

Speakers:



Shawn Attakai ('00)

Staff Attorney, Navajo Nation Judicial Branch

Shawn Attakai is Bit'ahnii and Tabaaha, married with children to Tó Aheedliinii. Shawn is fluent in the Diné language and has been practicing as traditional Diné practitioner for almost two decades. He graduated from Dartmouth College (BA '95) and ASU College of Law (JD '00). Mr. Attakai holds Navajo and Arizona bar licenses, is a peacetime Marine veteran, and has been an attorney for two decades in various capacities including court attorney, associate, and criminal defense. Recently, Mr. Attakai was a Yavapai-Apache Nation associate judge. He currently serves as a Vice-President for the Navajo Nation Bar Association, and an Alumni Council Representative for the Native American Alumni Association of Dartmouth. As a part of the training committee, Mr. Attakai helped develop the Four Directions approach, a legal methodology based on traditional Diné Bibeehaz'aanii principles, and a problem-solving approach founded on the four sacred directions that separates the Diné legal system from other jurisdictions.



Shea Backus ('03)

Shea Backus, a citizen of Cherokee Nation, graduated from the Indian Legal Program in 2003. Prior to her last year of law school, she interned for the Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice. This opportunity allowed her to assist the Office of Tribal Justice in drafting testimony for the then director to present before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

After graduating from law school, Shea returned home to Las Vegas and started practicing law with her father. Shea is a shareholder of the law firm Backus | Burden.

Throughout her career, Shea has been permitted to practice before courts for the following tribal nations: Moapa Band of Paiutes, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe and Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. Shea has also been able to represent tribes in other jurisdictions, including a state court Indian Child Welfare matter and as local counsel in a federal court matter. As part of Shea's practice, she provides pro bono service as a child advocate for children subject to abuse and neglect.

Shea Backus is also a Nevada Assemblywoman, representing Assembly District 37. Shea has served 2 regular sessions and 4 special sessions. This last session, Shea served as Chair of Revenue, Vice-Chair of Ways & Means, Chair of the Subcommittee on K-12/NSHE/CIP funding and a member of Commerce & Labor. This interim, Shea will serve as Chair of the Revenue Interim Committee and Vice Chair of Interim Finance Committee and serve on Legislative Commission.

Shea also serves as a Nevada Commissioner to the Uniform Law Commission. She currently serves as Vice Chair on the Uniform Health Care Decision Act, is on the study committee for considerations of a uniform or model act for states to codify the Indian Child Welfare Act, and serves on the Committee on Liaison with American Indian Tribes & Nations.

This past legislative session, Shea sponsored AB444, which adopted a state ICWA, and AB125, which is to pass state legislation to address missing and murdered indigenous relatives.



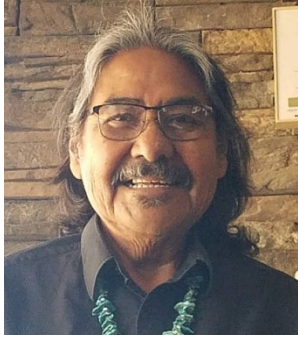
Derrick Beetso ('10)

Professor of Practice and Executive Director, Indian Gaming and Tribal Self-Governance programs, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University

Beetso is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and earned his JD and certificate in Indian law as part of ASU Law's nationally recognized Indian Legal Program.

Prior to joining ASU Law, Beetso served as the general counsel for the National Congress of American Indians, the first and only Native person to ever serve in this capacity for the organization. While there, he handled in-house legal needs and co-managed the Tribal Supreme Court Project with the Native American Rights Fund.

Beetso also served as an attorney-adviser within the Office of the Solicitor's Phoenix Field Office, where he provided legal services for the Western Region of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the San Carlos Irrigation Project. Previously, he served as counselor to Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn during President Barack Obama's administration.



Roman Bitsuie

Roman Bitsuie is a citizen of the Diné, also referred to as the Navajo Nation. He spent time away from the Navajo Nation in boarding and prep schools and is the first Navajo to graduate from Princeton University. He uses his traditional and Anglo-American education to serve the Navajo people. Roman has held many positions in the Navajo Nation, including the youngest person to serve as a delegate to the Tribal Council. Most recently, he was the executive in charge of the Navajo Peacemaking Program. Most of Roman's career has been working to seek justice for 14,000 Navajo families who were relocated from their ancestral lands to make way for Peabody Coal Company to strip-mine parts of the Navajo Nation to fuel the Navajo Generating Station.



