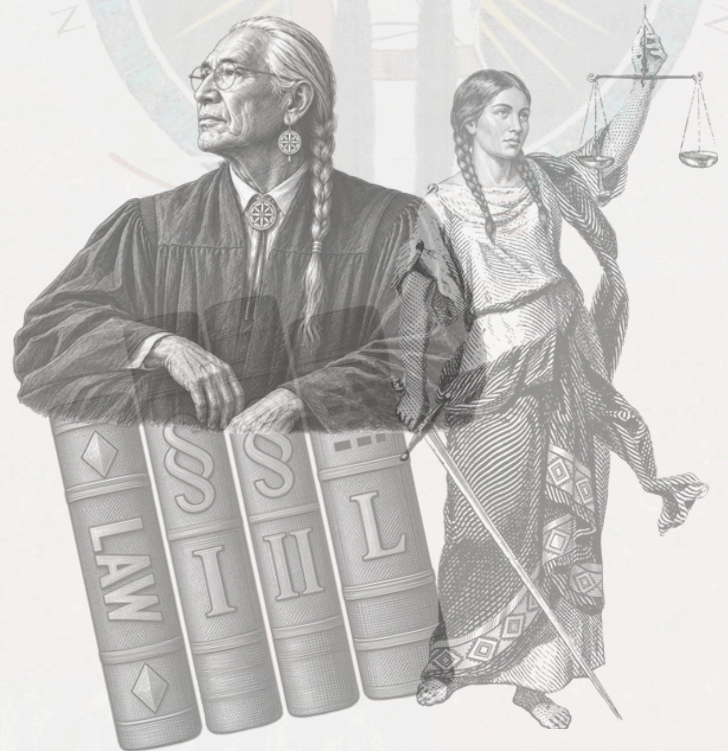


MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September has been a month of connection, opportunity, and momentum across the National NALSA community. From welcoming students into the new academic year to sharing internships, fellowships, clerkship programs, and professional development opportunities, our focus remains on helping Native law students stay connected and supported.

This month, we're highlighting the people and programs shaping our community—from student and alumni voices to chapter resources, upcoming National NALSA programming, and opportunities across Indian Country.

Inside this issue: alumni spotlight, Native Excellence, NALSA Toolkit, student voices, events, career opportunities & more.



ON THE HORIZON

What's coming up across the National NALSA community.

OCTOBER 2



Race & Wrongful Conviction Symposium

A hybrid symposium hosted by NYU's Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law, The Innocence Project, and N.Y.U. Review of Law & Social Change.

OCTOBER 9



National NALSA Town Hall

Hosted by Brittany Rogers, IL Advocate. Learn how to get involved, what to expect this year, and how National NALSA can support students and local chapters.

OCTOBER
16-17



Cutting Sign to the Legal Profession

Professional development, networking, interviewing, and career-building opportunities for Native law students at the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law.

OCTOBER 23
10 AM - 12 PM PT



Virtual Mid-Year Conference

Join National NALSA virtually for our Mid-Year Conference featuring community updates, programming, and opportunities to connect with Native law students from across the country.

NALSA CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF LAW

The University of Arizona Native & Indigenous Law Students Association (NILSA) had a strong 2025–26 year centered on community, advocacy, and student support.

Highlights included **Camp 1L**, where upper-level students mentored incoming 1Ls; a student-led symposium on American Indian governance and artificial intelligence; and participation in the University of Arizona's Rotating Tribal Flags Initiative honoring Arizona's 22 Native Nations. NILSA also connected students with career opportunities, **visited local high school students**, hosted fundraising events, and **sent three teams to the National NALSA Moot Court Competition**. Several members have also served in National NALSA leadership.

Looking ahead, the 2026–27 board plans to expand Camp 1L, share more Indian Country scholarship opportunities, collaborate with other student organizations, and **continue strengthening support for Native and Indigenous law students**.

Connect: @UArizonaNILSA | nilsa.uofa@gmail.com



ON OUR RADAR: IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN FEDERAL INDIAN LAW/TRIBAL LAW

Shoshone-Bannock Supreme Court Petition Moves Forward

The Supreme Court petition in *Department of the Interior v. Shoshone-Bannock Tribes* remains pending. The case concerns federal authority over lands previously acquired from the Tribes. The Tribes' response deadline has now been extended to October 21, 2026, making this an important petition to watch as the Court begins its 2026–27 term.

Tribal Gaming & Prediction Markets Collide in Federal Court

September brought new litigation involving Tribal gaming and online prediction markets. Recent cases involving Blue Lake Rancheria and the Ho-Chunk Nation raise questions at the intersection of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, Tribal jurisdiction, and federal commodities law. These disputes could have broader implications for how emerging forms of online wagering interact with Tribal gaming authority.

