

Navajo Nation Law CLE Conference Friday, October 21, 2022

Indian Legal Program / Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law / Arizona State University
Beus Center for Law and Society, Room 240
111 E. Taylor Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004

Speaker Biographies



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 Co-President 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.



Ted Barudin

Barudin Law Firm, PC

Ted Barudin is the owner and founder of the Barudin Law Firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico, an "av" rated Plaintiffs only litigation firm emphasizing personal injury, medical malpractice, and the Federal Tort Claims Act. Ted's career has been representing native individuals and families in tribal, state, and federal court litigation. He attended the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce Law Center and received his juris doctorate in 1981. He also received a Master's

in Science in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he was a teacher in the Wisconsin Native American Teacher Corps Program from 1973-1978. Ted has litigated in federal, state, and tribal courts and in the Navajo Courts since 1983, where he was the former Solicitor to the Navajo Courts and editor of Volume 4 of the *Navajo Reporter*.

Ted has achieved numerous recognitions for his legal work and is Martindale-Hubbell “AV” Highest Possible Rating in Both Legal Ability and Ethical Standards 1997-2022 and is recognized as Preeminent Rating – Judicial Edition. He is recognized in Super Lawyers of the Southwest 2012-2022; American Association of Justice (AAJ) Past Chair, Federal Tort Claims Act Section Board, and New Mexico Trial Lawyers Association Board member.

Some of the cases Ted has prevailed in are: *Andrew Frank, et. al. v. State of Alaska*, Superior Court of Alaska (1982) Permanent injunction issued to allow Yupik Eskimo family to transfer a limited entry fishing permit; *El Paso Electric Company, et. al. v. New Mexico Public Service Commission and New Mexico Attorney General*, 103 N.M. 300 (New Mexico Supreme Court, 1985) Successful claim against utility to place advertising costs to be paid by the shareholders and not the ratepayers; *California, et. al. v. Cabezon Band of Mission Indians, et. al.*, Supreme Court of the United States, No. 85-1708, 480 U.S. 202, *Amici Curiae*, (February 25, 1988) Class III gaming allowed for tribes throughout the United States; *Pueblo of Sandia v. Amrep* Successful NPDES litigation under the Clean Water Act – Pueblo Sand Bar placed on the National Historic Preservation Act - National Register of Historic Places; *Benalli v. First Financial Insurance*, 7 Navajo Reporter (Navajo Supreme Court, 1997) Insurance Stacking permitted in the Navajo Nation; *Betsuie v. United States of America*, 65 F. Supp 2d 1218 (D.N.M 1999) Suit against the Indian Health Services for personal injury coverage; *Murphy, et. a. v. United States of America*, Civ. No. 1:17-cv-00384-JAP-JHR Medical malpractice against the United States (Indian Health Services) Trial and Judgment entered for \$15,300,000 (1999-2021)

Ted is married to Ann Chavez Barudin (Kewa Pueblo) and they have three daughters and five grandchildren.



Derrick Beetso ('10)

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.



Rodgerick Begay

Assistant Attorney General, Navajo Nation Department of Justice

Rodgerick T. Begay is Todik'ozhi (Salt Water Clan), born for the Biih Bitoodni (Deer Spring Clan), maternal grandfathers are Kiyaa'aanii (Towering House People), paternal grandfathers are Tsi'naajinii (Black Streak Wood People). Mr. Begay grew up on the Navajo Nation in the communities of Whippoorwill and Tselani-Cottonwood. Mr. Begay and his wife have been together since high school and have a son and three daughters. Mr. Begay is a Chinle Wildcat and received his undergraduate degree from Arizona State University and earned his law degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law. He returned home and has dedicated his entire legal career to serving the Diné by holding several legal positions within the Navajo Nation government. He has worked for the Chinle and Window Rock District Courts. Mr. Begay was formerly appointed and confirmed as Deputy Attorney General. He currently leads the DOJ Chapter Unit as an Assistant Attorney General where he shares and applies his expertise in Navajo Municipal Law to the 110 Navajo Nation Chapter governments and to the Division of Community Development. He is licensed to practice law in the State of Arizona and on the Navajo Nation.



Kathleen Bowman ('86)

Director/Attorney, Office of Navajo Public Defender

Kathleen Bowman, a Navajo attorney, is Director of the Office of Navajo Public Defender for the past 29 years. Born in Rehoboth, New Mexico, Ms. Bowman has lived in Fort Defiance, Arizona for most of her life. Ms. Bowman graduated from Anderson School of Management, University of New Mexico in 1976 and was employed by Navajo Area IHS as Deputy Personnel Officer when she entered Arizona State University College of Law in 1983. She obtained her J.D. in 1986 and was admitted to the State Bar of Arizona in 1986; Navajo Nation Bar in 1987; and State Bar of New Mexico in 1988.