Steve Bodmer ('06)

Steve M. Bodmer is an enrolled member of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe of South Carolina and veteran of the U.S. Navy. He received his JD from Arizona State University College of Law, where he also earned the Indian Legal Program Certificate for extensive study in the area of Federal Indian law.

Bodmer practiced Indian law in the private practice setting for several years in Phoenix, Arizona, until leaving to serve as general counsel for tribe in Central California. Bodmer has also previously worked in Washington, D.C., for Sen. Tim Johnson of South Dakota on the senator's Indian Affairs team and also worked for the Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice.

Bodmer serves as general counsel for the Pechanga Band of Indians in Temecula, California. In this role Bodmer provides legal counsel to the Tribal Council, the Pechanga Development Corporation, and oversight for the legal affairs of the Pechanga Resort and Casino and other economic diversification projects of the tribe. Among other areas of practice, Bodmer specializes in federal Indian law, gaming law, tribal governance and tribal economic development. He is also an adjunct professor with Arizona State University Law, teaching Contemporary Issues in Tribal Economic Development. Bodmer is a member of the International Masters of Gaming Law and has presented at conferences throughout the U.S.

and internationally for over a decade on topics such as the future of tribal sovereignty, gaming law and sports betting.



Judy Dworkin (JD '86)

Judy M. Dworkin leads the firm's Indian Law and Tribal Relations practice group. She offers broad experience in Indian law, with a major emphasis on assisting Indian tribes in achieving their economic development objectives.

Judy is listed by Super Lawyers and *The Best Lawyers in America*[®], and her leadership of the firm's Indian Law practice has earned "Band 1" status in "Native American Law – Arizona" by London-based Chambers and Partners.

Judy is admitted to the Navajo Nation Bar and has practiced before the Courts of the Tohono O'odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, San Carlos Apache Tribe and Navajo Nation.

Judy frequently lectures and writes articles on issues in Indian law and business development. She is the Presiding Appellate Justice of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Council Court and has served as a judge *pro tem* for the Tohono O'odham Nation and a special judge to the Fallon-Paiute Shoshone Tribe in Nevada as well as a Solicitor to the Hualapai Tribe.

In addition to her Indian Law practice, she has spent a great deal of her career focused on water rights and has taught Water Law and Natural Resources Law at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

Judy was one of four private-sector finalists for the 2017 ATHENA Businesswoman of the Year Award, presented by the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce.



Sheri Freemont ('01)

Senior Director, Casey Family Programs, Indian Child Welfare Sheri Freemont (Turtle Mountain Chippewa/Omaha) is a Senior Director with Casey Family Programs in the Indian Child Welfare Unit, where she focuses on providing technical support to state and tribal jurisdictions to improve outcomes for tribal children and families in child welfare systems, as well as supporting the Indian Child Welfare Act practices in national projects and state forums. Ms. Freemont previously served as the Director of the Family Advocacy Center and as the Chief Prosecutor for the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Sheri has served as President of the Native American Bar of Arizona, Chair of the Indian Law Section for the State Bar of Arizona, President of the Arizona Tribal Prosecutors Association, and a member of the Board of Directors for the Child Crisis Center of Mesa. Ms. Freemont was appointed to Attorney General Holder's Violence against Women in Tribal Prosecution Task Force (2011).

Ms. Freemont is a graduate of Arizona State College of Law, (J.D.), and a Certificate in Federal Indian Law. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Portland, in Portland, Oregon.



Corey Hinton ('11)

Corey Hinton, Leader of the firm's Tribal Nations Practice Group, advises Tribal Nations, Tribe-owned entities, and entities that interface with Tribes on federal Indian law and policy, the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, employment matters, economic development, environmental and natural resource issues, and the fee-to-trust process. A citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe (Sipayik), Corey draws from a uniquely deep well of experience to deliver significant value to his clients.

Corey has substantial experience with the commercial, transactional, and resource management issues related to natural resources – including Tribal and non-Tribal owned Improved Forest Management (IFM) carbon offset projects. In 2016, he assisted the Passamaquoddy Tribe to establish an IFM that was recognized in California for removing 3.8 million tons of greenhouse gases in furtherance of California's "cap-and-trade" program.

