

Michigan Indian Legal Services, Inc.

MILS REVIEW

Providing civil legal services to low-income Indian individuals and tribes to further self-sufficiency, overcome discrimination, assist tribal governments and preserve Indian families.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT by John R. Runyan, Jr.

In this issue of MILS Review, I would like to thank all the people who helped to make MILS's 40th



Anniversary celebrations a success and to thank you from the bottom

of my heart for your continued support for the provision of legal services in the to Native American communities in Michigan.

We decided that our 40th Anniversary was such a significant milestone that we wanted to have two celebra-



tions, rather than just one. The first—which took place at the Courtyard Marriott in Detroit on September 11, 2015



and recognized my forty years of service as an MILS Trustee--was organized by a host committee which included Chair John Lemire, Andy Nickelhoff, Eva Kennedy, Tom St. Dennis, Honorable Angela Sherigan and

Professor Kirsten Carlson. The second--held at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort in Mt. Pleasant on October 13, 2015--was organized by a host committee composed of Chair Karrie Wichtman, Professor Kirsten Matoy Carlson, Frank Ettawageshik, Honorable Allie Maldonado, Tom St. Dennis, Honorable Angela Sherigan and Honorable Tanya Wanageshik. I would like to thank all of those who worked behind the scenes, including staff members and their families, to make both evenings a success.





I would also like to thank all of the sponsors of and donors for to both events; they are individually listed in the pages that follow. Of course, neither celebration would have been a success without all those who purchased tickets for one or both events. While they are too numerous to name individually, they also have our thanks. Many of those in attendance not only bought tickets but also helped to support MILS by participating in the silent auction held in connection with each event. Those who



donated auction items for one or both events include the following: Janice Adams, Bay Mills Indian Community, Lloyd Beckman, Cami Fraser, Robin Fraser, Grand River Bands, Dwayne Jarman, David Johnson, Jim Keedy, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, Elizabeth Orzechowski, Steve Naganashe Perry, Tom St. Dennis, Bucko Teeple, Sue Theeck, Minnie Wabanimkee, and the Ward and Eis Gallery of Petoskey. I would also like to thank Frank Ettawageshik who did such a masterful job of serving as Master of Ceremonies at the 40th Anniversary celebration and Leslie Van Alstine who created a wonderful DVD presentation of old MILS photographs.

Because of your support, and the support of others across the state, MILS continues to be able to provide free legal services to indigent members of the Native American communities throughout Michigan. Over the years, MILS has helped a number of the tribes in Michigan obtain federal recognition. As the tribes in Michigan have gained federal recognition and achieved economic self-sufficiency, MILS's focus has turned from projects for the tribal governments 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 cases under the Indian Child Welfare Act and Michigan Indian Family Preservation Act. cases. MILS has also provided representation for individuals in 11 of the 12 tribal courts in Michigan in a variety of tribal court cases, including child welfare, juvenile delinquency, garnishment, eviction, and criminal defense.



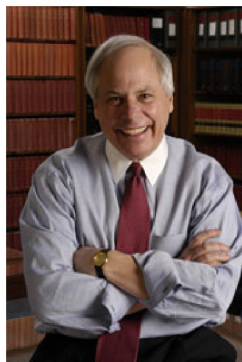
We have had a good first 40 years and we look forward to the next 40! Thank you again for your continued support!



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MICHIGAN INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In a Tribal Court child welfare case, a MILS attorney helped a parent get her case successfully closed after several months of successful reunification with her children.

welfare case dismissed at the preliminary hearing.

A MILS attorney assisted a Tribal member in resuming parenting time visits with his daughter after



In three related Tribal Court child welfare cases, a MILS attorney represented a parent in negotiating a diversionary agreement regarding his cases and ultimately having all three cases dismissed.

We were contacted by a young couple with four children who had been living in an unsafe home for the past two years. The landlord filed a summons and complaint for eviction against the couple that was scheduled to be heard a week later. A MILS attorney negotiated a settlement with the Landlord that provided for an immediate dismissal of the lawsuit, a payment of \$1000 and allowed the tenants to remain in the home for one more month to find alternative housing.

We were contacted by an elder with questions about her pension. She had received a notice from her former employer that she could opt out of monthly payments for the rest of her life and, instead, receive a single lump sum payment. She was confused by the notice and so requested our help with the situation. With the help of a MILS attorney, the elder was able to make a fully informed decision.

In another Tribal Court child welfare matter, a MILS attorney assisted a Tribal member in getting a child

nonnative grandparents had obtained a guardianship without his knowledge and refused to allow him to see his child.

A MILS attorney drafted a Power of Attorney for Care of a Minor to help a tribal member avoid a potential child welfare case and kept the child out of foster care.

A MILS attorney is helping a client amend his birth certificate to accurately reflect the name of his true father so that he will be eligible to enroll into a Michigan Tribe.

A MILS attorney assisted a tribal member grandmother petition the state court for an order determining heirs so that she could use the court order to eventually access trust funds for her deceased son's three minor children for whom she provides.





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MILS PHOTO VAULT



**Left to Right: Jim Bransky,
Bill Brooks, John Mitchell
and Jim Keedy**

Michigan Indian Legal Services is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to those who qualify. Your support of MILS is critical to our ability to provide legal services that would otherwise be unavailable to Michigan's Native American community. Michigan Indian Legal Services is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to those who qualify. Therefore, we do not collect any money for services provided to our income eligible clients. MILS relies solely on grants and various funding sources, including individual donations to continue to provide our legal services.

You can help! Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution this year by sending any amount to:

Access to Justice Fund
Michigan State Bar Foundation
306 Townsend Street
Lansing, MI 48933

Your continued support will assure MILS' ability to provide free legal services to those that need it most. Michigan Indian Legal Services participates in the Access to Justice Campaign to increase resources for civil legal aid to the poor in Michigan. The ATJ Campaign is a partnership of the State Bar of Michigan, the Michigan State Bar Foundation and 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.

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