OUR MISSION:
to protect Indian rights,
foster Indian self-determination,
and facilitate tribal nation building.

A very special thanks to award-winning Artist John Balloue for donating the bear artwork on the cover. John has an art studio in Hayward, CA. This painting is called Mr. Big and it is certainly big on color and has the feeling of Indian Country: bold and daring but also generous and wise. We hope you enjoy Mr. Big as much as we do.

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September 22, 2016: CILS is happy to report that 2017 will usher in a much-needed change to California’s notary laws regarding the acceptance of tribal identification cards. The Honorable California Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Garden), in cooperation with CILS, sponsored Senate Bill 997 which allows California notaries public to accept tribal identification cards from federally recognized tribes as a form of identification for notarial acts.

The change is a recognition by California lawmakers of the struggles some tribal members face when their tribal identification cards are rejected as valid forms of identification for documentation requiring notarial seals.

Tribal members living in rural areas of California often find it difficult to travel to larger towns where county and state agencies issue their forms of identification. Now these individuals will be able to present their tribal ID cards as valid identification so long as the card is current or issued within the last five years, contain a photograph, a description of the person, a signature, and a serial or other identifying number such as a tribal enrollment number. CILS staff are delighted to have supported the passage of this law which now brings California in line with other states who have a large percentage of Native American populations.

“I’ve been a notary public for 18 years working with California tribal communities. It is a welcome and useful change. I’m proud CILS played a part in supporting this law and I’m grateful California lawmakers made this a reality.” Sonia Montero, CILS advocate who testified in support of the law.
DEAR FRIENDS OF CILS:

Welcome to the 2016 CILS Annual Report. It has been another productive and successful year for CILS. We have continued to work hard for our tribes, tribal communities, and California Native American clients. Our work is reflected in our direct client representation, as well as our indirect efforts through legislation and amicus work at both the Supreme Court of the United States and California. This Annual Report highlights some of our accomplishments including cases and legislation, our community education programs, fundraising and our goals for 2017.

Among CILS’ successes was in federal impact litigation involving the protection of Kumeyaay human remains and their rightful return to the Kumeyaay tribes. CILS continues to fight for protection of tribal inherent to protect their community from non-Indians committing crimes on tribal lands. CILS was very active in the area of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 2016 filing briefs and successfully arguing two cases before the California Supreme Court. CILS worked with the Attorney General for the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians in filing an amicus brief before the Supreme Court of the United States seeking to protect all tribes from the National Labor Relations Board’s jurisdiction over labor matters in tribal gaming facilities.

We also continued to work successfully for individual Native Americans on matters of state agencies attempting to regulate tribal members on tribal lands and Indian allotments and taxing of tribal members’ income earned on their reservation. CILS also sponsored and was successful in having SB 997 adopted as law that allows tribal members to use their tribal identification cards as acceptable forms of personal identification for notarizing purposes.

Our Report highlights many more of the cases and projects CILS was involved in during 2016. We want to thank all those who support our work and have made generous donations to support our mission.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to extend CILS’ welcome to several new staff attorneys with a wide range of experience and from diverse backgrounds. We all look forward to serving you in 2017!

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Alther
Executive Director

"CILS continues to work successfully for individual Native Americans on matters of state agencies attempting to regulate tribal members on tribal lands and Indian allotments and taxing of tribal members’ income earned on their reservation.”
DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF CILS:

Another year has passed, and it is time for the 2016 Annual Report. This year is special to CILS because it is our 49th anniversary. In honor of these years of service, we used a portrait which was generously donated by award winning artist John Bailoue, of a California black bear on the cover of the annual report. Bears are symbols of strength and wisdom to many Native Americans. In folklore, Bear is often portrayed as a sort of enforcer figure who punishes disrespectful or improper behavior among other animals and people. CILS similarly enforces and defends Indian rights from forces that would cause harm. Yes, 49 years of serving California Indian communities with legal services that involve issues unique to Native Americans.

