

THE INDIGENOUS LAW & POLICY CENTER

Michigan State University College of Law | Indigenous Law & Policy Center

CHECK OUT THE REST OF THIS ISSUE!

Student Spotlight

Supporting Our Students & Communities

18th Annual Indigenous Law Conference

Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

Defending the Indian Child Welfare Act

What's Next?



RETURN TO CAMPUS

As 2022 begins, we reflect upon and celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of our students, faculty, alumni, and community in 2021.

After a year and a half of virtual learning, this past semester was one of change and growth as we welcomed both new and returning students to the halls of the law college. As we transitioned back to in-person learning, some of our students were stepping foot inside the college of law for the first time. We wish to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work and dedication presented by our students, especially the graduating classes of 2020 and 2021 for completing their law school experience despite the difficulties and isolation of remote learning.

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indigenous@law.msu.edu

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Alyana L. Jimerson
Seneca Nation of Indians
J.D. Candidate, 2022
Vice President, MSU NALSA
Area 4 Representative, NNALSA



As our students continue on their pathway for careers in law and Indian law, we wish to take a moment to appreciate the work they have done over the past year. The Indigenous Law & Policy Center strives to give students the opportunity to work in a hands-on manner and support them through their endeavors.

This past summer, Vice President of MSU Native American Law Student Association Alyana Jimerson spent her first weeks at Maier, Pfeffer, Kim, Geary & Cohen, a boutique Indian law firm in Oakland, CA. She spent the second half of her summer in Washington, DC at global law firm Dentons in their Native American Law and Policy (NALP) Group. Jimerson stated "I am grateful for the opportunity to work with both Firms, and I learned so much from both."

Secretary of MSU Native American Law Student Association and Staff Editor for the Michigan State Law Review, Hugh Theut spent his summer clerking for Chief Judge Allie Greenleaf Maldonado of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Theut will be clerking for former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Michael Cavanagh as he mediates the negotiations surrounding the 2000 Consent Decree between the State of Michigan, five Indian Tribes of Michigan, and the Federal Government, and for the summer of 2022 he will be joining Kerr Russell as a Summer Associate.



Hugh Theut
Mackinac Bands of Chippewa
and Ottawa Indians
J.D. Candidate, 2023
Staff Editor, Michigan State Law
Review
Secretary, MSU NALSA

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS & COMMUNITIES

The ILPC hosts and participates in a multitude of events each year, including:



ILPC WELCOME RECEPTION

September 16, 2021

The Indigenous Law & Policy Center hosts a welcome reception for new and returning students studying Indian law at the start of each academic year.

Students have the opportunity to get to know their fellow law students and the faculty and staff of the ILPC, as well as be welcomed and supported in their educational journey.

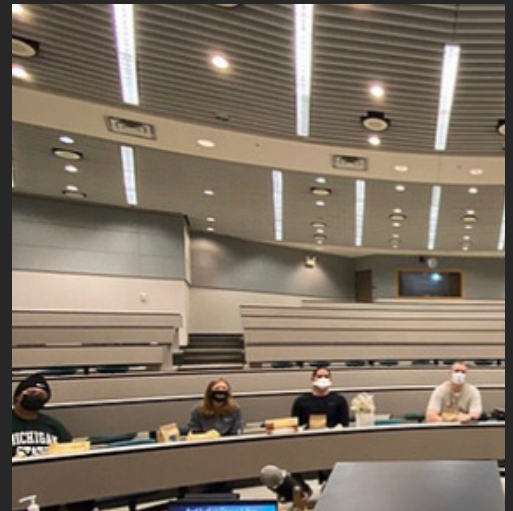
This year's event took place at Patriarche Park on a lovely late summer's day amongst the shaded trees and picnic tables.



ORANGE SHIRT DAY

September 30, 2021

The ILPC handed out orange ribbons for the national Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding School Survivors.



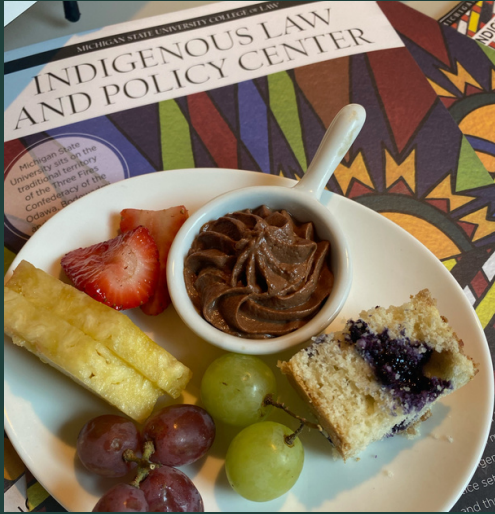
CHECK-IN

November 30, 2021

Some of our ILPC students enjoying an end of the semester check-in and lunch!

