinned to the shirts of team members. Tribal leaders carried the Treaty Staff the first distance of the Run out of the pow-wow grounds where the runners received it and were off. An eagle soared and rode the west wind above the Staff as it left Bear River on its journey.

The Lac du Flambeau grade school students cheered Kemo on as he stopped briefly to explain that the run was for them and for their children.

Strengthened by the spirits of the west and aided by friends, Kemo (Gary Kmiecik), Bob Jackson, Tobasonakwut, Kekek, Charlie Rasmussen, and Ernie St. Germaine, the core team made sixty-six miles in the first day, stopping at Merrill, Wis. just after dark.

It was a first day well run and a strong start of a long journey. A talking circle brought the team and support runners together. Plans were underway for a sweat in Madison, and Tobasonakwut departed for Minneapolis to finish a runner’s pipe.



*Tobasonakwut and his son, Kekek, Ojibways of Onigaming, presented a pipe-loading song to the core team in ceremonies on the eve of the run.*



*A strong west wind made the Waabanong team and supporters huddle around a fire as the runners were smudged and asemaa was put on the fire before they began.*



*Bo Hammond relays the Staff to Kemo (Gary Kmiecik) in Lac du Flambeau. Kemo received applause from Lac du Flambeau’s elementary school students when they heard the run was for their benefit.*



*Budman Morrow & Bo Hammond head out of the Bear River Pow-wow grounds in the first miles of a nearly 1,000 mile journey.*





**Day 2—A friend, corn soup, and apple pie**

*“...Erik Gahbow and others listened carefully to the song to learn it. During our evening talking circle, Erik and Budman led us in this song.”*

The second day dawned to find the team and support runners gathered at the corner of a motel parking lot. All were smudged and asked to remember Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy in their prayers as they ran.

The Staff traveled out of the northwoods, beyond the ceded territory and south into a more urban/agricultural environment. The team relayed the Staff through Wausau and south to five miles past Plover by dark. Sixty miles was about on target.

Weary runners were received by Jean Day in Stevens Point where corn soup, apple pie and ice cream followed a talking circle and smudging. The day concluded in the warmth of hospitality and a circle of friends.



*With the light snow cover melting away, Eva takes the Staff south of Merrill.*



*Bob Jackson runs gingerly on a sore ankle.*



*Running north of Wausau, Eva hands the Staff to Randy.*



*Bo takes the Staff from Bob Jackson on a side road north of Merrill.*

**Day 3—Running with the birds**

*“She (Jean Day) said she would pray for us each day. She reminded us that like Sundancers every step upon the earth on our journey is a prayer.”*

The third day of the Waabanong Run began with geese flying overhead, traveling south and then turning east, which the team saw as a symbol of the path they were undertaking. The runners were asked to pray for Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and her family. Billy Jo Grimm, a support runner, was the first to run. Later Kemo joined the team again, contributing four miles. Don Graves returned home with Bob Jackson due to a death in the family, but the remaining team went on, heading ever southward, conscious that members of the animal nations were with them—geese, swans, and a playful hawk joined the runners at intervals down the road—and Migizi, the eagle, appeared, flying south, as the day's journey ended near Portage, Wisconsin. Seventy miles covered. Team members smudged and closed the day, some feeling soreness from the strain of the relay.







### Day 4—A sweat and ribbon shirts

*“We decided to pray for Chief Justice Rehnquist today. Runners were reminded that the pains of exertion were part of the sacrifice and might help to make our prayers heard by the Creator.”*

The fourth day dawned, another miraculously clear day. All days had been beautiful, clear and crisp. Injuries continued to haunt some of the runners—sore knees, blisters, twisted ankles, sore muscles. But they continued south arriving near Janesville, Wisconsin late afternoon, where support runner John Coleman joined the run and gave the last mile.

Patty Loew and Dave Braga received the aching team and replenished their bodies with a hearty meal. Art Shegonee had reconstructed a sweat lodge and prepared it for use of the runners. Mitch Soulier arrived with ribbon shirts from the GLIFWC office, also with maps, antlers, and feathers.

Three pipes were loaded in the sweat lodge. Tobasonakwut and those in the lodge prayed. It was a time for spiritual replenishment and fortification for the long road that yet remained.



*A sweat lodge near Madison provided spiritual fortification for team members.*



*A statue of the White Buffalo Calf Woman near the home of Miracle, born a white buffalo calf.*

### Day 5—Visiting Miracle

*“We were asked to pray for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia today. Patty was given a Waabanong Run ribbon shirt in appreciation for her kindness and generous hospitality. She talked how this run was similar to the journey Chief Buffalo took to Washington D.C. to secure the treaties in 1852.”*

At the break of the fifth day, runners were smudged in a circle on the deck of Dave and Patty’s Madison home. Ribbon shirts were passed to each core team member. Art Shegonee gave the team a beautiful eagle feather to carry and directions to the Heider’s ranch, home of Miracle, born a white buffalo calf.

A pipe ceremony was held close to Miracle’s corral. Miracle stood facing and a part of the runners’ circle throughout the ceremony, never moving until it was complete. A gift from the White Buffalo Calf was placed on the Staff.

The relay began late in the morning, but with good spirits. The path led over the Wisconsin border with Gene Connors covering the last mile in Wisconsin and taking a wrong turn as he entered Illinois. Once back on track, the relay continued to reach Highway 23 by dusk.

