Media Contact: Carl Shaw, (202) 343-2315
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The Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Eddie F. Brown, today announced the appointment of Walter R. Mills as Deputy to the Assistant Secretary for Operations. Mills, a 17-year employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge, S.D., has been acting in the position since last month. His new appointment is effective September 24.

"Walt Mills brings a wealth of experience in Indian Affairs to his new position and possesses exceptional organization and management capabilities. He has worked in the field at various managerial levels and in all the program areas he will be involved in as my principal deputy," Brown said. "I will look to Walt to run the day-to-day operations of the BIA and be my close advisor on all Bureau programs."

Mills, 54, joined the BIA in 1971 as a training instructor at the Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque. He later served in administrative positions at SIPI, BIA's Hopi Agency in Keams Canyon, Ariz. and the Phoenix area office before being named agency superintendent at the Colorado River Agency in Parker, Ariz. in 1979. He served in that position until 1983 when he was named assistant- area director of Indian Services in the Phoenix area office. From 1985 to 1988 Mills served as assistant area director for Indian programs which combined the Indian services and trust programs for the Phoenix area. He was named area director of the Anadarko, Okla. office in February, 1988. He was serving in that position when he was named acting deputy to the assistant secretary last month.

Prior to joining the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mills attended Haskell Institute in -Lawrence, Kans. and worked as a pressman, cameraman and stripper and in supervisor positions with Southwestern Bank and supply and Bank Note Printing and Litho Company. From 1968 to 1970, he was a salesman for Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S. He was serving as head cameraman and stripper with the Allied Printing and Publishing Co. when he joined the BIA in 1971.