



CHEROKEE NATION

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Wilma P. Mankiller
Principal Chief

John A. Ketcher
Deputy Chief

April 27, 1993

To: Ada Deer

From: Wilma Mankiller

Re: Impending Nomination

When Ross Swimmer resigned and left me in charge of the Cherokee Nation in 1985 no one expected me to succeed. I had a council that had opposed my candidacy and a staff that was loyal to him, not me.

You are in a similar situation. There are a number of people, Indian and non-Indian, who simply do not expect you to succeed. As always you will prove them wrong.

For what its worth following is my advice to get off to a good start. First impressions are very important. Indian Country, women and the 10,000 BIA employees will all be watching very closely in the initial few weeks while you set the tone for your tenure as Assistant Secretary.

1. When the nomination is announced, get right to work. Get a team of two or three trusted people to advise you on major issues that may come up in the confirmation hearings. John Echohawk who was on the Interior transition team would be excellent.
2. If you are asked to comment, be non-committal. State that you plan to review the work done by the BIA Reorganization Task Force, consult with tribal leaders, BIA staff and Secretary Babbitt before proposing any new initiatives.
3. Immediately reach out to the other candidates for the Assistant Secretary position. This will diffuse opposition as well as bring together people with an immense body of knowledge. Too often in Indian Country, personal likes or dislikes get in the way of progress for Native people.