



Office of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

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Four years of Probation for Gary McDonald.

St. Michaels, Navajo Nation-The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission participated in the Arizona Superior Court hearing at St. Johns, AZ in the case of Arizona v. Gary McDonald. The Court sentenced Mr. McDonald to four years probation and 1.25 years of detention.

"It was disappointing to have Mr. McDonald get off on reduced sentence. While it is clear that the extent of the issue before the court was limited to events that transpired while McDonald was in jail, Judge Kindig was encouraged to take into consideration McDonald's old age, lost of his businesses and how half of the Navajo people in the court owed money to McDonald" stated the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Executive Director, Leonard Gorman.

Gorman further said, "It is appalling to know that the court record shows that Navajos owe money to McDonald while Navajo people did not have the benefit, even through the representative from Arizona Attorney General's Office in court, to counter the assertion that Navajo's are a party to Mr. McDonald's welfare."

In addition, the Court announced at the beginning of the court session that the revocation of the liquor licenses would not be a part of the court session because the issue was not filed appropriately before the court. Gorman further states that, "Navajo people in the courtroom were under the impression that the judge will consider revocation of the liquor licenses." The Apache County attorney's office did not ensure the revocation request was appropriately entered before the Apache County Superior Court.

Navajo people suffered at the hands of three liquor stores in Sanders and Chambers for over 50 years and the families continue to suffer even though the liquor stores are now closed. Yet the judge was enticed to consider the closer of the liquor stores in favor of McDonald and not the suffering and pain of the Navajo families that were affected from the liquor stores in the Sanders and Chambers area.

The NNHRC continues to work with the Renewal of Hope Taskforce to look at solutions to modify Arizona liquor laws in rural areas. For more information contact the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission at 928-871-7436.

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