The runners smudged and smoked the pipe, and support runners returned to Madison, so farewells were said to Carol Brown, Paul Kmiecik and Conan Kmiecik who had helped the team on its way. For the team, this was a “day of change” because no new supplemental runners were expected for some time.



*Miracle, born a white buffalo calf, became part of the circle when ceremonies were performed near her quarters. A gift from Miracle was carried on the Staff to D.C.*



*Don Graves and Joel Shaugo bay, core team runners, carry the Staff through an urban area.*

*Miracle is considered to be the first white buffalo calf born since 1933. Being a white calf, Miracle is extremely important in the religious beliefs of many American Indian tribes.*







**Day 6—Becoming horses**

*“He (Jim Schlender) had just said his Anishinaabe name and clan; just started to pray for Justice John Paul Stevens (when) he distinctly heard an Indian Song coming from high up in the trees along the road. Later, when he crossed this creek, he stopped and put asemaa in ziibing (river) and said thank you for this wondrous sign.”*

Day six began at Bevedere, Ill. The team continued south, taking the Staff beyond the Fox River and stopping at the Illinois River just after dark. More supplemental runners departed. Francis Kmiecik returned to Chicago, one of the last runners called “new horses coming our way,” and Charlie Rasmussen left for Sparta, saying he would wear his Waabanong Run shirt on November 28th, when the team was due to arrive in D.C. and on December 2nd, the day of the hearing. Only the core team members remained. They were becoming horses—strong and enduring.



*Joe Dan Rose, GLIFWC, talks to horses who were curious about the runners passing their field.*



*Charlie Rasmussen, GLIFWC, helped relay the Staff through Wisconsin.*



*Budman loosens up stiff muscles and watches for the Staff to come down the road.*



*Colors of the four directions on a windmill caught the eye of the Waabanong runners.*



*Mitch Soulier, GLIFWC, joined the relay for a segment through southern Wisconsin.*



*Carol Brown-Biermeier, Lac du Flambeau tribal attorney, hands off the Staff to Erik Gahbow.*

**Day 7—Waabanong—going back to the East**

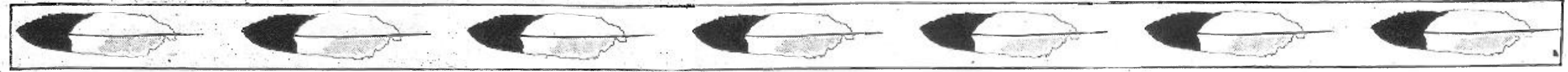
*“Birds from different nations have looked our way as we’ve run by; today a flock that looked like black leaves standing up on the branches, chirped and sang from a distant grove of trees to the east of us. In other places, horses have stood watching us. When these things happen we feel that our journey has meaning and that the animal nations are looking our way.”*

This day the team remembered Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in their prayers. Until this day, the team’s path led straight south, but the turn eastward occurred near Chenoa, Ill. on Highway 24. The path eastward would be long, traveling through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and into Maryland. But attention was on the immediate surroundings of the team as they ran through the countryside, looking and listening for messages along the way.

Team members talked about doing extraordinary things sometimes. Budman ran a two mile leg. He needed to be on the run, he said, because his mother’s father is from Mille Lacs.







### Day 8—Trucks and ninjuns

*“Like the spotted lizard, a warrior must be adaptable and creative—ready to change on a moment’s notice.”*

Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer and his family were in the prayers of team members as they left Illinois and entered Indiana. Trucks speeding by on Highway 24 “blasted the runners and the Staff with wind gusts.” It was tiring and the gravel shoulder along the road was narrow. Randy was sprayed with gravel from a passing semi-truck. Erik and Joel wore black face masks. They looked like ninja warriors, but the team figured they were simply “Ninjuns.”

Mitch Soulier and Joe Dan Rose, from GLIFWC, arrived to supplement the team’s efforts. Runners covered seven to eight miles each and walkers went four to five. The day closed with the pipe-loading song, smoking the pipe and a talking circle as the sun lowered and presented the runners a cloud that looked like a beautiful red-orange miigwan (feather). Team members talked about having come together as a team and how the focus of the run has become a prayer.