Corey has represented clients before a variety of federal administrative agencies including Indian Health Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of the Interior (including National Indian Gaming Commission, Office of Indian Gaming, Bureau of Indian Education, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Reclamation). Corey also regularly represents clients in government-building, ethics and employment policies, negotiation and administration of Public Law 93-638 programs, and real estate transactions.

A separate focus of Corey's work is with non-profit entities that serve indigenous, socially-disadvantaged, and under privileged communities. Corey advises non-profit clients on a wide range of subjects including strategic planning, internal governance issues, employment matters, fundraising, programmatic development, and transactional issues.

Prior to joining Drummond Woodsum, Corey spent time at the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. He is the former president of the Native American Bar Association of Washington, D.C. He's also a former Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse team member.

In his free time, Corey enjoys spending time with his family, their dog, and two cats. He takes Passamaquoddy language classes, organizes sports/life skills camps for Tribal Nations youth, and volunteers for the Maine Justice Foundation and the Abbe Museum. Corey also serves on the Executive Committee for the Thompson Brothers' 4 the Future Foundation, which inspires youth by creating community-based opportunities at the intersection of culture and healthy lifestyles (<https://www.4thefuturefoundation.org/>).



LaTonia Johnson ('05)

LaTonia B. Johnson is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation from Window Rock, Arizona. LaTonia is the Assistant Attorney General of the Human Services and Government Unit. She advises, represents, and assists the Division of Social Services, Division of Public Safety, Division of General Services, and Navajo Nation Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission. LaTonia has practiced law for 17 years and is licensed to practice law in the State of New Mexico and Navajo Nation. She obtained her Juris Doctor degree and Indian Legal Certificate from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, and Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Arizona.



Verrin Kewenvoyouma (04)

The majority owner and managing partner of Kewenvoyouma Law, PLLC, providing legal services exclusively to tribes, tribal entities, tribal agencies, and individual Indian business owners. Mr. Kewenvoyouma's practice is generally focused on business transactions, however, it also includes development, economic development, finance, commercial transactions, business formations, government relations, gaming, water rights, and day-to-day general counsel services to Tribes.

Mr. Kewenvoyouma formed Kewenvoyouma Law, PLLC in May 2010 and was also a Senior Attorney at a mid-size national Indian law firm. Mr. Kewenvoyouma has worked with over 40 clients on various Indian law matters in the capacity as special or general counsel. Prior to legal services, Mr. Kewenvoyouma was a Senior Associate with the State & Local Government Practice of KPMG, LLP. At KPMG Mr. Kewenvoyouma provided advisory, audit, and consulting services to tribes, tribal enterprises, state governments, and Fortune 500 companies. His experience at KPMG included program/ infrastructure evaluation, project management, healthcare planning and design, construction, and internal audit.

As a business and law student, Mr. Kewenvoyouma clerked for Arizona tribes providing services in the areas of economic development, land sales/transfers/acquisitions, vendor selection, water rights, commercial code development, housing, intergovernmental agreements, and business organizations. Through the Tribal Governments class at ASU law, he also developed a comprehensive Secured Transactions Uniform Commercial Code for a large land and population-based Tribe in Arizona.

Before business and law school, Mr. Kewenvoyouma worked with a national bank for 7 years, most notably in the roles of retail/branch management, market development, and commercial lending. Mr. Kewenvoyouma received his MBA from the WP Carey School of Business, Arizona State University and JD from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University. Mr. Kewenvoyouma also holds a Certificate of Indian Law from the ASU Indian Legal Program. He is the Chairman of the Board for Native Home Capital, a non-profit CDFI dedicated to increasing parity in homeownership for Native Americans living on and off reservation in Arizona. He also currently serves as a board member for the Native American Alumni Chapter at ASU, other various boards, and provides pro bono and community-based services to various tribes and tribal members. Mr. Kewenvoyouma is licensed to practice in the state of Arizona, the Tohono O'odham Nation, Hopi Tribe, Pascua Yaqui Tribe and is admitted pro hac vice in the

Federal Court of the Southern District of California. He is Hopi and Navajo, member of the Navajo Nation.



Peter Larson ('02)

Peter Larson is a partner in the firm's Tribal Affairs, Finance, and Gaming practice groups. Peter's transactional practice focuses on representing Indian tribes, tribal entities in financing matters, and commercial and economic development in Indian country.

