



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Carl Shaw, 202 219-4150

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Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt today announced the appointment of Faith Roessel, a licensed attorney and enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior.

"I am highly pleased that Faith Roessel has agreed to join the Department as my deputy," Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ada Deer said. "She is a most welcome addition to our team and I look forward to utilizing her talents and legal knowledge in assisting tribal governments in the protection of their trust assets and their quest to become self-sufficient."

Roessel said she looked forward to working with Secretary Babbitt, Assistant Secretary Deer, and tribal leaders throughout the country in providing the best of services to Indian people. "I know this Administration is dedicated to the protection of the land and other natural resources of Indian tribes, and I am honored to have been asked to serve," she said.

Roessel comes to Interior after serving three years as Director of the Washington office of the Navajo Nation where she directed the legislative strategy of her tribe's budget and annual appropriations initiatives before the Congress. From 1987 to 1991 she served as senior staff attorney with the Native American Rights Fund in their Washington office where she represented Indian tribes and groups before the Congress, federal agencies, law judges, and federal courts.

The new Deputy Assistant Secretary served as Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) from 1983 to 1987. For two years previous she was an associate in the law firm of Vlassis and Ott in Phoenix, Arizona, a firm that served as General Counsel to the Navajo Nation.

Roessel earned her B.A. in Sociology from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, in 1978. She was awarded a J.D. in 1981, from the University Of New Mexico School Of Law in Albuquerque. Roessel is a board member of the American Bar Association's Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession and is the Chair of the ABA Multicultural Women Attorneys Network. She is also a board member of the Arizona State University School of Law Indian Advisory board and serves on the board of Americans for Indian Opportunity.

Roessel and her husband Matthew Slater have one child and reside in Bethesda, Maryland.