This year CILS presented oral argument before the California Supreme Court on two Indian Child Welfare Act cases, helped pass Senate Bill 997 that allows notaries to accept tribal ID cards, and supported the Little River Band of Ottawa with an Amicus Brief requesting the United States Supreme Court’s review of their case decision.

CILS participated in the implementation of the BIA’s Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations by providing American Indian Probate Reform Act presentations, legal advice and notary public services. CILS supported the formation of the California Tribal Court Judges Association to provide a forum for Tribal Court professionals to project a unified voice on state and federal actions that impact tribal jurisdiction. CILS assisted the Indian Child Welfare Act Compliance Task Force draft a report on the status of compliance throughout California with the Indian Child Welfare Act and related state laws.

I pause to think about all the cases CILS has won, the countless legal trainings provided, and how many individual Indians had their rights defended. It makes me proud to be the Chairperson of an organization that devotes itself to Indian rights, self-determination, and tribal nation building.

CILS has represented nearly every California Indian tribe on a wide-range of legal and governmental issues. After 49 years of service, there are still many legal problems in our California Indian communities. CILS continues to work diligently to address these legal issues faced by tribes and Native American individuals.

Thank you for reading our 2016 annual report, and I hope our work inspires you. I welcome you to get involved with CILS as a volunteer, a client, a board member or a donor. As a community, we need legal aid to provide for those who cannot afford justice alone.

Ijan,

Mark Romero
Chairman
CILS at California Supreme Court

IMPACT LITIGATION

CILS Presents Oral Argument Before the California Supreme Court, the BIA’s Land Buy-Back Program, and Amicus Briefs for the Little River Band and the Pauma Band

Only four times since in Indian Child Welfare Act’s adoption in 1978 has the California State Supreme Court accepted an ICWA case for review. California Indian Legal Services filed briefs in three of the four cases. Also, CILS attorney Mark Radoff appeared and made oral arguments in three of the high court cases.

On May 3, 2016, the Supreme Court heard oral argument on two ICWA cases in one day: Abbigail A. (2016) 1 Cal.5th 83 and Isaiah W. (2016) S221263. CILS not only filed Amicus Briefs in these two significant cases (Abbigail A. deciding the extent Social Service’s obligation to assist Indian children with enrollment), and (Isaiah W. deciding whether a parent can ever forfeit the right to appeal an ICWA violation). CILS’ Senior Attorney, Mark Radoff also filed and argued an Amicus Brief in In re W.B. (2014) (addressing whether the ICWA protections extend to delinquent minors).

At issue in Abbigail A. was whether Social Services has an obligation to assist an Indian child with her enrollment application after the Cherokee Tribe acknowledged her eligibility, but her father had not yet enrolled. Sacramento County Social Services opposed assisting and objected to the application of the ICWA while Abbigail’s application was pending.

Isaiah W. addressed whether a mother forfeited her right to raise ICWA notice violations by not appealing at the early-stage dispositional hearing. Even though giving notice and applying of the ICWA are a continuous case long obligation, Los Angeles County took a one-strike-and-you’re-out position. Social services argued that the mother was permanently and irrevocably precluded from raising ICWA violations at later hearings—even if the violations adversely affected an unnoticed tribe that could not yet participate.
Abigail A. invalidated Calif. Rule of Court 5.482(c) that required “active efforts” to enroll a child before a finding has been made that the ICWA (Act) applies. A Rule of Court cannot exceed the statutory law and the Calif. Supreme Court held that applying the Act before an ICWA finding has been made was not allowed under the statute, and therefore the court cannot treat children as if they were an Indian child while an application is pending, or theoretically possible.

