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BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
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MISS INDIAN AMERICA TO VISIT WASHINGTON

This year's Miss Indian America, Wahleah Lujan, 18, from Taos, N. M., will pay her first visit to Washington today through Tuesday, Jan. 31, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett announced today.

While here, the Ft. Lewis College (Colorado) sophomore will meet members of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee; will be welcomed to the District by Commissioner Walter Tobriner, Friday at 2:00 P.M. in the District offices; and feted at a reception given Saturday night by the American Indian Society at the home of its president, Mitchell Bush, Jr.

Wahleah, whose name means Hope and Faith in the Tewa language of her pueblo, is also scheduled to meet with Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, and be guest of honor for the Harkness Ballet premiere performance, Tuesday night at Lisner Auditorium. The ballet features an Indian-inspired dance, "Koshare", the story of the Hopi creation myth.

When not attending school (on a Bureau of Indian Affairs scholarship) in Durango, Colo., Miss Indian America XIII lives with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Bernal, in a five-story pueblo in the Taos central village, established in the year 1300. Grandfather Bernal makes most of her Indian dresses, and tans deer hide into buckskins from which he makes her boots.

The pretty Indian girl is descended from two Governors of the Pueblo, Yellow Arrow and Santiago Martinez. She was selected for her role last July 31 during the 1966 All American Indian Days Celebration held annually in Sheridan, Wyo., winning over forty-nine other contestants representing 35 tribes.

Wahleah is a recognized and accomplished artist, too, having received the Top Student Art Award at the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe in 1965, and has had her paintings hung in the galleries of Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa, the Fine Arts Museum in Chicago; Cornwall Heights Museum, Philadelphia; and in the Boston Fine Arts Museum. She plans to finish a major in sociology and return to the reservation and help her tribe in a meaningful application of her education.

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