Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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James J. Thomas, 27, Winnebago Indian, has been named special assistant to the Department of the Interior's Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Louis R. Bruce, the Commissioner announced today.

Thomas, horn and reared on the Winnebago I Indian Reservation, Nebraska, recently completed an Indian administrator development program of the Bureau.

In announcing the appointment, the Commissioner said: "I am proud that Indian people have man such as Jim Thomas who can come to the Bureau of Indian Affairs from an Indian reservation and contribute the knowledge he gained there coupled with expertise from the urban setting for the betterment of Indians."

Thomas joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1967. He headed the Bureau's Youth Committee and served in an intern capacity at the Billings Area Office, Flathead Agency, and Cleveland Field Employment Assistance Office, all BIA field offices.

Part of his internship included a special eight-month assignment to the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C., as an analyst for selected community action programs.

Thomas attended St. Augustine's Indian Mission on the Winnebago Reservation, and was graduated from Heelan High School, Sioux City, Iowa, in 1963. He served three years in the National Guard, and was on active duty at Fort Jackson, S.C., and Fort Polk, La. He has attended George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; Eastern Montana State University, Billings, Mont.; Griswold College, Cleveland, Ohio; and Northern Virginia Community College, Arlington, VA.