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2026

INDIAN LAW CONFERENCE

*Analysis of New Developments
Affecting Tribal Rights, Resources and
Relationships in Minnesota and Beyond*

Featured Sessions

- Preserving Tribal Sovereignty and Protecting Native American Businesses and Citizens in the Shadow of Immigration Enforcement
- Reclaiming Indigenous Paths to Harmony: Restorative Justice Frameworks for Minnesota's State and Tribal Courts
- The Advocate's Dilemma: Ethics and Leadership During Times of Civil Disobedience

PLUS –

- In-depth Analysis of the Decisions in *Tix v. Tix* and *Running Aces*
- Navigating Moral Injury, Grief, and the Weight of Exploding Dockets
- Litigating Cases in Federal District Court
- And More!

**Conference
Luncheon and
Honoring**

Lunch at



**ATTEND IN PERSON
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026**

Minnesota CLE Conference Center, Minneapolis

CAN'T ATTEND IN PERSON?

View the online replay Thursday, June 11, 2026

2026

INDIAN LAW CONFERENCE

**ATTEND IN PERSON
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026**

SCHEDULE

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.
CHECK-IN & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
Sponsored by Bronze Sponsor JAMS

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.
Prayer and Welcome

9:10 – 9:55 a.m.
2026 Case Law Update
 An update of recent decisions and important cases pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and Minnesota state courts.
 – *Judge Colette Routel*

9:55 – 10:00 a.m. BREAK

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Preserving Tribal Sovereignty and Protecting Native American Businesses and Communities in the Shadow of Immigration Enforcement

1.0 elimination of bias credit applied for
 In early 2026, the Twin Cities became the epicenter of one of the largest federal immigration enforcement actions in U.S. history. During this operation, Tribal citizens were questioned, detained, and subjected to use of force by federal agents. Tribal businesses were impacted and disrupted. This session addresses the legal frameworks for protecting Native American communities and businesses, including responding to ICE, habeas petitions, tribal membership and ID documentation, sovereignty, and self-governance.
 – *Cameron L.Y. Giebink*
 – *Alison Neswood*
 – *Chief Judge Michael Harralson, moderator*

11:00 – 11:10 a.m. BREAK

11:10 – 11:55 a.m.
Reclaiming Indigenous Paths to Harmony: Restorative Justice Frameworks for Minnesota’s State and Tribal Courts

Learn about the innovative ways Tribal and State courts are shifting away from punitive models and returning to traditional values – rooting justice in kinship, accountability, and the restoration of balance and recognizing that understanding individual, historical, and intergenerational trauma allows the legal system to act as a bridge to wellness rather than a cycle of further harm.
 – *Chief Judge Abby Abinanti*
 – *Veronica S. Newcomer*
 – *Chief Judge Megan E. Treuer*
 – *Judge Korey Wahwassuck, Ret., moderator*

11:55 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Honoring Ceremony

12:20 – 1:05 p.m. LUNCH BREAK
Provided by Minnesota CLE at



1:05 – 1:50 p.m.
BREAKOUT SESSION A

101
Navigating Moral Injury, Grief, and the Weight of Exploding Dockets

Native American lawyers and judges, and legal practitioners who represent tribes and tribal interests, frequently stand at the intersection of deep community grief and the “moral injury” that arises when systemic constraints hinder the pursuit of true restorative justice. Noted anthropologist of law and leading scholar in judicial wellbeing and access to justice, Dr. Michele Statz, examines the heavy toll of disenfranchised grief and organizational stress – specifically “exploding dockets” and impossible timelines – that can make the practice of law feel like a war of attrition. By identifying these structural burdens, we will discuss how we can move toward a sustainable model that protects the well-being of judges and attorneys without compromising the mission of tribal and state courts.
 – *Professor Michele Statz, Ph.D.*

102
Stadium Gaming & Tribal Exclusivity: Analyzing the Running Aces Deadlock

The recent split decision in *In the Matter of the Minnesota Racing Commission’s Approval of Running Aces* effectively upheld a lower court ruling allowing the racetrack to operate “dealer-assist” electronic table games. While the court affirmed that Tribal Nations have the legal standing to challenge state-authorized gaming that infringes on their “competition-restricted environment,” the split on the merits leaves a cloudy horizon for the definition of “video games of chance” versus “card playing.”
 – *Casey L. Matthiesen*
 – *Joshua T. Peterson*

1:50 – 2:00 p.m. BREAK

2:00 – 2:45 p.m.
BREAKOUT SESSION B

201
Tribal Governance & Business Update: 105(l) Leasing & Other Strategies for Maximizing Funding

Review the foundations of 105(l) leasing under ISDEAA, discuss emerging tribal arguments testing the scope of the federal government’s 105L funding obligations, and explore proven strategies for maximizing federal funding for tribes.
 – *Cynthia M. Ferguson*
 – *Jeffrey K. Holth*
 – *Geoffrey D. Strommer*

202
Insights on Litigating Indian Law Cases in Federal District Court

Join experienced practitioners as they discuss the courts’ receptivity to Indian Law cases and practice tips for managing cases in federal court.
 – *Andrew Adams III*
 – *Sara K. Van Norman*
 – *Samantha Hermsen Sánchez, moderator*

2:45 – 2:50 p.m. BREAK

2:50 – 3:35 p.m.
BREAKOUT SESSION C

301
Domestic Relations and Disappearing Jurisdiction: The Impact of Tix v. Tix

For practitioners in Minnesota and the broader Eighth Circuit, *Tix v. Tix* is a warning shot. It challenges the inherent authority of Tribal Courts to regulate the internal and social relations of their members. This session discussing the impact of the case is critical for family law practitioners, Tribal judges, and sovereignty advocates.
 – *James K. Nichols*
 – *Jessie Stomski*

302
How Tribal Sovereignty is Impacting Minnesota’s Cannabis Market

A discussion about negotiating state compacts, new regulations and caselaw, and tax issues when collecting on a federally prohibited product.
 – *Andrea Y. Kingbird*
 – *Jason C. Tarasek*
 – *Vanya S. Hogen, moderator*

3:35 – 3:45 p.m. BREAK

3:45 – 4:45 p.m.
The Advocate’s Dilemma: An Open Forum on Law, Leadership, and the Ethical Duty of Lawyers During Times of Protest and Civil Disobedience

1.0 ethics credit applied for
 During times of political and social unrest lawyers face complex dilemmas that test the boundaries of their professional responsibility. This session provides a rigorous analysis of a lawyer’s ethical obligations when engaging in high-stakes environments of civil disobedience and rapid federal policy shifts.
 – *Aram V. Desteian*
 – *Susan M. Humiston*
 – *William H. Stancil*
 – *Emma J. Brunelle, moderator*

4:45 – 5:15 p.m.
ANNUAL RECEPTION
 Spend time creating community and connecting with friends and colleagues



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COURSE INFORMATION

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Friday, May 8, 2026
Minnesota CLE Conference Center
 600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 370
 Third Floor City Center, Minneapolis

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