



August 10, 2020

James Rideout, Monica Miller sworn in to Puyallup Tribal Council; Council selects Bill Sterud as chair, Sylvia Miller as vice chair

TACOMA, Wash. – James Rideout and Monica Miller took the oath of office for Puyallup Tribal Council on Thursday, beginning three-year terms as part of the Tribe’s seven-person governing body.

The short ceremony took place at the entrance to the I-5 Emerald Queen Casino, which opened to the public for the first time on June 8. A 174.5-foot-long by 30-foot-high mural by artist Anthony Duenas became the ceremony’s backdrop. The mural depicts bone games, which have been part of the Tribe’s rich culture since time immemorial.

Rideout won re-election to a second term on Aug. 1, and Miller won her first term, unseating Tim Reynon. The election date had been moved back two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Tribal Council’s first meeting following the swearing-in, councilmembers chose Bill Sterud to serve as chairman and Sylvia Miller to serve as vice chairwoman for the coming year.

Chairman Sterud, who succeeds David Z. Bean, represented the Tribe in negotiations that led to the Puyallup Land Claims Settlement in the 1980s, setting the foundation for much of the Tribe’s work today. He was first elected to the Council in 1978 and has had a hand in every aspect of the Tribe’s economic development, including its casinos, cannabis enterprise, marina, gas tax and putting land into trust. He said economic development is a priority.

“I promise that there will be a diversified economy in the Puyallup Tribe,” he said.

Sterud pointed to successes such as care of Elders and attention to youth. He thanked all of the people, both Tribal members and non-Tribal members, who have worked with the Puyallup Tribe to help it advance over the years.

“Many of those people are gone, and I miss them dearly,” he said.

Sterud has served in the chairman and vice chairman role several times since his first election. He wished luck to Reynon and also expressed appreciation for the new Council.

“The Council that has been seated will work together,” he said. “They’re all good people that I’ve worked with in the past.”

Sterud also cautioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has not stopped.

“Please wear your mask. Please social distance. It’s real. It’s all around us,” he said.

Vice Chairwoman Miller was first elected to Council in the late 1990s and for years has been the governing body’s natural resources and wildlife representative. She graduated from Stadium High School in 1977 and had a scholarship for Eastern Washington University and was accepted at University of Puget Sound but couldn’t afford it.

“Times were hard,” she said. “The Tribe didn’t have money at the time.”

Instead, she went to work for the Tribe as a physical education teacher and found other ways to pay for further education at Tacoma Community College and Bates Technical College.

“I fished on the river to make my way through college and worked at the smoke shop and worked for the Tribe,” she said. “It was a struggle, I’ll tell you.”

Vice Chairwoman Miller took courses in business management and bookkeeping, skills she used in later roles at the Tribe such as directing the Job Training Partnership Act program, where she placed lower-income people into training positions, helped them build their resumes, conducted mock job interviews and helped prep them for working life. She also created an incentive program that paid dollars to Tribal members who earned their GEDs – and helped them prepare for the exam.

“I’d like to say to all people that what I’ve learned from this Tribe, you’ve never going to learn from a textbook,” Miller said. “I’m grateful to have had the opportunity to serve all these years. It’s the best education anyone could ever have.”

Looking forward to the coming year, Miller stressed unity among Tribal members and partnership with non-Tribal communities.

“All the years that I’ve been with this Tribe, it’s very important that we have a very good working relationship, not only with your own people but with the outside community,” Miller said. “I think this is a good step forward. We as a Puyallup people have grown, and we will continue to grow. We are not going to leave – this is our home.”

“I hope I can do everything I can to make our people proud – each and every one of us.”

Councilmember James Rideout is a fisherman who became involved with the Tribe’s fishing and seafood harvesting programs. He is the uncle of Jackie Salyers, whose death in a Tacoma police shooting prompted the “Justice for Jackie” movement. Rideout advocated for Initiative 940 and other measures to bridge divides between communities and law enforcement. He attended Chief Leschi Schools, and volunteered for a decade with the Culture Department and Canoe Family.

“I’m very eager and optimistic to do everything I can to maintain our culture,” Rideout said during the swearing-in ceremony.

Before her election Aug. 1, Councilmember Monica Miller, a sister of Vice Chairwoman Sylvia Miller, served the Tribe for over 43 years. She began working in the Enrollment Department in the late 1970s, going to high school at the same time. She kept working for the Tribe after high school, spending a few months in the law office. She later created and served as director of the Per Capita Department. In 2011, she created and became director of the Department of the Representative Payee, which exists to protect Tribal beneficiaries and their financial assets from exploitation, and for Members who want help with bill-paying and other financial transactions. Councilmember Miller has also served on the Enrollment Committee, Housing Committee and Puyallup International Inc.

“My mission is always to work for the Tribal members to make sure their assets, their per capitas, their waters, their lands, their berries, their sovereign rights – everything – is protected,” Councilmember Miller said. “Our culture. That our children receive the best education. That our Elders receive the best care.”

“I thank each and every one of the voters for their support in this 2020 election,” Miller said. “I believe in change along with them, and together we can strive for that change by making our voices heard. ...I want people to know: I work for you.”

About the Puyallup Tribe of Indians

The Puyallup People have lived along the shores of what is now called Puget Sound since time immemorial. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is a sovereign nation of more than 5,000 members and one of the largest employers in Pierce County. It serves its people and neighbors with generosity and is committed to building a sustainable way of life for future generations. [Learn more about the Puyallup Tribe.](#)

About the Puyallup Tribal Council

The Puyallup Tribal Council is the elected governing body of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. The council consists of Chairman Bill Sterud, Vice Chairwoman Sylvia Miller, David Z. Bean, Annette Bryan, James Rideout, Anna Bean and Monica Miller.

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