PRESIDENT STANLEY'S PRE-GAME RECEPTION

September 11, 2021



The President hosted a delicious brunch at Cowles House.



Legal Counselor Cassondra Church and Communications Coordinator Gabriela Gendreau shared information with attendees about what the ILPC offers.



At the reception, President Stanley thanked the ILPC for their work and encouraged attendees to ask us about the Center. With information stations set up throughout the venue, the reception was a wonderful opportunity to speak with donors and sponsors of the university and other on-campus groups about the ILPC.



Professor Kate Fort discussing the services the ILPC and Clinics provide.



NATIVE WELCOME EVENT

September 29, 2021

Every year American Indian & Indigenous Studies and the North American Indigenous Student Organization put together a Native Welcome Event for Indigenous organizations, community members, staff, and faculty to come together and show support for Native students and allies.

We gathered at the former Indian Encampment Site along the Red Cedar, where the event began with a prayer led by Aarin Dokum, who teaches at the Wednesday night Anishinaabemowin classes held at Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center. This was followed by a wonderful feast of wild rice and corn soup, Indian tacos, and strawberry shortcake.

The Indigenous Law & Policy Center was honored to join the greater MSU Indigenous community at this event and share information about the Center and the Indigenous Law Certificate Program.



There was a wonderful turnout at the Welcome as students and community members sat down together under a large canvas tent strung with lights to eat delicious Indian tacos.



Legal Counselor Cassandra Church shared information about the opportunities and services the Indigenous Law & Policy Center provides.

18TH ANNUAL INDIGENOUS LAW CONFERENCE

Hosted by the Indigenous Law & Policy Center and Tribal In-House Counsel Association

The Indigenous Law & Policy Center and the Tribal In-House Counsel Association hosted their 18th Annual Indigenous Law Conference on November 4 and 5, 2021. This annual event brings together practitioners of Indian law to share their experiences in an open discussion forum.

Panelists included experienced practitioners of Indian Law presenting on their areas of expertise by sharing tips and best practices with the wider law community. Attendees included attorneys from private practice and tribal, state, and federal government.

Panel topics included Tribal Traditional Law, Consultation Practices, ICWA, Self-Governance and Consultation, Deciding When Your Tribal Nation Should Participate in Litigation, Advocacy Strategies, and Egregious Misconduct. This conference is an excellent opportunity for our students of the Indigenous Law Program to learn from leading figures in Indian Law and to network with potential employers.

The tentative dates for the 19th Annual Indigenous Law Conference fall upon November 16-18, 2022.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

MSU College of Law Alum ('07) and Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Bryan Newland delivered this year's keynote address.

Newland outlined his personal experience and pathway to becoming the ASIA. This was followed by an open discussion about leadership role transitions with Newland's successor and Tribal Chair of the Bay Mills Indian Community, MSU Law Alumna Whitney Gravelle ('16).

ILPC FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



CASSONDRRA CHURCH

The ILPC welcomes the recent addition of MSU College of Law alumna Cassandra Church ('21) as Legal Counselor at the Indigenous Law and Policy Center.

Here, she provides academic support to first-year Native American law students, co-teaches the Indian Law Clinic class and the NNALSA Moot Court team, and conducts scholarly research.

Cassandra Church is a citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and was born and raised in West Michigan.

Prior to receiving her Juris Doctorate from Michigan State University College of Law, she received a master's degree in social work from Michigan State University. She is a graduate of the Pre-Law Summer Institute (PLSI) class of 2018 and served as a PLSI Teaching Assistant in the summer of 2019.

Cassandra Church is also the recipient of the 2021 American Indian Law Section Bar Study Scholarship award.



ILPC alumni Cassandra Church, Sapphire Long Knife, and Kacey Chopito at their graduation ceremony on May 14, 2021.



MATTHEW FLETCHER

Director of the ILPC & Professor of Law at Michigan State University College of Law.

Matthew is a citizen of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and sits as an appellate judge for several tribes. He is a prolific author on federal Indian law and is the primary editor and author of Turtle Talk.

An educator and practitioner of Indian law, Matthew L.M. Fletcher frequently serves as a speaker at events where he shares tips and best practices with other professionals and Indigenous law students about legal and social issues affecting Native communities.