*Some of the runners, like Joel Shaugobay, acquired a “ninjun” look.*



*Signs indicate Jim Zorn, GLIFWC, should be going the other way.*



*Larry Miller sets a good pace with the Staff.*

### Day 9—Pow-wow tapes and bouncing heads

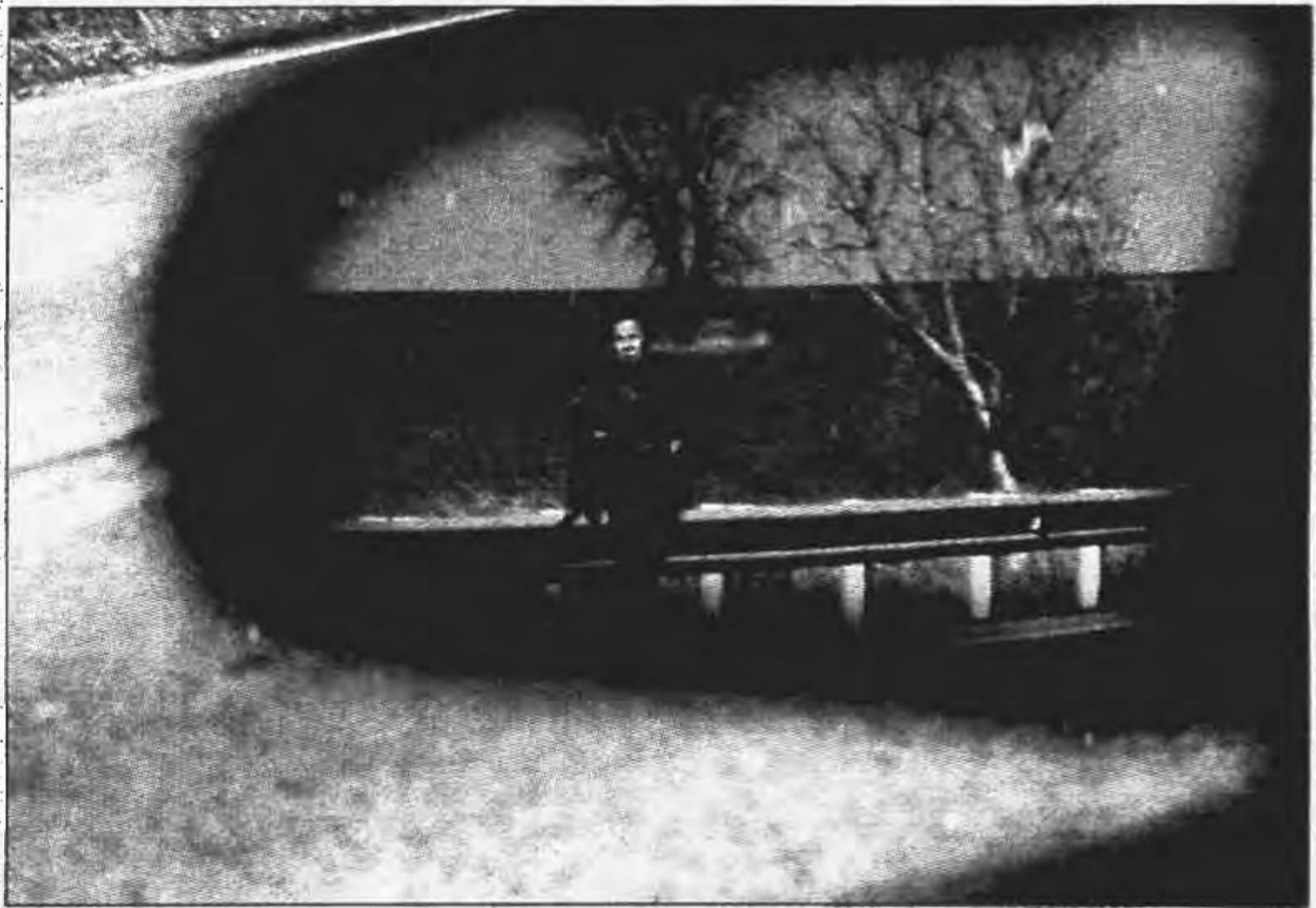
*“We crossed the Tippicanoe River in Monitcello, the Wabash River in Peru, and the Eel River in Logansport. Historically, this area had many Potawatomi and Miami villages. Following land cession treaties in the 1830’s this stretch of land contained over 100 small reservations.”*

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was in the prayers of runners on this day. Asemaa, tobacco, was brought by Jim Zorn, who came to supplement the team’s effort through Indiana. Pow-wow tapes in the team’s vehicles were turned up loud—giving the runners strength and extra energy from the beat of the drums and the singers’ strong voices. Piishko (Larry Nesper) and three students joined to help the run. Spirits were high and nearly 90 miles were covered by dusk. Everyone had contributed extraordinarily in individual effort.

The team returned to Peru, Indiana to be hosted by the Miami Nation of Indians who greeted them, fed them, and opened the tribal center for accommodations.



*A statue in honor of Native Americans across the nation.*



*Coming down the road with the Treaty Staff. Eva Connors is seen in a rearview mirror.*



*Randy Miller waits to receive the Staff and take it another mile or two down the road.*







