

Presenter Biographies

Stephanie Autumn (*Hopi/Irish*), Director, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Stephanie Autumn brings extensive experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs in Indian Country. Ms. Autumn has thirty-eight years of local, national, and international American Indian advocacy and policy work experience and has presented at various human rights forums at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland and in New York. She has worked throughout the country on issues of American Indian adult and juvenile justice, substance abuse prevention, restorative justice, and Tribal youth mentoring programs. Ms. Autumn served as the Executive Directive of the Minnesota Restorative Justice Campaign for five years and is a skilled Restorative Practitioner facilitator, trainer, and Circle Keeper. Ms. Autumn’s expertise includes developing culturally competent strategic planning tools and trainings for American Indian/Alaska Native tribes. She has directed national projects on American Indian juvenile domestic assault, restorative justice, pre- and postrelease services for American Indian offenders, Tribal mentoring, and truancy. She served as project director for three Department of Justice–funded programs for Tribal youth that provided training and technical assistance to more than 135 Tribal grantees. Ms. Autumn has provided expertise/testimony for the Minnesota and South Dakota Departments of Corrections with regard to traumatic brain injury and trauma-informed care needs/issues with incarcerated American Indian juvenile and adults. For the past fifteen years, Ms. Autumn has provided expertise to the Minnesota Department of Education on disproportionality issues that impact American Indian youth and communities. Ms. Autumn is the founder of the American Indian Prison Project Working Group.

Regina Begay-Roanhorse (*Diné*), Court Administrator, Navajo Nation Judicial Branch Judicial Districts of Alamo, To’Hajiilee, Crownpoint, and Pueblo Pintado; National American Indian Court Judges Association, Consultant

Regina Begay-Roanhorse is a U.S. Army Veteran (CPT, OD) and presently works for the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch as a Court Administrator for To’Hajiilee Judicial District. She develops programs and specialty court or problem-solving courts for the Judicial Branch. She also writes grants for the Navajo Nation justice systems, the Canoncito Band of Navajo Health Center, and Navajo Department of Information Technology. She is a licensed member of the Navajo Nation Bar Association and has worked for thirty years as a Tribal Court advocate (1991–2022). She also worked for DNA Legal Services, prosecutor’s office (1992–2000), private counsel, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, and New Mexico Voices for Children working on issues related to suicide prevention, mental health, and drug addiction. She received her master of legal studies degree in health care law from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 2019. She received an honor graduate distinction at her 1987 U.S. Army Officer Basic Course for leadership. Her father is Thomas H. Begay, Navajo Code Talker, U.S. Marines (World War II), and U.S. Army Frozen Chosin survivor (Korea). Her brothers all served in the U.S. Army. In 2008, she received the New Mexico Public Health Association’s award for the advocate of the year and the 2008 Volunteer Advocate of the Year award from the New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative, which are statewide honors for organizations or people committed to improving behavioral health services in New Mexico.



Nan Benally (*Diné*), Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Nan Benally, M.C., serves as the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court TTA Specialist for the Tribal Law and Policy Institute’s Tribal Youth Resource Center. Nan has spent a lifetime acquiring experience around passionate and purposeful people. The constant and driving passion for Nan has been in the world of research—the desires to learn, explore, and create. Coupled with her passion in bringing healing to people who have been through traumatic/stressful events has guided her research in the areas of social justice. Utilizing her role as a researcher has created outcomes of direct application and influence in resolving concrete problems and meeting community-based needs, transforming the status quo of institutions and challenging stakeholders in addressing these issues collaboratively, leading to a multidisciplinary commitment to enact change. Through her experience and education, Nan has gained training in various therapeutic treatment modalities, had the opportunity to participate and present her work in professional venues and engendered community networks and alliances for the support and fulfillment of project goals. These experiences have enhanced her skills in interpersonal communications, professional style, and commitment to the ethical standards of practice to envision the power of bringing purpose into the people equation while promoting equity, balance, and productivity in her work. Nan has utilized her background in areas of social justice in helping to create outcomes of direct application and influence in resolving concrete problems and meeting community-based needs, transforming the status quo of institutions, and challenging stakeholders in addressing these issues collaboratively, leading to a multidisciplinary commitment to enact change. Nan has continued her passion for learning and has her master of counseling degree from Arizona State University. She continues to work on her doctoral degree and pathways toward professional licensure. She is a member of the Diné Tribal Nation. Her membership in professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the Society of Indian Psychologists of the Americas, National Congress of American Indians, and Alpha Pi Omega reinforces her ties to remain abreast of evolving trends and continually develop her professional alliances as a unique network base to push forth the collective voices of change.

Will Blakely, Program Associate, Center for Children and Family Futures
Will Blakeley coordinates grant projects and program responsibilities while providing various training and technical assistance to courts and teams nationwide. He has seven years of experience in the child welfare system. Roles include court coordinator for Yellowstone Family Recovery Court, grant management in father engagement, and child protection worker. He has also taught in both high school and middle school. Mr. Blakeley holds a master of arts degree in teaching from Christian Brothers University and a bachelor of arts degree in human rights studies from the University of Dayton.

Hon. Peter Boome (*Upper Skagit Tribe*) Associate Judge, Tulalip Tribes
Peter Boome is an enrolled member of the Upper Skagit Tribe. Judge Boome earned his associates degree from Northwest Indian College. He earned his bachelor of arts and MES from the Evergreen State College. Peter earned his juris doctorate from the University of Washington School of Law. As a student Judge Boome was part of the University of Washington public defense clinic. He served as the public defense attorney for the Healing to Wellness Court for five years at Tulalip. Judge Boome served as a public defense attorney for Muckleshoot. In his solo practice Judge Boome focuses on mediation,



facilitation, alternative dispute resolution and Indian law. Judge Boome is also a college professor teaching a wide range of courses. In addition to these pursuits Judge Boome is an established Coast Salish artist with art in many collections around the world.

Patti Buhl (*Cherokee Nation*), Director, Department of Juvenile Justice, Cherokee Nation
Patti Buhl is a lifelong Tahlequah resident and a proud citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Patti is married with a son and a three-legged cat named Salem. Patti is a former Chief of Police/Director of Public Safety (she retired in 2020 after twenty-six years in law enforcement). Patti is also the former Missing and Murdered Persons Coordinator for all three U.S. Attorney Districts in Oklahoma. Patti has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Northeastern State University and a Juris Doctor degree from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Roxanne Burtt, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator, Tule River Tribe
Roxanne Burtt is the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator for the Tule River Tribe of California. She is an enrolled Tribal member and resides in Porterville, CA. Roxanne received paralegal certifications along with an associate in arts degree in business administration. Roxanne is a certified paralegal, legal secretary, and law office clerk and has been employed with various departments throughout the Tribe for several years. She started her career with the Tribe as the property clerk for the Administration. She then worked with the Legal Department as General Counsel, Legal Secretary for more than twelve years. She has also worked for the Tribe's U.S. Department of Agriculture Department, along with the Tule River Economic Development Corporation. Roxanne's career goal was to be employed through the court and work with the judges and court staff.

