Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: March 6, 2003
Print PDF

WASHINGTON - Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today conducted a ceremonial swearing-in of the founding members of the American Indian Education Foundation (AIEF) Board of Directors at its inaugural meeting in the Interior Department's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Congress established the Foundation in December, 2000 under the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act (Public Law 106-568).

The Foundation is authorized to accept contributions from private citizens and outside entities wishing to provide direct assistance to Indian students attending Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools. "Education is one of the highest priorities of this administration," said Secretary Norton. "We are striving to leave no child behind in our efforts to improve the quality of education - including those at BIA schools across Indian country. The American Indian Education Foundation will play a vital role in supporting Indian students and bringing hope to their parents and communities."

Secretary Norton was joined today by Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin and AIEF Founding Director Lorraine P. Edmo for the ceremonial swearing-in of nine business leaders, educators and social service professionals who will serve on the Foundation's 11-member board. The Secretary and the Assistant Secretary will both serve as ex-officio board members. The BIA school system is comprised of 185 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools on 63 reservations in 23 states serving 47,909 students.

"The individuals who will serve on the board of directors are experienced and dedicated professionals in their fields," Secretary Norton said. "I am deeply grateful for their willingness to commit their time and energy to such a worthy effort. Through their leadership, the Foundation will become an effective advocate for BIA schools everywhere." In addition to Secretary Norton and Assistant Secretary Martin, the founding board members include:

- Dave Anderson of Edina, Minnesota, a member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwa and Founder and President of Famous Dave's Barbecue Restaurants franchise. His entrepreneurial experience and leadership helped his reservation substantially increase it gross revenues, an effort which was recognized by President Reagan's Presidential Commission on Indian Reservation Economies. In 1999, the Anderson family established the Youth Skills Foundation with a $1.4 million gift. Anderson was awarded the Bush Leadership Fellowship in 1985 and received a Masters Degree from Harvard University in 1986.
- Dr. David Beaulieu of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - White Earth Reservation and the first Electa Quinney professor of American Indian education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Education, a position named for the state's first American Indian public school teacher. He has extensive experience in federal Indian education having served as Director of the Department of Education's Office of Indian Education from 1997 to 2001 and on the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force from 1990 to 1991.
- Sharon K. Darling of Louisville, Kentucky, Founder and President of the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) and an internationally recognized leader in the field of family literacy. She is an active member of several boards and serves on the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. Darling also pioneered a program combing early childhood education, adult literacy

education, parent support and structured interaction between parents and their children. She received the National Humanities Medal from President George W. Bush.

- John Guevremont, a member of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe of Connecticut and Director of the Tribe's National Government Affairs Office located in Washington, D.C. He has held several positions within Mashantucket Pequot tribal government, has been active in local and state politics, and is a retired major of the U.S. Marine Corps (1975 to 1995). He has a Masters Degree in Engineering Management and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering.
- Daniel Lewis of Phoenix, Arizona, a member of the Navajo Nation and Senior Vice-President and Director of the Office of Native American Financial Services for Bank of America. Prior to joining the financial services company, Lewis served as Minority Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. He is active in various local and national organizations and is currently chairman of the National Native American Advisory Committee of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.
- Nick Lowery of Tempe, Arizona, President of the Nick Lowery Foundation and Co-Founder of "Nation Building for Native Youth." He has over 20 years experience organizing and leading community projects at the local and national level that promote and facilitate volunteerism, and that try to restore faith and healing to isolated communities. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A former All-Pro professional football player with the Kansas City Chiefs and the New York Jets, Lowery is the only American to work for Presidents Reagan, Bush and Clinton in the Office of National Service and Drug Abuse Policy.
- Jo-Anne Stately of St. Paul, Minnesota, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and Senior Program Officer of The Saint Paul Foundation. She was recently elected President of Native Americans in Philanthropy, a national non-profit association of American Indian and Alaska Natives promoting philanthropic giving across Indian Country. She has specialized experience in fund development in communities of color and her areas of focus include economic and neighborhood development, health care, and management of special projects.
- Dr. Linda Sue Warner of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a member of the Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma and Research Associate Professor, Truman Center for Public Policy, University of Missouri - Columbia and most recently served as Chief Executive Officer for the Indian Community School of Milwaukee, Inc.. Dr. Warner has extensive teaching experience in public and BIA schools as well as at the University of Kansas-Lawrence, where she also did graduate level research on Indian education leadership. In addition to her teaching credentials, Dr. Warner has a M.Ed. from Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. from The University of Oklahoma-Norman.
- Della Warrior of Santa Fe, New Mexico, a member of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma and President of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) where she also served as Interim President and, prior to becoming president, as Development Director. Under her leadership, the Institute has received over $9 million to establish permanent facilities, received full accreditation for its two-year academic programs and implemented its first four-year degree programs. She has a Masters Degree in Education from Harvard University.

AIEF founding director Lorraine Edmo, a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall, Idaho, has extensive experience in the federal and non-profit sectors. She previously served in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Indian Education (OIE) as an Education Program Specialist. From 1993 to 1999, she served as executive director of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the country's oldest and largest non-profit Indian education organization.

From 1983 to 1992, she served as Executive Director of the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) in

Albuquerque, N.M., a non-profit scholarship organization for American Indian and Alaska Native graduate students. Edmo has a Bachelors Degree from the University of Montana and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of New Mexico.

Congress established the Foundation as a federally-chartered charitable, nonprofit corporation under Title XIII of the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act of 2000 to accept and administer charitable donations for the benefit of Interior's Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) and "other activities" to further educational opportunities for American Indian students attending Bureau-funded schools. Federal agencies are prohibited from accepting private donations unless authorized to do so by Congress.

The Foundation will be organized as a 501(c)(3) corporation in the District of Columbia. Under the terms of the statute, the Secretary is authorized to provide support for the Foundation for a period of at least five years until it becomes an independent entity. The board will meet annually and operate independently from the Interior Department. The board also intends to select a permanent name for the Foundation as it develops the organization's articles of incorporation in the coming months.