Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover, a Lawton native and a Pawnee tribal member, is returning to his home state to speak about critical American Indian issues and his vision for Tribal America during a University of Oklahoma American Indian Law and Policy Symposium on Saturday, March 21. The symposium, sponsored by the American Indian Law Review editors and the University of Oklahoma College of Law, commemorates the 25th anniversary of the American Indian Law Review.

Gover was nominated by President Clinton for the Assistant Secretary's position and was sworn in on November 12, 1997. He leads the 10,700-employee Bureau of Indian Affairs and serves as the Clinton Administration's senior Indian Affairs official. His speech will be his first major address in Oklahoma since assuming office. Gover was born and raised in Comanche County, Oklahoma, which formerly was the reservation of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache tribes. He is the great grandson of Seal Chief of the Skidi Pawnees and the great grandson of Hovarithka of the Yapawicka Comanches.

Gover will attend an Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity reception Friday evening in Norman. His parents, Maggie and Butch Gover, were both active members of the organization.

During his Indian Law Review symposium speech, Gover will discuss the changing direction and improvement of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the many challenges that face it and tribal nations as the new century approaches. Gover also will explore the theme of "Indian Warriors Then and Now" as it relates to the challenging work of tribal leaders, Indian lawyers, and others who work on behalf of 554 federally recognized tribal nations. His speech will include a discussion of the devastating Indian Country problems that include alcohol and drug abuse, youth suicides, and joblessness. Gover will emphasize that today's "warriors" must use their considerable skills and experience in creating tribal solutions to these troubling problems, while also strengthening responsible and responsive tribal governments.