**Day 10—A growing sense of loss**

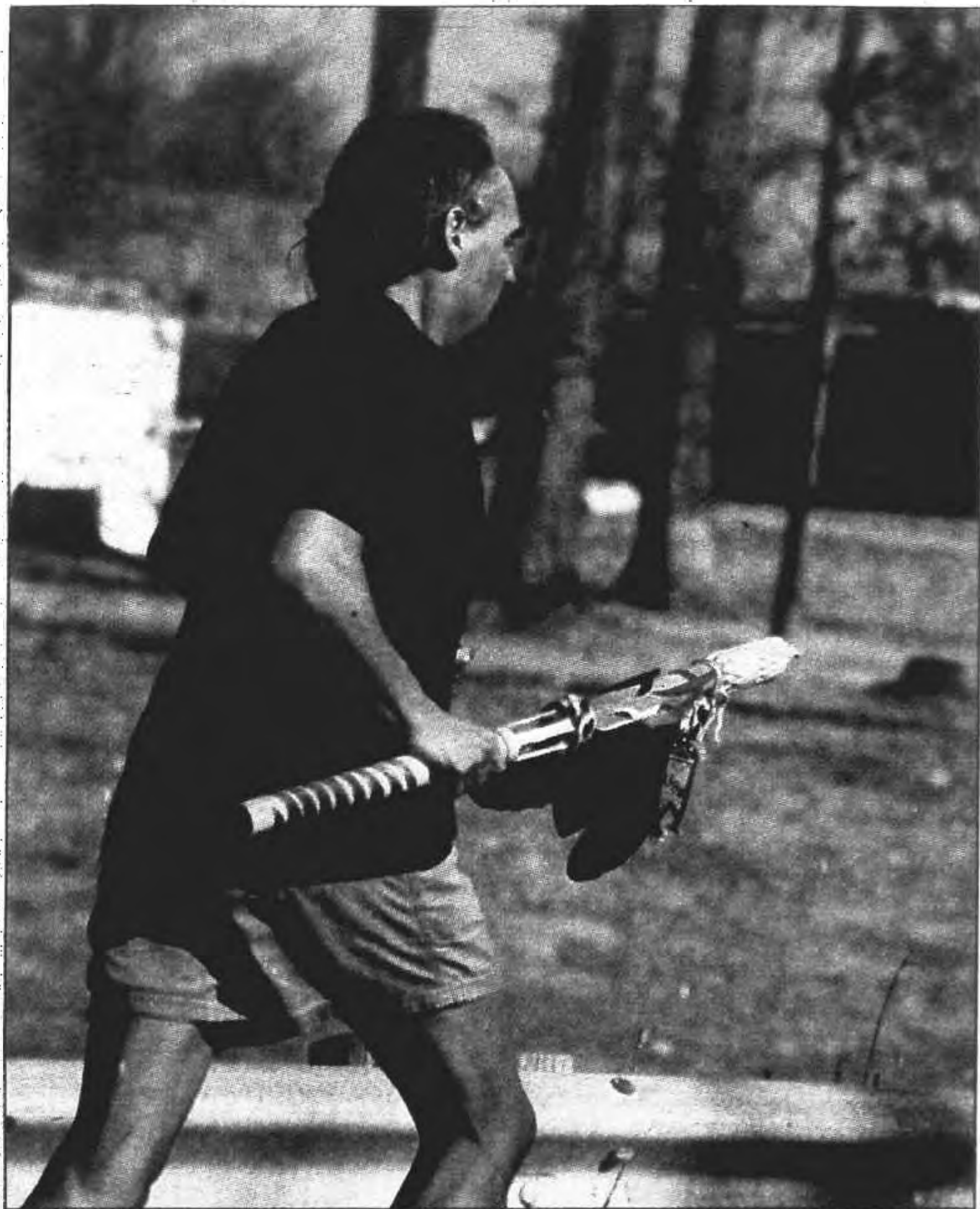
*“Greenville is the site where one of the first treaties between the U.S. and the Chippewa was signed in 1795.”*

Asemaa and cedar were passed in the morning ceremony and thank-you's said to the tribal hosts. The team was asked to pray for Supreme Court Justice David Souter. The team carried the Staff mile by mile into Ohio, stopping at Greenville, where the first treaty with the Chippewa was signed. Other tribes also signed it, including Miamis, Kickapoo, Kaskaskia, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Delawares. At the site of this treaty signing, Indian people from the area and the Celina Indian Center feasted the runners, and a youth drum sang three songs.

The awareness of loss of reservations, homelands, culture, language, and identity began to emerge more clearly. As the team went east, there were no reservations, only scattered groups of Indian people who struggled to retain some semblance of their cultural heritage and identity.



*The Waabanong Run stops briefly by an historical marker for the Treaty of Greenville made in 1795.*



*Kemo (Gary Kmiecik), above, and daughter Brook, below, supplement the core team effort during the last leg of the journey.*



**Day 11—Return of a ninjun**

*“Everyone ran hard today and seemed to find a new reservoir of strength and endurance.”*

Following a sunrise ceremony in Greenville, Ohio, the team took off down the road again, loaded with sandwiches, chips, cookies, and soda from friends at Greenville—food which fortified them throughout an 80 mile day. Core team member Don Graves returned strong and gave eight miles his first day back. Friends Barbara Crandall and Jean McCord met the team in Jacksonville, Ohio and took them to their ranch for corn soup, fry bread, spaghetti and cake. Sore feet and legs were massaged by Barbara and aching muscles were thankful for the touch.



*Don Graves returned to the run. A death in the family had taken him home earlier in the run.*





### Day 12—Discovering Columbus

*“Today we were asked to pray for the children of all Indian Nations so that those Nations could remain strong.... Together with the Cincinnati runners we covered around 85 miles. We had a good day and felt blessed.”*

Contacts in Cincinnati, Ken Irwin and Susan Mills, provided runners willing to pass through the cities for the team. They ran through Columbus, Reynoldsburg and to a small town called Wagram, Ohio, where the core team began. Together the supplemental runners had run 22 miles and a hawk circled above them as they finished. Gary Kmiecik and his daughter, Brook, also joined the run, but Piishko had to leave. He had shared his running legs and his historical knowledge about the area and gave a special “twist” to the run. He ended his miles by running sideways, which Erik and Budman picked up, adding a movement resembling a grass dance move as a finale to some of their miles.