Britney Bush, Program Coordinator, Juvenile Healing to Wellness, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Britney Bush is a resident of Durant, Oklahoma, and a Tribal member of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Britney has two daughters and an Alaskan Klee Kai named Kaizer. Britney has worked at Choctaw Nation for sixteen years, with the last four years involved in the Tribal Court system. Britney served four years as a Tribal Probation Officer and recently, accepted the position of Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator. Britney has a bachelor's degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Grace Carson (*Yavapai/Chiricahua Apache*), Skadden Fellow, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Grace Carson serves as a Skadden Fellow for Tribal Law and Policy Institute's Tribal Healing and Wellness Courts Project. Her Skadden Fellowship project is focused on developing a restorative justice program for Tribal communities that channels harm-doers away from incarceration and fines, and toward rehabilitation, community involvement, and healing. This project builds on the foundation already established by Tribal Healing and Wellness Courts by incorporating Peacemaking—a Tribal practice that repairs intercommunity harm that has been committed. Carson graduated the University of Denver with a bachelor of arts in political science and journalism (2019) and graduated UCLA School of Law with specializations in critical race studies, public interest law and policy, and international and comparative law (2022). Her current research and scholarship is focused on ethnic studies, critical Indigenous studies, decolonization theory, and abolition theory.

Arianna Chavarria, Probation Officer, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

Arianna Chavarria is a Probation Officer with Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court's Urban Native American Healing to Wellness Program. Ms. Chavarria started as a Judicial Specialist for the Probation Division and thereafter was promoted to Probation Officer I for the DWI First Offender Program, where she worked for approximately a year and half before being promoted to a Probation Officer II position with the Urban Native American Healing to Wellness Program. She graduated from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelor's in Political Science with a minor in Criminology in 2014. Prior to working with the court, Ms. Chavarria worked as a Paralegal for an Immigration Law Firm, where she assisted with various clerical duties. As a Probation Officer now, she is grateful that she gets to work closely and build rapport with the participants she supervises. Healing to Wellness is a team that really wants to see the participants go through a life changing experience and Ms. Chavarria is honored to be a part of a program that incorporates culture and tradition into their recovery journey.

Dianne Cisneros, Tribal Youth Court Coordinator, Intertribal Court of Southern California

Dianne Cisneros is the Tribal Youth Court Coordinator with the Intertribal Court of Southern California. She is responsible for managing day-to-day operations of the youth court. In this role, Dianne monitors the participants throughout their wellness program, ensuring all facets of their plans are accomplished before participants can complete the program. Dianne studied psychology at the University of La Verne. She is no stranger to working with youth, having spent more ten years working in the special education field in local school districts. Her focus was on the individual need of special education students, accommodating in the design and implementation of customized hands-on lessons for the student. Prior to starting with the Intertribal Court of Southern Californian, Dianne left her position with the Irvine Unified School District to work in the mortgage industry, where she gained loan processing experience and comprehensive knowledge of conventional and government loan programs. During her time in the mortgage industry, Dianne became a notary public, in which she was able to work adjacent to the real estate industry team in certifying and notarizing financial and legal documentation related to loan documents. Passionate about working with children, Dianne left the mortgage industry and returned to working with youth in her role at the Tribal Youth Court.

Hon. Karla Comanche (*San Carlos Apache Tribe*), Chief Judge, San Carlos Tribal Court, San Carlos Apache Tribe

Chief Judge Karla Comanche is a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe and represents the (Ha'K'Ayeh') Grinders Clan. She attained a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice from Northern Arizona University in 2001 and is a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribal Bar Association. She was appointed as the Associate Judge of the San Carlos Apache Tribal Court in 2009, and was promoted to Chief Judge in 2017. As Chief Judge, she is tasked with presiding over hearings and handling all administrative and fiscal functions of the Tribal Court. She also serves as the Judge Pro Tempore for the Tonto Apache Tribe. Prior to her judicial appointment, she worked as a Lay Advocate in the Zuni Tribal Court, Clerk for the Superior Court, and Judicial Assistant in the Second Judicial District Court in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Judge Comanche has one son, and they reside on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

Julio De Los Santos, Juvenile Affairs Case Manager, Quapaw Nation



Julio De Los Santos works for the Quapaw Nation in Oklahoma. He is currently the Juvenile Affairs Case Manager. Julio started working for the Quapaw Nation in 2018, where he worked at a Compliance Officer for the Quapaw Nation Gaming Agency. In 2021, Julio transitioned to a new role with the Nation when he took on the Juvenile Healing to Wellness program under the Quapaw Nation Court. Julio has since been an integral part to establishing the Juvenile Affairs sector of the Quapaw Nation Court. Julio was born in McAllen, Texas, and grew up in Houston, Texas. In his late teenage years, Julio moved to Norfolk, Nebraska, with his family where he graduated from Norfolk Senior High School in 2013. Julio is bilingual in English and Spanish. Prior to moving to Oklahoma Julio prided himself in assisting his Spanish-speaking only clients in the corporate-banking sector. Currently, Julio lives in Miami, Oklahoma, with his five dogs and continues his work with the Quapaw Nation. In October 2021 the Quapaw Nation received their McGirt ruling in *Lawhorn vs. State of Oklahoma*. Julio, at his professional capacity, continues to work on the challenges that come with the Nation’s reestablished reservation boundary and the added jurisdiction.

Hon. Evelyn Dolchok (*Kenaitze Indian Tribe*), Chief Tribal Judge, Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Judge Evelyn Dolchok is a citizen of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and lifelong Alaskan and Kenai resident. She was appointed to a judgeship position by the Kenaitze Tribal Council in 2013 followed by her appointment to Chief Tribal Judge in September 2019. Judge Dolchok is steadily completing courses for her Tribal Judicial Skills Certificate from the National Judicial College and continues to attend classes that further develop her skillset as a judge. She is active in conferences held by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, National American Indian Court Judges Association, National Indian Child Welfare Association and more. Judge Dolchok is the presiding Tribal Judge for the Henu Community Wellness Court, which is one of the few joint jurisdictional courts in the United States. Weekly hearings are dually conducted with a state of Alaska Superior Court Judge at the Qiz’unch’ Tribal Court. “Qiz’unch’” is the Dena’ina word translating to “the right way, the truth.” Henu is the Dena’ina word for “hard work,” which describes the effort and dedication each participant puts into their recovery throughout this 18–24-month program. Witnessing the transformation take place in each participant is one of her greatest joys of being a judge.

