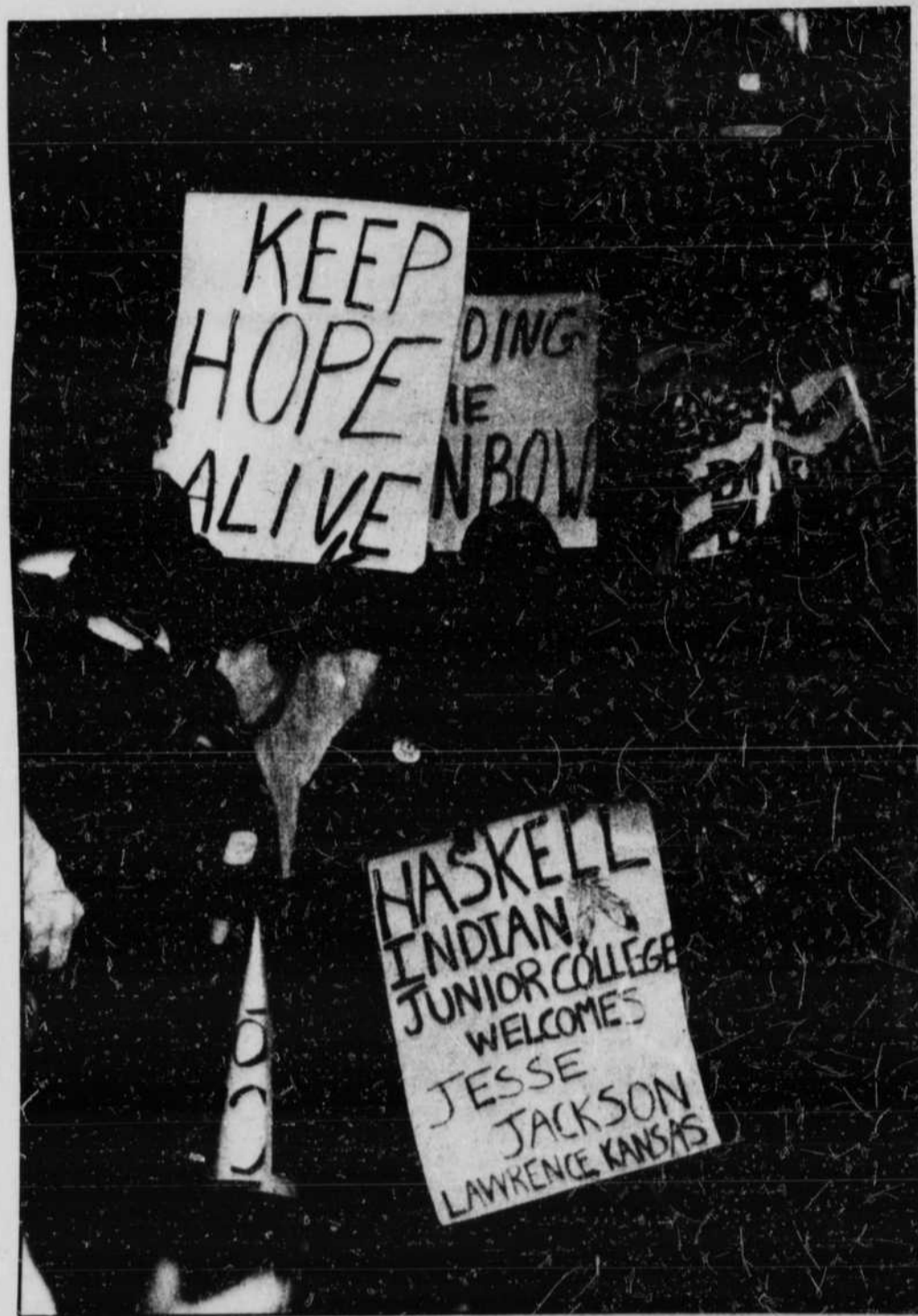


# 'Stand tall. This is your nation.'

## Jackson tells NCAI



A set of recommendations from the American Indians will be waiting for the next president and congress of the United States.

U.S. leaders may or may not follow the recommendations, but the American Indians spent five days last week creating an agenda so their wishes are known.

The agenda was written at the 45th Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians Oct. 24-28 in Sioux Falls, S.D. The theme of the convention was "The Next Generation: Here and Now."

The Nebraska Winnebago Indians sponsored the convention.

Reuben Snake Jr., past president of NCAI and recently retired tribal chairman of the Winnebagos for 11 years, said the convention was a success.

The convention focused on economic and health issues, Indian education, concerns over sovereignty, natural resources and other issues.

Committees formulated resolutions to be incorporated into a single document and handed over to the president.

Snake said 300 tribes were represented at the convention. NCAI has more than 150 dues-paying tribes and is the largest American Indian organization in the country.

A representative from each NCAI member tribe sits on a council. During the convention, the general council hears concerns from Indians attending, and amends resolutions for the Indian agenda. When the convention adjourns, the executive council finishes any business left from the general council, Snake said.

Later, that business is turned over to 12 vice presidents of NCAI. Snake said the most significant action during the convention was a

visit Friday morning from the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Indians are a part of Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" and will support whatever political role Jackson plays in the future, Snake said.

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Amid clapping and howls, cheering and chants, the Rev. Jesse Jackson walked onto the stage, and sat at the right of the podium.

Members of the Winnebago Veterans Association presented the flag, as the Winnebago top male singer performed the "Flag Song."

As Jackson took the podium, the crowd quieted.

"It is a great privilege to share every chance I get with the American Indians, and brothers and sisters and friends, because I respect you so much and because I love you so much . . . and because my father's part Cherokee."

Jackson spoke about the injustices done to the American Indians since the formation of the United States. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke of the Trail of Tears, where thousands of Indians were forced off their lands and marched across the country, and the torture of the Cherokee, saying, "their blood cries out (to this generation)."

"We measure our character by how we treat the least of these, the abandoned, those with their backs against a wall," Jackson said.

He spoke of the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, and how the American Indians were excluded from the Constitution.

"But I've come to say today that you count."