This fall, Matthew presented at multiple conferences and webinars, including the 18th Annual Indigenous Law Conference co-sponsored by the Michigan State University College of Law's Indigenous Law & Policy Center and the Tribal In-House Counsel Association. At this conference, Matthew spoke on a panel regarding tribal customary law and Anishinaabe law, where he used pages from his book *Ghost Road* as a launching point to discuss his comic book *Anishinaabe Jurisprudence*. His second talk for the conference was the ethics lecture, wherein he used his comic book *Egregious Misconduct* and discussed methods tribes can take to prevent and remedy misconduct.

At the Maine Law School Indian Law and History Lecture, Matthew presented using his comic book *Understanding Federal Indian Law* in Maine to discuss current issues in Federal Indian law. Additionally, Matthew virtually presented a comic book for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, as well as a for the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association. These presentations about ICWA, VAWA, and Tribal Courts laid out the jurisdiction, procedure, standards, and challenges faced by Indian Tribes.

With research assistance and bench memos prepared by students in the Michigan State University College of Indian Law Clinic, Matthew authored three tribal court opinions. These included *Cabazon Band of Mission Indians v. Lexington Insurance Co.* (Cabazon Reservation Court of Appeals); *Lower Elwha Housing Authority v. Francis* (Lower Elwha Court of Appeals); and *Miller v. Rolin* (Poarch Band of Creek Indians Supreme Court).





WENONA SINGEL

Associate Director of the ILPC & Associate Professor of Law at the Michigan State University College of Law.

Wenona recently completed a two-year appointment as Deputy Legal Counsel and Advisor for Tribal Affairs for Governor Gretchen Whitmer. She was also appointed by President Barack Obama to the Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, a position she held for five years.



Wenona Singel presented on “Indigenous Women and the Right to Vote” on a panel on New Books and Women’s Rights hosted by the Southeastern Association of Law Schools on July 30.

On October 13, Wenona and Matthew were interviewed for an episode of Forward, a podcast produced by the Wisconsin Law Review, which can be accessed on any podcast streaming platform. Wenona and Matthew also gave a guest lecture on “Supreme Court Perspectives on Indigenous Legal Systems” for the Indigenous Legal Orders course offered by the Windsor Law Faculty on October 29.

At the 18th Annual Indigenous Law Conference on November 4, Wenona gave a presentation on “Consultation Practices as the Bedrock of Good Government-to-Government Relations.” On November 5, she presented on “The Development of the Restatement of the Law of American Indians” for the 2021 Wisconsin Law Review Symposium in Madison, WI. On November 16, Wenona gave a presentation on “Native American Rights, Activism, and Social Justice” for the National Diversity Counsel’s National Native American Summit.

Professor Singel also gave a presentation on “Equal Protection and Other Constitutional Attacks on Indian Law” for the Federal Bar Association’s annual D.C. Indian Law Conference on November 19. On November 30, Professor Singel was interviewed on Stateside of Michigan Radio to discuss the life of Cora Reynolds Anderson, the first woman elected to the Michigan legislature and the first Native American woman to serve in a state legislature in the US.

Wenona attended the Gathering of Indigenous Legal Scholars at Arizona State University’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law on December 9, where she presented on her current book project, which recounts the separation of Native American children from their families in five successive generations of Professor Singel’s own family, from the early 19th century to the 1970s. The book examines the circumstances that led to these separations through the lens of federal Indian law and policy. The book also represents a story that is emblematic of federal Indian law and policy’s impact on Indian families across the nation.



KATE FORT

Director of Clinics at the Michigan State University College of Law where she runs the Indian Law Clinic and teaches the Clinic class and other classes in federal Indian law.

In 2015, she started the Indian Child Welfare Act Appellate Project.

The Project works with law students and tribes to ensure high quality ICWA representation in complex litigation.

Kate Fort spoke at the 18th Annual Indigenous Law Conference hosted by the ILPC and TICA on “Beyond Brackeen: On Going Protections for Indian Children” with April Olson (Rothstein Donatelli) and Austin Moore, MSU Law '20 (Native American Disability Law Center). She also gave presentations on the Indian Child Welfare Act at the Wisconsin Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts, the Michigan Court Improvement Program summer series, the New York State Indian Child Welfare Act Conference, the Native American Trial Court Judges Association annual conference, the 34th Annual Indian Law Symposium at the University of Washington, the annual Oklahoma Courts Sovereignty Symposium, and the child welfare data non-profit Evident Change.