Federal Courts Continue Addressing Sovereign Immunity & Tribal Jurisdiction

Recent September decisions include cases involving Tribal sovereign immunity, Tribal membership, property, and jurisdiction over nonmembers. NARF's National Indian Law Library added multiple new federal cases throughout the month, underscoring how actively these doctrines continue to develop across the circuits.

NATIVE EXCELLENCE: Scholarship Spotlight: Indigenous Constitutionalism

W. Tanner Allread

"Indigenous Constitutionalism," 139 Harv. L. Rev. 1257 (2026)

In *Indigenous Constitutionalism*, W. Tanner Allread examines Tribal constitutions as a distinct American constitutional tradition and centers the ways Native Nations define, structure, and exercise their own governmental authority.

Rather than treating Tribal sovereignty only through the lens of federal courts and federal Indian law doctrine, Allread's scholarship emphasizes the constitutional systems Native Nations have developed and continue to govern through themselves.

Why It Matters

Tribal sovereignty is not simply something defined by federal law. It is lived and exercised through Tribal constitutions, governments, courts, laws, and political institutions.

Allread's work offers an important reminder that understanding Indigenous governance requires looking to Native Nations themselves—not only to the federal cases that discuss them.



"Understanding Tribal sovereignty requires looking to Native Nations themselves."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? NATIONAL NALSA ALUMNI -

How did NALSA impact your law school experience?

NALSA was my "home base" on campus. Growing up in Minnesota, Berkeley NALSA gave me a community that felt like home. That support also empowered me to advocate for greater visibility of Native issues on campus, including helping lead the effort to have Indigenous Peoples' Day recognized at the law school.



Kelsey Lutgen
Oglala Lakota
Berkeley Law | 2024

What are you doing now?

I'm a Real Estate Associate at Mayer Brown LLP, working primarily on transactions in the hospitality and leisure space. My work includes acquisitions, dispositions, borrower-side financing, leasing, licensing agreements, and operational matters involving hotels, luxury real estate assets, and private residences.

What advice would you give current Native law students?

Use federal Indian law and Tribal law as a jumping-off point to explore all of your interests. These areas intersect with nearly every other body of law. Reframing my coursework through an Indian law lens made even routine subjects more interesting and helped me understand concepts more deeply.

What does supporting the next generation of Native attorneys mean to you?

Mentorship is a major reason I am where I am today, so I prioritize giving back to Native students and aspiring attorneys. I bring a familial feeling to those relationships—sharing advice, hosting visiting students, making sure people are cared for, and helping demystify the unwritten expectations of law firm life. My goal is to make those spaces more accessible to those coming after me.

27TH ANNUAL NATIONAL NALSA WRITING COMPETITION

The National NALSA Writing Competition is now accepting submissions for its 27th annual competition, hosted by **Michigan Law Review Online**.

Law students are invited to submit original legal scholarship addressing issues affecting Native Nations, Indigenous communities, Federal Indian law, Tribal law, and related areas of law and policy.

The competition is designed to encourage student scholarship on issues impacting Indian Country and to elevate emerging Native and Indigenous legal voices.

Submission details, eligibility requirements, deadlines, and official rules are available through National NALSA.



2027 NATIONAL NALSA MOOT COURT COMPETITION

NATIONAL NALSA MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Additional registration, competition, and travel information coming soon.

The University of Tulsa College of Law
Tulsa, Oklahoma
FEBRUARY 26-27, 2027



Law students and NALSA chapters from across the country are invited to participate in the 2027 National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court Competition.

KEY DATES

OCTOBER 26, 2026
Registration Opens

NOVEMBER 1, 2026
Competition Problem Released

NOVEMBER 14, 2026
Registration Deadline

DECEMBER 1, 2026
Withdrawal Deadline
Registration Payment Due

JANUARY 6, 2027
Competition Briefs Due

FEBRUARY 26-27, 2027
NATIONAL NALSA MOOT COURT COMPETITION



**Dates and deadlines are subject to change.*

National NALSA's annual Moot Court Competition returns February 26-27, 2027 at the **University of Tulsa College of Law in Tulsa, Oklahoma**.

The competition gives law students the opportunity to sharpen their legal writing and oral advocacy skills while engaging with issues affecting Native Nations and Indian Country.

Key dates begin this fall: registration opens **October 26**, the competition problem is released **November 1**, and registration closes **November 14**.

Additional competition, registration, and travel information will be shared as it becomes available.

STUDENT VOICES FROM ACROSS INDIAN COUNTRY



What inspired you to pursue law?

During a 2023 internship with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, a coworker said something that stayed with me: “If you really think about it, we’re not supposed to be here.” It made me think about all the spaces Native people were never expected to occupy—institutions of higher education, the legal profession, and systems that historically worked toward our erasure. I decided I wanted to remain in those spaces and see how much we could change them.