Isaiah W. allowed late appeals of the ICWA even if they were not raised at the Dispositional Hearing. The forfeiture doctrine ordinarily does not allow an appeal after 60 days, but because the courts have a continuing duty to apply the ICWA throughout a dependency case, an appeal at the Permanency Hearing is not time-barred by the Forfeiture Doctrine—even if an appeal could (or should) have been made at disposition. In dependency cases, the Dispositional Hearing is treated as if it were a final judgment, so this is an exception to the general rule and allows tribes or parents to object and appeal at the later stages of a dependency case.

Amicus brief for Little River Band
CILS and the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians filed an Amicus Brief in support of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Soaring Eagle Casino et al. Petitions for Certiorari at the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court denied the Petitions resulting in the Sixth Circuit Court’s decision standing which finds that the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) applies to tribal gaming facilities.

Amicus Brief in Support of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians
On November 7th, CILS and the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians filed an amicus brief in support of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This issue before the court is whether the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) applies to tribal gaming facilities on Indians lands. We raised the same arguments presented in our amicus brief to the U. S. Supreme Court in the Little River Band and Soaring Eagle cases.

CILS took part in nine one-day joint presentations on implementation of the BIA’s Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations. The program arose from the federal class action settlement of the Cobell v. Jewell litigation, setting aside $1.9 billion for the purchase of highly-fractionated Indian lands (lands where there are so many co-owners that it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to gather the necessary consent to make any beneficial use of the land). The program was implemented to consolidate ownership of such lands with the appropriate Indian tribes and to give individual landowners the opportunity to sell such land interests. During May and June, we attended three presentations at the BIA’s Sacramento office, as well as presentations in San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Upper Lake, Coyote Valley, and Round Valley. At each of those meetings we provided a one-hour presentation on the American Indian Probate Reform Act (regarding the drafting of wills for Indian lands and the default provisions of intestate descent). We also met with individuals after each presentation to provide legal advice on their trust land questions, and to provide notary public services for the forms required to opt in to the Buy Back program.
INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT TRAINING

CILS Creates a Tribal Advocate Guide, Training Program and Webinars for ICWA Advocates and Social Workers

Tribal Advocate Guide and Training Program.

Tribal ICWA Advocates and social workers are on the frontline in state dependency case involving tribal children. Tribal Advocates and Social Workers are critical in the court room at the initial stages of a dependency case to ensure that Indian children that have been or will be removed from their home are being placed with extended family or other tribal members. CILS cannot represent every California tribe in every state dependency cases, as a consequence it is often left to the Tribal ICWA Advocate or social worker to make sure the state court is following the heightened protection afforded to Native American children in the system.

CILS developed an extensive training curriculum that included a “Dependency Law and Skills Program Handbook” with materials on practice tips for participating in a dependency case, sample encounters that may be anticipated, outlines and checklists that can be used in preparing for a dependency case. The curriculum also included the “ICWA Advocate Guide” that walks Advocates and social workers through a state dependency case step-by-step with discussion of each stage of the proceeding. CILS sponsored regional trainings in four location in California.
each training event was extensive and covered two and half days. CILS also prepared and provided ten webinars on subjects ranging from the new “2015 BIA Guidelines” to “Advocating and Education Tribal Foster Youth.”

CILS Domestic Violence Team Update
The CILS DV Attorney, Susan Dalati and DV Legal Advocate, Yvette Morales (“DV Team”) continue to make strides in building collaborative relationships with DV community partners within the Native American community. The DV Team participates in the San Diego Intertribal Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings for domestic violence and sexual assault, and the Riverside County DV Tribal Alliance to address and work through issues affecting the Tribal communities.

All trainings were well attended. Building on the accomplishments from the 2016 CDSS project, CILS was awarded a 2017 contract to continue this crucial work. These materials are available on our website at: calindian.org/indian-child-welfare.

