

# "I AM ZUNI"

by Clydia Nahwooksy

## NATIVE AMERICANS

*Native Americans each year bring to the Mall the richness and beauty of their traditional cultures. Participants are carefully selected through a continuing fieldwork program. Important criteria in their selection are a knowledge of their tribe and their skills in a particular artistic area.*

*Southwestern tribes from the states of New Mexico and Arizona are guests at this year's Festival. Pueblos, Papagos, and Pimas, along with Navajos and Apaches share the enduring ways of life of their communities with the public. The constant yet often imperceptible change of color and harmony in the lives of the people is all a part of the pottery, weaving, dances, and stories of these desert dwellers.*

Clydia Nahwooksy



During a recent Arts Festival in a southeastern state, an extremely inquisitive group of spectators were talking to one of the participants.

Their curiosity transgressed the boundaries of good manners as they quizzed the straight, slight young man who stood in back of a table. They asked about the turquoise and silver jewelry on the table, commented on its value and quality. They commented on his white, flared trousers and red velvet shirt and said that he surely was not Indian because he did not wear feathers.

The spectators drifted away, except for one who had traveled in the Southwest and who tarried to say that he knew the young man was Navajo. The young man had courteously and carefully answered each question, with warmth and often with a generous, though half-shy smile. To that last spectator, he said simply, "I am Zuni."

Randolph Lalio is Zuni. He is gentle, kind, loving, a listener. He is the young product of an ages-old heritage of dignity and discipline.

Zuni Pueblo, located in New Mexico, is one of numerous Pueblo Indian communities still in existence in the southwestern United States. The Spanish explorer Coronado came among the Zuni people in 1540, looking for the Seven Cities of Gold. Instead, he found multilevel villages and people who were outstanding agriculturalists. Some years later, Catholic priests founded missions in the Zuni communities.

Randolph lives across the courtyard from the Zuni Mission. His house is one of the oldest in the old part of his village. Tall, steep steps carved from solid pieces of stone lead up to the door. The steps, worn from centuries of use, are swept clean, as is the inside of the neat, unadorned interior.

The same half-shy, yet completely confident smile greets you when you visit Randolph in his home. There is a sparkle of pride in his eyes as he introduces his grandmother and younger brothers and sister. His grandfather is away tending the family's flock of sheep and his mother and father are

elsewhere on business.

On other days after school, when his mother is at home, Randolph would be helping her with the silver jewelry that she makes. He has been learning jewelry techniques and crafting from her for some time; he doesn't feel that he has to, but that he wants to do this. "Seldom do our parents and grandparents tell us what to do, we only learn from watching them and listening to stories."

I asked him why he had gone with three other Zuni young people to the Arts Festival, and in a few sentences I learned much about Zuni today. "We went there at the request of our leaders to share some of our dances and arts. However, they aren't exactly the same as we would do them at Zuni. Many of our dances have religious significance and have to be treated differently when they are done away from home. We went there to learn. Today's youth will someday be the leaders at Zuni and we will need to know as much as possible about everyone and everything."

*Randolph Lalio at the Smithsonian's Montreal Expo Program, 1971.*





# SAMPLINGS FROM "THE PUEBLO INDIAN COOKBOOK"

by Gladys Hainwooky

We went there to talk about Zuni so that people would understand better about all Indians."

The Zuni Tribal Council is seeking a more adequate income and better health and education facilities for the people, so that they may compete equitably in the twentieth century. At the same time, the council and the religious leaders of Zuni are tenaciously holding on to the old religion and ceremonies, knowing that the strength and cohesiveness of the tribe rest on those qualities. They are striving successfully for a continuance of the valuable and significant lifestyle that makes the people Zuni.

Randolph will go away to college this fall. He will take with him a well-grounded awareness of Zuni history and religion; he will also take with him an ability to function well in a broader society. His skill as a craftsman, and the patience learned by practicing his craft, will serve him in many ways. His knowledge of Zuni songs and ceremonies will fill gaps as he adjusts to a new situation. Most importantly, he will come back and be a part of the sinew of continuance that is Zuni Pueblo.



A Zuni youth standing by an eagle cage in 1879. Eagles were and are prized by the Zunis for their feathers, and were captured when young and kept alive in the Pueblo. BAE photo

Zuni Pueblo of the 1880s, looking southwest, toward Corn Mountain. Corn and chilies are drying on the roof tops in the foreground. BAE Photo

A Zuni silversmith in his home/workshop. Taken in 1891, this photo shows the interior of a typical Zuni house. BAE photo

