



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leaders confirmed for new Navajo Human Rights Commission

Next step is to hire executive director for Human Rights Office

“The foundation has been laid to actually prepare a very prestigious group to take the role of beginning their advocacy on behalf of the Navajo Nation,”-- Leila Help-Tulley, acting executive director of the Navajo Human Rights Office

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The newly formed Navajo Human Rights Commission has its first four inaugural commissioners after the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council confirmed the appointees Monday, July 15.

Clarence Chee, Steven A. Darden, Irving Gleason and Duane “Chili” Yazzie are the first four people appointed by the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan to the five-member commission to be confirmed. A fifth commissioner is currently being sought.

The Human Rights Commission is an unprecedented program of the Navajo Nation that will investigate incidences of civil rights infractions that will protect the Navajo people from being discriminated, especially for Navajo residents who live in border towns such as Gallup, N.M., Flagstaff, Ariz. and Farmington, N.M. In addition, their role will be broad as they gear up to advocate in state, national and international arenas.

The initiative that originated from Speaker Morgan’s office was kick started by Legislative Staff Assistance Leila Help-Tulley, the program’s acting executive director.

“The foundation has been laid to actually prepare a very prestigious group to take the role of beginning a powerful advocacy on behalf of the Navajo Nation,” Help-Tulley said.

The four commissioners have set a time to have their initial meeting the first week in August. A priority on their agenda is to select a chairperson and to begin interviewing for a new executive director.

Clarence Chee brings to the commission more than 15 years of human resources, administrative and personnel experience. His latest employment was with the Navajo Housing Authority as a recruitment specialist and is currently a human resources manager with Morgan & Associates.

Steven Darden has more than 25 years experience in program and project management. An entrepreneur with five successful home-based businesses, Darden has worked with municipalities, such as Flagstaff, Ariz., Farmington and Gallup, N.M., as a presenter regarding race relations and cultural sensitivity.



The newly appointed Navajo Human Rights Commissioners pictured clockwise from top-left: Irving Gleason, Clarence Chee, Duane “Chili” Yazzie and Steve Darden. (Photo by Bronson Peshlakai)

Irving Gleason, a masters of arts in English Rhetoric and Composition writing degree holder, brings a graduate level educational background to the commission.

“I have the educational knowledge to recognize written formats used by the dominate ideology to ignite social discriminatory practices against differing viewpoints,” Gleason said in his letter of interest to the Speaker.

Duane Yazzie has been an advocate for Native and human rights since the 1970s. His past experience working with the New Mexico and U.S. Civil Rights Commissions, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will be a definite asset to the Navajo Human Rights Office and Commission. Yazzie is a former Navajo Council Delegate and is presently the Shiprock Chapter President.

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