ICWA Compliance Task Force
CILS assisted the Indian Child Welfare Act Compliance Task Force and its co-chairs from the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Habematolet Pomo of Upper Lake, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Susanville Indian Rancheria, Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, and the Yurok Tribe to draft a report on the status of compliance throughout California with the ICWA and related state laws. The report to the California Attorney General’s Bureau of Children’s Justice discusses the most common barriers to implementation of the ICWA and significant areas of non-compliance, the effects that they continue to have on Indian children, families, and tribes, and makes 20 specific recommendations on how those barriers may be overcome and compliance increased, so that the civil rights that the ICWA and related state laws were intended to protect do not continue to be violated.

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CILS Launches New Website, Participates in ICWA Project, Presents “Keeping Native Families Safe”, and Starts Judges Association

CILS Announces the Formation of the “California Tribal Court Judges’ Association”

March 22, 2016: California has the largest Native American population in the country, and over 100 sovereign Indian Nations within its borders. With over twenty active Tribal Courts, California is the home to numerous innovative Tribal Court systems that seek to provide transparent, efficient and effective justice to tribal members throughout the state. Yet, many of these tribal courts face common challenges, ranging from lack of funding and resources to problems with state recognition of their orders. CILS, with the encouragement of a number of California Tribal Court judges, has formed the California Tribal Court Judges’ Association (CTCJA) to provide a forum for tribal court professionals to exchange ideas, address common opportunities, promote the independence and recognition of tribal courts, and project a unified voice on state and federal actions that impact tribal jurisdiction.

With assistance and support from CILS, the CTCJA held its first meeting on November 23, 2015. Since that meeting, CTCJA has moved forward with adopting By-Laws and electing the following Officers: Chairperson, Honorable Christine Williams, Chief Judge, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians; and Yurok Tribal Member; Vice-Chairperson, Honorable Joseph Wiseman, Chief Judge, Northern California Intertribal Court System; and Secretary, Honorable Mark Radoff, Chief Judge Chemehuevi Indian Tribe.

One overarching goal of the CTCJA is to bring greater awareness to state and federal governments of the unique legal needs of the tribal communities that tribal courts serve. The CTCJA looks forward to building stronger and more vibrant tribal courts in California and offering new judicial programs and services to their communities.
New CILS Website Launched

CILS launched a new website on January 22, 2016. The updated website includes the CILS History, Staff, Board of Trustees, financial reports and annual reports. A new section about our work and current cases has been added. A portal of self-help and community education publications that we offer on topics like child welfare, Indian ancestry, cultural resources, taxes and community presentation is available to assist California Indians in finding legal resources. The new website also includes a blog of the latest CILS news. The contact page includes the office locations, how to request legal services and client eligibility criteria, areas of practice, and more.

CILS Receives Live Well San Diego Proclamation

On July 26, 2016, CILS was presented a Live Well San Diego Proclamation by Jennifer Bransford-Koons, Deputy Director, Health and Human Services Agency, County of San Diego at our Keeping Native Families Safe Conference. The Proclamation signifies CILS’ partnership with Live Well San Diego’s vision of our region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving to life.

CILS Presents “Keeping Native Families Safe - DV and ICWA Resources” Training

On July 26, 2016, CILS in conjunction with Indian Health Council presented a training entitled Keeping Native Families Safe - DV and ICWA Resources. The training provided an overview of the overlap between the domestic violence and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) dependency worlds, which frequently collide. The event was well attended and very helpful to those who work with ICWA and DV in Indian Country.

“Attendees came from several counties with a wide range of professional disciplines. The audience actively participated throughout the day, resulting in a productive, informative and collaborative experience for everyone.” Susan Dalati, CILS Domestic Violence Attorney

This training was sponsored by Southern California Edison, Blue Shield Against Violence Initiative, Peace Between Partners, Indian Health Council and California Indian Legal Services.

