



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Dr. Karen Swisher, HINU's First Woman President, To Be Honored

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For Immediate Release: January 16, 2001

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Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) tribal college in Lawrence, Kansas, has announced February 2, 2001, as the inauguration date of Dr. Karen Gayton Swisher, the first woman to head the 116-year old institution. The event is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. (CST) at the Warner E. Coffin Sports Complex on the HINU campus.

"Dr. Swisher is an historic choice for Haskell and the BIA," said Michael J. Anderson, Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, "She is an experienced administrator with a deep commitment to her students and a strong leader for the University." The inauguration is the focal point in a week of activities starting on January 29 that includes an inaugural banquet on the evening of February 1, when Dr. Swisher's presidential portrait will be unveiled and placed in the President's Room of Stidham Union on campus. A traditional honor powwow, which is open to the public, will conclude the week.'

Dr. Swisher, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who was born and raised on the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota, joined Haskell in 1996 to direct its teacher-training program and chair its teacher education department. She was named interim president in July 1999 and served until May 2000, when she became the permanent president. Dr. Karen Gayton Swisher (Haskell photo) "Haskell is fortunate to have someone of Dr. Swisher's caliber," said William J. Mehojah Jr., Director of the BIA's Office of Indian Education Programs, "She's an Educator's educator." Dr. Swisher has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and Master of Science degree in Elementary School Administration from Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and a doctoral degree in Educational Administration from the University of North Dakota. She also has higher education experience from Huron College in South Dakota, the University of Utah and Arizona State University. Dr. Swisher has been active in numerous education organizations including the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the American Educational Research Association, and served on the boards of the Urban Indian Education Research Center, the American Indian College Fund, and Girl Scouts of the USA. She received NIEA's highest award, Indian Educator of the Year, in 1997, and was named Native American Educator of the Year by the Kansas Association for Native American Education in 1998.

Haskell Indian Nations University was originally established in the 1884 as Haskell Institute, a boarding and vocational school for American Indian children and youth. In the 1980s, it began offering Associate degrees and was renamed Haskell Junior College. In 1995, Haskell was approved by the North Central Accreditation Association to offer its first Baccalaureate degree. HINU now offers Associate degrees in Applied Science, Science, and Art, and Baccalaureate degrees in Elementary Education, Indian Studies, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, and Business Administration.

For information on inaugural activities, contact Freda Tapedo at Haskell Indian Nations University at

(785) 749-8416 (e-mail: ftapedo@ross1.cc.haskell.edu) or Nedra Darling, Director, Office of Public Affairs, BIA, at (202) 208-3710, or visit the HINU web site at www.haskell.edu for a schedule of events.

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