



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2022

President Nez commends the historic confirmation of Diné woman, Sunshine Suzanne Sykes, to serve as U.S. District Court Judge

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer congratulate Judge Sunshine Suzanne Sykes, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation from Tuba City, Ariz., for being confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, to serve as the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. Judge Sykes is the first Native American Article III judge in California, the first Article III judge from the Navajo Nation, and the fifth Native American Article III judge actively serving in the country. She was nominated by U.S. President Joe Biden.

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we congratulate Judge Sykes on her historic nomination and becoming the first Diné person to serve as a U.S. District Court Judge. Her upbringing, exceptional experience, and commitment to serving the public and the justice system will bring new and unique perspectives to the justice system. We will continue to pray for her continued success as she serves in the U.S. District Court and we thank her for being an inspiration to our young Navajo people. We also thank the Biden-Harris Administration and the Senate. We look forward to having more appointments that reflect the diversity of this country,” said President Nez.



Since 2013, Judge Sykes has served as a California Superior Court Judge on the Superior Court of Riverside County. She received her J.D. from Stanford Law School in 2001 and her B.A. from Stanford University in 1997.

“I am elated for Judge Sykes’ confirmation to the federal district court! Native American representation on the bench is critical because it makes us full participants within the federal judicial system. Her accomplishments also demonstrate to all Native law students that it is possible to accomplish your goals in the justice system. Yéego Judge Sykes!” said Navajo Nation Attorney General Doreen N. McPaul.

From 2001 to 2003, Judge Sykes was a staff attorney for California Indian Legal Services. From 2003 to 2005, Judge Sykes worked as a contract attorney for the Juvenile Defense Panel at the Southwest Justice Center. From 2005 to 2013, she served as a Deputy County Counsel in the Office of County Counsel for Riverside County.

“We congratulate Judge Sykes, her family, and her community of Tuba City, Arizona, for leading the way for more of our Navajo people to serve in the highest courts. With her confirmation, this demonstrates to our young people that hard work and prayer pay off. On behalf of my wife, Dottie Lizer and I, we congratulate Judge Sykes and we pray for her and her family as she moves forward in this new position,” said Vice President Lizer.

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