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FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION INAUGURATION CELEBRATION WELCOMES THREE TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS TO NEWLY ELECTED POSITIONS

President, Treasurer and Council Member take formal oaths of office as part of culture-rich evening of music, food and dance

FORT MCDOWELL , Ariz. – Feb. 17, 2020 – On February 11, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation recognized the results of their 2020 General Election by welcoming President Bernadine Burnette, Treasurer Pansy P. Thomas and Council Member Gerald Doka to their recently named tribal council positions.

The inaugural celebration held at the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, a tribal-owned Enterprise, began with a traditional song by the Maswade Drum Group, opening address by Tribal Council Vice President Paul J. Russell, and a positing of colors by the Fort McDowell Yavapai National Veterans Association. Burnette, Thomas and Doka were then escorted by family members through the Wassaja Ballroom, named from Burnette’s tribal ancestor Carlos “Wassaja” Montezuma, to their seats on stage, where Reverend Randy Ruiz and Interim Chief Judge Kerry Passey performed the invocation and oaths of office, respectively.

Burnette, Thomas and Doka then gave inspiring inaugural speeches pledging to further grow the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation by opening a state-of-the-art, \$140-million casino resort later this year and continuing to advance the health, prosperity and happiness of the 889 members that call the 24,000-acre reservation their home. A traditional song by Theodore DeClay and lavish dinner buffet for the more than 700 guests completed the induction celebration.

Representatives from the National Indian Gaming Association and tribes across the country were in attendance to add their support and well wishes.

An additional highlight was a video presentation featuring congratulatory remarks from Governor Doug Ducey and Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, recognizing the significant expertise and commitment that Burnette, Thomas and Doka bring to these key leadership positions.

“What an incredible evening this was for all of us,” remarked Burnette. “Guided by the Sovereignty, we were honored to celebrate our new appointments and rich Yavapai heritage with our families, fellow tribal members, and local and state dignitaries in song, dance and ceremony. With the talent and passion of this strong tribal council team, our future potential is limitless.”

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.

Contact:

President Bernadine Burnette
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
480-789-7199
bburnette@fmya.org

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