Alisha Edelen, Director, Community Services, Choctaw Nation
Alisha Edelen graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University with a bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice. Alisha has nine years of experience with the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs as a Juvenile Justice Specialist II. Alisha began her career with Choctaw Nation eight years ago as a Reintegration Specialist helping build the Reintegration Program to assist adult offenders postrelease from prison. Alisha became the Assistant Director of Juvenile Services at Choctaw Nation, as her true passion is working with at-risk youth. Alisha facilitated building and overseeing the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Program. Alisha came into her current role in 2021 after the expansion of Juveniles Services due to the McGirt ruling. Alisha enjoys spending time with her two children and stays actively involved in their activities.

Joseph Thomas Flies-Away, CAB Member, Community and Nation Building Facilitator
Joseph Thomas Flies-Away, J.D., M.P.A, describes himself as a community- and nation-building consultant/facilitator. As a consultant, Flies-Away facilitates Tribal community and nation-building



projects in planning, evaluation, technical assistance, research, and training. Focusing on developing justice systems, including Healing to Wellness Courts, Flies-Away is interested in how courts and other governmental institutions contribute to affective governance and “living together well.” Flies-Away’s experience includes serving as a Hualapai Tribal Council Member, director of the Tribe’s Department of Planning and Community Vision, promoter and chairman of the board of the Tribal corporation, HBE, Inc., Chief Judge and Associate Judge of the Hualapai Tribal Court (trial court), and Associate Justice and Chief Justice of the Hualapai Court of Appeals. Judge Flies-Away has also taught students from junior high to university level, including being a lecturer in law at Stanford University School of Law, an adjunct faculty member at Arizona Summit Law School. He has also taught courses in Native American Studies in the Stanford School of Humanities and Sciences, Arizona State, and a UCLA course called Working in Indian Country. Judge Flies-Away holds a juris doctor degree from the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law and a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and is a graduate of Stanford University in English Literature.

Adelle Fontanet-Torres, Director, Tribal Justice Exchange, Center for Justice Innovation

Adelle Fontanet-Torres is the Director of the Center’s Tribal Justice Exchange. She provides on-site and long-distance training and technical assistance to tribes seeking to enhance their justice systems around the country. Ms. Fontanet works with Tribal justice systems to design and implement problem-solving strategies such as the use of alternatives to incarceration, restorative justice practices, diversion and deflection programs, and risk-need tools. She has also lead justice system needs assessments and strategic planning projects with numerous tribes, including child welfare focused needs assessments and healing to wellness court assessments. Prior to working in technical assistance, she participated in a fellowship with the center where she worked with Bronx Community Solutions to provide alternatives to incarceration to low-level misdemeanor adult and youth defendants in Bronx Criminal Court. Additionally, she was one of the lead planners of the Red Hook Peacemaking Program where she served as a peacemaker for disputes referred from the court system and other partner agencies. Ms. Fontanet has a Juris Doctor from Columbia Law School, where she participated in the school’s peacemaking clinic, and has a dual bachelor’s degree in English and anthropology from the University of Florida.

Melanie Fritzsche (*Laguna Pueblo*), Senior Program Manager, Tribal Justice Exchange, Center for Justice Innovation

Melanie Fritzsche is a senior program manager for the Center for Justice Innovation’s Tribal Justice Exchange. Melanie works with Tribal Courts to assist them with needs assessments. She also provides technical assistance to tribes to enhance their justice systems and is part of the Tribal risk-need-responsivity tool project. Prior to joining Center for Justice Innovation, Melanie was with the American Indian Law Center as an assistant director and staff attorney. She assisted tribes with development and implementation of Tribal Court operations and code development. Melanie has a Juris Doctor from the University of New Mexico School of Law with a certificate in Indian law, and a bachelor of arts degree in history/government from Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado. Melanie is a member of Laguna Pueblo. She is licensed to practice law in the state of New Mexico.

Alejandra Garcia, Associate Director, Treatment Courts Technical Assistance, Center for Justice Innovation



Alejandra Garcia is an associate director for the center’s National Technical Assistance Department, leading and delivering a wide range of onsite and remote technical assistance projects including drug treatment court evaluations, statewide strategic plans, opioid court implementation, and training events. Previously, she worked as the program associate and social work intern for the center’s Training Institute where she cocreated and implemented the strategic plan for its inaugural year, as well as collaborated with departments across the center to develop original training content. She previously interned with the New York Legal Assistance Group’s Legal Health department, and has worked in a variety of roles in the area of youth development. She received her master of social work degree from the Silver School of Social Work at New York University, and her bachelor of arts in sociology and psychology from Columbia University.

Suzanne Garcia, Tribal Legal and Child Welfare Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Suzanne Garcia is a Tribal Legal and Child Welfare Specialist at the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI). At TLPI, Suzanne supports Tribal self-determination and empowers Native Nations that want to create pathways to wellness for their communities. The projects Suzanne works on focus on uniting various disciplines, communities, families, and individuals with an emphasis on healing and prevention. More specifically, Suzanne’s projects often involve child welfare and court systems whose goal is providing quality child welfare services, positively impacting substance use and substance use–related issues, enhancing Tribal/state collaboration, and preventing domestic child sex trafficking. Prior to working for TLPI, Suzanne served as the Assistant General Counsel for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California where she represented the Tribe in child welfare cases and developed various programming to support and protect vulnerable community members. Suzanne has also served as a staff attorney for the Domestic Violence Victims Assistance Project, where she provided civil legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence in Tribal and state courts in rural Nevada.

Kevin Gasco (*Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians*), Male Cultural Resource Advisor, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court

Kevin Gasco is an enrolled member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) located in Harbor Springs, Michigan. Kevin currently is the Male Cultural Resource Advisor for the LTBB Tribal Court and assists Tribal members associated with one of the Specialty Court Dockets. Kevin has served on the Waabshkii-Miigwaan Adult Drug Court Program in different capacities for more than ten years. Kevin has been a community volunteer, Juvenile Probation Officer, and now as a Cultural Resource Advisor. Kevin has been in long-term recovery since 1983 and received training as a peer recovery coach through the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery. Kevin is the father of four and grandfather of one, who are all enrolled Tribal members as well. He grew up in the LTBB community and is active in his community’s traditional culture. Kevin has been a past presenter for the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. Kevin has an associate degree in general studies from Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City, Michigan.

Tanya Grassel-Krietlow (*Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Nation*), South Dakota Network FAST Grant Manager, FAST Tribal Sexual Assault Initiative

Tanya Grassel-Krietlow is an enrolled member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Nation. She graduated high school in Chamberlain, South Dakota, went to University of Minnesota, Morris, graduated from



South Dakota State University with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology, and then attended graduate school at the University of South Dakota. Tanya's son recently graduated from the Indian Police Academy. He is employed by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. Her husband, Kurt, is a real-life Daniel Boone who hunts and fishes as hard as he works. They are a family that cooks what we harvest and are equal parts outdoorsy, tree hugger, and river rat. Tanya has been privileged to have had a great deal of career paths from law enforcement to education to grants management. All have involved working with Native Americans and their families. She currently lives in Pierre, South Dakota, and is working with the South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault as Program Manager for the FAST Tribal Sexual Assault Initiative.

