



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Navajo Nation Council confirms probationary appointment of Rhonda Tuni as Navajo district court judge



**PHOTO:** Rhonda Tuni takes the oath of office administered by Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne after being confirmed by the Navajo Nation Council as a probationary district court judge for the Navajo Nation at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 25, 2018.

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Thursday during the fourth day of the 2018 Winter Council Session, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council confirmed the appointment of Rhonda Tuni, to serve as a probationary district court judge for the Navajo Nation.

Tuni is originally from the community of Mexican Water, Utah. She is Bit'ahnii, born for Naaneesht'ézhi Tábaqahá. Her maternal grandfather's clan is Kiníichíí'nii and her paternal grandfather's clan is Kinyaa'áanii.

Among her professional experience includes serving as a staff attorney with the Ramah District Court, attorney with the Office of Legislative Counsel, assistant with the Office of the President and Vice President, Case Manager Supervisor with the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, and as an extern with the Arizona Supreme Court Legal Services.

Tuni earned a Bachelor Arts in Sociology – Criminology and a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities from Fort Lewis College, and a Juris Doctorate from the Arizona Summit Law School. She is a member of the Navajo Nation Bar Association and the New Mexico Bar Association.

In her presentation to the Council, Tuni attributed her accomplishments and successes to her parents, grandparents, and many others who have inspired and motivated her through Navajo cultural teachings to pursue her goals and to help other people.

Speaking in the Navajo language, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) commended Tuni for respecting and valuing Navajo teachings and using them as means to help other people. He stated that the fact that Tuni grew up on the Navajo Nation, left to pursue her education, and came home to help her people sends a positive message to young Navajo people.

On Oct. 30, 2017, the Law and Order Committee passed a resolution recommending the probationary appointment and on Jan. 16, President Russell Begaye issued a letter appointing Tuni as a district court judge.

Law and Order Committee chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) asked the Council to support the legislation on Thursday, adding that Tuni met all of the qualifications.

“The Law and Order Committee has been working hard to fill all of the judge positions. Last night we accomplished the goal of confirming a chief justice. I would encourage you to support her. We always want our young ones to fulfill their goals and I know she will be there for our people,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

The Navajo Nation Council approved the probationary appointment on Thursday with a vote of 20-0. In accordance with Title 7 of the Navajo Nation Code, Tuni will be required to serve a two-year probationary period. Immediately following the confirmation, Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne administered the oath of office to Judge Rhonda Tuni.

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