Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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John W. Fritz, senior corporate counsel for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, has been named Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Interior Secretary James G. Watt announced today.

Fritz, 33, will manage the day-to-day operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in his new Senior Executive Service (SES) position and will serve as one of two deputies to Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kenneth L. Smith. Fritz is a member of the Cherokee Tribe of Oklahoma. ''We consider ourselves fortunate to find a person with the background and qualities of Mr. Fritz," Watt said. "This administration is committed to establishing a strong record in Indian affairs and I feel certain Mr. Fritz will be able to provide the kind of leadership and managerial expertise we need to fulfill our vital mission of responsibility to American Indian tribes."

He joins Roy H. Sampsel, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, working directly under Smith.

After graduating from the University Of Minnesota Law School in 1973 Fritz joined the 3M company in its office of general counsel in St. Paul, Minnesota; he was elevated to senior attorney last August.

In the summer of 1971, Fritz was employed as a law clerk in the Interior Field Solicitor's Office at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and in the summer of 1972 worked with the Interior Department's Indian Civil Rights Task Force in Washington, D. C.

Fritz is also a graduate of South Dakota State University at Brookings, South Dakota. His father, Eugene Fritz, was a noted athlete at Haskell Indian Institute in the 1930s and later became an educator and guidance counselor.

Following his graduation from law school in 1973, Fritz served in the U. S. Army at the Southeastern Signal School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and is currently a Captain in a reserve unit, the Military Intelligence Corps, 523rd U. S. Army Security Agency in Minnesota.

He is a member of the American Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, American Indian Bar Association, and Minnesota Bar Association. He is also a member of the Minnesota State Board of Law Examiners and the Minnesota State Bar Advisory Council. He was on the University of Minnesota Law School Dean Search Committee and is presently on the Board of Directors of the American Indian Lawyer Training Program and a member of the Governing Board of the American Indian Law Reporter.