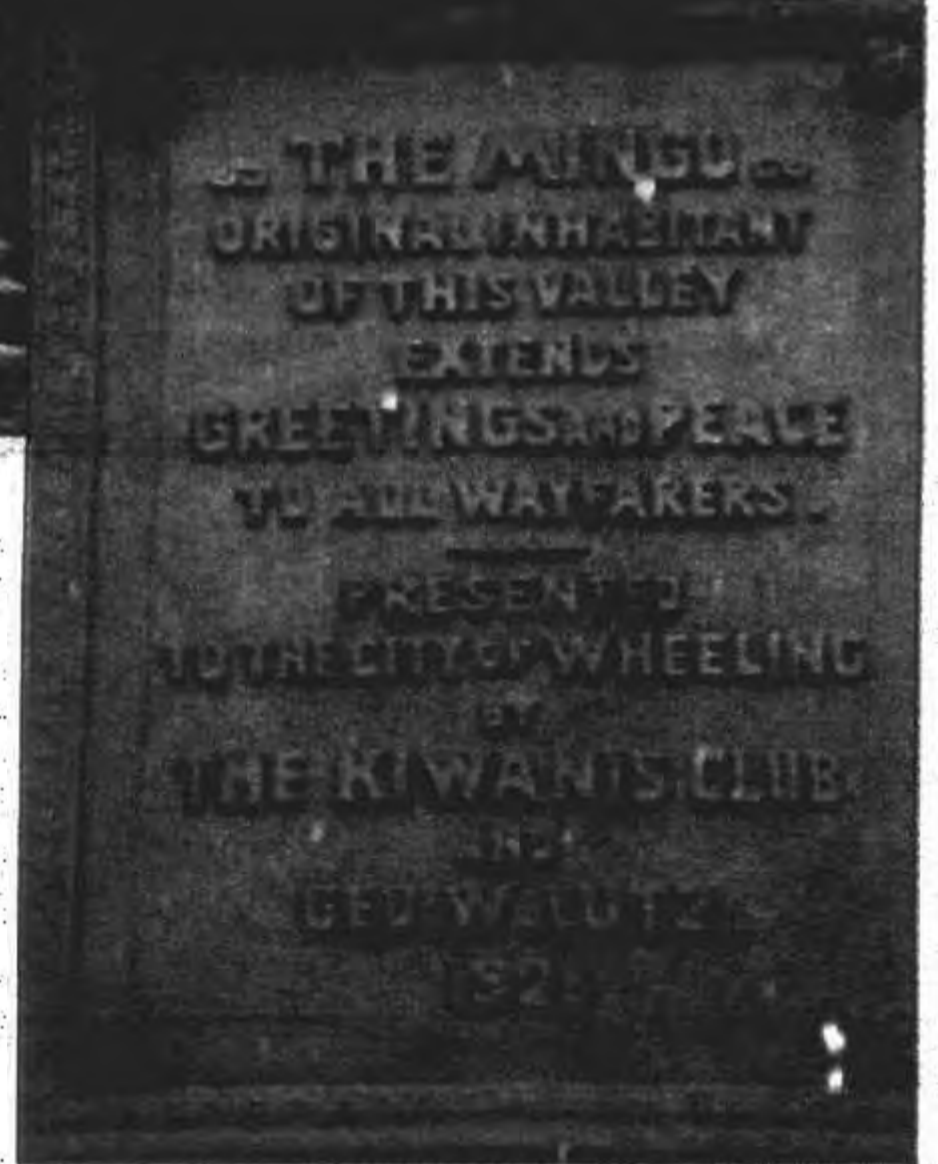
### Day 13—What happened to the Mingo?

*“We saw a statue of a Mingo Indian made to depict the welcoming of American settlers to this area. We had never heard of the Mingo and wondered what happened to them.”*

On this day the team prayed for the elderly as they carried the Staff. They covered 60 miles from Morristown, Ohio to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, running uphill and around a jack-knifed truck, a road closure, up towards the Cumberland Gap. They stopped at Washington, Pennsylvania—the most northern point on Highway 40, figuring it would be only downhill to Washington, D.C. from there, but it wasn't. They were met by Delores Jones and hosted to a feast at her hunting cabin about 2500 feet in the mountains. The team still had to reach the summit of the Allegheny Mountains, the next day's task.



*A statue in Wheeling, Ohio acknowledges the Mingo Indians as original inhabitants of the valley.*



*Joel Shaugobay takes the Staff through an Ohio community.*



*Bo Hammond still running strong in Ohio.*







**Day 14—Where the settlers first passed through**

*“...while running to the east we were seeing more and more into this country’s distant past; but at the same time many of the Indian people we have met aren’t a part of a recognized tribe and are struggling to maintain a connection with their Indian identity...if we are not careful, this is what we might be seeing as Indians in our future.”*

On this day the team was smudged and asked to pray for the sick, incarcerated, addicted, and handicapped. The team’s path was up, up and over the summit of the Allegheny Mountains through the Cumberland Gap, carved out to allow the first influx of settlers to the western reaches.