Peter has considerable experience in all areas of Indian gaming, including Indian lands determinations, federal, state, and tribal regulatory matters, and representation of tribal gaming agencies. He also works on other economic development issues, including land use and leasing, tribal court development, taxation issues, development of tribal laws and regulations, and regularly interacts with the NIGC and the Department of Interior.

Peter's wide variety of experience includes:

- Tribal economic development planning, including strategic planning and implementation.
- Representing Indian tribes in taxable and tax-exempt debt offerings.
- Representing tribal gaming enterprises in new casino construction financing.
- Representing institutional lenders in complex financing and refinancing transactions with Indian tribes.
- Drafting and negotiating development agreements, consulting agreements, and management agreements between tribal governments and non-Indian developers.
- Negotiation and drafting of leases of tribal and allotted lands.
- Drafting and implementing tribal gaming ordinances and regulations.
- Representing native based nonprofit organization in corporate formation and successful efforts to obtain tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.
- Representing Indian tribes and tribal gaming agencies in tribal-state rulemaking efforts.
- Drafting federal and state legislation for the benefit of Indian tribes.

- Drafting and implementing Patron Tort Claims Ordinances.
- Various other issues relating to tribal government, economic development, and land issues in Indian Country.



Rhett Larson

Rhett Larson is the Richard Morrison Professor of Water Law at Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. He is also a senior research fellow with the Kyl Center for Water Policy at ASU's Morrison Institute for Public Policy. Professor Larson's research and teaching interests are in property law, administrative law, and environmental and natural resource law, in particular, domestic and international water law and policy.

Professor Larson's research focuses on the impact of technological innovation on water rights regimes, in particularly transboundary waters, and on the sustainability implications of a human right to water. He works on dispute resolution and improved processes in water rights adjudications in Arizona and the Colorado River Basin with the Kyl Center for Water Policy. He is the Principal Investigator on a USAID-funded applied research project improving water supplies for refugee host communities in Lebanon and Jordan. Professor Larson was a visiting professor and Fulbright Scholar at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, a PLuS Alliance visiting fellow with the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, a Lady Davis Fellow and visiting professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of *Just Add Water: Solving the World's Problems Using its Most Precious Resource* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Professor Larson also practiced environmental and natural resource law with law firms in Arizona, focusing on water rights, water quality, and real estate transactions.



Brian Lewis ('09)

Brian Lewis is an experienced attorney whose practice is devoted to tribal economic development and the protection and promotion of tribal powers, rights, and interests. He represents tribes, tribal enterprises, tribal member-owned businesses, and non-tribal private corporations

doing business in Indian Country in collaboration with tribes and tribal enterprises. Mr. Lewis litigates federal Indian law and commercial matters, and much of his practice concerns complex jurisdictional disputes and taxation and regulatory preemption issues. Mr. Lewis also has extensive experience in performing virtually all aspects of sensitive, high-level commercial and financial transactions, particularly those involving sovereign stakeholders and components. He advises and represents clients in a range of areas, including energy, commercial, corporate, construction, tourism, finance, and gaming matters. He also directs and manages securing energy leases and rights-of-way on federal, state, private, tribal trust, and allotted lands for large projects and transactions. Mr. Lewis has deep transactional, regulatory, and litigation experience in complex matters involving tribes, states, and the federal government that allows him to effectively promote the interests of tribes and tribal enterprises in a wide range of commercial, financial, jurisdictional, and governmental matters. In his dynamic and interdisciplinary practice, he brings experience to understand the challenges and opportunities unique to tribal nations and matters that concern tribes and a focused, analytical approach to solving problems and resolving issues in every matter and all circumstances, with the primary aim of protecting and promoting tribal interests.

