

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Chief Judge of San Manuel Tribal Court is Veteran Jurist



Pictured are members of the San Manuel Business and Judiciary Committee with Judge White (center)

San Manuel Indian Reservation, (Near Highland, Calif.), January 25, 2018 – The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians announced today that Judge Claudette C. White was sworn in and began her service as the San Manuel Tribal Court Chief Judge.

Judge White is an enrolled member of the Quechan Indian Tribe of Winterhaven, Calif., where she served as chief judge for 11 years. During this period, she also served the trial and appellate courts as judge pro tem for a number of tribal nations in Arizona, including Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Tonto Apache Tribe, and the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

“We welcome Judge White to the San Manuel Tribal Court,” said San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena. “She is a knowledgeable veteran of tribal courts with the breadth and depth of judicial experience that will contribute to continued growth of our courts.”

Judge White is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a major in Criminal Justice. She earned a Juris Doctorate at the Sandra Day O’Conner School of Law at Arizona State University, with a special certificate in Federal Indian Law. Over a distinguished career with tribal courts, she has worked to ensure justice by collaborating with local and neighboring jurisdictions, and working to educate state courts about tribal courts and strengthen comity among the various court systems.

I am extremely grateful to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for this opportunity to serve as their chief judge,” said Judge White. “The chief judge is a position of great honor and responsibility for the Court, and I thank the people of San Manuel for their faith in my abilities.”

Judge White currently serves as an appointed member to the California Tribal and State Court Forum and the Arizona Tribal, State, Federal Court Forum, as well as the California Child Welfare Council. Judge White has been working to incorporate concepts of restorative justice by utilizing tribal customs and traditions, and focusing on alternatives to standard punitive measures.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys, mountains and high deserts who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Since time immemorial, the San Manuel tribal community has endured change and hardship. Amidst these challenges the tribe continued to maintain its unique form of governance. Like other governments it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Today San Manuel tribal government oversees many governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment.

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