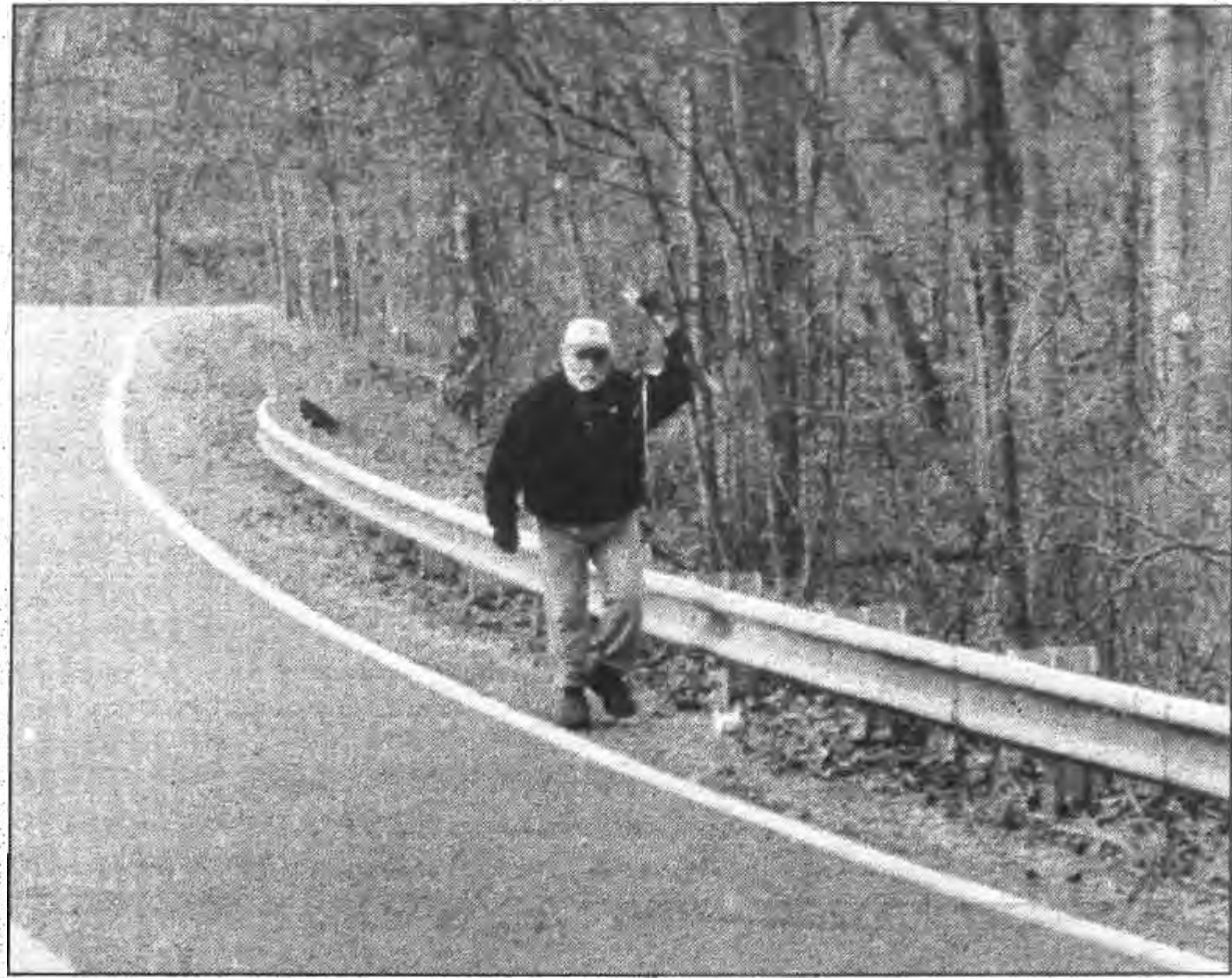
The historic Highway 40, or the Cumberland Trail, was first blazed by Nemacolin, a Delaware Indian. A sense of history and a sense of loss was pervasive, but the team went on covering 90 miles, 50 miles which cut through mountains. The team felt strong.

**Day 15—A wonderful mistake**

*“We saw many animals and birds and had special feeling like this valley was alive and somehow blessed. Prayers were sent to the White Buffalo Calf Woman.”*

This day the prayer was for women, the strength of our nations. Sue Erickson, Tyra Vernon, and baby Colten joined the journey. A mistake coming out of Cumberland sent the team up Warrior Mountain and winding down into a verdant valley, full of life. Many animals and birds were seen there. Eleven horses were seen in the valley, a symbol of the eleven core team members. Hawks circled above the Staff and called out, and on top of another mountain a large “kettle” of circling birds were seen—hawks, golden eagles, osprey, and buzzards.

The day’s end brought the Staff into Fredrick and to the Quaker settlement house for an evening supper and talking circle. Team members shared in a Quaker time of silence and contemplation. The peace and quiet only lulled Jim Schlender into a sitting sleep. Nearing the snoring point, Neil nudged him. His startled response broke the meditative silence around him...as did Brook’s laughter shortly after.



*Downhill towards D.C., Jim Schlender completes a mile with a “Walkers Staff.”*

**Day 16—Thanksgiving, feasting, friendship and rest**

*“We rose slowly.”*

Scheduled as the first and only day of rest and relaxation on the Run, the team rose leisurely to breakfast on foods left by the Quaker hosts the night before. However, most of the runners wanted to continue, covering at least a few miles during the day, so left mid-morning and returned five hours later, having covered 40 miles to Clarksburg, leaving only 25 miles to the destination, Washington, D.C.

Around 4:00 p.m. a beautiful Thanksgiving feast was prepared by the Quakers and everyone sat at a long table to share the food and become better acquainted. Gifts of appreciation were given to the Quakers for their hospitality—a birchbark basket, tobacco ties, wild rice, hats, shirts, and Mille Lacs pins.