Before her appointment as Director, Ms. Bowman's previous employment included Attorney, Navajo Nation Department Justice, Director; Navajo Legal Aid and Public Defender Office; Executive Director, DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc.; and Assistant Attorney General, Navajo Nation Department of Justice. Ms. Bowman was honored as Legal Counsel of the Year in 1998 by Chinle District; Outstanding Alumna 1990, Arizona State University for achievement in her community and profession; Indian Legal Program 2013 Award for Professional Achievement in the Public Sector, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Arizona State University, and was also selected to receive the St. Katherine Drexel National Justice Award 2021 (Philadelphia, PA).

Ms. Bowman is on the Indian Affairs Committee of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and serves on the Board of Directors, Arizona Public Defender Association.



Colin Bradley ('14)

Owner/founder, Bradley Law, PLLC

Colin Bradley is the owner/founder of Colin Bradley Law, PLLC—which is a boutique law firm specializing in litigation and Indian law. Mr. Bradley has extensive litigation experience in the courts, and administrative tribunals, on the Navajo Nation. Prior to starting his own firm, he was a member of the Litigation Unit of the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

Mr. Bradley is a member of the Navajo Nation (Nation) and attended the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU). He is admitted to practice in Arizona, various tribal courts, federal district court, and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

**Troy Eid**

Shareholder, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Troy Eid co-chairs the firm's American Indian Law Practice Group. He represents corporations, tribes and tribal enterprises, universities, and other leading institutions in investigations and enforcement actions. Troy is often selected to mediate complex disputes between Native American tribal governments and energy companies, and between tribes and state governments.

Troy served as Colorado's 40th United States Attorney appointed by President George W. Bush. During the Obama Administration, Troy was appointed to chair the Indian Law and Order Commission, the national advisory board to the President and Congress for strengthening public safety for all 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Before joining GT, Troy served on the cabinet of former Colorado Governor Bill Owens.

Troy is the immediate past President of the Navajo Nation Bar Association, the largest non-profit legal services organization in the United States that directly serves a Native American tribe. He has been honored for excellence by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Secret Service, and more than two dozen federal, state and tribal departments and agencies across the country.

**Kate Fort**

Director of Clinics, Director of Indian Law Clinic, Academic Specialist, Michigan State University College of Law

Kathryn (Kate) E. Fort is the Director of Clinics at Michigan State University College of Law and runs the Indian Law Clinic, where she teaches the Clinic class and other classes in federal Indian law. In 2015, she started the Indian Child Welfare Act Appellate Project, which represents tribes in complex ICWA litigation across the country. She is the author of *American Indian Children and the Law*, published by Carolina Academic Press. Prof. Fort has written articles on laches and land claims and has researched and written extensively on the Indian Child Welfare Act. Her publications include articles in the *Harvard Public Health Review*, *George Mason Law Review*, *Saint Louis University Law Journal*, and *American Indian Law Review*. She co-edited *Facing the Future: The Indian Child Welfare Act at 30* with Profs. Wenona T. Singel and Matthew L.M. Fletcher (Michigan State University Press 2009). She contributes the popular and influential Indian law blog, *TurtleTalk*. Prof. Fort is a popular guest lecturer and speaker at conferences, trainings, and law school classes around the country.

Prof. Fort graduated magna cum laude in from Michigan State University College of Law with the Certificate in Indigenous Law and is licensed to practice law in Michigan. She

received her B.A. in History with honors from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia.



Justin Jones

Founder, Law Offices of Justin Jones

J.D., University of Kansas School of Law, (Certificate of Indian Law, Government, & Natural Resources)

B.A., Political Science, Fort Lewis College

Justin Jones is from Rock Point, Arizona and is currently in private practice with The Law Offices of Justin

Jones, P.C. in Farmington, New Mexico.



Katya Lancero

Attorney, Sacks Tierney

Katya practices in Indian and tribal relations, representing and advising tribes, tribal enterprises, and companies operating on Indian reservations. Katya also practices in employment and labor law, including employment discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; wage and hour compliance; and restrictive covenants.

At the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law, Katya earned a concentration in Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy and interned at the Indian Law Project of Nevada Legal Services, where she assisted in providing legal services and representation to tribal members in tribal courts in Northern Nevada. She also competed in the National Native American Law Students Association moot court competition and served as a Third-Year Writer for the Arizona Law Review.

Before joining Sacks Tierney, Katya counseled and represented employers in employment and labor law matters for a little under seven years. Katya has been recognized as a Super Lawyers Rising Star for three years beginning in 2019.

**Sage Metoxen**

Principal Attorney, Litigation Unit, Navajo Nation Department of Justice

Sage Metoxen is a member of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes of Oklahoma, and is originally from Oklahoma. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 2013 with a certificate in American Indian Law from the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy. After graduating law school, Metoxen moved to the Navajo Nation to work as a staff attorney for DNA People's Legal Services, Inc. She was then a natural

resources attorney for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice. She has most recently served as Senior Assistant General Counsel for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. She is admitted to practice law in the state of Arizona and the Navajo Nation.

**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.

**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.