

2022 INAUGURATION



SRPMIC Hosts Inauguration Ceremony for Elected Officials

“Everybody has a legacy and I am thankful for the path that they have paved for our Community. I know that they have served in multiple capacities, and I am thankful for where we are today.” She said there are many others that have decisions that were made by previous council representatives and that has inspired her to think about how her choices will impact others later.

Newly sworn In SRPMIC Council Representative Mikah Carlos

BY CHRISTOPHER LOMAHQUAHU
O’odham Action News
Christopher.Lomahquahu@srpmic-nsn.gov

After the results of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community tribal election were certified, the time came to officially swear into office the Council members, vice-president and president. The SRPMIC inauguration was held at the Talking Stick Resort Grand Ballroom on December 16.

Jacob Moore, a Community member and associate vice president for tribal relations at Arizona State University, was the master of ceremonies for the inauguration. He welcomed the hundreds of Community members who attended the inauguration and recognized several guest dignitaries in the audience.

His remarks were followed by a musical performance by Community member musician/flutist Robert “Tree” Cody, which was followed by a troupe of O’odham and Piipaash singers, the SRPMIC Traditional Singers, and the Bird Sing-

Dancing by the River group.

After the singers came the American Legion Post #114 “Bushmasters,” who presented the colors while former Miss Salt River Isabella Dockerty sang the national anthem. Following her performance, the blessing was provided by Barbara Johnson, an SRPMIC elder.

Sistine Lewis, the 2022-2023 Miss Indian Arizona and previous Miss Salt River 2021-2022, started the evening by welcoming everyone to the inauguration. “I want to welcome the new and incoming elected officials being sworn in today,” said Lewis. “I just wanted to say that they are all good ambassadors for [us] and will represent our people extremely well.”

“It is such a great honor for both my husband and I to be invited to celebrate this important occasion for [your] Community,” said Arizona Governor-elect Katie Hobbs. “Thank you so much for allowing me to add my voice to the chorus of congratulations to President Harvier on your reelection, Vice-President Leonard, and the new incoming

Continued on page 2



2014 SRPMIC Inauguration

Council members who are taking the oath of office this evening.”

Hobbs extended her thanks for the Community’s support in her bid for governor and for President Harvier’s participation on her transition team as she prepared to take office. “I look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure that Arizona [is] an Arizona for everyone, so let’s get to work,” said Hobbs.

“On behalf of myself, Lt. Gov. Monica Antone and the great Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), we offer our sincerest well wishes,” said GRIC Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, “as you prepare to take your oath and carry out your sacred leadership responsibilities.”

Lewis said that all O’odham tribes are united in their people, culture and history and serve as an example of how each community can benefit the others, from one office of leadership to another. It is important “[f]or our leadership to collaborate, to offer support to each other, and to share knowledge and resources whenever possible.”

He looked back on the challenging past two years, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, which took a toll on all tribal nations including the SRMPIC, but that it was through the steadfast leadership of the Community that they were able to respond to the crisis.

On the act of leadership for the reelected and newly elected individuals, Lewis said, “I think we know you serve the people. You serve the people and by way and by comparison you lead your people, your Community, your villages. You leave them better for having served.”

After Gov. Lewis’ remarks, Jonathan Curry and Veronica Flores shared a traditional O’odham song in a special performance. This led to the administration of the oath of office.

Moore said, “This is a time of celebration when we gather to honor, feast and dance as our leaders are placed before us, but first is the administration of the oath of office, which will be given by Presiding Judge Darayne Achin.”

The oath of office was administered first to Council, starting with Council newcomer Jacob Butler, who was joined by his father, James Butler. Second was another



Arizona Governor-select Katie Hobbs, thanked the Community for its support and the incoming and re-elected SRPMIC leadership being sworn-in.



Master of Ceremonies Jacob Moore, welcomes Community members and guests to the inauguration.



Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis addresses the audience, while congratulating the elected SRPMIC leadership.

new member to Council, Mikah Carlos, who was with her sister, TC Carlos. Both Butler and Carlos were elected to represent District I. Up next was incumbent Council Representative Michael Dallas Sr., who represents District II in Lehi; he was accompanied by his wife, Berlene Dallas. Finally, District I incumbent Council Representative Cheryl Doka took the oath of office, joined by her partner, Tsosie Wood.

After the last oath of office was administered to Council representatives, it was time to turn to the offices of president and vice-president. Incumbent Vice-President Ricardo Leonard took the oath, joined by his wife, Annette Leonard. Incumbent President Martin Harvier then was sworn in to carry out another four-year term. Harvier took the oath of office with his wife, Toni Harvier, by his side.

During a separate interview, Butler said, “I am humbled by the amount of respect and faith

people have in me. I understand that it is a big responsibility that people have given me, and I want to make sure that I do right by the people.” He recognized the departure of Tom Largo, who chose not to run for reelection to Council, and said that it is an honor to follow in his footsteps, because Largo is highly respected by the people for his integrity.

While Diane Enos was not reelected to her seat on Tribal Council, Butler said that as a former president of the Community and a Council member, she has shown how much of an active “warrior” she has been for SRPMIC. “I can follow in their footsteps and maybe forge a path of my own,” said Butler on the legacy that both Largo and Enos have left behind.

Leonard said, “I am very honored, and knowing the people and trying to help out as best as I can have been my strong points.” He said that he hopes the Community continues to support its leadership for the next four years. He said that he is no stranger to both support and criticism, as he feels the best way is to include the people in leadership decisions.

“I am also trying to be more involved with youth services and after-school programs, just to teach the songs so they can never forget them,” said Leonard on his initiative to involve the youth in the Community’s culture. Reflecting on Largo and Enos, he stated that they both have a lot of heart for the Community and have always cared about the Community members, working to uplift them in times of need and help them find their place with culture and job creation efforts. “It’s truly been a blessing to

serve with them,” Leonard said.

Carlos said, “It is a great opportunity, and I have been working towards this in various capacities, starting with the Youth Council. And so for me it is an honor to serve with these individuals who have been serving for a very long time.” Carlos said that she looked at the options and how she could make an impact on the lives of the Community, especially on the youth, whom she has experience working with.

“Everybody has a legacy, and I am thankful for the path that they have paved for our Community,” Carlos said. “I know that they have served in multiple capacities, and I am thankful for where we are today.” She said that previous Council representatives made significant decisions leading to today’s development of the Community, and that has inspired her to think about how her choices will impact others later.

Harvier said, “I want to welcome all of our Community members, leaders and invited guests. I want to especially thank the next governor of the State of Arizona, Katie Hobbs, for joining us here this evening. I look forward to working with you in the upcoming years.

“I also want to thank and congratulate Vice-President Leonard in his reelection. I know I don’t say it enough, but I truly appreciate your support over the years. I look forward to the next four years of serving with you. I also want to congratulate Council members Cheryl Doka and Michael Dallas Sr. on their reelection and thank them for their work. Congratulations to our newly elected Council members, Mikah Carlos and Jacob Butler.”

Harvier said that he looks forward to new thoughts and ideas over the next four years, recognizing that the new generation of leadership has arrived with the election of Carlos, the youngest SRPMIC member to serve as a Council representative. Harvier also said, “I want to personally say how grateful I am to have this opportunity to serve another four years as the president of our Community.”

To close the ceremony, Tom Largo provided the invocation, calling for strength and wisdom for the entire SRPMIC leadership.