Elizabeth Gerlach, Behavioral Health Treatment Provider, First Nations Community Healthsource
Elizabeth Gerlach is a treatment provider for First Nations Community Healthsource (FNCH) and has been with the company for three wonderful years. Ms. Gerlach began employment at FNCH as a Court Case Manager for Metro Recovery, Metro Healing to Wellness, Community Veterans Court, District Drug Court, and District Mental Health Court. She graduated from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelor's in Psychology with a Minor in Family Studies in 2018. Ms. Gerlach facilitated a Psychosocial Rehab at Therapeutic Living Services prior to her employment with FNCH and worked as an RBT for "Bridges to Success". At the time, she worked with autistic children. She received her LSAA in March of 2022 and in March of 2024; she will be eligible to apply for her LADAC. Ms. Gerlach further plans to attend Graduate School and receive a Master's in Social Work. Currently, she facilitates three treatment groups during the week and Healing to Wellness Men's Recovery group on Monday evenings. She is pleased to be working with a population who can integrate their culture and native beliefs and apply it to their recovery. Healing to Wellness is a court that cherishes their culture and provides many opportunities for each participant to establish a life worth living sober.

Hon. Sherrie Harris, Juvenile Judge, San Carlos Tribal Court, San Carlos Apache Tribe
Sherrie Harris is the Juvenile Court Judge for the San Carlos Apache Tribe. She was appointed last April and took the bench in May 2022. Judge Harris received her Juris Doctor degree at the University of New Mexico School of Law. Her docket includes adoptions, guardianships, child dependency, and juvenile offenses. The San Carlos Apache Tribe is a current Juvenile Wellness Court grantee, and had been working to develop and implement a Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court. Miss Harris has previously served the San Carlos Apache Tribe as Wellness Court Coordinator, Chief Public Defender, and Chief Prosecutor.

Alyssa Harrold, Tribal Wellness Court Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Alyssa Harrold serves as a Tribal Wellness Court Wellness Specialist and resides in Petoskey, Michigan. Prior to joining the Tribal Law and Policy Institute she served as the Project Director/Coordinator and Probation Officer for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. In that role she oversaw all specialty court programs, which included a Domestic Violence Docket, Family Preservation Court, and an Adult Healing to Wellness Program. In 2017, she oversaw and implemented program enhancements to accept felony level healing to wellness clients. More recently she coordinated the implementation of the Little Traverse Bay Band family preservation court. She began her career working in safe homes



providing services to domestic violence survivors. With a background in criminal justice and gender studies, she has a focus on rehabilitative services and assisting clients in cultivating resiliency.

Leah Hitcher (*Cherokee Nation, Muscogee Creek*), Coordinator Juvenile Healing to Wellness, Cherokee Nation

Leah Hitcher a resident of Stilwell, Oklahoma within the Cherokee Nation Reservation. Leah is a citizen of Cherokee Nation in addition to Muscogee Creek heritage. Leah has two daughters and a shared German Shepard named Banilla. Leah formerly worked eleven years in the Tribal Court and Permanency Unit within the Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare department. Leah accepted the position as the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator in September 2022, and quickly worked to complete the strategic plan and implementation of the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court at Cherokee Nation. Additionally, Leah holds a bachelor's degree from Haskell Indian Nation's University in American Indian studies and a master's degree in social work from the University of Oklahoma. Leah has spent a majority of her working career working with Indigenous populations within the Cherokee Nation Reservation.

Hon. Mary Kate Huffman, Judge, Second District Court of Appeals, Dayton Ohio; American Bar Association National Judicial Fellow

Mary Kate Huffman served as a General Division Judge on the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court from 2022 to February 2023. In 2022, she was elected to the Second District Court of Appeals and began service on that court on February 9, 2023. Judge Huffman received her bachelor of arts degree in political science from Wright State University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Dayton, a master of arts in judicial studies from the University of Nevada, and a certificate in Judicial Development General Jurisdiction Trial Skills. In 2019 she obtained a certificate in Judicial Development Dispute Resolution Skills from the National Judicial College. Prior to judicial service, Judge Huffman was a partner in the law firm of Huffman, Landis & Weak. In 2021 Judge Huffman was appointed as the Ohio Judicial Outreach Liaison, focusing on providing training to judges and other stakeholders on impaired driving issues. In January 2023, Judge Huffman assumed the position as the American Bar Association Judicial Fellow, serving as a teacher, writer, consultant, and liaison on impaired driving to those in the criminal justice community around the country.

Vicki Johnston, Case Manager Supervisor, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

Vicki Johnston is a Program Manager for Case Management with the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court in Albuquerque. She is currently also the Case Manager for both Healing To Wellness Court and their DWI Recovery Court. Ms. Johnston has worked as a Case Manager with Metro Court since 2019 and has worked with all of their treatment courts, which includes Community Veterans Court, Behavioral Health Court, and DVSTEP Court in addition to Healing To Wellness and Recovery Court. Ms. Johnston has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the Ohio State University and a Law Degree from the University of Wyoming, College of Law. Prior to moving to New Mexico and working within the treatment courts, Ms. Johnston worked as an attorney for many years in Ohio. Her practice focused on Guardian ad Litem work, where she worked with families struggling with many factors, including substance use and behavioral health issues. Ms. Johnston enjoys working with treatment courts and believes the best part is seeing the changes in the participants. She feels it has truly been such a rewarding experience and is so grateful to be working with participants in their journeys to recovery.



Valarie Jones (*Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe*), Re-entry Case Manager, Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe
Valarie Jones is a member of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe. She takes pride in her journey on the red road of recovery as she is a person of lived experience. Valarie is the Lead Success Coach/Case Manager for Port Gambles Recovery homes, Success Coach for the Re-Entry Program. Valarie is certified in Recovery Coaching, Trauma Informed Care, NWI Healthy Relationships, White Bison Medicine Wheel of the 12 steps, Warrior Down, Correctional Assessments for Intervention Systems, and Mental Health First Aid USA. She has a passion for the Second Chance Act, due to her lived experience she was a participant in the Port Gamble Re-Entry Program. Upon completion of re-entry, she was given the opportunity to work in the Tribes Court Services Program starting out as an assistant and quickly flourished. With her dedication and passion, she worked her way up to the Re-Entry Success Coach to give back and be a helping hand for her community and tribe.

Angélica Lorena Juárez-Monger, Tribal Wellness Court Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Angie Lorena Juárez-Monger, M.A., serves as the Tribal Wellness Court Specialist at the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. She served the Southern Ute Indian Tribe for more twelve years as the Court Administrator (2017–22) and Court Information Analyst/Grant Writer (2010–17), where she oversaw and managed several federal and state grant projects for the Tribal Court, including the tüüÇai (Wellness) Court and the implementation of Family Treatment Court. She also led trauma-informed efforts for the court through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Defending Childhood Policy Initiative, continued work for the Southern Ute Tribal Court to be a trauma-informed court, and completed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Gather, Access, Integrate, Network, and Stimulate (GAINS) Center’s How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses training. She received a master’s degree in the administration of justice from Saint Louis University where she was a Diversity Fellow and focused on justice system leadership. She also attended New Mexico State University and received a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice/law and society and was recognized for her research in juvenile facilities. She was born and raised on the beautiful desert borderland of El Paso-Juárez and currently resides in Bayfield, Colorado.

