Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: June 18, 1980
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Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus today commended the nomination by President Carter of Thomas W. Fredericks to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs.

"We are pleased that Tom Fredericks will be returning to Interior, this time as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs," Andrus said. "This is an extremely important position to the Indian community and the Nation as a whole. He is among the Nation's most qualified Indians and will handle matters of great importance to Native Americans

Fredericks, 37, previously was Associate Solicitor for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior from July 1977 to November 1979, when he resigned to head his own law firm in Boulder, Colorado. At Interior he was the chief legal officer on all legal matters involving American Indians.

Born March 3, 1943, at Elbowoods, North Dakota, Fredericks is a member of the Mandan-Hidatsa Tribe. He graduated from North Dakota's Minot State College with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1965 and from the University of Colorado Law School in 1972.

One of the original founders of the Native American Rights Fund, Fredericks was associated with the Fund from 1971 to 1977. During the period the Fund represented a number of Indian tribes on major issues. From June '1975 to July 1977 he was chief executive officer of the Fund, supervising a staff of 60 at Boulder, Colorado.

He was a management consultant: for several Indian tribes between 1970 and 1974. From 1966 to 1969 he was administrator of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe at Fort Yates North Dakota, and taught high school at Bowbells, North Dakota, in 1965·66.

A member of the Colorado State Bar, North Dakota State Bar, and the American Indian Lawyers Association, Fredericks is married and has two children. He was president of the American Indian Lawyers Association in 1973.