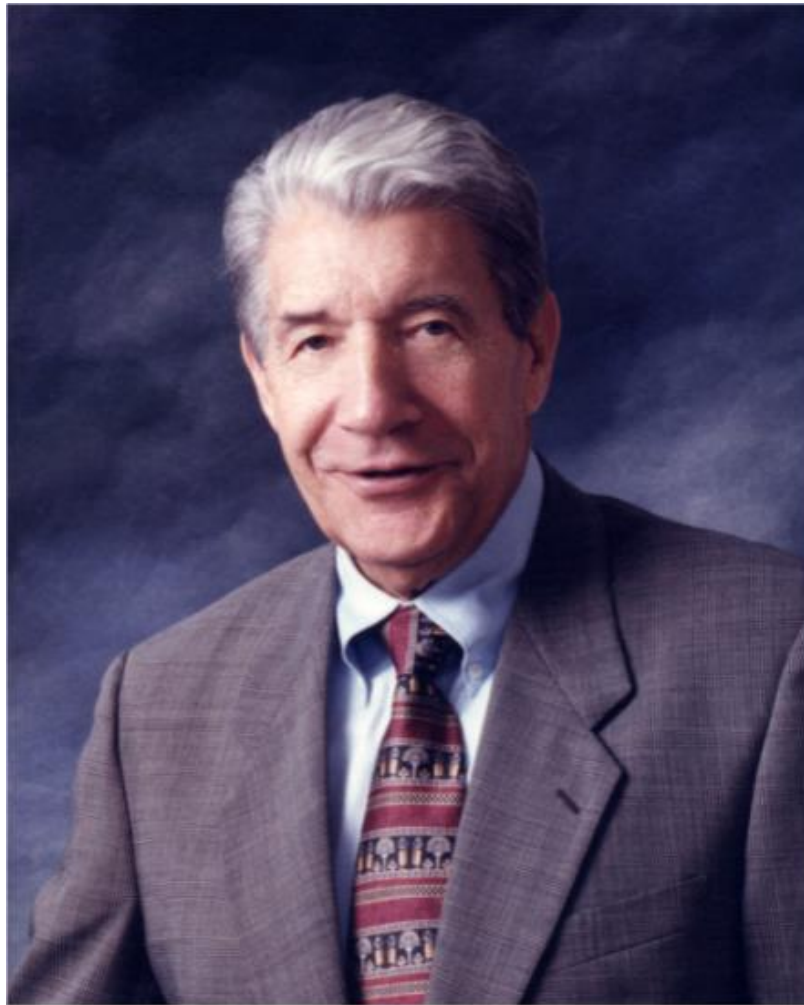


National Native American Hall of Fame  
2019 Inductee

**FORREST GERARD**  
**BLACKFEET NATION**



**GOVERNMENT**  
**ARCHITECT OF SELF DETERMINATION**

1 - 2 50-minute class periods

## **SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

### **CCSS Literacy SL 10-1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### **CCSS Literacy SL 10-1d**

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3**

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

## **GOALS FOR UNDERSTANDING**

### **Students will understand**

- Forrest Gerard was a great leader at the highest levels of the US Government during a time when the nation needed new direction away from the Era of Termination.
- Forrest Gerard lived a remarkable life and leaves behind a tremendous legacy

- Forrest Gerard served his country in many ways, as a pilot in WWII and as a visionary governmental official.



*July 1977: Jimmy Carter, 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, nominates Forrest Gerard as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs*

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

What cultural movement did Forrest Gerard bring to US Government fruition during the 1970's?

Why was the work that Forrest Gerard led so important to Native Americans, the United States, and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Where did Forrest Gerard come from and how did he come to represent so many different Native American nations?

What can we learn from Forrest Gerard's remarkable ability to succeed and apply it to our own endeavors?

## **ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

### **Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

Active listening through note taking

Small group discussion

Class discussion



*September 1977: Forrest Gerard congratulated by Chief Earl Old Person following his Swearing in Ceremony as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs*

### Culminating Performance

#### Assessment of Learning Outcomes

- Students will finish their own small group K/W/H/L charts
- Participate in a small group discussion
- Answer the essential questions when reporting out as a group to the class

#### ENTRY QUESTIONS

Who is Forrest Gerard?

