

Arvo Mikkanen is an Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma and a current federal judicial nominee for the United States District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma. I spoke with Leslie and she's not sure he has been appointed yet.

Background

Mikkanen is an enrolled member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma and is also of Comanche and Finnish descent.

Federal Judicial Nomination

Mikkanen was recommended for a judgeship on the United States District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma by Democratic Governor Brad Henry. On February 2, 2011, President Barack Obama formally nominated Mikkanen to a seat on the Northern District of Oklahoma. His nomination was immediately met with opposition from members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation, with Republican Senators James Inhofe and Tom Coburn and Democratic Representative Dan Boren expressing disappointment that they were not consulted on the nomination. However, the Obama White House disputes that they did not consult with the Oklahoma congressional delegation. Public opposition to Mikkanen's nomination has centered around procedural grounds rather than substantive issues about Mikkanen himself.

If confirmed, Mikkanen would be only the third Native American ever to serve on the federal bench, after Frank Howell Seay and Michael Burrage.

Legal Experience

Mikkanen has been a federal prosecutor since 1994 and has prosecuted cases involving violent crimes, physical and sexual assaults, homicides, firearms offenses, immigration offenses, wildlife violations, embezzlement, drug offenses, government corruption, as well as civil cases involving administrative law, foreclosures, and government regulations. He has been counsel of record in over 475 cases in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, having handled numerous civil cases, juvenile delinquency adjudications, and criminal prosecutions, including bench and jury trials, as well as oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit.

Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, Mikkanen was an associate attorney and litigator with the Andrews Davis law firm in Oklahoma City from 1988 to 1994 where he engaged in business practice, products liability defense, trademark law, real estate law, insurance defense, and commercial litigation in state and federal courts.

Prior Judicial Experience

He is a former judge of the Court of Indian Offenses for the Anadarko Area Tribes (1988–1994), a federally administered tribal court which is part of the U.S. Department of Interior, and formerly served as a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes (1991–1994). He published numerous opinions during his period of service as a judge.

Additional Informative Documents

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/09/on-judicial-nominees-sen-coburns-crusade-goes-interstate/244930/>

<http://legaltimes.typepad.com/blt/2011/02/obama-bucks-home-state-senators-on-judicial-nominee-arvo-mikkanen.html>

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?subjectid=16&articleid=20110218_12_0_WSIGOr611855

<http://www.oiba.net/Leadership.html>

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/02/02/president-obama-names-two-united-states-district-court>