



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION HOLDS 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

President, Treasurer and Council Member named in key tribal council leadership roles

FORT MCDOWELL , Ariz. – Jan. 17, 2020 – Today, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is proud to announce the results of their annual general election held on January 14. The inauguration will be held on February 11 at the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center.

Incumbents President Bernadine Burnette and Council Member Gerald Doka retained their previously held leadership roles, while Pansy Thomas joined the tribal council as its new Treasurer. All three elected positions underscore the 889 tribal members' confidence in their ability to serve the best interests of the Yavapai people and propel the tribe to further growth and prosperity.

PRESIDENT – Bernadine Burnette

Recently named one of the Most Influential Women in Arizona Business, Burnette has led the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation for more than two decades, during which time she has held the position of Secretary, Vice President and, most recently, President for the past four years. She also currently serves as President of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) and a board member of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA), and has held previous positions as President and Vice President of the Arizona Indian Gaming Association and Secretary of the National Indian Gaming Association. Burnette's current and past memberships include the National Congress of American Indians, the National Tribal Environmental Council, the National Indian Education Association, and the MAG Regional Council. Leveraging her experience as a federal employee for more than two decades, her hard work and dedication have resulted in substantial tribal economic growth, including better medical and educational assistance, public safety protection for the community, and a definite place in Tribal, County, State and Federal government.

TREASURER – Pansy Thomas

With past experience as Tribal Council Secretary (12 years), Vice President (4) and Council Member (2), Thomas brings an impressive background to her new position. She has served on numerous tribal committees and boards, including the Planning Advisory Board, Yavapais Against Substance Abuse (YASA), Tribal Gaming Commission, National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), Arizonans for Tribal Government Gaming (AGT2), Wellness Court, Law and Order Committee, and the Crisis Response Team.

COUNCIL MEMBER – Gerald Doka

Serving in this capacity since 2014, Doka is liaison to the Special Events/Tourism Department and Community Service Division, including Elderly, Veterans, Parks & Recreation and Tribal Gaming. Previously, he was Manager of Events for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, where he also held

positions in the Human Resources, Social Services, Finance and Parks & Recreation departments. A 2004 graduate of Mesa Community College who also studied at Arizona State University, Doka has taken an active role in numerous youth and elderly programs, putting people first by creating community-engaging events and focusing on ongoing Member development.

“Thank you to all the tribal members who voted for us and will continue to support our Nation,” remarked Burnette. “By working together, we will be the leader among indigenous communities guided by the Sovereignty and grounded in Yavapai tradition and culture. I am FOR YOU, WITH YOU in our common goal to improve the health, well-being and happiness of our people as we enter a new decade.”

About the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is an 889-member Native American tribe that calls Central Arizona’s upper Sonoran Desert home. Located to the northeast of Phoenix within Maricopa County, Arizona, the 40-square mile reservation is a small part of the ancestral territory of the once nomadic Yavapai people, who hunted and gathered food in a vast area of Arizona’s desert lowlands and mountainous Mogollon Rim country.

Fort McDowell Casino and the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center will become the all-new We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort in 2020, a state-of-the-art gaming and entertainment venue with luxurious accommodations and amenities.

The tribe also operates a variety of successful enterprises including We-Ko-Pa Golf Club, Poco Diablo Resort in Sedona, Fort McDowell Adventures, Eagle View RV Resort, Baja Gas, Yavapai Materials and the Tribal Farm.

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Photos *(from left to right)*: Bernadine Burnette, Pansy Thomas, Gerald Doka.
Larger images available upon request.