

# *About Howard Yackytooanipah*

Howard Yackytooanipah, an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation was born at the Fort Sill Indian Hospital in 1932 to Joe and Florence Yackytooanipah of Lawton Oklahoma. Howard's family abbreviated their family name to "Yackus" for the benefit of non-Comanches. Growing up, Howard loved to Powwow, and fancy war danced at every opportunity. While in high school he and his brother Kenneth, his cousin Melvin Ahhaitty and friends would hitch-hike every weekend to various powwows and tribal celebrations all over Oklahoma.

After high school Howard enlisted in the United States Navy. Howard served our Nation proudly as a Corpsman. He was attached to a number of Marine Corps units during his two tours of duty, spending 11 months in Vietnam. He left the Navy in 1966 and was relocated to the Los Angeles area. While in Los Angeles, Mr. Yackus became active in the American Indian Community by taking part in local Powwows and American Indian sports organizations with bowling being Howard's favorite pastime.

In 1972, Howard played a fundamental role in organizing the Golden State Gourd Dance Society and served numerous times as the organization's president. During this time, Howard put away his fancy war dance clothes and took up the "Straight Dance" and was a champion dancer. He was an active supporter in the early years of the Southern California Indian Center, Inc., then known as the Orange County Indian Center (OCIC). Howard was always there for fund raising events to support cultural activities like the Annual OCIC Powwow.

After OCIC incorporated and captured its first Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) grant. Mr. Yackus was tasked by the OCIC Board to manage the new grant and became the director of the OCIC Manpower Development Program.

Howard Yackus served his people all his adult life in both work and play. He was a role model to many and mentored numerous young Indian people and remained active all his life. Howard left us too soon and tragically. On Sunday August 31st, 1986 while attending a Pow-wow at the Barona Indian Reservation, Howard returned home to Cerritos to golf with plans to return to the Pow-wow that evening. That day was the day that Howard and his new family were lost to us as an Aeromexico jet crashed into his home.

