

Funding in Indian Country Not Fair By Dean Chavers

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Indian Country does not get its fair share of private funding. That is a theme that has been playing in my head for almost 40 years. I wrote my first grant in 1970 to get some Pit River people out of jail. I wrote it on Beverly LeBeau's kitchen table in Redding, CA, using a portable typewriter. To my surprise, it was funded in a week. That's when I learned that some people give away money for free.

... John Echohawk and NARF have raised many millions in private funding for that national Indian law firm, which has won hundreds of battles for Indians over water rights, land rights, cultural preservation, and other issues. The American Indian College Fund under Rick Williams is now one of the largest fund raising organizations in the U. S. Elouise Cobell raised several million dollars in grants to support her lawsuit.

But it is still not enough. Back when I first computed the numbers, Indians were getting less than \$5 million of the \$9 billion foundations and corporations gave away. In the latest look at the situation, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy came out with an article by Joy Persall six months ago that said the amount of money going to Indians had gone up slightly from 1989 to 2002. Joy is head of NAP.

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