Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: October 10, 1965
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A Navajo Indian medicine man will demonstrate the sacred art of sandpainting for visitors to the Interior Department I s Art Gallery beginning October 12.

Fred Stevens, a Navajo medicine man from the Indian Reservation at Lupton, Arizona will create sand paintings used in Navajo religious-healing ceremonies. He will appear in connection with the Gilbert Maxwell Collection of Navajo Weaving now being displayed at the gallery.

Sandpaintings which depict scenes in the life of the Holy Ones, are usually made on the floor of the Navajo ceremonial house (hogan) by sprinkling dry sands colored with natural pigments. The sandpainting is a religious altar composed of the representations of divinity, which later becomes sacred. When an ill person sits on a sandpainting and is treated by the medicine man and chanted over by members of his tribe, he is believed to become a god possessing miraculous powers.

Mr. Stevens will be accompanied to Washington by his wife who will demonstrate the exacting art of Navajo weaving.

The couple will be at the Department of Interior Art Gallery, 18th and C Streets N.W., Monday, through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., beginning Tuesday, October 12. On Saturday, October 16, the Gallery will be opened to allow students and those unable to visit during regular hours an opportunity to see this unusual demonstration. The Stevens will be at the Gallery through October 22, the Navajo Weaving Show will continue through November 5.