Brian Lewis began his career as an attorney with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, where he handled special matters for the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General of the Navajo Nation. While with the Department of Justice and Office of the Attorney General, he represented the Navajo Nation as lead counsel in numerous federal, state, and tribal administrative, trial, and appellate cases, including, *Navajo Nation v. RJN Construction Mgmt., Inc., et al., Ctr. for Biological Diversity, et al. v. Pizarchik et al., Diné C.A.R.E., et al. v. Salazar, et al.*, and *Navajo Nation v. Urban Outfitters*. He also served as the lead attorney in the Navajo Nation's creation of a new commercial instrumentality, Navajo Transitional Energy Company, LLC, the acquisition and merger of all assets and interests of an international mining company, and the negotiation of eight and nine-figure transactions for the company's operations. He served as a member of several teams, commissions, and task forces, including, the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council's Energy Task Force, the President of the Navajo Nation's project negotiation and transaction teams for large-scale economic development projects, and the New Mexico Governor-elect's Transition Team's Indian Affairs Department Review Committee. In private practice, Mr. Lewis has continued to represent Navajo Nation political subdivisions and commercial instrumentalities, as well as corporate entities working collaboratively with the Navajo Nation, as a part of his overall representation of tribes, tribal enterprises, public utilities, and private companies. He serves as outside general counsel to several tribal enterprises and private entities, for which he handles and oversees all litigation and transactional matters impacting their operations. He represents tribes, tribal enterprises, public utilities, and private corporations in large transactions and projects, as well as in the resolution of complex jurisdictional and commercial disputes. With his experience representing tribes and tribal

enterprises along with private commercial entities, Mr. Lewis has developed deep transactional, regulatory, and litigation experience in complex matters involving industry, tribes, states, and the federal government that allows him to effectively promote clients' interests in a wide range of governmental, financial, and commercial matters.

As a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma with a wife and daughters who are members of the Navajo Nation, Mr. Lewis has deep and extensive ties in Oklahoma and the Navajo Nation and is committed to enhancing economic development in Indian Country. He earned his J.D. with an Indian Law Certificate from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, where he was a member of the Indian Legal Program and graduated Order of Barristers, and earned his B.A. and M.A. in Political Science and Political Economy from Washington State University with honors. Prior to law school, he attended the Pre-Law Summer Institute for American Indians at the University of New Mexico College of Law's American Indian Law Center. Mr. Lewis teaches and presents for the Navajo Nation Bar Association, state bar associations, and legal industry organizations in the areas of business organizations, civil procedure, commercial transactions, contracts, energy, and property law.



Michael Mainwold ('13)

Assistant General Counsel at Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community



Robert Miller

Robert J. Miller's areas of expertise are Federal Indian Law, American Indians and international law, American Indian economic development, Native American natural resources, and Civil Procedure. He is an enrolled citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, the Interim Chief Justice for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Court of Appeals and sits as a judge for other tribes.

He is the Willard H. Pedrick Distinguished Research Scholar at ASU and the Faculty Director of the Rosette LLP American Indian Economic Development Program at ASU.

In 2014 he was elected to the American Philosophical Society. The APS is the oldest learned society in the United States and was created by Benjamin Franklin in 1743. Thomas Jefferson served as president of the APS for seventeen years overlapping his time as president of the United States. The APS has only elected about 5,600 members in its 280 year history.

Before joining ASU in 2013, Professor Miller was on the faculty of Lewis & Clark Law School from 1999-2013. Prior to his career in academia, he practiced Indian law with Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, and practiced litigation with the Stoel Rives law firm. Following graduation from law school, he clerked for Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Professor Miller's scholarly works include articles, books, and book chapters on a wide array of Federal Indian Law issues and Civil Procedure, and he speaks regularly on Indian Law issues across the U.S. and in other countries. He is the author of "Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny" (Praeger 2006), and "Reservation Capitalism: Economic Development in Indian Country" (Praeger 2012). He co-authored "A Promise Kept: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and McGirt v. Oklahoma (forthcoming University of Oklahoma Press 2022); "Creating Private Sector Economies in Native America: Sustainable Development through Entrepreneurship (Cambridge University Press 2019); and "Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies" (Oxford University Press 2010). Professor Miller has worked as a consultant with the American Philosophical Society since 2006 on tribal language and archival issues. He was elected to the American Law Institute in 2012.



April Olson ('06)

Partner, Rothstein Donatelli LLP. April Olson has served tribal governments for almost 20 years, first as a social worker and now as an attorney. April has served as in-house counsel and is now a partner in the Tempe Office of Rothstein Donatelli LLP. April practices exclusively in the field of federal Indian law and tribal law and her experience includes a wide variety of practice areas. A substantial part of her practice involves Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) matters. April has represented 9 tribes in ICWA matters in at least 10 states across the country. She has provided ICWA representation to tribes at the trial court level and in appellate proceedings.

