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President Burnette: Ft. McDowell election results

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The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation has announced the results of its annual general election held on Jan. 14. The inauguration will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 11, at the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center.

Incumbents President Bernadine Burnette and Council Member Gerald Doka retained their previously held leadership roles, while Pansy Thomas joined the tribal council as its new treasurer. According to a statement from FHYN, all three elected positions underscore the 889 tribal members' confidence in their ability to serve the best interests of the Yavapai people and propel the tribe to further growth and prosperity.

Recently named one of the Most Influential Women in Arizona Business, Burnette has served the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation for more than two decades, during which time she has held the position of secretary, vice president and, most recently, president for the past four years. She also currently serves as President of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) and as a board member of the Inter Tribal

Association of Arizona (ITAA), and has held previous positions as president and vice president of the Arizona Indian Gaming Association and secretary of the National Indian Gaming Association.

Burnette's current and past memberships include the National Congress of American Indians, the National Tribal Environmental Council, the National Indian Education Association and the MAG Regional Council. Leveraging her experience as a federal employee for more than two decades, her hard work and dedication have resulted in substantial tribal economic growth, including better medical and educational assistance, public safety protection for the community and a definite place in tribal, county, state and federal government.

With past experience as Tribal Council secretary (12 years), vice president (4) and council member (2), Thomas brings a varied background to her new position. She has served on numerous tribal committees and boards, including the Planning Advisory Board, Yavapais Against Substance Abuse (YASA), Tribal Gaming Commission, National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), Arizonans for Tribal Government Gaming (AGT2), Wellness Court, Law and Order Committee, and the Crisis Response Team.

Serving as a council member since 2014, Doka is liaison to the Special Events/Tourism Department and Community Service Division, including elderly, veterans, parks and recreation and tribal gaming. Previously, he was manager of events for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, where he also held positions in the Human Resources, Social Services, Finance and Parks and Recreation departments.

A 2004 graduate of Mesa Community College who also studied at Arizona State University, Doka has taken an active role in numerous youth and elderly programs, putting people first by creating community-engaging events and focusing on ongoing member development.

"Thank you to all the tribal members who voted for us and will continue to support our nation," Burnette said. "By working together, we will be the leaders among indigenous communities guided by the sovereignty and grounded in Yavapai tradition and culture.

“I am for you, with you in our common goal to improve the health, well-being and happiness of our people as we enter a new decade.”