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Kevin Gover

Director of Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian

Kevin Gover is the director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian as of Dec. 2, 2007. He is a former professor of law at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University in Tempe, an affiliate professor in its American Indian Studies Program and co-executive director of the university's American Indian Policy Institute.

Gover, 52, grew up in Oklahoma and is a member of the Pawnee and Comanche tribes. He received his bachelor's degree in public and international affairs from Princeton University and his law degree from the University of New Mexico. He was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree from Princeton University in 2001.

"We're delighted that Kevin Gover will lead the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Indian in the next phase of its service to the public," said Cristián Samper, Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian. "Mr. Gover's extensive experience in Washington and with Indian communities, his deep interest in and knowledge of Indian history and culture and his commitment to bringing the vast resources of the National Museum of the American Indian to the broadest possible audience will enable him to provide strong and effective leadership to the museum."

"I am deeply honored to be the next director of the National Museum of the American Indian," said Gover. "The museum's mission of educating the public about living Native cultures is an important and challenging one, and I am grateful for the opportunity to build upon the strong foundation created by the museum's founding director, Rick West." Gover added, "I will miss my colleagues and students at Arizona State University and my many friends from the Indian nations of Arizona, but I do look forward very much to serving the Native peoples of the Americas, the American public and the museum's international visitors."

Gover joined the faculty at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University in 2003 and serves on the faculty of the university's prestigious Indian Legal Program. He has taught courses in federal Indian law, administrative law and statutory interpretation, as well as an undergraduate course in American Indian policy.

A presidential appointee, Gover served as the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1997 to 2000. He was responsible for policy and operational oversight of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the agency responsible for the federal government's relations with Indian

tribes. He oversaw programs in Indian education, law enforcement, social services, treaty rights and trust asset management.

Gover also practiced law for more than 15 years in Albuquerque, N.M., and Washington. His legal career began in 1983 at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Kampelman in Washington. In 1986, he moved to Albuquerque and founded Gover, Stetson & Williams (1986-1997). His last stint in law practice was with the Washington office of Steptoe & Johnson (2001-2003). His practice areas included federal Indian law, commercial transactions, environmental and administrative law, and legislative affairs.

He currently serves as associate judge on the Tonto Apache Tribal Court of Appeals and the San Carlos Apache Tribal Court of Appeals. He is a member of the board of trustees of the nonprofit Grand Canyon Trust in Flagstaff, Ariz., and of the board of directors of the nonprofit Futures for Children in Albuquerque.

The Smithsonian's search committee was chaired by Smithsonian Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Sheila Burke. The other members of the committee were Nina Archabal, director of the Minnesota Historical Society; Lonnie Bunch, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture; Virginia Clark, director of the Smithsonian's Office of External Affairs; Doug Evelyn, former deputy director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; Dwight Gourneau (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), chairman of the National Museum of the American Indian's board of trustees; George Horse Capture (A'aninin), former senior counselor to the director and former special assistant for cultural resources of the National Museum of the American Indian; Richard Kurin, director of the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and the Office of National Programs; Henrietta Mann (Southern Cheyenne), also a board of trustees member; and Ira Rubinoff, Acting Under Secretary for Science at the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian retained the services of SpencerStuart, a leading executive search firm, to assist with finding a new director for the museum.

Gover succeeds W. Richard West Jr. (Southern Cheyenne), who was the founding director of the National Museum of the American Indian (1990-2007).

About the Museum

Established in 1989, through an Act of Congress, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is an institution of living cultures dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The museum includes the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall; the George Gustav Heye Center, a permanent museum in lower Manhattan; and the Cultural Resources Center, a research and collections facility in Suitland, Md.

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