What did Forrest Gerard achieve during his career to warrant induction into the National Native American Hall of Fame?

Of which Native American Nation was Forrest Gerard a member?

#### MATERIALS

Computer and internet access for the following videos is required. Additional written materials for printing are at end of this lesson.

44-minute video on the Living History – A Conversation About American Indian Policy featuring Forrest Gerard and others

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6Z3-NAOtE>

5-minute video of the occupation of Alcatraz Island; The end of the Termination Period and beginning of the Self-Determination Era

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9sBk8Stms4>

25-minute video of Indian Policies leading up to the occupation of Alcatraz Island and subsequent legislation supporting Self-Determination

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=46&v=gEmae2PsWJI&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=46&v=gEmae2PsWJI&feature=emb_logo)

24-minute Hall of Fame “Inspirational Leadership” interview with daughter, Pat Gerard

<https://vimeo.com/465237813> The interview is also accessible by scanning the Quick Response (QR) code below with a smartphone or QR Reader.



*July 1978: Forrest Gerard, meets with participants at  
The Longest Walk outside of Washington, DC*

## **LEARNING MODALITIES**

Audio/Visual: Through watching the videos whose links are listed above, students will learn about the details of Federal Policy Eras and why it is so important to Native



American communities. This audio and visual information will provide students with the necessary context to understand the significance of his role as a Native leader who worked with many lawmakers in Congress and in the Executive branch of Government.

Writing/Recording: Students will take notes while observing the films, identifying key concepts, incidents and people. These notes will be used to complete the K/W/H/L chart in the small groups.

### **OVERT INSTRUCTION**

- 1) The instructor divides the class into groups of four and asks each person and each group to begin making a “K/W/H/L” Chart, which stands roughly for “What they Know/What they Want to Know/How to Research this topic/What they Learned”  
The teacher can introduce Forrest Gerard by asking the students to read a hard copy of the short biography.
- 2) Using the information in the bio, the students will begin completing their learning graphic organizer charts.
- 3) After about 5 – 10 minutes of discussion and chart work, the teacher will show the class one of the longer videos pasted above.
- 4) Following the video, students will spend 20 minutes answering the following questions in their small groups. Every team member will contribute, with one person recording the information on a separate sheet. This information can also be utilized for the group K/W/H/L chart.

#### **Questions**

- a. How did Forrest Gerard distinguish himself throughout his career and as the Assistant Secretary of the US Interior Department?
  - b. What did Forrest Gerard achieve as a leader for Native Americans throughout the United States?
  - c. What types of challenges did Forrest Gerard overcome on his path to becoming the first ever Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs?
- 5) Following the small group discussions, each group will report out on their answers, and the answers will be included into a class K/W/H/L chart organized by the instructor on a smartboard or projector.
  - 6) The instructor will open the discussion to include any final thoughts, questions or insights about Forrest Gerard and his career and legacy.

**This concludes the first 50 minutes of the Lesson**

## Extension Exercises

- 1) Students who wish to continue their research on Forrest Gerard and the federal policy of Self-determination can read the biographical book that reflects on Gerard's time as Assistant Secretary of the Interior, entitled *The Last Great Battle of the Indian Wars: Henry M. Jackson, Forrest J. Gerard and the campaign for the self-determination of America's Indian tribes*, and write an essay focused on answering the following questions:
  - a. How was the Era of Self-Determination much like the last battle of a war?
  - b. Why is Forrest Gerard's legacy a testimony to indigenous people around the world?
  - c. What factors in American culture provided Forrest Gerard with the historical context to successfully advocate for a new era of self-determination for Native American Tribal Governments?



