

Sault Tribe selects John Wernet as new general counsel

Contributed by Michelle Bouschor
Wednesday, 01 June 2011

John Wernet, former deputy legal counsel to Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm and a recognized expert in Native American law, will be the new general counsel to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Wernet will become the lead attorney for the Sault Tribe, the largest federally recognized Indian tribe east of the Mississippi with nearly 39,000 members, and its talented team of lawyers. He brings to the position many years of experience in Native American legal issues nationally and in Michigan.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the members and leadership of the Sault Tribe," said Wernet, who officially starts the job on June 13. "The Sault Tribe is the state's largest sovereign Native community and is vitally important as a job provider. I am proud to be a member of their team."

Wernet earned his B.A. from the University of Michigan's Residential College in 1972 and his J.D. from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. in 1975. From 1975 through 1979 he was on the faculty of Antioch School of Law where he directed the law school's paralegal programs including the National Indian Paralegal Training Program.

Wernet returned to Michigan in 1979 to become an Assistant Attorney General for the state of Michigan and served as counsel to the Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs from 1980 through 1988, as First Assistant in the Indian Law Unit from 1992-1995, and as Assistant in Charge of the Native American Affairs Division from 1998 through 2003. In 2003, he became Deputy Legal Counsel to Michigan Gov. Granholm and served as the governor's advisor on tribal-state affairs.

"John Wernet is a superior attorney and a high quality person with distinguished credentials and a stellar reputation, and we are thrilled to have him as our new general counsel," said Lana Causley, vice chairwoman of the Sault Tribe Board of Directors.