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## **FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION CELEBRATES 27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SOVEREIGNTY DAY**

*Four-mile commemorative walk symbolizes the 1992 protest march from Fort McDowell Casino to the Arizona State Capitol, a critical part of the Tribe's non-violent standoff that paved the way for Indian Gaming in Arizona*

**FORT MCDOWELL , Ariz. – April 26, 2019** – On Friday, May 10, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation will hold its 27<sup>th</sup> annual Sovereignty Day Celebration commemorating one of the most important days in Fort McDowell's history.

A historically significant highlight of the morning-long event will be a four-mile commemorative walk starting at 7:15 a.m. from the Fort McDowell Parks and Recreation Complex to the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center that emulates the 1992 protest march from Fort McDowell Casino to the Arizona State Capitol. The walk will be followed by an informative program, luncheon and entertainment.

Twenty-seven years ago, 25 to 50 federal agents and U.S. marshals raided the Fort McDowell Gaming Center. Before they could leave with the 349 slot machines they had confiscated, more than 100 Tribal members, community members, casino employees and casino guests blockaded the only road out. The subsequent three-week non-violent standoff culminated in the state signing compacts with Arizona tribes – paving the way for Indian Gaming throughout the state.

“Every year, we celebrate our parents, grandparents, friends and other tribal members who so valiantly – and peacefully – deterred the efforts of government officials to attack our Tribal Sovereignty and self-determination,” said Bernadine Burnette, president of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. “Their dedication, tenacity and firm belief in preserving what rightfully belonged to us has sculpted not only our Tribal Council and members but the entire landscape of Arizona gaming. This is indeed a proud day for the Yavapai people.”

Since that fateful event in 1992, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation has continued to prosper, give back to the community, and celebrate their rich heritage. Their resilient, progressive spirit will be further evinced next year when they unveil a brand new multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art casino adjacent to the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center in summer 2020.

### **About the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation**

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is a 900-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.

The tribe currently operates a variety of successful enterprises including the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, We-Ko-Pa Golf Club, Poco Diablo Resort, Fort McDowell Adventures, Eagle View RV Resort and Fort McDowell Casino, that will be unveiling a new, state-of-the-art gaming facility in 2020.

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