Professor Gavin Clarkson was mentioned in an article on Indianz.com about the continued vacancy of the head of the Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, which has been unfilled for over two years.

This article was posted to Indianz.com on Wednesday, March 16, 2011:

**Special Trustee post stays vacant pending resolution of Cobell**

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

It's been more than two years since President Barack Obama took office but don't look to him to fill an important Indian Country job any time soon.

Obama has failed to nominate someone to lead the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, which oversees trust reform at the Interior Department. The position has been vacant since January 2009 and it won't be filled until the settlement to the Indian trust fund lawsuit is finalized, Secretary Ken Salazar said on Tuesday.

"Ray Joseph is fulfilling this function," Salazar said during a visit to the Riverside Indian School in Oklahoma, referring to the acting head of the OST.

Judge Thomas Hogan will hold a fairness hearing for the settlement on June 20. It's expected that he will issue a final order a month or so later, triggering a 60-day appeal period before the deal becomes official.

The time frame means a nominee for the OST post might not be named until the end of the year. Depending on the Senate confirmation process, it could take months before the job is filled.

The Obama administration interviewed a few candidates for the job in 2009 but none were formally offered the post. Among those in consideration at the time were Derrick Watchman, a member of the Navajo Nation; [Gavin Clarkson, a member of the Choctaw Nation](https://www.indianz.com/archives/2011/03/16); and Valerie Red-Horse, who is of Cherokee ancestry.

Congress created the position in the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994. Three people have held the job since then and all three were controversial.

The first Special Trustee, Paul Homan, resigned in protest of the Clinton administration. The second, Tom Slonaker, was forced to quit by the Bush administration after he told Congress it would be impossible to complete an historical accounting of the Indian trust.

The last person to hold the job was Ross Swimmer, a member of the Cherokee Nation who was criticized for rapidly expanding OST's scope during the Bush administration.