*The Quaker Friends at Frederick, Pennsylvania, hosted runners to a Thanksgiving feast and opened their settlement house for accommodations.*





## Day 17—Gabekana (at the end of the road)

*"We had reached our destination and accomplished what we had set out to do. We had planned to walk the last mile together, so we were all a little discombobulated when the run ended so unexpectedly."*

Tobasonakwut had arrived in Fredrick, and the team smoked his pipe in the morning after being smudged. Gary Kmiecik gave an eagle feather he had been asked to present. Budman, Eva and Erik ran the first mile with all three Staffs. Pow-wow tapes were going and it was not long before the team entered the congestion of Georgetown and headed down Wisconsin Street toward Capitol Square. At this point runners became separated and some got temporarily lost among the traffic. Team members found the Supreme Court building one by one, but Erik Gahbow, carrying the Treaty Staff was not to be found. Neil circled back and eventually found Erik on the west side of the Congressional buildings. They ran the last quarter mile or so to the Supreme Court steps together. Although the congestion and confusion at the hub of D.C. had prevented the team from walking the last mile together, as planned, the Staff arrived at its destination.

A mission had been accomplished and its ending was hard to contemplate, perhaps because the Run was only a segment of a much longer journey on behalf of Indian people and justice. For this particular leg, called the Waabanong Run, the core team carried the Staff and the Prayer, as they had vowed and committed to do seventeen days earlier.



*A moment to celebrate—nine members of the core team pose on the steps of the Supreme Court building on November 27th.*

Miigwetch to those who donated time and energy to the Waabanong Run. Everyone's efforts combined to make the run a success!

**Supplemental Runners:** Ernie St. Germaine, Kekek, Tobasonakwut, Bob Jackson, Ken Irwin, Susan Mills, Bill Sr., and Bill Jr., Tonya, Nathan Zimmerman, Larry Nesper, Jody Hoff, Tim Wright, Paul Butler, Billy Jo Grimm, Carol Brown-Biermeier, Gary Kmiecik, Brook Kmiecik, Paul Kmiecik, Conan Kmiecik, Francis Kmiecik, Joe Dan Rose, Mitch Soulier, Jim Zorn, Charlie Rasmussen, Sue Erickson, Tyra Vernon and Colten Vernon.

**Friends along the way:** Mayta, Jean Day, Patty Loew, Dr. Hanson, Art Shegonee, Dave Heider, Andy Gokee, Holly Gokee, Brenda Hartleroad, "Kempjarz," Lanni Saminigea, Barbara Crandall, Dean, Doris, Jean McCord, Delores Jones, Chris Fowler and Quaker friends.

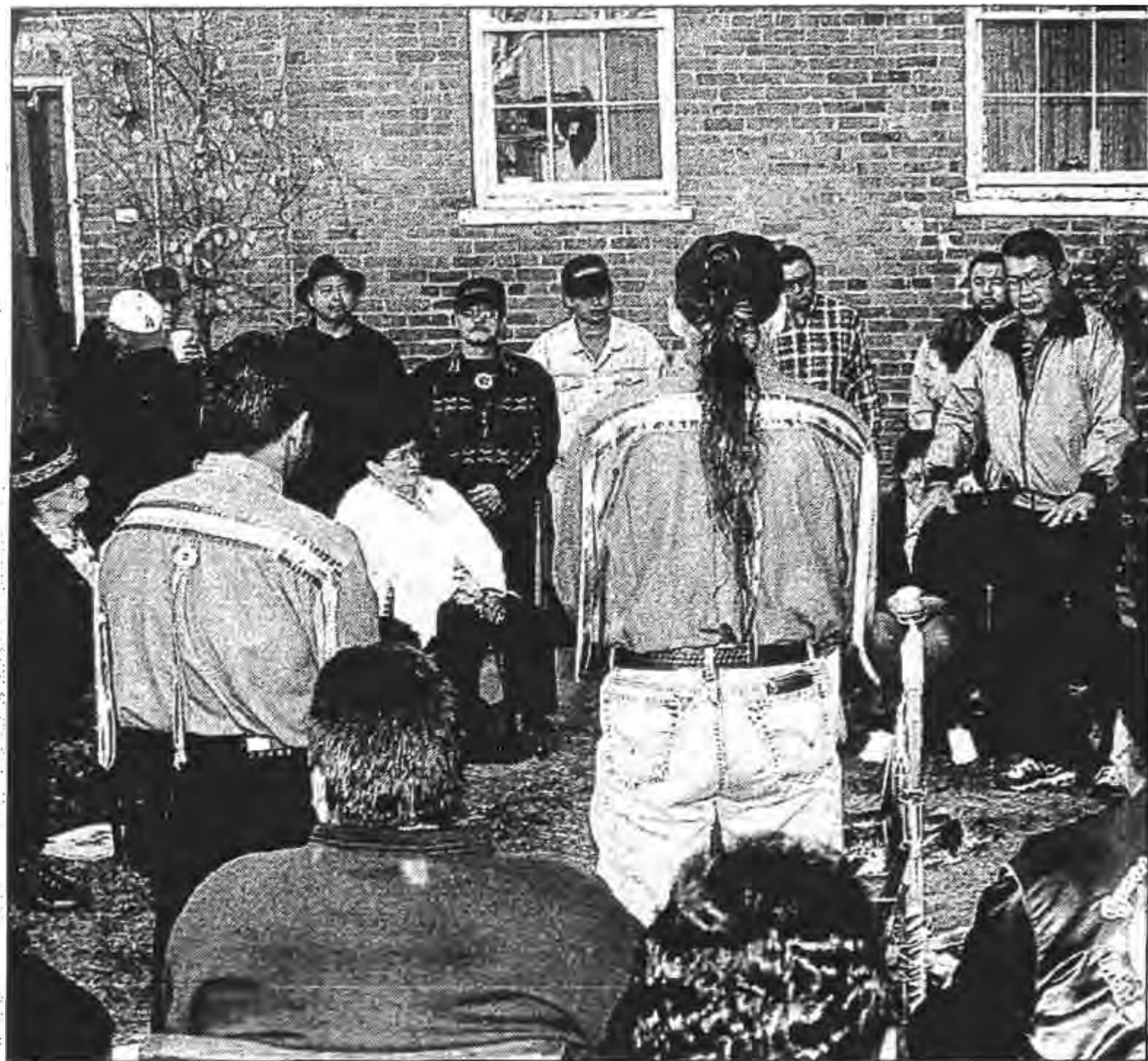
Please excuse unintentional omissions.