Groundwater legislation

We developed a presentation on how California’s recent major groundwater legislation (the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act) could impact the water rights of Indian tribes and individual trust land interest owners, and how the quantification of those rights will be important in local government regulation of groundwater basins. Our preliminary work included researching the legislation in detail, meeting with Department of Water Resources staff on several occasions and attending several related presentations, and developing a Power Point for tribes and individuals. Our first presentation, to tribes in the Fresno area, took place at the Big Sandy Rancheria in November. We provided
MORE YEAR IN REVIEW

CILS Sponsors Reception for “Something Inside Is Broken” and Assists with California Statewide ICWA Conference

another to tribes in the Mendocino area in early 2017 and expect to provide further presentations as the various stages of implementing the legislation are reached. We also drafted an article for the CILS blog that discussed ways in which tribes and local governments could work together.

“Something Inside Is Broken” on Native American Day

September 23, 2016: California Indian Legal Services sponsored the reception for a special performance of “Something Inside Is Broken” after the Native American Day celebration at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians and the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians sponsored the performance at Sac City Theater. This is the first Native American produced Rock Opera Musical depicting pre-gold rush California. It was truly a spiritually transforming experience.

“Something Inside is Broken” is a spiritually transforming experience. A groundbreaking original Native American Rock Opera with a powerhouse musical production consisting of 26 original songs and reprises in the English and Nisenan language. This is a language preservation project, a history lesson, a vessel for healing, as well as an entertaining and enlightening production.

The Annual California Statewide ICWA Conference was held at Pala Casino and Resort on June 6th - 8th. CILS presenters included Mark Radoff, Senior Staff Attorney, Dorothy Alther, Executive Director, Delia Parr, Eureka Directing Attorney, and Elizabeth Pacheco, Staff Attorney. The conference focused on updates to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and increasing knowledge and skills for service providers, agencies, leaders, legal practitioners and judges.
2016—BY THE NUMBERS
Protecting and Servicing California Tribes and Their Communities

60,328
PERSONS RECEIVED
CILS SERVICES

including

25,422
read Legal Education
materials online

28,589
downloaded
Pro Se materials

4,613
attended
Legal Education

759
referrals to other
resource providers

802
direct service cases

143
were cases involving
Indian Child Welfare Act

20 staff members
at 4 offices
serving all of California
WHY TRIBES GIVE

“The United Auburn Indian Community strongly supports CILS and its mission to provide specialized legal representation to California Native Americans. UAIC believes in the importance of building tribal communities by protecting individual rights, providing Indian taxation assistance and protecting cultural resources and would like to support the work of CILS with a donation. We send it along with our appreciation for the services CILS provides.”

Chairman Gene Whitehouse
United Auburn Indian Community

“The Soboba Foundation is honored to be able to assist with this program and is in line with our mission”

Sally Ortiz
President of the Soboba Foundation

“We have been pleased by the level of service and expertise provided by the California Indian Legal Service. CILS has provided exemplary service and has displayed extensive knowledge in multiple areas of Indian Law. They have addressed our legal needs in the areas of environmental compliance, cultural resources protection, water rights, and governance. We are confident in the work product that CILS produce and we will continue to be a repeat client.”

Chairman Darrell Mike
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

“Much has changed in Indian Country since California Indian Legal Services started in 1967. Today we are blessed with sources of income that just a few years ago would only be considered a dream. Both Gaming and Non-Gaming tribes now have resources never visualized. All of us should pause and remember the “old days” when we had nothing and how California Indian Legal Services was there to help us fight so many battles from sovereignty issues to child welfare issues. Let’s all support California Indian Legal Services, which in fact is supporting tribes who are less fortunate. Is that not what we should do, look out for and help each other?”

Chairman Bo Mazzetti
Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

“The Department of Justice reports Native American women suffer domestic violence as much as fifty percent higher than any other minority group in the United States. California Indian Legal Services provides needed services for Native American women who require legal assistance related to domestic violence issues. CILS addresses needs unique to Indian County by working with tribal governments, local jurisdictions and families clearing a path to needed legal assistance and intervention.”

Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

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Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
### Thank You for Your Generous Support

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<tr>
<th>Agua Caliente Band</th>
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<td>Pechanga Band</td>
<td>United Auburn Indian Community</td>
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CILS ON THE ROAD

CILS delivers training and presentations to Native American communities, government organizations, and the non-Indian community, all designed to educate them on various aspects of Indian law. Below is a list of some of the training and presentations provided by CILS staff throughout California during 2016.

PL 280 TRIBAL LAW TRAINING
1/08/2016
LSC Indian Law Training
Washington, DC
1/25/2016
Cal Western School of Law
2/05/2016
Next Frontier in Indian Law at UCLA
8/18/2016
Regional PL 280 Conference
Bear River
9/27/2016
California Tribal College
10/14/2016
San Diego County Judges
11/07-08/2016
Tribal Court Training
United Auburn Indian Community
11/15/2016
BIA Tribal Assessment Team
11/28-29/2016
Redding Rancheria

ICWA TRAINING
2/08/2016
U.C. Davis
3/21-23/2016
ICWA Advocate Training

2/11/2016
NAGPRA
Western Indian Gaming Conference
9/19-21/2016
Title IV-E foster care
Yurok Reservation
10/28/2016
Indian Law Careers
Sherman Indian High School
Riverside, CA
12/12/2016
Northern CA Tribal Chairmans Assoc.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
2nd Wednesday of every month
Domestic Violence Legal Clinic
Indian Health Council
1/13/2016
Best Practices in CA Indian Affairs
CA Office of Emergency Services

4/13/2016
U.C. Davis
5/09-11/2016
ICWA Advocate Training
5/16-18/2016
ICWA Advocate Training
6/05-08/2017
Statewide ICWA Conference
6/09/2016
DOJ ICWA Task Force
6/14-16/2016
ICWA Advocate Training
6/28/2016
DOJ ICWA Task Force
7/29/2016
Two Feathers NAFS
8/09/2016
Yolo County Training
9/27/2016
ASU Indian Law Program

PRESENTATIONS ON ELDER LAW
3/24/2016
Tecopa Senior Center
4/05/2015
Lone Pine Senior Center
5/10/2016
Wilton Rancheria
5/18/2016
Big Pine Senior Center

AIPRA & ESTATE PLANNING
4/15/2016
Caregivers
4/19/2016
Tribal Elders
5/10/2016
Wilton Rancheria
6/15/2016
Pala Band
7/18/2016
Pala Band
10/24/2016
Torres Martinez Senior Center
Objection to Probate
The Escondido office represented a Rincon member who objected to an Order to Show Cause (OSC) from the Interior Department’s Office of Hearings and Appeals to reopen her mother’s will. The problem was the mother had already gift deeded that allotment to our client during her life, therefore it is not subject to OHA probate proceedings. Our client already significantly developed the land by adding a home, a stable and horse training facility worth over one million dollars. She feared losing title to the land and her investment.

By presenting 45 pages of evidence regarding the gift deed and late mother’s intent and various Wills, the OSC was dismissed. The OHA found that the allotment is not subject to a property modification or redistribution. Our client is relieved her home will remain in her name.

Good News on ICWA Cases
Mark Vezzola, Escondido office Directing Attorney, recently received good news on three of his ICWA cases. In two cases the children were returned to their parents’ care as part of family maintenance plans and in the third case the Court terminated jurisdiction (closing the case) with successful mother-child reunification. An example of success in a challenging legal field.

No Regulatory Jurisdiction Over Tribal Land
Last spring, CILS secured a dismissal for an elderly client cited by the California Department of Fire and Forestry for illegal burning. Our client, a tribal member living on a allotment within the boundaries of a reservation, believed he was exempt from the state regulation because he was on Indian land. CILS agreed that burning is a regulated activity rather than a crime in California, a Public Law 280 state. We appealed the citation and filed a motion to dismiss. The Department dismissed the citation moments before trial began in Riverside Superior Court.