Selina Oshanee Kenmille (*Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes*), Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Selina Oshanee Kenmille is a member of the Kootenai and Salish tribes in northwest Montana. She is utilizing her lifelong dedication to culture, education, and children in her current role as the Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) to reconnect the youth to their culture and environment. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in business management and entrepreneurship from Salish Kootenai College and is pursuing a master’s degree in child, youth, and family through University of Nebraska. Selina brings extensive experience in education, grant writing, and family systems to the CSKT Juvenile Healing to Wellness community.

Jeffrey Kushner, Montana Statewide Drug Court Coordinator, Montana Supreme Court/Office of the Court Administrator

Jeffrey Kushner is the Montana Statewide Drug Court Coordinator with the Montana Supreme Court/Office of the Court Administrator. He currently serves as a member of the board of directors of the Native American/Alaska Native Addiction Technology Transfer Center. Kushner is the recipient of



many awards such as the Oregon Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse President’s Award, Women’s Commission Award from the Oregon Women’s Commission on Alcohol and Drug Issues, and the Administrator’s Award for Public Service from the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Federal government. Kushner is a strong advocate for implementation of evidence-based practices within treatment programs and drug courts. Kushner has been both a Single State Agency Director for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and a statewide drug court administrator. Kushner had developed several instruments and published numerous documents in the treatment and treatment court field. Kushner lives in the foothills of the Bitterroot Mountains with his wife, Siberian Husky, and Great Pyrenees.

Jered Lee, Traditional Wellness Program Coordinator, First Nations Community Healthsource
Jered Lee is the Program Coordinator of the Traditional Wellness Program (TWP) at First Nations Community Healthsource. His role at TWP is rooted in the support of cultural wellbeing, traditional knowledge sharing, and the fostering of healthy character development through a Native American approach and services provided. This dynamic has become a positive factor in the lives of many Healing to Wellness Court participants. It is with great regard and appreciation that the TWP is able to serve along with the entire court staff in support of our Native population seeking sobriety.

Juliet P. Lee, Senior Research Scientist, Study Director, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
Juliet P. Lee, Ph.D., is a Senior Research Scientist and Study Director at the Prevention Research Center of Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, a nonprofit public health institute with core funding from the National Institute of Health to address the environmental prevention of alcohol and other drug problems. Dr. Lee’s work emphasizes participatory approaches to research and intervention. She has led and co-led research projects funded by the NIH and state of California, including two major studies of the impacts of alcohol sales outlets on community alcohol problems, and she served as coinvestigator on a project that successfully reduced underage drinking among Native youth using policy as well as therapeutic methods. She serves as Principal Investigator on the Healthy Tribal Nations Project (HealthyTribalNations.org).

Matthew Lesky, Attorney, Court Administrator, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court
Matthew Lesky is an attorney licensed in the state of Michigan and the court administrator for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court. Matthew began his legal career in the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Legal Department as in-house counsel. Following his time as in-house counsel, he served two terms as the Tribal Prosecutor for LTBB. As the Tribal prosecutor he was responsible for the prosecution of criminal cases and representing the Tribe in child welfare matters. He was also involved in the implementation of several grants both as a team member and trainer, including Violence Against Women Act, National Clearinghouse on Abuse Later in Life, Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation, and Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. Matthew has been a member of the Tribal Court’s Waabishkii Miigwaan Drug Court program (WMDCP) since its inception in 2009, first as a prosecutor, then as the defense attorney, and now as the court administrator. The WMDCP is a specialty court focused on high-risk/high-needs clients with substance use disorders. Matthew is a team member on the Family Preservation Court for LTBB which was fully implemented this year. The Family Preservation Court is focused on preventing the removal of children from their families and, in cases in



which removal cannot be prevented, on providing intensive services aimed at reunifying the family as quickly as is safe to do. Matthew is also serves as the defense attorney for the Emmet County Juvenile Drug Court. He has been a past presenter for TLPI and recently presented at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals All RISE 2022 conference. Matthew completed his undergraduate studies at Central Michigan University and received his juris doctorate from Michigan State College of Law.

Amber Loftis, Program Manager, Juvenile Services, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Amber Loftis has nine years of experience working with at-risk youth. Amber has worked for Choctaw Nation for five years, starting in the role of Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator. Her passion is helping youth and families meet their needs by building rapport, offering rehabilitation services and guidance to overcome challenges. She is a member of the Choctaw Nation Multi-Disciplinary Team, Choctaw Nation Service Team, and various other community organizations/coalitions in her area. Amber earned a bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice, with a minor in human services counseling from East Central University. She is a proud mother of two children and currently resides in Southeastern Oklahoma.

Dwight K. Lomayesva (*Hopi*), Coordinator, Intertribal Court of Southern California; Executive Director, America Indian Recruitment Programs

Dwight K. Lomayesva is the Executive Director and Cofounder of the American Indian Recruitment Programs (AIR), a nonprofit organization that serves underprivileged American Indians within education. Through AIR, he led the development of an academic program that merged both culture and academic understanding to promote educational success within secondary instruction. His continuous push of cultural inclusion and historical relevancy within an academic model led to self-empowerment, confidence, and self-esteem among AIR students, which resulted in greater academic performance. Dwight earned his bachelor of arts degree, with in political science, at San Diego State University and earned his Juris Doctor from Western Sierra School of Law. He is a former board member of the San Diego/Imperial Valley ACLU and sits on the Enrollment Management Advisory Council at San Diego State University. Honors include Pacific Sociology Association Social Conscience Award, for AIR Programs, 2009; KPBS Local Hero, San Diego, 2010; American Indian Community Honoree at the San Diego-Balboa Park Powwow, 2014; and 2018 UPCEA Leadership in Diversity Award that recognizes an individual or a program representing best practices in promoting the educational success of diverse students. Formerly, Dwight served as the Director of Tribal Learning Community and Educational Exchange at the UCLA School of Law from 2012 through 2018, and presently works with Intertribal Court of Southern California in development of a Tribal Youth Peer Court. Dwight is a member of the Hopi Tribe.

Angela M. Medrano (*Cahuilla Band of Indians*) Pro tem and Youth Court Judge, Intertribal Court of Southern California

Angela M. Medrano is a pro tem and Youth Court Judge at the Intertribal Court of Southern California (ICSC). She is a graduate of the University of Southern California (B.A.) and the University of San Diego's School of Law (J.D.). She's spent her legal career advancing Tribal interests and is an instructor for the Introduction to Tribal Legal Studies through the University of California, San Diego extension in collaboration with American Indian Recruitment Programs and ICSC. This spring semester she taught Native American Law at the University of San Diego, School of Law, as an adjunct professor. Additionally,



Ms. Medrano is a former board member of the California Indian Law Association, a current board member for the San Diego County Bar Association, and current president of the Native American Lawyers Association of San Diego County. Over the years, she has also served on various boards, committees, and commissions for her tribe—the Cahuilla Band of Indians.

