



Celebrating MILS's 40th Anniversary
(Benefiting MILS through the ATJ Fund)



October 13, 2015
(the evening prior to the Annual Meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan)

Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort
*6800 E Soaring Eagle Blvd
Mt Pleasant, Michigan*

5:30 p.m. Strolling Dinner and Entertainment

Host Committee

*Karrie Witchman, Chairperson; Tom St. Dennis, Honorable Tanya Wanageshik,
Honorable Angela Sherigan, Honorable Allie Maldonado, and Professor Kirsten Carlson*

Dear Colleagues:

We will be celebrating Michigan Indian Legal Services turning 40, and benefiting MILS operations through the ATJ Fund, on October 13, 2015 at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort the evening prior to the Annual United Tribes meeting (5:30 pm Dinner and Entertainment) and we would love for you to attend.

Committee Chair: Karrie Witchman, Rosette LLP

Additional Information: Cameron Fraser, MILS, at 800-968-6877 or cfraser@mils.org

Sponsorship Opportunities: Celee Marchek. MSBF, 800-968-6723 or Celee@msbf.org

In September, 1975, a small but visionary group of Michigan Indians and attorneys met at Ranch Rudolf, south of Traverse City, to organize Michigan Indian Legal Services. MILS was created to provide legal services to low income Indian individuals and tribes to further sustainable economic development and self-government, protection of tribal cultures and religious freedoms, overcome discrimination, and preserve Indian families. MILS offices were initially housed in a small cinder block building on Garfield Road, only a few miles south of the present location.

Over the years, MILS has helped a number of the tribes in Michigan obtain federal recognition. MILS filed the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa's petition for federal recognition and, in 1980, they became the first tribe in the US to be recognized under the Bureau of Indian Affairs' regulations. In the 1980s, MILS worked with Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to gain separate federal recognition, which was achieved in 1988. MILS also worked with Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa, Little River Band of Ottawa and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi to gain legislative affirmation in 1994.

As the tribes in Michigan have gained federal recognition and achieved economic self-sufficiency, MILS's focus has turned from federal recognition projects and tribal governance development to direct representation of individuals to defend the rights of native peoples and families. MILS attorneys represent parents at all levels of the Michigan court system in Indian Child Welfare Act and Michigan Indian Family Preservation Act cases. See *In re McCarrick/Lamoreaux*, 2014 Mich. App. LEXIS 2039 (Mich. Ct. App. Oct. 23, 2014); *In re In re Roe*, 764 N.W.2d 789 (Mich. Ct. App. 2008); *Empson-Laviolette v. Crago*, 760 N.W.2d 793 (Mich. Ct. App. 2008); *In re Elliott*, 554 N.W.2d 32 (Mich. Ct. App. 1996); *In re Kiogima*, 472 N.W.2d 13 (Mich. Ct. App. 1991); *In re Hanson*, 470 N.W.2d 669 (Mich. Ct. App. 1991). MILS has also provided representation for individuals in 11 of the 12 tribal courts in Michigan. MILS handles a variety of tribal court cases, such as child welfare, juvenile delinquency, garnishment, eviction, and criminal defense.

Please join host committee members Tom St. Dennis, Tanya Wanageshik, Honorable Angela Sherigan, Honorable Allie Maldonado, Professor Kirsten Carlson and me at this important celebration and please consider becoming a sponsor by returning the attached Sponsorship Form by September 14, 2015. To celebrate our 40th Anniversary with us, please complete the attached Ticket Registration Form.

We hope to see you in October at this wonderful event! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karrie Witchman, Rosette LLP
Chairperson, MILS 40th Anniversary Celebration Host Committee

Enclosures: Ticket Registration Form
 Sponsorship Donation Form

Michigan Indian Legal Services participates in the Access to Justice Campaign to increase resources for civil legal aid to the Michigan's civil legal aid programs. Tax deductible contributions to the ATJ Fund are received and administered by the Michigan State Bar Foundation according to the Access to Justice Fund Guidelines located at www.msbf.org/atjfund.