



Chief Justice Ray Rabinowitz administers the oath to Mary Jane Fate, the first Alaska Native on the state Judiciary Commission. Other commission members are in the background.

## FNA's Mary Jane Fate named to judicial group

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Six years ago, the Alaska Supreme Court adopted an affirmative action plan calling for the integration of minorities into the court system.

Recently, a report was issued stating that Native Alaskans hold low level positions in the court system but no major positions are filled by Alaska Natives.

A small step toward integrating the Alaska Natives into higher level jobs was accomplished two weeks ago when Fairbanks Native Association President Mary Jane Fate was appointed to the Alaska Commission on the Judiciary.

Fate, a Koyukon Athabascan originally from Rampart who now lives in Fairbanks, is the first Na-

tive and the first woman to hold a seat on the commission.

The Commission is responsible for interviewing and making recommendations on appointments to judges, posts throughout the state; periodically interviews and reviews the performance of the Alaska Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges as well as lower court judges; reviews the jobs of judges for the process of re-appointing them.

Fate, who also is a director of her village corporation, was sworn in on Sept. 3.

Fate always has been involved in the affairs of her people and, although she has had no formal training in the law, she has been

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# Fate joins judiciary panel

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involved in quasi-legal matters for several years.

Fate attended her village grade school and graduated from Mt. Ararat. She then attended the University of Alaska at Anchorage taking classes in biology then, but when the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed "and there was a need for our people to know about finances," she turned her focus to accounting matters.

As the president of her village corporation "We have had to get someone to sponsor it."

She was a representative to the National American Indian Women organization and also worked with legal affairs in that group, writing and working with legislation of interest to the group.

She travelled a great deal and did a study on the special needs of Indian children. "I had to do a

lot of homework. It tied into residential and individual law. It was a lot of work, writing and analyzing laws. It might not have been the most formal professional training I took but I learned a great deal."

Fate says her membership on the Alaska Judiciary Committee will allow her to work on a problem that troubles her most about the life in the villages -- the problem of leisure-time boredom and the consequent problems it presents with the law.

She says she hopes to propose a study of leisure-time law-breaking, and work that study into recommendations for the state judges to follow. "Boredom is a basis for a lot of problems and with some research and investigative process, we might be able to look into some innovative ideas."