CILS Goes the Extra Ninety Miles to Execute an Indian Will
In April, CILS Escondido attorney Mark Vezzola and advocate, Summer Morales traveled ninety miles from the office to execute an Indian Will for a past client left homebound by a recent fall.

The client, a tribal elder, wanted her allotment interests on the reservation to pass according to her wishes upon death. By traveling to the client, CILS ensured the Indian Will was properly executed and brought some much needed peace of mind to the family.

Thriving with Family
Almost a year after a child was removed from her parents care for neglect, Los Angeles County notified her tribe of the ongoing dependency case. In an effort to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Court started the case to ensure it made the necessary ICWA findings. Once notice was given the tribe exercised its right to intervene in the case and advocated for a tribal placement with a relative. Minor had been living with a non-Indian foster family that hoped to adopt her. When the parents did not complete their case plan the foster parents sought de facto parent status, a step towards a permanent plan. The tribe challenged their request and motioned to transfer the case to tribal court pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act. The court approved the motion which rendered the de facto parent application moot. The child was placed with the relative where she is thriving as the youngest member of the family.

Casino Lawsuit Dismissal
The Escondido office successfully won a dismissal of a lawsuit brought in San Diego Superior Court by a casino patron challenging a tribal government action. The tribe fined the individual and excluded her from the reservation based on evidence of a theft at the tribal casino. The individual then sued the tribe, its casino, and the tribal gaming commission for damages citing jurisdictional grounds and due process rights. The tribe and its insurer retained CILS who filed a motion to dismiss the suit based in sovereign immunity. While gaming tribes often do waive sovereign immunity in limited ways pursuant to their state gaming compacts, this tribe had not consented to state court jurisdiction. Much to the relief of the tribe and its insurance company, the suit was dismissed.
HISTORY

Fifty Years of Service to Native Communities in California

Birthed from the 1960’s upheaval of the status quo, California Indian Legal Services grew out of the California Rural Legal Assistance legal aid program that focused efforts on all rural communities. Recognizing the uniquely complex legal issues facing Native American communities in California, George Duke and David Risling began our story with the incorporation of California Indian Legal Services in 1967.

CILS began to stretch its legs and spread its wings in the 1970s. From the East Bay office, CILS added field offices in Bishop, Escondido, Eureka, and Ukiah. The fight against termination era actions against tribal communities raged on as CILS scored victories in restoring reservation lands, quantifying water rights, litigating civil rights cases, and strengthening tribal governments. These efforts laid the foundation for future generations to protect Native Americans in California.

The 1980s brought intense efforts by CILS to reestablish tribes that were once terminated through the Tillie Hardwick litigation. The victory was heralded as a major win for Indian Country and catapulted CILS forward as a leader in Indian Country. Shortly following, CILS stood up to the U.S. Forest Service who sought to build a 400-mile logging road between the towns of Gasquet and Orleans, leading to the project dubbed the “G-O Road.” CILS was able to convince the District Court judge to issue an injunction preventing the road from desecrating local tribal religiously significant areas.

As tribal governments matured in the 1990s, so too did CILS. Economic development became a focus for lifting Native Communities in California out of poverty. CILS assisted in starting the new economic engine of Indian Gaming after an alum of CILS was victorious in the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians v. Cali
fornia case that ultimately resulted in Congress passing the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. The infusion of revenue that allowed some tribal governments to expand services to their members and increase tribal sovereignty. CILS continues to assist tribes with providing social services and economic development for the twenty-first Century.

Over the past twenty years, CILS further assisted Native Communities in California with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) advocacy, understanding the American Indian Probate Reform Act (AIPRA), placing fee land into trust, challenging state taxation, discrimination in schools, religious discrimination in detention facilities, cultural resource protection under AB 52 and SB 18, and preparing for changes to state water rights systems. Some highlights include the CILS’s efforts in passing SB 678, which extended federal ICWA protection to California’s Indian children. Also, CILS authored the California Judge’s ICWA Bench-guide used at all levels of state and tribal court. In 2016, CILS was instrumental in the passage of SB 997, which gives tribal identification cards the same status as a California identification card when notarizing a document. Today, CILS is working with the state legislature and California communities to pass a bill allowing feathers and other culturally significant regalia to be worn at high school graduations, which addresses a major lack of cultural sensitivity pervasive in California high schools.