April Olson also handles adoptions and permanent guardianships, both in tribal and state courts.



Perry Riggs ('98)

Perry Riggs is a member of the Navajo Nation. He has dedicated his legal career to working with Tribal Governments and Tribal Entities for more than 20 years.

Through most of his career, Mr. Riggs worked as in-house counsel with various Indian tribes working on numerous transactions involving federal Indian law, economic development, gaming, construction, housing, casino development, tribal ordinances, procurement, contracts, resolutions, tribal constitutions and a variety of other issues.

Mr. Riggs also worked in Washington, DC as counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and as Deputy Director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office working on issues involving land, water, healthcare, public safety, housing, education, labor, economic development, environment, budget and appropriations, and federal Indian law. He helped obtain legislation, developed testimony and comments to regulations, and worked with tribal leaders on strategies through the legislative process. He provided zealous advocacy for tribal positions within Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Housing and Department of Education.

Mr. Riggs is licensed to practice law in Arizona and the Navajo Nation.



Ron Rosier ('95)

Ron Rosier is an accomplished lawyer with more than 20 years of Indian law experience. His practice focuses on the representation of tribal governments in the areas of Federal Indian law, economic development, business law, and gaming law. He provides legal advice to tribal economic development authorities and corporations, and to entities seeking to do business with Indian tribes.

Economic Development

Ron's economic development experience includes representing clients in commercial leasing and land development projects, government infrastructure projects, acquisition of rights of way/easements, the development of new commercial enterprises, and the reorganization of existing business entities. He also provides legal advice to tribal governments regarding third party commercial leasing and development of allotted trust land. In addition, Ron advises tribal clients regarding tribal-state tax issues involving governmental and commercial activities. He also has experience in management contracts, business licensing and suitability issues, and tribal corporate governance.

Gaming Law

Ron's gaming law experience includes tribal gaming law and regulatory issues, gaming licensing and state suitability issues, casino operational issues, gaming equipment purchases, and compact disputes with the state regulatory departments. He has also served as legal counsel for tribal gaming commissions and also advised tribal clients regarding new casino development projects.

Tribal Government

Ron has experience in government policy and procedure, government development projects, tribal-state tax issues, and tribal matters involving elections, per capita payment programs, employment, enrollment and tribal housing programs. He has extensive experience drafting tribal codes and policies and regularly works as team lead on multi-disciplinary projects. He handles large projects for tribes and shepherds them through the tribal council approval process, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs approval process for those projects that require such approval.



Joe Sarcinella ('09)

Joe Sarcinella, Co-Leader of the firm's Tribal Nations Practice Group, has served Indian Country as either an attorney, advocate, or in nonprofit management for over two decades. Joe's family is First Nations Lakota/Nakota from Canada, and his wife and children are citizens of the Navajo Nation.

He advises Tribal Nations, Tribally-owned entities, Native owned businesses, and entities looking to collaborate with Tribes. His practice includes providing legal services, strategic counsel, and national advocacy specific to Indian Country, in the areas of renewable energy, financial services, economic development, government affairs, Tribal Nation building, transportation, environmental/natural resources, water rights, human rights, cultural resources, sacred sites and places, government contracting (SBA 8a contracting), gaming, energy, and tribal youth programming.

Recognizing the intersection of climate security, clean energy, and Indian Country, Joe strategically counsels his clients in all areas related to renewable energy, including structuring, development, navigating the cross sections of Tribal law and federal law, leasing, and government relations. He strategizes with energy stakeholders to document understandings, option agreements, leasing, intergovernmental agreements, and pilot agreements. He further advises clients in risk analysis and mitigation alternatives with extensive knowledge of the multi-jurisdictional process of regulations related to solar development across Indian Country and the southwestern United States.

Prior to Drummond Woodsum, Joe was the General Counsel of a successful tribal holding company in Montana. While in that role, he managed a multimillion-dollar legal portfolio, successfully led multiple litigation teams, and developed litigation strategies that ultimately saved his client millions of dollars on multiple occasions. Additionally, he successfully negotiated and structured a multimillion-dollar investment between two tribal nations' economic development arms, and led the corporate formation of a tribal hemp company, including the development and implementation of the Tribe's hemp code and USDA-approved tribal hemp regulations.

