

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community 2024 INAUGURATION



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A new era has begun for the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

During the SRPMIC general election in November, three council seats were voted on by the people. In District I (Salt River), two seats were open and in District II (Lehi), one seat.

David Antone and Su:k Fulwilder won seats in District I. Antone was re-elected, receiving 449 votes. Fulwilder received 476 votes. Deanna Scabby secured another term in District II, receiving 128 votes.

The three were sworn in at the SRPMIC 2024 Inauguration Ceremony on December 21 at the Talking Stick Resort and Casino Ballroom. Hosted by Pacer Reina, the event included performances by the O'odham and Piipaash singers, as well as the presentation of colors by the Salt River

Police Department Honor Guard, and the chicken-scratch musical group, Molina Music.

Community seniors, families and loved ones of Council members, and other guests began arriving at 5 p.m. before the ceremony's 6 p.m. start.

Miss Salt River Sialik King, First Attendant Zoe Hernandez, Jr. Miss Salt River Diondria Pilger, Jr. Miss Salt River First Attendant Tiaré Begay-Smith, and Jr. Miss Salt River Second Attendant Aiyanna Toya helped escort Community seniors and membership to their tables as well as mingling with guests throughout the ceremony.

As soon as it was time, the doors were closed and a procession of singers entered with O'odham on the left and Piipaash on the right meeting in the middle to begin the program.

Speaking about the Bird Singing and Dancing by the River and SRPMIC Traditional Singers, Reina highlighted the importance of each group. "Their social songs represent stories significant to

each tribe [O'odham and Piipaash], passed down from generation to generation."

Following the opening ceremony procession, former Miss Salt River 2020-2021, Isabella Dockerty, sang the national anthem in O'odham.

"Good evening, everyone," began former Council member Tom Largo Sr. as he provided the invocation for the inauguration. "I want to thank the committee and those responsible for asking me to be a part of this gathering," he said. In his opening prayer, he asked for protection for the incoming Council members as well as their family and loved ones. "They've been chosen because people could see the goodness of their heart, their compassion, those things that are necessary when you are in leadership," he said.

After the invocation, SRPMIC Vice-President Ricardo Leonard delivered the welcoming address. President Martin Harvier was absent and excused as he tended to a family health matter.

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Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Hosts Inauguration For New Council Members

"I want to welcome you all to our 2024 inauguration where we will be swearing in three Council members to take over the roles of leadership," Leonard said. He continued, "Thank you for being here. We will have a great year in 2025."

At the conclusion of Leonard's welcome, Reina introduced the Piipaash group, Birds Singing and Dancing by the River who shared a song before the main event.

Presiding Judge Raymond Deer conducted the oath of office for Antone, Fulwilder, and Scabby.

Antone was accompanied by his sister, Cecilia, who held the Bible for her brother while Deer performed the oath of office.

Accompanying Fulwilder for her oath was her father, Meldon. Following her oath of office, Meldon blessed her with a white fan of feathers in his hand, and they exited the stage together.

The third and final oath of office was then held for Council member Scabby. Her grandson, Sage Reyes, held the Bible for her.

Following the oath of offices, the SRPMIC traditional singers performed. As the group took time to gather and get into their places, emcee Reina provided humorous Dad-jokes which filled the ballroom with joyous laughter.

SRPMIC Council member Michael Dallas Sr. shared a benediction, asking for blessings and protection for the newly sworn-in Council members, their families and the entire SRPMIC.

As the ceremony neared its end, Antone, Fulwilder, and Scabby stood at the front of the stage to shake hands and greet attendees as their newly sworn-in representatives. The three will now serve four-year terms on Council.



Su:k Fulwilder
District I - Salt River



David Antone
District I - Salt River



Deanna Scabby
District II - Lehi



