



CILS News



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New Staff at CILS

Latest additions to our attorney staff add experience and new enthusiasm.

In 2009-2010, CILS has been pleased to welcome the newest additions to our attorney staff. Some have past work experience with CILS, having returned from private practice while others are new to our organization. Nonetheless, our four new attorneys have all demonstrated their commitment to our Native communities and to the mission of CILS. We welcome them and hope that you will meet them when they come to your communities.

Inside this issue:

New Staff at CILS	1
4 th Annual CA Tribal Courts Conference	3
Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Update	3

Jasmine Andreas, Staff Attorney (Bishop Office)

Jasmine is a member of the Bishop Paiute Tribe. She graduated from Sherman Indian High School in Riverside California in 1995 and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO in 2003 as a Humanities major, with an emphasis in Indian Studies. During her law school experience, she clerked at DNA Legal Services both in their Farmington office and on-site at the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. Subsequently, she received her juris doctor from Arizona State University College of Law as well as her Indian Law Certificate in 2007. Since July 2008 she sits on the Bishop Paiute Tribal Council and the Owens Valley Board of Trustees. She is currently living on the Bishop Paiute Reservation with her three children. Her hobbies include photography and basketry.



Alex Cleghorn, Acting Directing Attorney (Sacramento Office)

Alex is the Acting Directing Attorney of CILS' Sacramento office and brings several years of Federal Indian law experience. He previously worked as a CILS Staff Attorney and as an Associate with Sonosky Chambers LLP. Alex has experience with a variety of Federal Indian law issues including the Indian Child Welfare Act, Tribal Court and code development, sovereign immunity, administrative regulation, land and Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act contracts.

Prior to returning to CILS, Alex was an Associate with Minami Tamaki LLP where his litigation practice focused on civil rights and employment law. He has represented individual and class action clients in state and federal courts and in mediation proceedings. Alex also served as a Staff Attorney at the ACLU of Northern California where he wrote an amicus brief to the California



Supreme Court on behalf of a woman denied medical treatment because of her sexual orientation. Alex received his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and earned his juris doctor from Northeastern University School of Law in 2003. He continues to be involved in civil rights issues and serves on the Board of Directors for the Transgender Law Center.

Alex was born and raised in Alaska and is Aleut/Alutiiq. He is grateful for the support he received from the Natives of Kodiak and the Koniag Educational Foundation while in law school.



Joe Hardgrave, Registered Legal Services Attorney (Eureka Office)

Joe Hardgrave, originally from Arkansas, attended the University of Arkansas as an undergraduate. Needless to say, he is an avid Arkansas Razorback fan and a true Southerner. He went to law school in South Florida where he tailored his academic resume towards a career in Indian Law. In school, he was director of the Inter-American Center for Human Rights, founded a chapter of the Native American Law Student Association, served as an editor on Law Review and clerked for a small firm that served the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Upon graduation in May of 2008, he passed the Florida Bar and then moved to Billings Montana to serve as an AmeriCorps Legal Fellow hosted by Montana Legal Services Association. For a year and a half, he worked on the Indian Law Project encompassing everything from drafting Indian Wills dealing with trust property, teaching other attorneys how to navigate the American Indian Probate Reform Act and taking on all matters of civil suits in tribal courts. It is through his passion for Indian Law and his experience working in the realm of legal aid that he has found his way to CILS.

Mark Vezzola, Staff Attorney (Escondido Office)



Mark Vezzola joined California Indian Legal Services as a staff attorney in 2009. Originally from Longmeadow, Massachusetts, Mark graduated from UMass-Amherst in 2000 and moved to California in 2001 to study Indian law at UCLA where he earned his law degree and MA in American Indian Studies. While in law school, Mark clerked for the Hopi Appellate Court in Keams Canyon, Arizona, the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington DC, and CILS during the summer of 2004. Upon passing the California bar exam, Mark worked as a litigator with Callahan, McCune & Willis, APLC, in downtown San Diego before returning to CILS. Aside from practicing law, Mark is an adjunct professor of history at San Diego Mesa College and American Indian Studies at Palomar College in San Marcos. He has published several articles and book chapters on the constitutional rights of incarcerated Native Americans to practice their religion as well as the issue of same sex marriage in Native communities. In his spare time Mark is involved with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of San Diego, the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program and enjoys tennis and the beach. Mark currently lives in the North Park section of San Diego.



Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant ; Update

In 2008, CILS was fortunate to received a three-year grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund our California Tribal Justice Initiative. Due in large part to the mandatory application of Public Law 83-280 ("PL 280"), many California tribes are at a considerable disadvantage when seeking to enforce tribal laws or to operate a tribal court. Our goals have been to utilize our grant to address these challenges. While we aim to increase and improve the use of tribal justice systems in California, we also strive to promote understanding and cooperation between tribal courts and law enforcement and their state and local counterparts in areas where tribal, state, and local interests overlap. A number of our activities in recent months have helped to advance those goals.

CILS made several presentations to large audiences on PL 280, since the frequent lack of understanding of PL 280 in state/local authorities (and to a lesser extent, in tribal authorities) is a significant barrier to the success of tribal law enforcement. On behalf of several tribes, Senior Staff Attorney, Dorothy Alther, was able to attend the Department of Justice's Listening Conference last October 2009, and provided comment to the many difficulties faced by California tribes as a result of PL 280.



Tribal Police Vehicles

We are working with several tribal governments to help them establish their own courts and law enforcement. This has included drafting codes and constitutional revisions to increase self-governing capabilities, as well as meetings with tribal members to

discuss community priorities and to provide information on members' civil rights.

We are helping the California Tribal Police Chiefs Association re-organize and regain nonprofit status. The Association will provide valuable training opportunities and the ability to share useful information between tribal law enforcement departments.

In upcoming months, CILS' work will concentrate on a lay advocate program for people appearing in tribal courts, producing our 4th Annual Tribal Courts Conference, and pushing for greater acceptance of tribal court orders by state/local authorities. We expect to continue these efforts even after the grant is exhausted to advance the self-governance rights of all California tribes.

4th Annual CILS CA Tribal Courts Conference - May 2010 Novel issues pack full agenda!

CILS is pleased to announce that our 4th Annual CA Tribal Courts Conference will be held at the Carlino's Event Center at the Rolling Hills Casino in Corning, California. The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians is generously hosting this year's statewide tribal courts event scheduled for May 19th through the 21st. If you attended a CILS Tribal Courts Conference in the past, you know that we make every effort to present topical current issues with dynamic speakers. This year is no exception. This year's agenda highlights the increasing spotlight on tribal law enforcement issues including updates on the Tribal Law and Order Act. The recently enacted Tribal Customary Adoptions (AB 1325) bill is also scheduled for discussion. In addition, new to this year's conference are sessions dedicated to lay advocates practicing in tribal courts. In a break from the past, this year's Conference will also provide attendees with a rare opportunity to attend a mock trial session. Because of the increasing popularity of the CILS Tribal Courts Conferences, it is recommended that those wishing to attend register online or mail in their registration forms as soon as possible. Those registering online will receive a Conference registration discount. Attendees can register online at www.calindian.org/eventbrite.com. Also, CILS has reserved discounted blocks of rooms at area hotels. Please book early to take advantage of these discounted rates. Visit the CILS website at www.calindian.org for more information.



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About CILS

THE CILS MISSION

California Indian Legal Services (CILS) is one of the oldest not-for-profit law firms devoted exclusively to the cause of Native American rights. Governed by a Board of Trustees selected by California tribes and tribal organizations, CILS has provided free and low-cost legal services to California tribes, tribal organizations, and Native American individuals throughout the state for more than forty years. Our mission is to protect and advance Indian rights, foster Indian self-determination, and facilitate tribal nation-building.

DONATIONS

CILS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please make your tax deductible gift today. Contact the Principal Office for more information on charitable giving or visit us on the internet at www.calindian.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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