



**JOE SHIRLEY, JR.**  
*President*

**FRANK J. DAYISH, JR.**  
*Vice-President*

## THE NAVAJO NATION

**For Immediate Release**  
Dec. 8, 2005

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### **Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., honors new NCAI President Joe Garcia as brother, relative**

**GALLUP, N.M.** – Ohkay Owingeh Governor and new National Congress of American Indians President Joe Garcia was received as a brother, a relative, and a friend to the Navajo people at a luncheon held in his honor here Wednesday.



*Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., places a silver and turquoise bolo tie on the new President of the National Congress of American Indians Joe Garcia. President Garcia, who is also Governor of the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh, was honored by Navajo leaders on Wednesday.*

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., First Lady Vikki Shirley, Navajo Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, 10 Navajo Nation Council delegates, nine division directors and two dozen staff members gave President Garcia and his wife Oneva a warm Navajo welcome at a luncheon hosted by the President's office and the Navajo Nation Washington Office at the Gallup Holiday Inn.

"When something good happens to a relative, a brother, it's time to celebrate," President Shirley "It's time to bring out the fatted calf and have a feast, or, in our case, the fatted chicken."

President Garcia was elected NCAI president last month at its 62<sup>nd</sup> annual convention in Tulsa, Okla. NCAI is the oldest, largest and most representative Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of 251 tribal governments, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding Native governments, people and rights.

Ohkay Owingeh is the Tewa name of the San Juan Pueblo and means "place of the strong people." It's about 25 miles north of Santa Fe, N.M.

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Before 150 people attending the NNWO's federal update session here this week, President Shirley spoke warmly of getting to know President Garcia when the two lobbied members of Congress in September regarding Native participation in the re-writing of the federal Telecommunication Act.

"I want to encourage my brother," President Shirley said. "We are very happy for him. This is to let him know that we honor him in his new position and as governor as Ohkay Owingeh and also to have him remember us as a Navajo Nation, as Navajo people, as relatives, as relations as he goes into this new position as president of NCAI."

Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough welcomed the leaders to Gallup and presented President Shirley with a silver key to the city inlaid with turquoise, coral, abalone and jet.

President Shirley presented President Garcia with a Pendleton blanket bearing a Navajo Nation seal and a silver and turquoise bolo tie. In turn, President Garcia presented President Shirley with a piece of Ohkay Owingeh pottery, a silver and turquoise necklace, and a book about Ohkay Owingeh warrior Pope', who led the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 which rid the New Mexico and Hopi pueblos of Spanish occupation.

President Garcia also led the audience in a rendition of "Happy Birthday to You" for President Shirley, who turned 58 on Sunday.

President Shirley said election to a "very prestigious position" as President of NCAI "doesn't happen to a person very often, perhaps once in a lifetime."

"I want to continue working with him from his position as President of NCAI," President Shirley said. "It's always good to work together. As Native peoples, I believe we need to. We have to. We need to go forward with a united voice."



**Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough presents a silver key to the City of Gallup, inlaid with turquoise, coral, jet and abalone, to Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr.**



**Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo Governor and President of NCAI Joe Garcia with his wife Oneva.**

President Shirley said that with only about four million Native Americans in a country of 300 million, there are relatively few Native people in the United States or the world.

"For that reason, we need to continue to always fight for standing together, defending our sovereignty and our way of life," he said.

"I just want you to know we have the highest regard for you, we have the highest respect for you," President Shirley said. "We love you as relations, as a brother, and we want to wish you Godspeed in your new position."

President Garcia, who also attended the luncheon with members of the Ohkay Owingeh Tribal Council and staff, said it did him good to hear these words.

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“You don’t know how much of an honor it is for me to stand here in front the Navajo Nation,” he said “It means a lot to me. It means a lot to my family. It means a lot to Ohkay Owingeh.”

President Garcia said he and President Shirley “came to know each other as brothers” when they visited on a plane ride to Washington, D.C., and discussed issues in common to the Navajo Nation, Ohkay Owingeh and NCAI.

“Being the kind of aggressive person I am, I tried to recruit him,” he said. “It sure would be nice if the Navajo Nation would become members of NCAI.”

He said President Shirley said he’d think seriously about it.

He said what is making Native people stronger across the country is a renewal and return to traditional, cultural ways and preservation of language – ideals shared by the Navajo Nation.

“In the last 100 years, we’ve made a lot of progress with somebody else’s education system,” President Garcia said. “If we can do that, think of how much more we can do if we institute our traditions, and our culture and our language and our principles and our ways into the education system of this country.”

“We have the answers,” President Garcia said. “It’s just that sometimes we’re led elsewhere rather than seeking the strength from within and from our people. Our people have a lot of the answers. And if we listen to them, get their ideas, get their strength, get that energy flowing, then there is no force that can break that kind of energy, unity or spirituality. No way.”

The new Arizona Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Milton Bluehouse, Jr., told the leaders that Native people have a unique status as citizens of their tribes, states and the United States. Despite this, they have been historically underrepresented and underserved.

He committed his office to work to improve the quality of life on Native lands in Arizona.

Both Cal Curley, representing New Mexico Congressman Tom Udall, and Gabriel Freeland, representing Arizona Congressman Rick Renzi, congratulated President Garcia and said the congressmen would re-dedicate themselves to continue working on behalf of Native people.

Attending the luncheon with President Garcia and his wife were Ohkay Owingeh 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Governor Joseph Duran, Council members Herman Agoyo and Donald Cata and the Governor’s staff members Nancy Garcia, Laura Calvert and Carole Cruz.



**President Shirley blows out the candles of his surprise birthday cake. He turned 58 on Sunday.**

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