I’m especially interested in natural resource law and providing environmental legal services to Tribal governments. To me, there is power in learning the language of a legal system that has been imposed on our communities and finding ways to leverage it for Native Nations.

What does being a Native law student mean to you?

I often think about a line from CAConrad: “When speaking with the dead / listen to the golden boomerang return.”

Our ancestors made sacrifices without knowing what the future would hold. I think of our work today as part of that return—the

knowledge of our ancestors reaching forward to guide us, while we show them that their sacrifices carried something forward.

Being a Native law student means recognizing that I am here because of what came before me, and carrying that responsibility into what comes next.

What advice would you give other Native students?

Trust yourself, trust the process, and trust the people closest to you.

Remember that you are drawn to the legal world for a reason, even when the path ahead is unclear. The world needs more Native lawyers.

Keep moving forward.

“I wanted to remain in these spaces and see just how much we could change them.”

NATIONAL NALSA ALUMNI

— WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU —

National NALSA is reconnecting with alumni across the country and celebrating the Native attorneys, advocates, judges, scholars, leaders, and changemakers who have been part of our community.

Were you involved with NALSA during law school? We want to hear from you.

Share where your journey has taken you, stay connected with National NALSA, and help us inspire the next generation of Native law students.

Your story may be featured in an upcoming **National NALSA newsletter** or **social media Alumni Spotlight**.

[ALUMNI SURVEY HERE](#)



1L ADVOCATE UPDATES

a message from National NALSA 1L Advocate, Brittany Rogers!



TOWN HALL

You're Invited!

Join us on October 9, 12–1 p.m. MTN, for the first Town Hall! We'll cover everything you need to know about how to get involved, what to expect this year, and how National NALSA can support you.

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO REGISTER →



CAREER SERIES

New Career Series

Explore our new career series highlighting pathways across Indian Country. The first video features Senior Staff Attorney Beth Wright of NARF, interviewed by Abigail Boatman, Area 5 Representative, about her journey.

← CLICK THE IMAGE TO
WATCH THE INTERVIEW

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NALSA TOOLKIT: RECRUITING & ENGAGING 1LS

The first few weeks of law school can shape whether a new student feels connected or isolated. A strong NALSA chapter can make that transition easier by reaching out early, creating low-pressure ways to participate, and making 1LS feel like they belong from the start.

Reach Out Early.

Do not wait for 1LS to find you. Introduce NALSA during orientation, student organization fairs, class group chats, and early-semester events. A personal invitation can make a much bigger impact than a general announcement.

Make the First Event Easy.

Your first event should feel welcoming, not intimidating. Consider a casual lunch, coffee hour, welcome dinner, or “NALSA 101” meeting where students can meet one another without feeling pressure to immediately take on leadership or responsibilities.

Pair New Students With Community.

Connect 1LS with upper-level students, alumni, or mentors who can answer questions about classes, professors, outlining, internships, Indian law opportunities, and law school life. Even an informal buddy system can help students feel supported.

Give 1LS a Role.

Students are more likely to stay engaged when they feel useful. Invite 1LS to help with events, social media, service projects, outreach, or chapter planning. If your bylaws allow it, consider creating a 1L Representative position.

Remember That Not Every Native Student Comes in the Same Way.

Some students may already be deeply connected to Indian law and Native legal communities; others may be exploring that connection for the first time. Create space for different backgrounds, interests, identities, and levels of familiarity without making anyone feel like they have to prove they belong.

Follow Up.

Recruitment is not a one-time event. Check in after the first meeting, invite students personally to upcoming programs, and make sure new members know where to find chapter information, opportunities, and support.

Quick Chapter Challenge

Before the end of September, make sure every interested 1L has:

- met at least one upper-level NALSA member
- attended or been personally invited to one chapter event
- been added to your chapter communication channel
- been told about National NALSA opportunities and resources

NEXT TOOLKIT: Planning Strong Native American Heritage
Month Programming

GIVE BACK

making a difference in Indian Country

SINCE 1970, NATIONAL NALSA HAS SUPPORTED
NATIVE LAW STUDENTS AND STRENGTHENED THE
FUTURE OF ADVOCACY IN INDIAN COUNTRY.

YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS:

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS - Reducing financial
barriers for Native law students.

LOCAL NALSA CHAPTERS - Supporting student
programming, service, and community.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Connecting
students with opportunities, mentors, and the
Native legal community.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMING - Supporting Moot Court,
the Writing Competition, conferences, and other
National NALSA initiatives.

**SUPPORT NATIVE LAW STUDENTS. INVEST IN INDIAN
COUNTRY.**

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?
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