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Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel said today he was "absolutely that the President had nominated Ross Swimmer for Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. “We are exceedingly fortunate that Mr. Swimmer is willing to accept this position,” Hodel said, "for he has extraordinary qualities of leadership and business experience vital to the success of U.S Indian programs.

"Ross Swimmer combines a solid knowledge of tribal and Indian affairs with understanding and skill in modern business management," Hodel said, noting that the nominee has served for 10 years as the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, which includes more than 67,000 registered members living mostly in 14 counties of northeastern Oklahoma. At the same time he was president of the First National Bank of Tahlequah.

"He is dedicated to helping tribes achieve economic success in a competitive society while preserving the rich Indian heritage," Hodel said.

Swimmer, 41, was appointed by President Reagan in 1983 as Co-Chairman of the Presidential Commission on Indian Reservation Economies.

Swimmer earned a political science degree in 1965 and a law degree in 1967 at the University of Oklahoma. From 1967 to 1972 he was a partner in an Oklahoma City law firm. He became general counsel for the Cherokee Nation in 1972, serving in that capacity until 1975 when he was elected Principal Chief. In 1974, he was named executive vice president of the First National Bank in Tahlequah and was promoted to president the following year.

He is a member of the Oklahoma and American Bar Associations, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma Industrial Development commission; Oklahoma Bankers Association; Chairman, Board of Directors of the Council of Energy Resource Tribes; and Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts of America in Eastern Oklahoma. He also is the president of Cherokee National Historical Society and Chairman of the Inter-tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes.

Swimmer and his wife Margaret, a Tulsa attorney, have two children.