*Forrest Gerard during White Mountain Apache visit with longtime White Mountain Apache Tribe Chairman Ronnie Lupe*

## **CRITICAL FRAMING**

Teachers have an opportunity to connect many of the Native American Hall of Fame inductees to the Era of Self-Determination. Vine Deloria, Richard Oaks, Forrest Gerard, Ada Deer and even West Studi, had roles in advocating for a new Era of Self-Determination. Each lesson will bolster students understanding of that crucial era in federal Indian policy, and provide them with a mental framework to see how all of these

people affected change in their own way and that they were all needed and necessary leaders during the shift in federal policy.

## **DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR ADVANCED AND EMERGING LEARNERS**

Forrest Gerard's career offers students an opportunity to delve deeply into federal Indian policy, and to consider his remarkable career as a pilot in WWII, and his overall path of success in his life. Advanced learners can read the 1975 American Indian Self-Determination and Education Act and write a reflection on that legislation and how it has remained US policy to the present day in 2020.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **FORREST GERARD, BLACKFEET, ARCHITECT OF INDIAN SELF-DETERMINATION HAS WALKED ON**

BY [NATIVE NEWS ONLINE STAFF](#) / [CURRENTS](#) / 30 DEC 2013



Forrest Gerard (1925 - 2013)



**ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO** — Forrest Gerard, who provided the blueprint for Indian Self-Determination that led to today's current federal policy towards American Indian and Alaska Natives has walked on. He died in Albuquerque, New Mexico on Saturday, December 28, 2013. He was 88.

Gerard was a tribal citizen of the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana.

Gerard joined the staff of Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson D-WA in 1971. He was one of the primary architects of the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. He was appointed the first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs by President Jimmy Carter in 1977.

The legislation was introduced the Act by Senator Jackson in 1973. The Act, which passed Congress in 1974 and was signed by President Gerald Ford in 1975, reversed a policy of termination and assimilation, and launched the era of self-governance and self-determination, which continues to guide federal Indian policy today.

In July, Gerard was recognized on the United States Senate floor by U.S. Senator Marie Cantwell, D – Washington and chair of the US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, who read:

"Today we recognize Forrest Gerard for his dedication, intelligence, and persistence, which paved the way for the political achievements that transformed the landscape of Indian affairs. Tribes now have greater autonomy in managing their resources, preserving their cultures, and utilizing their land base,"

stated Senator Cantwell as she applauded Gerard for his commitment to Tribal sovereignty.

Cantwell emphasized Gerard's role in strengthening the government to government relationship between the United States and Indian Tribes. Gerard helped promote a shared goal of Tribal self-determination and self-governance. Today, Cantwell said, that relationship is a mature one.

"I think we are long overdue in commending Forrest for his pioneering, industrious career as a voice for Indian Country,"

Senator Cantwell said.

"Today we celebrate his leadership in charting a new path for American Indians, a path that won the support of Congress, Tribal governments, and the nation."

Gerard's service began with the US Army Air Corps as a member of a bomber crew in World War II. After flying 35 combat missions over Nazi occupied Europe, he became the first member of his family to attend college, receiving a bachelor's degree from University of Montana in 1949.

Over the next two decades, Gerard worked for the state of Montana, the newly formed Indian Health Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a legislative liaison officer, and the Director of the Office for Indian Progress in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Gerard spent the last 30 years advising Indian people on how to effectively participate in developing policy with government leaders and how to be part of the political process.

## **STORY OF FORREST GERARD IS A 'MUST' FOR THE CANON OF INDIAN COUNTRY**

BY [MARK TRAHANT](#) / [OPINION](#) / 31 DEC 2013

What is "The Canon of Indian Country?"

Those stories that are recited in schools, the ones most young people know by heart, tales of valor, excellence and an optimistic future. We do have great modern stories to tell.

How leaders like [Joe Garry](#) or [Lucy Covington](#) out maneuvered Congress and put an end to the nonsense called [termination](#). Or how Taos leaders patiently pressed the United States for the return of the [sacred Blue Lake](#), even though that effort that took nearly seven decades. Or how a [summer program in New Mexico](#) helped create an entire generation of American Indian and Alaska Native lawyers.

But there is no canon. So important stories drift about in individual memory, forgotten far too easily, instead of being told again and again.

