



WWW.NATIVEAMERICANBAR.ORG

For Immediate Release, June 4, 2014
Contact: Mary L. Smith (202) 236-0339

NNABA MOURNS THE LOSS OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ATTORNEY GAYE TENOSO

PHOENIX—The National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) mourns the passing yesterday of Gaye L. Tenoso, Deputy Director of the Office of Tribal Justice, United States Department of Justice (DOJ), and former three-term National Secretary/Treasurer of NNABA. She was just 60 years old.

An enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Indians, Ms. Tenoso was, at the time of her passing, the most senior American Indian lawyer at the DOJ, having served for more years than all but one other Native American lawyer in the history of DOJ. A Georgetown Law School graduate, Ms. Tenoso was only the fourth American Indian attorney hired at the DOJ in 1985. She worked in the Civil Rights Division for over 25 years and the Office of Tribal Justice since 2009. In the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division, she held the title of Special Litigation Counsel. She was one of the most respected voting rights lawyers in the United States and had received the high honor of being invited by the United States Solicitor General to sit at counsel table during the Supreme Court argument in the voting rights case of *Reno, Attorney General v. Bossier Parish School District*. She was the only American Indian attorney ever to be so invited.

“Gaye was the Deputy Chair of the Indian Trial Lawyers Association (ITLA) of DOJ for 25 years. There was no action taken or recommendation made by the ITLA that didn't have Gaye's input. Her recruitment of other Native American attorneys to the Department helped change the face of the Department of Justice,” said Lawrence Baca, National Treasurer of NNABA. “I worked with Gaye for over 25 years. She was an exceptional attorney and a great friend. Her passing is a great loss to the Office of Tribal Justice and to Indian Country. We will all miss her. ”

“I had the honor and privilege of serving with Gaye at DOJ,” said Mary Smith,

President of NNABA. “She was an brilliant lawyer, a tireless advocate for Native Americans across the country, a person with the highest integrity, and a loyal friend.” Additional details about Ms. Tenoso’s passing will be forthcoming and available on NNABA’s website at www.nativeamericanbar.org.

Founded in 1973, NNABA serves as the national association for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian attorneys, judges, law professors and law students. NNABA strives for justice and effective legal representation for all American indigenous peoples; fosters the development of Native American lawyers and judges; and addresses social, cultural and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

For more information contact 480-727-0420 or visit www.nativeamericanbar.org.

www.NativeAmericanBar.org