For Clinic clients, she and clinic students filed an amicus brief at the Washington Supreme Court, a certiorari petition at the U.S. Supreme Court, a motion for summary judgement in the Northern District of California, and provided technical assistance on a principle brief in the Alaska Supreme Court. Clinic students also provided bench brief assistance on multiple tribal appellate court cases and legal advice for a local Native non-profit.



On September 8, Professor Fort received the 2021 Tecumseh Peacekeeping Award from the American Indian Law Section of the Michigan State Bar for her work with law students and tribes.



GABRIELA GENDREAU

The ILPC welcomes MSU College of Communication Arts & Sciences alumna Gabriela Gendreau ('20) as its new Communications Coordinator.

Here, she coordinates events for the Center, communicates with students, provides access to resources, and assists in the planning of the Annual Indigenous Law Conference.

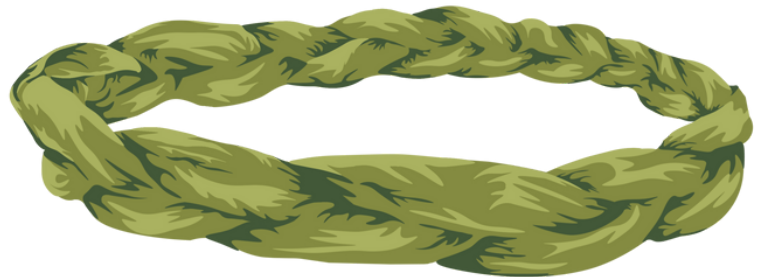
Gabriela Gendreau is a graduate of the MSU College of Communication Arts & Sciences Game Design & Development Program where she specialized as a 3D Artist.

In 2020 and 2021, Gendreau worked as a(n) Illustrator/Graphic Designer/Creative Consultant through Nielsen Design Group on the "Childhood is Sacred" media campaign for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan. The campaign centers upon childhood wellbeing and supporting parents and guardians in their journey.

Her illustrations portray meaningful and intentional moments of parents and guardians with their children doing various everyday and cultural activities. Her work has been featured on informational materials, as well as billboards in Northern Michigan in and near tribal communities in 2021.



A family walking their dog.



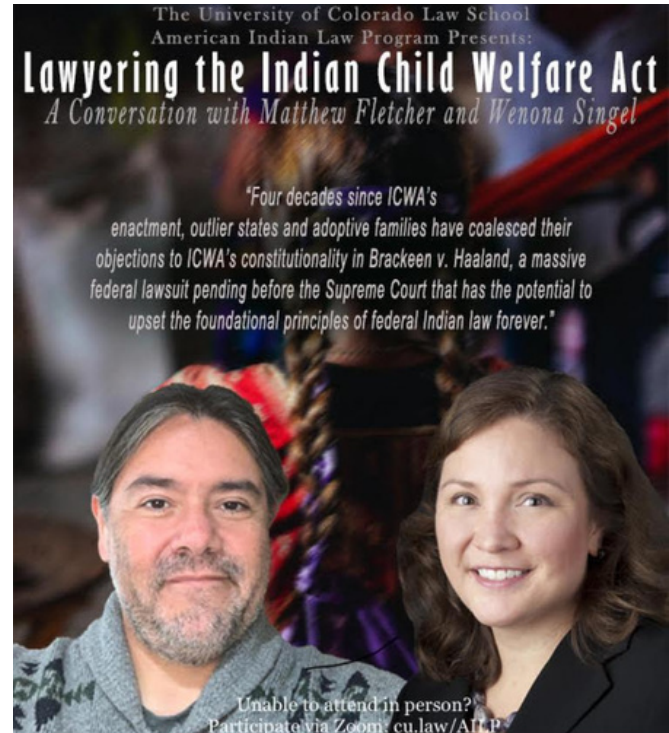
Braided sweetgrass.