Well, it has been five decades of championing the rights of Native Americans in California. CILS continues to grow with the tribal communities in California and serve from our four offices in Eureka, Sacramento, Bishop, and Escondido. The protection of tribal communities requires constant vigilance. We work in all 58 California Counties, guided by our Board of Trustees comprised of tribal and community leaders, members of the California Bar Association, and representatives of our client-eligible population. We look forward to working with tribal communities in California for the next fifty years.
The selected financial data was derived from California Indian Legal Services, Inc.’s financial statements. The financial statements of California Indian Legal Services, Inc. are audited annually and are available upon request.
DONATIONS
and Acknowledgements

CILS’ primary source of funding is through grants from the Legal Services Corporation and the State Bar of California. CILS also receives funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance grant targeted to assist tribes with developing tribal justice systems. Smaller grants subsidize overall legal aid services and allow our Bishop Office to serve that area’s senior population. Of equal importance is CILS’ contract work in the fields of economic development, tribal government services and child dependency cases, all of which help CILS fulfill its mission.

CILS CONTRIBUTORS

CILS would like to thank the following contributors whose donations allow the organization to continue moving forward in advocating for the needs of California Native Americans and Indian Tribes.

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donors

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Contributions to CILS are tax deductible as allowed by law. CILS is a nonprofit 501c(3) organization. Thank you for choosing to help further our mission to serve California Indian communities through your generous contributions. Contact Nicole Scott, Development Director, for more information at nscott@calindian.org.
STAFF

Principal Office
Dorothy Alther, Executive Director
Robert Glen Bryson, Controller
Tara Edmiston, Executive Assistant
Patricia De La Cruz-Lynas, Director of Administration
Nicole Scott, Director of Marketing and Development

Eureka Office
James Flower, Staff Attorney*
Delia Parr, Directing Attorney*
Elizabeth Pacheco, Staff Attorney*
Laura Svoboda, Legal Secretary

Sacramento Office
Blake Atkerson, Staff Attorney
Nicholas Mazanec, Directing Attorney*
Sonia Montero, Advocate
Jedediah Parr, Directing Attorney
Kimberly White, Legal/Administrative Assistant

Bishop Office
Jasmine Andreas, Staff Attorney
Adora Bissonette, Legal/Administrative Assistant
Terry Walker, Staff Attorney*

Escondido Office
Rachel Bilodeau, Legal Secretary
Susan Dalati, DV Staff Attorney
Summer Morales, Intake Advocate
Yvette Morales, DV Legal Advocate
Mark Radoff, Senior Staff Attorney
Mark Vezzola, Directing Attorney

Board

Board Chairperson
Mark Romero
Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians

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Northern Region
André Cramblit, Karuk Tribe of California
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Jessica Warne, Walaki, Numsoos & Cahuilla

Southern Region
Mercedes Amavisca, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians
Mark Romero, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians

State Bar Appointees
Joe Ayala
John Hueston
Cary Lowe
Steve Otto
Sheila Quinlan

* asterisk indicates left CILS in 2016
CALIFORNIA INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES

BISHOP OFFICE
873 N. Main Street
Suite 120
Bishop, CA  93514
(800) 736-3582

ESCONDIDO OFFICE
609 S. Escondido Blvd.
Escondido, CA  92025
(800) 743-8941

EUREKA OFFICE
324 F Street
Eureka, CA  95501
(800) 347-2402

SACRAMENTO OFFICE
117 J Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA  95814
(800) 829-0284

www.calindian.org

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