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New justice of the peace Norma-General Lickers gets help with her robe of office from Theresa Hall of Cochrane, Canada's first Cree justice of the peace.

Six Nations woman region's first native justice of the peace

OHSWEKEN — A Six Nations woman was sworn in Thursday as the first native full-time justice of the peace for southern Ontario.

Norma General-Lickers, 50, of R6 Hagersville, says she will treat everyone equally but hopes to encourage native people to use the justice system more effectively.

"We tend to be quiet and keep things inside. Hopefully, when they see a native person as the justice of the peace they will open up more."

Mrs. General-Lickers, grandmother of nine, said she was honored to be chosen from the 85 native candidates who applied for the position.

She will be responsible for taking information from police and citizens, performing marriages, issuing summonses and search warrants

and sitting in court on provincial matters such as offences under the Highway Traffic Act.

Mrs. General-Lickers grew up on the Six Nations reserve before working at a hospital in Buffalo, N.Y., as a medical records technician. She was a notary public for 14 years.

In 1986 she quit her job and went to school at Niagara College in Welland in a human relations program. She returned to the reserve early this year.

She changed careers because she wanted a new challenge and wanted to "help native people."

There are native justices of the peace in northern Canada. "It's about time they have a native working in this region," said Mrs. General-Lickers.