

# Thompson Sworn In

## *First Alaskan Native Commissioner*

Morris Thompson, 34, an Athabascan Indian from Tanana was sworn in as Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs by President Nixon during a White House ceremony at 11:00

a.m. Monday in Washington.

Thompson became Commissioner after serving since February of 1971 as Alaska area director for the BIA. He returned to Juneau this week in

preparation for moving his family to Washington later this month.

A story on the swearing in ceremony was written for the Tundra Times by Richard LaCourse, news director of the American Indian Press Association. The story was delayed and did not reach the paper by press time.

The Tundra Times will carry full news coverage and photographs of the event in the next issue of the paper, on December 12.

Thompson has announced that he plans to be in Alaska to attend the annual convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives and the eleventh annual Tundra Times Banquet in Anchorage on December 17.

Commissioner Thompson is the youngest head of the BIA in the history of the bureau. He is also the first Alaska Native ever to be appointed to that post.

The new commissioner has had extensive experience in the field of national Indian affairs. In 1969, Thompson became a special assistant for Indian Affairs to former Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel. He received recognition recently, while Alaska area director for the BIA, for the handling of the

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massive effort to enroll Alaska Natives for participation in benefits from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Commissioner Thompson is married to the former Thelma Mayo of Rampart. The couple has three children: Sherly Lynn, 7, Nichole Ray, 3, and Allison May, 1.