*The Little Otter Drum arrived at the NIGA building where the Sacred Fire burned. The Drum played in front of the Supreme Court building on December 2nd.*



*A moment of victory. Erik Gahbow arrives at the Supreme Court steps on November 27th. Bo Hammond cheers him on.*



*A Sacred Fire was lit on November 28th by Leo LaFernier and his son, Richard, in Washington, D.C. and kept for four days. It provided a place to gather, pray and hold ceremonies.*

## The Sacred Fire and the Staff

In preparation for ceremonies on December 2nd before the Supreme Court hearing of the Mille Lacs appeal, a Sacred Fire was lit in Washington, D.C. on November 28th. Leo LaFernier, Red Cliff, and his son, Richard, traveled to D.C. to light and tend the Fire for four days prior to the ceremonies.

A home for the Fire was offered by the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), whose office was within blocks of the Supreme Court building and also had a secluded courtyard in the back suitable for the Fire. It was there in this cozy courtyard, tucked away from the bustle of D.C. traffic, that the Treaty Staff was taken and kept.

The Sacred Fire became a center for the Waabanong team and the many supporters who began to arrive in D.C. for the December 2nd ceremony and hearing. People came to the Fire, put down their asemaa, and prayers were said...many prayers.

HONOR staff Megan Taylor and Diane Wyss assisted in making arrangements for the Fire and firekeepers and freely opened the building for use of visiting tribal representatives. Fran VanZile, Mole Lake, quickly made a downstairs kitchen into a homey stopping place for all—where the familiar aroma of wild rice, venison and soups filtered out the door and into the court yard. Food was always available; feasts prepared; and ceremonies/talking circles were ongoing throughout the four day wait to December 2nd.





# The Treaty Staff goes to the Supreme Court

*"...put cedar in your shoes."*

The circle of friends around the Sacred Fire grew quickly as the morning hours of December 2nd shed light on the awaited day. Tribal leaders from Canada, Wisconsin and Minnesota, spiritual leaders, tribal attorneys, representatives from national tribal organizations, core team members, tribal members, tribal supporters—all gathered around the Fire, and the pipe was passed. Prayers were said for the Mille Lacs Attorney Marc Slonim and for U.S.

Attorney Barbara McDowell, that their words would be strong, clear and true. Both attorneys had received eagle feathers in ceremonies the night before and were told to put cedar in their shoes. The Little Otter Drum provided a song before the procession to the Supreme Court building began.

The Treaty Staff was taken from its resting place by the Fire for the last leg of the journey to the Supreme Court building. Erik Gahbow and Neil Kmiecik took the Staff and would stay with it during the hearing in a room adjacent to the courtroom.

A police escort led the procession from the NIGA office to the Supreme Court building. Gathering around the Little Otter Drum in front of the Supreme Court, several songs were sung; pipes were passed for people to smoke, and people danced and held up eagle feathers. The piercing cry from an eagle bone whistle cut the air with its special voice and message. Passers-by stopped to listen and vehicles slowed as the Drum's strong beat resonated in the street. Ojibwe voices lifted in support of the Drum, and their song, too, was a prayer.

It was in this way that the Treaty Staff was brought to the Supreme Court building and was present throughout the proceedings as attorneys from both sides presented their cases and nine Supreme Court justices listened and questioned.

The prayer continues as Anishinaabeg people wait for the Court's ruling...and it will continue after. No matter what the Court rules, the prayer will go on.

The Staff rests and waits now at the Lac du Flambeau reservation in Wisconsin.



*A moment of silence and prayer during sunrise ceremonies prior to walking to the Supreme Court on December 2nd. Above are Tobasonakwut Kinew and Jim Schlender with the Pipe. Seated is Mille Lacs elder Jim Clark.*



*Tribal leaders, attorneys and supporters gather around the Sacred Fire for ceremonies before walking to the Supreme Court building.*



*The last leg of the Waabanong Run—walking from the NIGA office to the Supreme Court with the Treaty Staff.*



*Tribal representatives and supporters listen to the songs of the Little Otter Drum in front of the Supreme Court building on December 2nd prior to entering the building.*

## Masinaigan supplement credits

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**Quotes excerpted from a daily journal kept by Jim Schlender and Neil Kmiecik**

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