Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson announced today the appointment of LaFollette Butler, a Cherokee, as Acting Director of the Commissioner's Indian Self-Determination Staff. Butler, a 23-year BIA veteran, directed the Bureau's task force which developed the regulations for implementing the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. He is the Special Assistant to the Phoenix Area Director.

"LaFollette's assignment is a vitally important one," Commissioner Thompson said. "He has the dual responsibility of guiding the Bureau's efforts in the critical early months of implementing the Act and of recruiting and training the permanent staff that will continue the work."

Thompson said that Butler "is recognized throughout the Bureau and the Indian community as an expert in tribal government, the trust relationship and the Indian Self-Determination Act. I consider him uniquely qualified for this role."

As head of the task force developing the regulations for the Act, Butler was responsible for establishing policy guidelines, training BIA employees and carrying out an extensive consultation program with. Indian leaders throughout the Nation.

Butler, 53, has been detailed from his Phoenix post to serve in various critical positions. He has been Acting Director of the Bureau's Office of Trust Responsibilities, Acting Deputy Commissioner and Acting Commissioner.

A native of Hulbert, Okla. he graduated from Sequoyah Indian High School. He has studied law and government at the University of Oklahoma and at George Washington University. He began with the BIA as a law clerk (lands) in 1953 in Washington, D.C. He went to Phoenix as a Realty Specialist in 1966 and was made Special Assistant to the Area Director in 1969.