themselves, who practiced the same disciplines that were part of European shipbuilding, and which remain an integral factor in modern construction and building.

At the College of the Menominee Nation in northeastern Wisconsin, which opened in 1993, over 200 students are today pursuing degrees in natural resources, law enforcement, early childhood education, tourism/hospitality and forestry. As a result of the latter, the Menominee Nation is also home to a tribally owned timber industry that has earned international acclaim for its sustainable forestry practices. Every resource on the reservation is used creatively — students in the building trades program are constructing their new campus, including a library, as a reflection and repository of Menominee culture.

And while Native American traditions add a new dimension to the sciences, they infuse the arts with a unique and mesmerizing vision. At the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, talented Native American students from tribes throughout the United States are prepared for professional careers in traditional Indian art forms and contemporary expressions in the visual, performing and literary arts.

At other schools, students study printmaking, sculpture, pottery, fiber arts, jewelry making, creative writing, graphics, video production, theater, dance and music, performing arts, arts management and museum studies. These enriching outlets reverberate throughout Native America as the vision of today's students brings new life to ancient cultures and stimulates new pride in young hearts and souls.

In 1996, largely through the support of thoughtful and generous people like you, the American Indian College Fund was able to grant $1,450,000 in scholarships — an increase of more than $115,000 over 1995. But while we are immensely proud of the hundreds of educational opportunities we've been able to make possible, "opportunity" remains something beyond the reach of the vast majority of Native American people.

Even the modest tuition of a tribal college is far more than most Indians living on reservations can afford. If a high school student is fortunate enough to find an afterschool job — something quite rare on reservations with little commercial or business activity of any kind — he or she almost certainly must give every penny to help their families buy food and fuel.

Many parents struggle to provide for their children by working two, three or even four jobs — jobs often available only by driving great distances. For these industrious people, education is a luxury they simply cannot afford — even though it represents the opportunity they desperately want to have.

But believe me when I tell you that an investment in these strong, hard-working people is an investment worthy of your good judgment.

Our students feel a solemn sense of duty and gratitude for a scholarship of even a few hundred dollars. Discovering that someone like you, so far from their own isolated experience, believes in them and cares enough about their future to stake them a chance to work for it, validates and redoubles their own inner ambition to become everything they can possibly be.