DEFENDING THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT



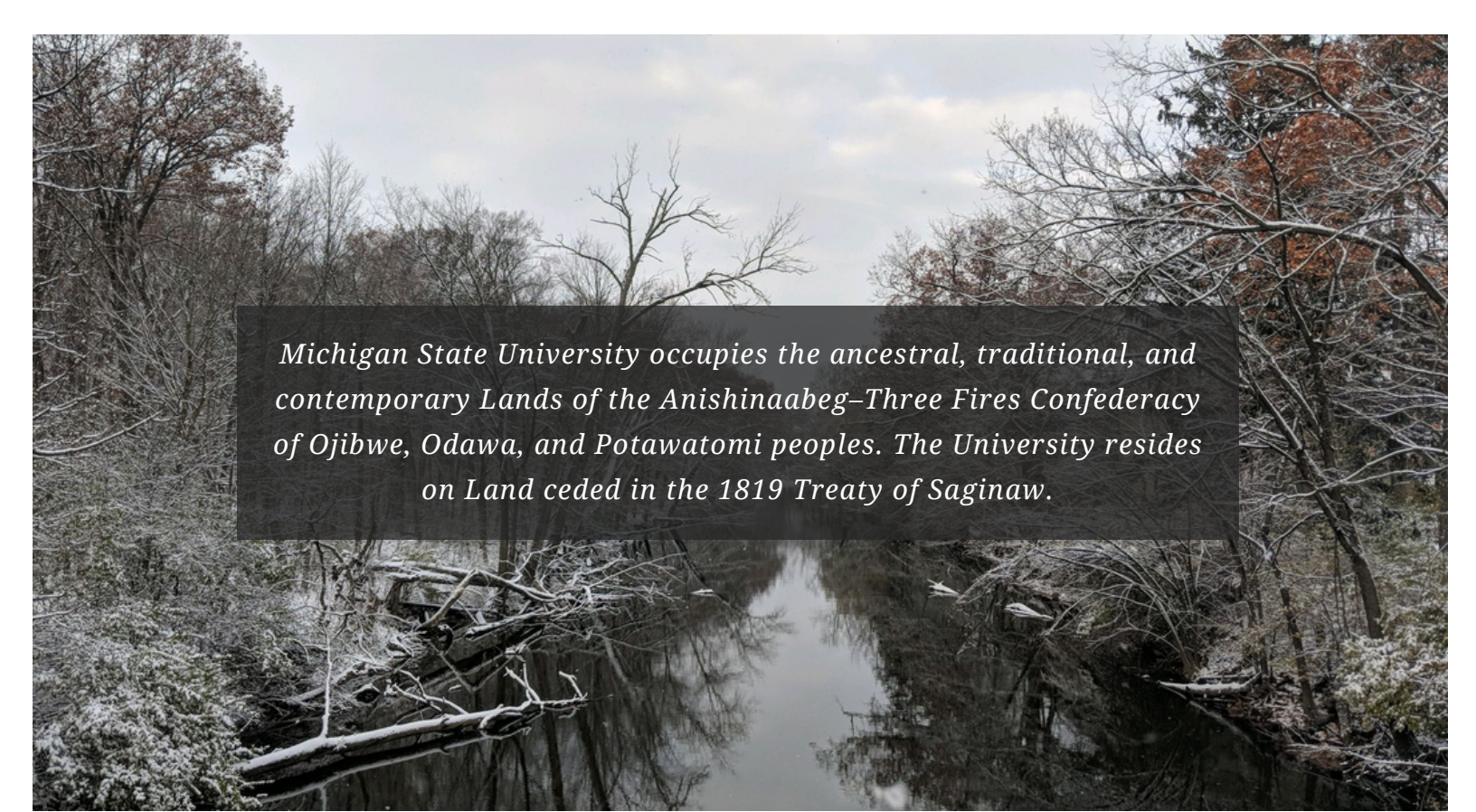
Matthew Fletcher, Kate Fort, and Wenona Singel work closely together on the Indian Child Welfare Act. Experts on the subject and advocates for justice for Native children; Fletcher, Fort, and Singel participated in multiple panels and talks this fall, including a discussion on Defending the Indian Child Welfare Act moderated by MSU College of Law's Dean Greene.

In October, Fletcher and Singel discussed *Lawyering the Indian Child Welfare Act* for the University of Colorado Law School's American Indian Law Program. In November, they also attended the Wisconsin Law Review's symposium on the Restatement of the Law of American Indians where they offered responsive commentary on various parts of the conference. Matthew stepped in as a keynote speaker pro tem when the scheduled speaker, Stacy Leeds, was ill.



Thursday Oct. 7, 2021
12 PM - 1 PM in Room 205

Food and Takeaway Containers Will Be Provided



Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg–Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. The University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Plans for the Indigenous Law & Policy Center for 2022

As we begin the new year, the Indigenous Law & Policy Center continuously works to bring our students and communities the best education and representation.

The ILPC plans on attending and hosting a table at the Federal Bar Indian Law Conference in April. This is an excellent opportunity for students of the Indigenous Law Certificate Program to learn from some of the leading figures in Indian Law and to network with potential employers from private practice and tribal, state, and federal government.

Stay up to date on current events in Indian law with Turtle Talk and follow us on social media for information on future events!