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Indian Affairs Assistant Secretary Forrest J. Gerard today announced that he has appointed Suzan Harjo to be Special Assistant for Legislation and Liaison.

Harjo, 32, is Cheyenne and Creek and an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. She will serve on the Assistant Secretary's immediate staff in the areas of Congressional and Tribal relations.

Harjo has directed the legislative program of the Native American Rights Fund, a legal association devoted to the protection of Indian rights and the orderly development of Indian law. Her work with NARF included efforts toward defining and implementing Indian legislative priorities and objectives.

In announcing her appointment, the Assistant Secretary stated, "Ms. Harjo's varied experience, expertise and understanding of Indian priority issues will enhance our capability to address the complex intergovernmental and legislative issues involved in Indian Affairs at present.

Previously, Harjo served as communication Director and Legislative Assistant for the National Congress of American Indians, representing NCAI as a member of the Advisory Council of National Organizations to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Coordinator of the National Indian Litigation Committee. In 1975 she was Project Coordinator for the NCAI/ National Tribal Chairmen's Association review and analysis of the Federal regulations proposed for implementation of P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act.

Harjo has also served as News Director for the American Indian Press Association. Until 1974, she was faculty coordinator of a lecture series on Contemporary Indian issues for six semesters at the New York University School of Continuing Education. For four years she co-produced a bi-weekly news and analysis program, "Seeing Red"' for WBAI-f.m. Radio in New York City, where she also worked as Director of the Pacifica Network's Draa and literature Department.

A 1976-77 John Hay Whitney Research Fellow, Harjo has published articles and poetry in numerous forums and anthologies, the most recent of which is the 1978 anthology of contemporary Native American literature, The Remembered Earth. Since 1972, she has been included in the annual Directory of American Poets and is also listed in the International who's who of Poetry and the 1976 Directory of American Women. She has served on the appointments task force of the D.C. Women's Political Caucus and the National Women's Political Caucus.

Harjo, born in El Reno, Oklahoma, is married to Frank Ray Harjo, Creek, and has a twelve-year old daughter and a five year old son.