

COMMUNITY NEWS

Tribal member sworn in as new Associate Judge

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News 02/07/19

Lillian Raven Ross is the new Associate Judge for the Nation's court.

This position was vacated by Anthony Little in December.

Ms. Ross is Tonto Apache/Hopi-Tewa and the daughter of the late Rebecca Smith and Robert Lee Pavatea, and granddaughter to Lily Wingfield (Yago'hi'gai'nde) and grandfather was Tom Smith (Das zine'das dain).

Ms. Ross possesses a M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) with concentrations in Native American Law/Policy and Political Science, and Bachelor's of Applied Science/Pre-law degree(s) from Arizona State University. In addition, an Associate of Applied Science/Tribal Court Advocacy Degree from Phoenix College. Ross stated prior to graduation of receiving her Bachelor and Master

degrees she was contacted by invitation to apply to the C.I.A. and F.B.I. directly by the agencies for a position(s) but declined and set her sights on coming home to the Yavapai-Apache Nation to offer her knowledge and skills to further advance her people.

Her tenure as a judge goes back to 1997-99 when she held the same position as a part-time Associate Judge for the Nation. During this same time period Ms. Ross was a Conflict Judge for the Salt River Community, Ft. McDowell Nation, and Fort Mohave Indian Community.

In 1978 she graduated from the Bureau of Indian Affairs U.S. Law Enforcement Academy, thus becoming the first YAN tribal member to graduate from this police academy. Ross became a federal police officer for the BIA in Ft. McDowell, where she was also assigned Acting

Chief during a transitional phase. After this, a stint with the Salt River Indian Community as a tribal police officer.

Ross states, "Education is very important and very critical in this day and age. I encourage tribal members, young and old to continue your education. Life within today's society is a never ending learning process"

Other roles she has had in the past include being a YAN tribal court Defense Advocate, and former TGO Director for the Nation's Gaming Commission.

Last year, Ross held the position as a YAN Department of Social Services Social Worker/CPS Investigator.

Ross is multi-faceted. Her personal background has an interesting twist. "I was an actress with the Screen Actors Guild back in the 80's and 90's and did TV commercials and some films. I did an MTV music video portraying



Lillian Ross signs her Oath of Office

a 'Biker Momma' for a band from England, which was filmed in Globe (Arizona)," she says.

She auditioned

against "200-300 actresses on her birthday and got the part by the end of the day," adds Ross.

Back in the 1980s-90s

She was the only known Native American blues singer who sang at the still popular Rhythm Room, Chars, and Blue Note in Phoenix and Scottsdale.

Ross has now made a full circle and has returned to the things that matter to her most, The Yavapai-Apache Nation.

Ross is most impressed with the Wellness Court:

"It's a very positive and supportive environment and is a vital program of striving towards and maintaining a healthy united community. When I was here in the 90s we were exploring on how to implement the Wellness Court. I am very pleased to see how the courts developed the program for our tribal members."

YAN-EPA office sponsors region 9 environmental conference

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News 01/29/19

About 60 people from Indian nations in the southwest gathered for a 3-day EPA Conference entitled 'Winter Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) on January 29 at the Nation's conference center at Cliff Castle Casino.

Attendees were from the Region 9 area: Utah, Nevada, Hawaii, Arizona, southern California and Navajo Nation. This 3-day conference was hosted by Yavapai-Apache Nation EPA office under the coordination of David Lewis, manager, and his staff members.

Mr. Lewis noted that the planning for the meeting was in process for many weeks but the federal government shut-down impeded the final confirmation of the meeting.

"It was unclear (if) we would have this event. Fortunately, the shut-down ended the week before (the conference) and the EPA officials (from Region 9 office in San Francisco) were able to attend," said Mr. Lewis.

The morning began with Vincent Randall, Apache culture director for Yavapai-Apache

Nation, giving the invocation in his native Apache and spoke briefly about the importance of honoring the special relationship of humans to the earth and that humans should be subservient to 'mother earth' or Bih'kih'go'ii'nan. Mr. Randall emphasized the importance of honoring traditional teachings and respect for the earth.

Vice Chairman Larry Jackson, Sr. gave the official welcome and spoke briefly about the responsibilities of the participants to keep a clean environment and the social responsibilities that comes with that responsibility..

Mr. Lewis said this was the first time the Nation hosted an EPA Region 9 RTOC conference. "The attendees were very impressed with the Nation's new hotel and positive comments about the restoration work along the Verde River and progress made on the agenda items," he said.

One of the regional educational organization from Northern Arizona University, the ITEP or Institute for Tribal Environmental Profession, also participated in providing the

recent updates on the national focus on the Clear Air Act. They are also instrumental in doing much of the leg-work in working with Indian tribes to mitigate clean and safe standards in all areas of environment. Executive Director for ITEP, Ann Marie Chischilly gave an overview of her organization and their agenda.

This 3-day schedule was jammed packed with break-out sessions and participants were eager to acquire more information about impending grant deadlines that were coming shortly during the month of February which were the most pressing items in the discussions the last day of the conference. One of the key concerns that is facing EPA is the continued funding through the 319 and the 106 Programs which may experience a drop in funding levels according to Mr. Lewis. Many of the Nation's EPA work crew assigned to the remediation program for evasive plants are employed under the 319 EPA funding program.

"The event was a great success as indicated by the tribal caucus attendees that included a field trip to the nurs-



Tribal representatives from as far as southern California attend the conference.

ery in Camp Verde (on the Nation's lands) and observation of the riparian restoration work along Verde River in upper Clover Leaf Ranch (area)," added

conference was having our first RTOC meeting here and to have our YAN recognized for all the work being done for the environment"

This gathering was

to share concerns and issues, to be able to talk to EPA (Region 9 office) on such a short notice," said Stevens.

"We do our best to protect our Nation and



Making a point for discussion.

Lewis.

At first there was some doubt as to whether the conference would occur said Lewis. "As the government shut-down continued into late January, 2019, it was unclear we would even have this event," he added.

Vivain stevents, Environmental Supervisor with the Nation's EPA office said, "The highlight of the

also an opportunity for the main stake holders (composed many of highly qualified individuals in their field) called a 'caucus' to act as representatives for the various Nations in Region 9 and taking that information home to their communities.

"This meeting also gave the opportunity for the tribes (from the various regions in the southwest) to come together

to educate our people. It will always be a challenge to change old habits/ways to work with local surroundings concerning water, non-native invasive species, pollution and climate change," Stevens added.

The EPA's annual Earth Day Festival is slated for April 13 from 10-2 p.m. to take place below the casino at the Veteran's Park.



Region 9 EPA representatives stand with conferees.