Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced that he has named Donald "Del" Laverdure to the post of Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs effective July 29. Laverdure is an enrolled member of the Crow Tribe of Montana (Ties the Bundle Clan) with ancestry from the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

"Del Laverdure is a dedicated public servant and experienced law professional who has built his career on service to his tribe and to Indian Country," Echo Hawk said. "He shares my vision for improving tribal communities, supporting tribal sovereignty and self-determination, and honoring the federal trust responsibility. I am deeply gratified that he has joined Indian Affairs as part of my management team."

Laverdure comes to Indian Affairs after having been instrumental in pushing for the Crow Tribe to endorse Senator Obama in the primaries for President of the United States, as well as serving on the American Indian Policy Advisory Council for the Obama for America campaign.

Since 2006, he has served as Chief Legal Counsel for the Executive Branch of the Crow Tribe, where he expanded and managed the Office of Legal Counsel and served as a senior advisor to the Chairman, the tribe's top elected official. He also worked on a wide variety of issues for the Crow Tribe including federal water legislation, federal and local (state and tribal) tax issues and submission of tribal and state legislation. He also served as the tribe's lead negotiator on several large energy projects, including Many Stars, a $7.5 billion coal-to-liquids project.

He also held judgeships with his and other tribes including Chief Justice for the Crow Tribe Court of Appeals (2002-2006), where he also chaired the tribe's Judicial Ethics Board, Pro-Tem Appellate Justice for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona Court of Appeals (2008-2009), Chief Appellate Judge for the Havasupai Tribe of Arizona (2006-2009) and Appellate Judge for the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community of Michigan (2003-2004).

From 2003 to 2006, Laverdure was an Assistant Professor of Law at the Michigan State University College of Law and was the founding director of its Indigenous Law Program. Prior to his positions with the Crow Tribe and Michigan State, Laverdure worked for the University of Wisconsin Law School (2001-2003), where he was a William H. Hastie Fellow, as an Adjunct Professor of Law and as Director of the Great Lakes Indian Law Center.

After law school, Laverdure engaged in private practice as an associate in two law firms as a tax attorney, Godfrey & Kahn, S.C. (1999-2000) and von Briesen & Roper, S.C. (2000-2001), where he was involved in structural tax planning and tax litigation for large and small corporations, nonprofit organizations and more than 20 Indian nations, and as a partner in his own firm in Wisconsin, Michigan and Montana.

In the Fall of 2000, Laverdure was selected for and participated in President Clinton's White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities.

In addition to having taught Federal Indian Law, Property, Constitutional Law, Indian Tax Law and Tribal Sovereignty seminars, he has written, testified (in the U.S. and Canadian Senates) and spoken extensively on a variety of Indian law topics, provided Pro Bono services, and co-created and taught courses for the first four Crow Tribe Bar Exams.

Laverdure earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering in 1995 from the University of Arizona and his Juris Doctor degree in 1999 from the University of Wisconsin Law School where he is also a LL.M Candidate (Indian tax). His law school honors include Advanced Opportunity Fellowship (1996-1999), LEO Program Indian Law Student of the Year (1998-1999), Law School Award, Highest Grade, Federal Indian Law (1997) and President of the Indian Law Students' Association (1997-1998).

His professional memberships include the State Bar of Wisconsin (1999-Present), the State Bar of Michigan (2004-Present), the National American Indian Court Judges Association, the Native American Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association, Indian Law Section. Laverdure is married with two children.

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