Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Upon notice that an order had been entered granting leave to appear in a New Mexico court action involving Navajo Indian voting rights, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today designated Max N. Edwards, Assistant to the Secretary and Legislative Counsel, to represent him at a hearing in the Bernalillo County District Court at Albuquerque, N. Mex., on March 14 in a suit brought there last December 23 by Joseph A. Montoya, defeated Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor in last November1s general election.

Montoya lost by a margin of 287 votes to Thomas Bolack, Republican candidate, and filed suit to cancel all votes by members of the Navajo nation on the grounds they live on a reservation and are not residents of New Mexico. The State statute requires residency within the State for a period of at least one year.

Secretary Udall’s motion to appear as a friend of the court, with right to file a brief and participate in the oral arguments was airmailed last Friday, and Judge John McManus of the Second Judicial District received the motion and signed the order today.

Earlier, Norman Littell, Washington attorney who is general counsel for the Navajos, filed a motion for leave to appear for the Navajos as friends of the court, and this motion was likewise granted.

Judge McManus has fixed cost bonds of $25,000 to be required of both parties to the contest.