Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson today announced his first two executive appointments since he took office December 3 --both Indian, one a woman. The woman is Mrs. Shirley Plume, an Oglala Sioux, who will be Superintendent of the Standing Rock Agency, Fort Yates, North Dakota. She is the first Indian woman appointed to such a post. The second executive appointment is Frank Self, Choctaw, who will be Superintendent of the Phoenix Indian School, Phoenix, Arizona.

Other similar appointments to key Bureau of Indian Affairs posts will be forthcoming soon, Thompson said.

Mrs. Plume's career embraces 30 years in the Bureau, including posts in North and South Dakota and Oklahoma. She received a Superior Performance Award of the Department of the Interior in 1958, and a commendation from the United Sioux Tribes as a result of her work in connection with establishment of its training center.

Miss Wilma Victor, Department of the Interior Federal Women's Program Coordinator and herself a Choctaw Indian said, when notified by Commissioner Thompson of Mrs. Plume's appointment: "I am most gratified to hear that one of the first appointments of the Commissioner is that of a woman. She is an Indian and career employee. Of further significance is that this position is one of so much responsibility."

Mrs. Plume was graduated from St. Francis Mission High School, Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota, and Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas, a Bureau of Indian Affairs two-year business school that has become Haskell Indian Junior College. She has attended North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota, and has had extensive management training thrown Department of the Interior programs.

She began her career within the Bureau at Pine Ridge Agency, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, as a clerk and served in the same capacity at Shawnee, Western Oklahoma, and Fort Sill Agencies, Oklahoma, and at the Anadarko Area Office, Oklahoma. In 1957 she was named relocation assistant at Pine Ridge.

She entered a junior intern trainee program at the Aberdeen Area Office, Aberdeen, South Dakota in 1960 and remained in it for one year. She was made Employment Assistance Officer at Standing Rock Agency in 1969, and has served as Acting Superintendent there since August 1973.

Mrs. Plume is married to Paul Plume, also an Oglala Sioux, who retired last year after 30 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Mr. and Mrs. Plume are the parents of two sons and two daughters.

Frank Self attended Goodland Indian School, Goodland, Oklahoma and Haskell Institute, Lawrence Kansas. He received his Bachelors degree from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 1949, and his Masters degree in 1951. He attended Yale University for one year while in military service.

Self has had approximately 14 years of professional experience in school administration. He has been Acting Superintendent, Chilocco Indian School, Chilocco, Oklahoma; principal, Sherman Indian High

School, Riverside, California; head, Boys Guidance Department, Phoenix Indian School, Phoenix, Arizona.

In addition he has been Chief, Training Division, United States Attache System -- responsible for training approximately 1,000 military personnel for diplomatic duty in Foreign Nations, but also responsible for 22 Federal schools overseas, Base Training Officer; Yokota Air Base, Japan, and Head of Education Division, United States Air Force Aerospace Program, Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.

He has served in the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force -- from which he retired as a Major.

Self is married to the former Delores Webber of Oklahoma City, Mr. and Mrs. Self are the parents of two daughters and a son.