Hon. Eric M. Mehnert, Chief Judge, Penobscot Nation Tribal Courts; American Bar Association Region 1 Judicial Outreach Liaison

Hon. Eric M. Mehnert has served as the Chief Judge of the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court since 2008. He presides over the Nation’s Criminal and Civil Courts as well as the Nation’s Wellness Court. He tells anyone who will listen that it is the best job he ever had, and ever hopes to have. He has also served as the Wellness Court Judge for the Hopi Tribe in Arizona. He was appointed in 2016 to help establish the Tribe’s Wellness Court, which is now fully active. In 2019 he worked with the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe in Wisconsin to help establish their Wellness Court, and it is fully active. He has presented on the benefits of Wellness Courts at seminars hosted by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, the North American Indian Court Judges Association, the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the American Bar Association, and the Maine Bar Association. He serves as a Contract Judge for the Bureau of Indian Affairs where he is a member of a team reviewing Tribal Courts to assist in meeting the due process requirements of the Tribal Law and Order Act and Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction under the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Mandi Moon (*Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe*), Community Resource Navigator, Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe

Mandi Moon is an enrolled member of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe located in Kingston, Washington. Having grown up in the Tribal community, Mandi has always wanted the best for her people. With compassion in mind and heart, her goal has always been to help support, guide, and give hope to her people. Mandi has worked for the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe for twenty-seven years. She currently serves as the Community Resource Navigator, connecting services and resources to individuals in need, and helps navigate access to systems and services available to Tribal and community members. Mandi also serves as a consultant with the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. Prior to her current roles, Mandi has served as an Administrative Assistance, Domestic Violence Advocate/Victims Advocate, and a Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator. One of Mandi’s biggest career goals involves researching, developing, and implementing the Port Gamble S’Klallam Healing to Wellness Court. When Mandi is not working, you will find her cheering for her talented teenage daughter at local sporting events.

Alisha Morrison (*Rosebud Sioux Tribe*), Senior Program Manager, Tribal Justice Exchange, Center for Justice Innovation

Alisha Morrison is a Senior Program Manager for the Center for Justice Innovation’s Tribal Justice Exchange team, which seeks to promote the sharing of information between state and Tribal Courts and provides technical assistance to tribes seeking to develop or enhance their justice systems. Alisha works with Tribal Courts to assist with justice system needs assessments, strategic planning projects and implementation of problem-solving practices. Alisha holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from



the University of Arizona, with a minor in adolescents, community, and education, and a Juris Doctor with concentrations in Indigenous peoples law and policy and family law from the University of Arizona College of Law. She is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and is licensed to practice law in the state of New York.

Elton Naswood (*Diné*), Program Coordinator, National American Indian Court Judges Association
Elton Naswood is the Program Coordinator at the National American Indian Court Judges Association. He was a Senior Program Analyst in the Capacity Building Division at the Office of Minority Health Resource Center with the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Health and Human Services. Prior to his work in the public health field, Mr. Naswood worked with Tribal Law and Policy Institute providing technical assistance to Tribal drug courts and substance abuse agencies and served as a trainer for the National Drug Court Institute for the Tribal Drug Court Initiative. He also worked with Tribal Victims Assistance programs throughout in Indian Country. Mr. Naswood received his bachelor of arts degree in sociology and American Indian Justice Studies from Arizona State University and attended the graduate degree program in American Indian Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Karen Otis, Deputy Director, Treatment Court Programs, National Training and Technical Assistance, Center for Justice Innovation

Karen Otis is the Deputy Director with the Center's department of treatment court programs, delivers expert assistance to state and local jurisdictions in the areas of adult drug courts, family drug courts, veterans treatment courts, mental health courts, and more. Karen also designs and delivers remote trainings via webinar and videoconference, and she develops content for the National Drug Court Online Learning System. Karen is a licensed mental health counselor with more than a decade of experience in family treatment court. She holds a master's degree in forensic psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a master's degree in mental health counseling from the City College of New York.

Kristina Pacheco (*Pueblo of Laguna*), Tribal Wellness Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Kristina Pacheco serves as a Tribal Law and Institute Tribal Wellness Specialist, is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna, and resides in the village of Paraje/Casa Blanca, New Mexico. She is a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor in the state of New Mexico and has more than twenty years of experience in the field of substance abuse treatment and prevention. Prior to joining the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, she worked for the Pueblo of Laguna for fourteen years as a Supervising Probation Officer (2004–10), Lead Counselor (2010–14), and Behavioral Health Program Manager (2014–19). In 2007, Kristina and the staff of the Tribal Court began the Pueblo of Laguna Healing to Wellness Court (HTWC). The HTWC was granted Mentor Court Status in 2017 by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Drug Court Initiatives. Kristina also provided training and technical assistance to other Native communities as a consultant.

Cayla Sanderson, Program Manager, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

Cayla Sanderson is a Program Manager for Bernalillo County's Metropolitan Court Urban Native American Healing to Wellness Program in Albuquerque, NM. Prior to her role as the Program Manager for Healing to Wellness, she worked as a Court Probation Officer II for seven years in various different units such as Misdemeanor Pre-trial, Felony Pre-trial and the Intake/Pre-Sentence Report Unit at the



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court. In these roles she monitored court compliance and collaborated with community resources to aid in access to treatment services such as substance abuse and a variety of different mental health needs. Ms. Sanderson has also worked for New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department as a Permanency Planning Worker for three years. In this role, she helped children and their families develop treatment plans with attainable goals to help build a healthy foundation to achieve reunification. In this capacity, she collaborated with various Native American Pueblo's on ICWA cases to ensure cultural needs of the families were being met. Ms. Sanderson earned her Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from New Mexico State University in 2012. She is currently enrolled in the Western New Mexico University Masters of Social Work Program and is expected to graduate from the program May of 2024. Ms. Sanderson feels fortunate to be a part of a program that incorporates traditional healing and has a team that is truly invested in the participant's success.

Andrea Seielstad, National American Indian Court Judges Association, Consultant; Professor of Law and Director of Clinical Programs, University of Dayton, School of Law
Professor Andrea Seielstad, Esq., teaches clinical and doctrinal courses. In both kinds of courses, she integrates problem-solving exercises and applied lawyering skills, typically within the context of representing real clients. She practiced law as a staff attorney for DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc. in Crownpoint, New Mexico, representing members of the Navajo Nation before the Courts of the Navajo Nation, federal and state court, and administrative tribunals. She has taught also at the law schools of the universities of New Mexico and Idaho, representing clients as a clinical teacher before the Courts of the Nez Perce Tribe. She is licensed to practice law in the Navajo Nation, New Mexico, and Ohio.

