Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today gave $1,500 to Sidney M. Carney, Bureau of Indian Affairs, for sustained superior performance as a Federal employee.

Carney, a Choctaw Indian, is a special liaison representative with the Seneca Indian Nation at Salamanca, N.Y.

Carney was sent to help the Senecas in 1962 following the decision to take 10,000 acres of their land for a reservoir behind Kinzua Dam. Nationwide attention was focused on the tribe as it fought unsuccessfully through the courts to retain its lands. President Kennedy directed all Federal agencies to "take every action within their authority to assist the Seneca Nation and its members who must be relocated in adjusting to the new situation."

Carney helped the tribe plan a relocation program for the 133 displaced families and aided in developing a large-scale industrial plan and community housing program. Funds appropriated by Congress as compensation for the loss of reservation land helped finance these ventures.

Secretary Udall said much of Carney's effectiveness stemmed from his ability to "overcome long-standing prejudices" and to promote close cooperation between Indians and non-Indians and between the tribe and the many Federal, State, and local agencies involved in the rehabilitation program.

With Carney's assistance the Senecas have helped the city of Salamanca build a new high school for Indians and non-Indians, have constructed almost 200 new homes, have begun building the first factory in a new industrial park, have established an education foundation for tribal youth and adults alike, and have constructed modern community buildings on their Allegany and Cattaraugus Reservations in New York.

"As a Choctaw, endowed with a deep appreciation for self-government, your work with the Seneca Nation reflects the highest qualities of public service, I. Udall told Carney, and “has been of immeasurable assistance to the proud Seneca Nation now embarking on a new and challenging life."

Carney joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs in August 1957 as an administrative officer at Fort Defiance, Ariz. A native of Quinton, Okla., he was graduated from the Haskell Institute and has bachelor's and master's degrees from Oklahoma State University. He and his wife, Emma, have four children.