Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-208-3710
For Immediate Release: June 20, 2000
Print PDF

Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Kevin Gover announced that Sharon Blackwell has been selected as the new Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "Sharon Blackwell has the sharp legal mind, the management experience and the dedication to public service that is required for success in this tremendously demanding position," said Assistant Secretary Gover. "We are very fortunate to have her on board to help guide the agency in the difficult months and years ahead."

As Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Ms. Blackwell manages an organization comprised of 10,518 employees throughout BIA headquarters, twelve regional offices and 83 agencies. Ms. Blackwell has served as special assistant to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs since 1997. From 1992 to 1997, she served as the field solicitor for the Department of the Interior's Tulsa Field Office, where she and her staff of attorneys represented the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma in judicial proceedings involving restricted Indian resources. She also served as legal counsel to two BIA regional offices and sixteen agencies serving 42 tribes, bands and towns in the States of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.

Ms. Blackwell holds a Juris Doctorate and a Masters Degree from the University of New Mexico and is a member of the New Mexico and Oklahoma Bar Associations. Ms. Blackwell is a recognized authority in federal Indian law, having written several publications on such topics as federal trust responsibility, resource development and environmental issues, focusing on the unique relationship between the tribal, state and federal governments. She has also served on the board of directors of the American Indian Heritage Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Legal Services of Eastern Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Indian Bar Association. She is a member of the Omaha Tribe and is also of Muscogee(Creek) descent. She is the daughter of Inez M. Provost and the late Joseph T. Provost of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

For Immediate Release: June 20, 2000