Pat Sekaquaptewa (Hopi), Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts Training and Technical Assistance Manager, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
Most recently, Pat Sekaquaptewa consulted with RurAL CAP's Alaska Tribal Justice Resource Center in Anchorage, Alaska, as part of its training and technical assistance services to CTAS Purpose Areas 3, 8, and 9 tribes in their Tribal Court and Tribal Healing to Wellness Court planning, implementation, and enhancement. Prior to that, she was an assistant professor with the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development where her research and teaching was focused on federal-Indian law, Tribal law and government, Native justice issues, and rural human and economic development. Prior to that, she served as the founding Executive Director of the Nakwatsvewat Institute (TNI) and later as the president of TNI's board of directors. Under her leadership, TNI established Hopi Dispute Resolution Services (HDRS), a community mediation program serving the Hopi community in Arizona. Early in her career, Ms. Sekaquaptewa served as the Director of the UCLA Native Nations Law and Policy Center and its Tribal Legal Development Clinic. Prior to this, she cofounded and launched the Hopi Appellate Court Clinic at UC Berkeley's School of Law with Jerry Gardner. This clinic was subsequently housed at, and expanded by, the UCLA School of Law and became its Tribal Appellate Court Clinic. At UCLA, she provided instruction in Tribal constitution and statutory drafting and Tribal Court development. She also taught Native Nation Building in the UCLA American Indian Studies Program. Today she also serves as the Chief Justice of the Hopi Tribe's high court in Arizona where she has been an Associate Justice for many years. She is a cofounder, and former longtime member, of the Board of the Directors of the Tribal Law and Policy Institute in West Hollywood, California.



Ashay Shah, Senior Program Associate, Center Children and Family Futures

Ashay Shah is a policy and research focused social worker with a strong commitment to serving the needs of disadvantaged children, youth, and adults including special-needs populations, adults with mental health or substance use disorders, and children in the child welfare system. He has spent the last eight years working for the Center for Children and Family Futures as an evaluator, technical assistance provider, and program manager. His experience in direct service, policy, and research and evaluation allows him to navigate complex systems of care and provide consultation to systems and programs across the country. He is currently a Senior Associate for the National Family Treatment Court Training and Technical Assistance Program. Mr. Shah received a master's degree in social work from the University of Southern California and a bachelor of arts degree in international studies with a minor in humanities and law from the University of California, Irvine.

Laura Smith, Program Coordinator, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Laura Smith has been with Tribal Law and Policy Institute since 2019. She completed her bachelor of arts degree in psychology at Vassar College with a correlate in sustainability. Upon graduating, Laura served as project manager for the World Well-Being Project, a multidisciplinary research team based out of the University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center. Laura is a percussionist and student of somatic and energy-based modalities.

Miigwaans Smith (*Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Ojibwe, Bodewatomi*) Female Cultural Resource Advisor, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Tribal Court

Miigwaans Smith is the Female Cultural Resource Advisor for Little Traverse Bay Bands (LTBB) Tribal Court. She began working there in September of 2022 in the Waabishkii Miigwan Drug Court Program (WMDCP) and the Family Preservation Court. WMDCP is an adult drug court program focused on implementing culture and language as prevention for clients with substance use and mental health disorders. LTBB's Family Preservation Court has been active for the past year helping struggling families. She has worked with children in the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe involved in the SAMHSA Federal Grant, Project Aware with First Lady Jill Biden, in providing cultural knowledge and teachings for healing with at-risk youth. Miigwaans completed two years at Central Michigan University and played for the Division 1 Women's Lacrosse Team and plans on continuing her degree in counseling specializing in youth studies this fall.

Sheldon Spotted Elk (*Northern Cheyenne Tribe*), Senior Director, Judicial National Engagement, Casey Family Programs

Sheldon Spotted Elk works as the Senior Director of Judicial and National Engagement at Casey Family Programs. He has a background and presents regularly on tribal law, child welfare and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). He is currently a judge on the Ute Indian Tribe Court of Appeals (Fort Duchesne, Utah) in a jurisdiction he once represented children in child welfare and juvenile delinquency matters. He has worked as an adjunct professor teaching a law school course on Family Law in Indian Country. He was recognized as a National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development 40 Under 40 recipient, a prestigious award which recognizes 40 emerging American Indian leaders from across Indian Country. He has published an influential law review article on tribal constitutional reform and has authored articles on the ICWA. Sheldon is a graduate from University of New Mexico School of Law and



received the Certificate in Federal Indian Law. And he and his two sons are (Tsistah) members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

Rachelle Tenorio (*Santo Domingo Pueblo*), Research Associate, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Rachelle Tenorio, M.S.W., Ph.D., is an enrolled member of Santo Domingo Pueblo (Kewa), New Mexico. Dr. Tenorio received a master's degree in social work from New Mexico Highlands University with a concentration in government nonprofit management in 2012. Thereafter, in 2018, she obtained a Ph.D. in justice studies from Arizona State University focused on deconstructing trauma in Pueblo communities. She teaches for the New Mexico Highlands University Social Work Program. Cumulatively, Dr. Tenorio has more than twelve years of research and prevention experience with American Indian communities. She continues to maintain strong ties to her pueblo through traditional activities and advocacy. Never forgetting the importance of her children, family, and her pueblo, Dr. Tenorio strives to adhere to the values she has learned through competence, compassion, and commitment to excellence.

Erin Thin Elk (*Sicangu Lakota Oyate*), Consultant, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Erin Thin Elk is an enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) and of Irish descendency. She earned a bachelor of arts in English and a certificate in Native American Studies (2002) and a masters of social work (2004) from the University of Iowa. Ms. Thin Elk holds a passionate commitment to healing, wellness, and social justice for Indigenous children, youth, and families. She is a mother, sister, auntie, grandma, and daughter who loves her children, family, culture, and cooking! Her professional experience includes community-based participatory research and evaluation, suicide prevention and postvention training, culturally based programmatic development, restorative practices and peacemaking circles, and university teaching and educational outreach with Indigenous communities across the United States. She currently serves as Senior Tribal Evaluator with One Fire Associates, LLC and Consultant with the Tribal Youth Resource Center as a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist working with Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court programs.

Gayle Thom, Retired Federal Bureau of Investigation

Gayle Thom was honored to work for ten years responding to violent crime scenes in Tribal communities, assisting victims, survivors, and their families through the investigative and prosecution phases of the criminal justice system. Gayle frequently had the privilege of collaborating with Tribal Court professionals. Serving on Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) nationwide Rapid Deployment and Evidence Response Teams, she responded to critical incidents across the country: Ground Zero after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and the Red Lake Nation school shooting. Gayle was the first FBI direct-service Victim Specialist, implementing the program in what Department of Justice calls "Indian Country." The program has now grown to 40+ FBI Indian Country Victim Specialists. She also implemented the Crash Assistance Program for the South Dakota Highway Patrol and assisted with developing the first Victim Assistance Academy for Bureau of Indian Affairs. Now retired from the FBI, she has continued to serve non-Native and American Indian/Alaska Native communities through her consulting work in training and technical assistance roles for more than twenty years.