The story of Forrest Joseph Gerard is one that ought to be required in any Indian Country canon. He died on December 28, 2013, in Albuquerque.

Forrest Gerard was born on Montana's Blackfeet Reservation on January 15, 1925, on a ranch near the Middle Fork of the Milk River. He told me that his "childhood I had there would have been the envy of any young boy in the United States. We had a horse of our own. We could walk maybe 15 or 20 yards have some of the best trout fishing in northern Montana. We had loving parents. We had love, support and discipline. And this was my universe, this was a world I knew."

That world he knew changed many times in his early life. During the Great Depression, his family moved into the "city" of Browning so his father could take a job. After his high school graduation, Gerard was eager to join the military and enter World War II. He was only 19 on his first bombing mission on a B-24 with the 15th Air Force. "We were forced to face life and death, bravery and fear at a relatively young age. That instilled a little bit of maturity into us that we might not under normal circumstances," Gerard recalled. The military also opened up access to the [G.I. Bill of Rights](#) and a college education, the first in his family to have that opportunity.

After college, Gerard worked at jobs that built his personal portfolio at agencies in Montana and Wyoming until moving to Washington, D.C., in 1957 to work for the newly-created Indian Health Service. Over the next decade or so Gerard took a variety of posts, including a coveted Congressional Fellowship, a post at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Health and Human Services.

But our story picks up in 1971 when Gerard is hired by Senator Henry Jackson, chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs, as a professional staff member for Indian affairs. Jackson had long been an advocate for termination and his staff assistant, James Gamble, had carried out that policy with a sense of mission. By hiring Gerard, Jackson was reversing course. (He did not fire Gamble, but moved him on other legislative issues, such as parks.)

To send a signal to Indian Country. Jackson issued a statement calling for a Senate resolution reversing House Concurrent Resolution 108 — the termination proclamation — and the message was delivered to Yakama Chairman Robert Jim while he was on the Hill. “He rushed out of the building, jumped in a cab, went over to where the NTCA was meeting, burst into the room, interrupted whoever was speaking, and told them Jackson was introducing legislation to reverse House Con. 108,” Gerard said. “In that one fell swoop; we did more to reverse Jackson’s image in Indian Country.”

The next step was more substantial. Turning Richard Nixon’s July [1970 message into legislation](#). That next step was the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, eventually signed into law on April 3, 1974.

But the legislative train was running. The self-determination act was followed by the Menominee Restoration Act, the Indian Finance Act, and, what Gerard considered his legislative capstone, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

It’s hard, even today, to imagine a string of legislative victories such as what happened during the partnership of Gerard and Jackson. The record speaks for itself.

After leaving the Senate, Gerard worked on Capitol Hill representing tribes until President Jimmy Carter nominated him as the first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Interior Department. In that post, he set the standard for the job itself, making certain that policy included voices from Indian Country.

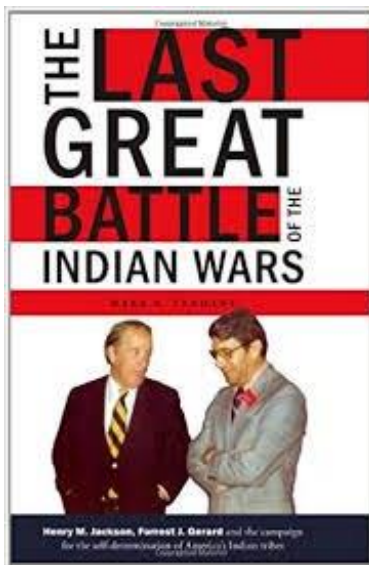
Gerard wrapped up his career in the private sector, again representing tribes in Washington.

So why should Forrest Gerard’s story be in The Canon? Simply this: He traveled from the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana and built a professional career. He was prepared for that moment in time where he was offered a job with enormous potential, shepherding legislation that not only ended termination as a policy but promoted tribal self-determination as an alternative. Sure, there had been other American Indians working on Capitol Hill, probably just two or three before Gerard, but none were given the authority to act in the name of a full committee chairman and craft law. This was new — and huge.

