

RESOLUTION OF THE  
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE OF THE  
FORT APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION

- WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe has become increasingly aware of and strongly concerned about numerous incidents of Indian families of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation whose children have been taken into the custody of non-Indian off-reservation residents, and
- WHEREAS, Virginia and Gary Woods are two such persons who have obtained Indian children from families on the Reservation, and who reportedly operate under the name of the "House of Samuel," now located in Tucson, Arizona, and
- WHEREAS, many complaints have been made to tribal authorities, including the Tribal Council, by families of such children, concerning the circumstances under which their children have been taken by the House of Samuel, and under which often great difficulties have been encountered in obtaining the return of these Indian children to their families, and
- WHEREAS, such conduct on the part of the operators of the House of Samuel to maintain separation between parents and children has threatened, and may further threaten, said Indian children with legalized severance from their parents, families and Tribe in the form of involuntary adoptions and termination of parental rights, and
- WHEREAS, the Tribal Council has warned in the past and continues now to command that in the matter of any proposed adoption of Indian children, the rights of all Indian People residing on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, specifically as relates to the care and custody of their minor children, and the rights of the parents thereto, are properly the subject of determination for the Tribal Court of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, wherein the customs, culture, language, family backgrounds and applicable tribal laws may be examined in each case, and
- WHEREAS, the Tribal Council deems the avoidance of tribal laws and tribal courts as a derogation of rights of the Indian people, both parents and children, and as a critical interference with Tribal self-government and the authority of the Tribe to provide for the welfare of its membership and the people entitled to its protections.
- BE IT RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that the actions of any persons or organizations, including Virginia and Gary Woods and the House of Samuel, to obtain and retain the custody of Indian children, to terminate parental rights, or to petition for adoption of such children, unsanctioned by tribal laws or courts of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, are hereby denounced by the Tribal Government on behalf of the Indian People of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tribal Council forthwith directs that any and all such action as is necessary to cease and prevent said custody and adoption activities by non-Indian off-reservation residents be taken by every governmental department, agency and program of the White Mountain Apache Tribe involved in the protection, health, welfare and safety of the Indian People of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and that every such governmental branch affirmatively fulfill its obligations to the Indian People in providing for their welfare.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tribal Council directs and authorizes the Tribal Chairman, through the Tribal Legal and Judicial Departments, to assist in obtaining the return of all Indian children of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation presently held by the House of Samuel, upon the request of the children's parents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tribal Council further directs the Tribal Chairman to authorize the investigation of all matters relating to this resolution, and to report the findings, activities and actions taken in such investigation, to the Tribal Council.

The foregoing resolution was on December 1, 1976 duly adopted by a vote of 10 for and 0 against by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, pursuant to authority vested in it by Article V, Section 1 (a & i) of the Amended Constitution and By-Laws of the Tribe, ratified by the Tribe June 27, 1958 and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on May 29, 1958, pursuant to Section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984).



ACTING *Alan Ketchum*  
Chairman of the Tribal Council

*William C. Engel*  
Secretary of the Tribal Council

Resolution No. 76-193