Hon. Renee Torres (*Pueblo of Isleta*), Judge, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

Judge Renee Torres is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Isleta in the State of New Mexico where she grew up on the Isleta Reservation. She was elected in the November 2016 General Election to Division III of the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her experience includes nine years as a Public Defender attorney at the Law Offices of the Public Defender (formerly the NM Public Defender Department) and three and a half years as a tribal judge, two years as Associate Judge at the Pueblo of Isleta Tribal Court and a year and a half as Chief Judge at the Pueblo of Zia Tribal Court. Judge Torres began serving as a State Judge in the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court in January 2017. Judge Torres graduated from New Mexico State University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism and graduated from the UNM School of Law in May 2003 with a Juris Doctorate degree and the Indian Law Certificate. Judge Torres attended the American Indian Law Center's Pre-law Summer Institute (PLSI) in the summer of 2000 and received the Advocacy Award for her writing and advocacy skills. She has been a member of the New Mexico Bar Association since 2004. Judge Torres has judged the American Indian Law Center's Pre-Law Summer Institute Moot Court, taken numerous courses at the National Judicial College (NJC) in Reno, Nevada, for both State and Tribal judicial education and co-instructed a course at the NJC. She has been a member of the New Mexico Tribal-State Judicial Consortium (established by the NM Supreme Court) since April 2013 and was appointed by the Supreme Court to serve as the Co-chair in 2019. Judge Torres has presided over the Urban Native American Healing to Wellness Court (HTW) at the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court since May 2017, in addition to her regular criminal docket. Judge Torres is also an active member of the NM Partners association comprised of private and state agencies that collaborate to improve the lives of families and children in the State of New Mexico.

Lauren van Schilfgaarde (*Cochiti Pueblo*), Assistant Professor of Law, UCLA School of Law

Lauren van Schilfgaarde is an Assistant Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law and previously was a UCLA Law Research Fellow and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Tribal Legal Development Clinic Director at UCLA Law. Van Schilfgaarde supervised live-client projects concerning Tribal governance and justice systems, ethics, cultural resource protection, voting, child welfare, and more. She received her undergraduate degree at Colorado College and her law degree from UCLA School of Law. Van Schilfgaarde previously served as the Tribal Law Specialist at the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI) in West Hollywood, California. At TLPI, van Schilfgaarde coordinated training and technical assistance to Tribal Courts, focusing primarily on Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts, restorative justice, Tribal Court infrastructure, and federal Indian law. At TLPI, van Schilfgaarde worked with more than eighty Tribal nations on various legal infrastructure projects. Van Schilfgaarde served as a law clerk for the Native American Rights Fund and Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. She was a Public Interest Fellow at American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado. Van Schilfgaarde currently serves as a board member for the National Native American Bar Association, as vice-chair for the Native American Concerns Committee of the American Bar Association, as a commissioner for the Lawyers Network Commission of the Center for Reproductive Rights, and as a board member of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Child Well-Being Program.

Hon. Korey Wahwassuck (*Cree*), Judge, Itasca County District Court



Judge Korey Wahwassuck served as a Tribal Court judge for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Court from 2006 until 2013 when she was appointed by Governor Mark Dayton to serve as a Minnesota District Court Judge for the Ninth Judicial District. Previously, Judge Wahwassuck served as a Kansas Supreme Court Certified Mediator, and practiced law for fifteen years, specializing in Indian law, child welfare, and juvenile delinquency. Judge Wahwassuck was a founding member of the first Joint Tribal-State Jurisdiction Wellness Courts in the nation and authored “The New Face of Justice: Joint Tribal-State Jurisdiction” for the Washburn Law Journal and “Building a Legacy of Hope: Perspectives on Joint Tribal-State Jurisdiction” for the William Mitchell Law Review. Judge Wahwassuck is also a member of Project T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) helping other jurisdictions create Tribal-state collaborative courts of their own.

Courtney Williams, Senior Program Manager, Technical Assistance Department, Center for Court Innovation

Courtney Williams, M.S., is a Senior Program Manager for the Technical Assistance Department at the Center for Court Innovation. In this role she provides state-level expert assistance and strategic implementation and enhancement training to treatment courts. Prior to her work at the center, Ms. Williams was the Strategic Planner for the New York City Criminal Justice Agency, where she oversaw the development and ongoing operation of new programs and policies for the Queens Supervised Release program. Ms. Williams received a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and a master of science degree in public and urban policy analysis from The New School in New York City.

Sarah Sense-Wilson (Oglala), Tulalip Tribes Problem Gambling Coordinator, Tulalip Behavioral Wellness Center

Sarah Sense-Wilson serves as Tulalip Tribes Problem Gambling Coordinator at Tulalip Behavioral Wellness Center. Sarah has worked in Tulalip for the past nine years. Prior to her role at Tulalip, she worked in Suquamish and in Seattle area as a clinician in various capacities. She is a certified Gambling supervisor and is cofounder of the Problem Gambling Intertribal Providers Coalition. Sarah has assisted in co-developing problem gambling services and programs in tribal communities throughout the region. Sarah is highly motivated to expand, improve and implement effective strategies for restoring wellness and health for those impacted by problem gambling. Sarah’s educational background includes a bachelor of arts in Political Science, UW 1999, Chemical Dependency License 2004, and she completed her master of arts degree in Applied Psychology from Antioch University in 2010. Sarah is a Washington State licensed Mental Health Counselor, and a certified Problem Gambling Counselor. She has worked in the chemical dependency field for over twenty years, specializing in both family and couples counseling. Sarah and her partner Mark Peltier have one daughter who is enrolled at North Dakota State University Doctorate in Indigenous Health program. Sarah’s most important role is grandmother “Unci” to her ‘Takoja’ grandson Waylin.

Marilyn Bruguier Zimmerman (Nakota, Dakota, Ojibway, Newe), Sr. Director of Policy and Programs, National Native Children’s Trauma Center

Marilyn Bruguier Zimmerman, M.S.W., Ph.D., is the former Tribal Senior Policy Advisor at Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Founding Director of the National Native Children’s



Trauma Center. She has been a member of numerous national, state, and local committees and workgroups including the U.S. Presidential (Obama) Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities and the Advisory Committee of the Attorney General’s (Holder) National Task Force on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence. Dr. Zimmerman is currently serving as the chair of the Native Advisory Committee to the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children. Dr. Zimmerman has expertise in trauma-informed systems-change, provides training and technical assistance in all service systems serving American Indian/Alaska Native children and families, and has participated in cultural adaptation of evidence-based and best practices. Finally, Dr. Zimmerman understands the relationship and community-based principals for the development of trauma-informed best practices for tribes.