After he left the committee, Sen. Jackson asked Gerard if he thought the self-determination process would happen all at once, if tribes would contract for the BIA and IHS? “No,” Gerard answered. “There would be steady progress.”

Nearly forty years later that progress continues. Today more money is spent on tribally-operated health care than on Indian Health Service operations. It’s the same at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Steady progress by tribal governments. And a story to add to The Canon.



*Mark Trahant is the 20th Atwood Chair at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He is a journalist, speaker and Twitter poet and is a member of The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.*

*The story of Forrest Gerard is told in the book, [The Last Great Battle of the Indian Wars.](#)*

## Forrest Gerard’s legacy is self-determination for tribes

BY KEVIN K. WASHBURN / ASSISTANT SECRETARY, INDIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR  
Monday, January 6th, 2014 at 12:05am

The passing of Albuquerque resident and former Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Forrest J. Gerard, on Dec. 28 provides an opportunity to take stock of the important federal Indian policies he championed and his contributions to Native Americans across the country deserve to be celebrated.

Gerard was born on the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, Montana, flew on bombing missions in Europe in World War II, and served in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service. His military and public service was important, but his most important legacy is the Indian self-determination policies he drafted as a Congressional staffer and, later, implemented as Interior’s first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

The federal government has a special government-to-government relationship, called the “trust responsibility,” with Indian tribes. This relationship stems from federal laws and treaties, as well as history. Willingly, and too often unwillingly, tribal nations gave up all or parts of their lands and resources, relocated to less desirable lands and made other concessions in exchange for promises from the federal government to provide for Indian people.

As every child learns in school, these treaty promises frequently went unfulfilled and the federal government’s performance sometimes fell short. In the mid-twentieth century, Congress considered terminating the special relationship to tribes and, for a few tribes, actually succeeded. The goal was to force assimilation into mainstream American culture and put an end to the federal government’s continuing obligations.

The termination policy had a catastrophic effect on tribes, leading to the loss of countless acres of land from tribal hands, crises for tribal economies, and negative health and education outcomes for Indian people who had relied on federally provided health care and education.

Forrest Gerard joined the staff of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in 1971 at a time when the failures of the termination policy were becoming obvious. Although his boss, Senator Henry ‘Scoop’ Jackson, had been an advocate for termination, Jackson allowed Gerard to spearhead the transition to a new policy.

With Gerard’s behind-the-scenes leadership, Jackson helped to restore Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo. He also introduced a resolution disavowing termination policy and later succeeded in passing the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975.

The genius behind the Indian self-determination law was that it allowed tribes who are unhappy with the provision of promised federal services to obtain federal funding to provide those services themselves.

In other words, instead of obtaining BIA or IHS employees, tribes obtained federal contracts, producing a fundamental transformation of federal services to Indian people.

This new approach has succeeded for two reasons.

First, it emphasizes accountability. Rather than federal officials, who are protected by civil services laws and are accountable only to officials in Washington, it is now tribal leaders who have the power – and responsibility – to provide governmental services to Indian people. If the tribal leader fails, tribal citizens can vote him or her out of office in the next election.





*1980: Forrest Gerard meeting with Lucy Covington and others*

Second, it has increased tribal governmental capacities. Tribes are now run by professionals who can make tribal government work in a culturally appropriate way. Tribal governments can often provide federal services more efficiently and more cheaply than the federal government can, bringing more services to Indian people out of the same level of appropriations.

Gerard provided much of the genius needed to make all of this happen, both on Capitol Hill and at the BIA. As a staffer, Gerard shepherded the law through Congress. When Congress elevated the position of Commissioner of the BIA to Assistant Secretary at the Department of the Interior, President Jimmy Carter chose Gerard as the first person to hold this office.

At Interior, we continue to work through implementation of the self-determination program. Indeed, it has required a fundamental change in the role and identity of the BIA.

But it is hands down the most successful federal Indian policy in American history. The late Forrest Gerard deserves much of the credit.