He also served as the Chief Operations Officer and General Counsel for the Native American Financial Services Association (NAFSA), where he lobbied Congress daily regarding tribal parity in financial services and economic development.

As an appointee under the Obama administration, he served as the Senior Advisor & Liaison for Native American Affairs for the Office of the Secretary of Defense. While at DoD, Joe was the lead official monitoring Department of Defense and Military compliance with all applicable federal laws, treaties, and executive orders relating to government-to-government relationships, cultural resources, and all matters pertaining to Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations. Joe also managed the Native American Lands and Environmental Mitigation Program, a DoD environmental cleanup program specifically addressing military environmental impacts on Tribal land. Additionally, he was charged with the creation of the federal government-wide training outlining the responsibilities of federal

employees and contractors to Tribal Nations regarding Sacred Sites and Places, which is still used today.

As a Federal appointee, on two separate occasions, Joe preserved tribal access to DoD business programs, avoiding litigation brought by tribal governments against the Department of Defense, claiming a lack of formal government-to-government consultation and notice when the DoD changed internal policy interpretations that would have denied Native access to DoD business programs and government contracting opportunities. This work earned Joe recognition as the 2016 National Indian Country Advocate of the Year by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development.

Joe also worked as a Subject Matter Expert to the National Congress of American Indians, a government and legislative affairs advocate for the Navajo Nation Washington DC office, where he lobbied Congress and federal agencies on a daily basis on a broad range of subjects impacting the Navajo Nation, and as the staff attorney and clerk of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Court.

Joe's broad and expansive portfolio of subjects he has handled in Indian Country over the span of his career has awarded him not only keen and comprehensive insight into positive pathways to assist his clients but a broad network of contacts and colleagues across Indian Country and the federal government that are an invaluable resource for his clients.

Joe's family has a rich cultural heritage; his paternal grandparents were first-generation Americans; both his maternal grandparents were of mixed Native & European ancestry; his younger cousins are enrolled members of the Coyote Valley Pomo; his nieces are enrolled White Mountain Apache, and his in-laws are Navajo, primarily residing on the Navajo Nation.

Outside of work, Joe is an avid writer and published children's book author. He has trained as a Strong Man, has run a 100-mile ultramarathon, is a retired competition powwow dancer, and played Division 1 college football on a full scholarship for Boise State University and Sacramento State University. Joe splits his time between Flagstaff, AZ, The Navajo Nation, and Washington, DC.



Jacob Schellinger ('12)

Jacob Schellinger's practice focuses on advising tribal leaders and governments regarding Indian Law and policy issues, including economic development, taxation, gaming, energy, leasing, natural resources, and Indian lands.

Through his practice, Jacob proactively devises advocacy strategy to promote tribal priorities and produce desired outcomes. His experience includes drafting tribal ordinances, regulations, resolutions, policies, and management plans to advance his clients' goals and comply with applicable federal and tribal law. He also routinely monitors federal and state legislative, regulatory, and other legal developments related to tribal client interest areas.

Jacob's previous experience serving as Vice President of Government Relations for the National Congress of American Indians and as counsel for the Office of the Vice Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs has given him the opportunity to engage with numerous tribal leaders, congressional members and staff, agency officials, interest groups, and others regarding legislation, regulatory activity, and legal matters affecting tribal governments.



Paul Spruhan

Assistant Attorney General, Litigation Unit, Navajo Nation Department of Justice and Faculty Associate, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University

Paul Spruhan is the Assistant Attorney General for the Litigation and Employment Unit at the Navajo Nation Department of Justice in Window Rock, Arizona. He received his A.B. in 1995 and his A.M. in 1996 from the University of Chicago. He received his J.D. in 2000 from the University of New Mexico. He graduated Order of the Coif and received an Indian law certificate. He and his wife, Bidtah Becker, have two children, and live in Fort Defiance, Arizona.



Casaundra Wallace ('15)

Casaundra Wallace is the Assistant General Manager – Legal and Development for the Wild Horse Pass Development Authority, an entity of the Gila River Indian Community. She previously worked for the Gila River Indian Community Office of General Counsel from 2015 to 2021 and joined WHPDA in September 2021. Casaundra earned a juris doctorate degree with an Indian Law Certificate in 2015 from Arizona State University.