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## **Kevin Gover**

### **Director of the National Museum of the American Indian**

Kevin Gover is the director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian and a citizen of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. Kevin began as director in December 2007.

Born in 1955 in Lawton, Oklahoma, he is the son of Bill and Maggie Gover, civil rights and Indian rights activists. Kevin left Oklahoma in 1970 to attend St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. He attended Princeton University, receiving his bachelor's degree in public and international affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University in 1978. He then attended the University of New Mexico College of Law and received his juris doctor degree in 1981.

Following law school, Kevin served as a law clerk in the chambers of the Honorable Juan G. Burciaga, United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico. He then joined the Washington, D.C. offices of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Kampelman, where his practice was limited to representing Indian tribes, tribal agencies, and Alaska Native corporations.

Kevin returned to New Mexico in 1986, where he established a small Native American-owned law firm that specialized in federal Indian law. Gover, Stetson, Williams & West, P.C. grew into the largest Indian-owned law firm in the country and represented tribes and tribal agencies in a dozen states.

His advocacy brought him to the attention of the Clinton White House, and in 1997, Kevin was nominated by President Clinton to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the United States Department of the Interior. He was confirmed by the United States Senate in November 1997 and served in that capacity until January 2001. As the senior executive of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, he won praise for his efforts to rebuild long-neglected Indian schools and expand tribal and BIA police forces throughout the country. His tenure as Assistant Secretary is perhaps best-known for his apology to Native American people for the historical conduct of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Upon leaving office, Kevin resumed the practice of law at Steptoe & Johnson, LLP in Washington, D.C. In 2003, he joined the faculty at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at

Arizona State University and served on the faculty of the university's Indian Legal Program, one of the largest such programs in the country. He taught courses in federal Indian law, administrative law, and statutory interpretation, as well as an undergraduate course in American Indian policy.

Throughout his professional career, Kevin has given freely of his time, serving on several committees of the Federal Bar Association and the American Bar Association. He has served as well on a number of non-profit boards, including the Southwestern Association for Indian Art, Futures for Children, and the Grand Canyon Trust. He has also served on the boards of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas and the Salt River Development Company, an enterprise of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

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