

1-1-2018

Republication and Translation of 1998 Introduction and Welcome

Robert Yazzie, Navajo Nation
Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/tlj>



Part of the [Indian and Aboriginal Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Race Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Yazzie, Navajo Nation, Robert. "Republication and Translation of 1998 Introduction and Welcome." *Tribal Law Journal* 19, 1 (2019). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/tlj/vol19/iss1/1>

This Symposium and Roundtable is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tribal Law Journal by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

By

The Honorable Robert Yazzie
Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation

As the Chief Judge of an Indian nation judicial system, I find it gratifying when people actually listen to and do something about what the Indian court community says. I, along with many other Indian nation judges have been saying for a long time that one of the problems with American Indian Affairs Law (the name given by the American Bar Association) is that it is a law used to *control* Indians and not the law *of* Indians. This shortcoming will now be addressed by the University of New Mexico's Tribal Law Journal, which will make the internal laws of Indian nations available, along with those of indigenous nations throughout the world.

The Tribal Law Journal addresses a shortcoming in the development of genuine indigenous law. There are few places on the worldwide web where a researcher can find materials on indigenous codes, court cases, traditional law materials, or current events. We will see articles and commentaries on traditional Indian law, which is of particular interest to us. More importantly, we will be able to trust what we read because Professor Christine Zuni Cruz is a friend who knows the needs of the Indian legal community well. She along with other members of the UNM law faculty and UNM law students, that I have had the pleasure of meeting, will assure the quality of the content of this e-journal.

I also welcome this initiative because as we, the Indian court community, are finally getting access to the internet, there needs to be a central place where we can go to get information and have a forum for our voices to be heard. For too long we have allowed others to speak for us, and now this new medium creates an opportunity for us to speak and for others to speak *with* us.

Finally, I welcome the possibility of a forum where we and our friends can speak openly and honestly about what we are doing. There are many challenges for Indian legal systems, including judicial independence, building a corpus of indigenous law, development of the Indian Country legal profession, law reform, and honest but helpful criticism of shortcomings—whether they are ours or someone else's. This web site will have readers from around the world, so we can address issues such as the international human rights of indigenous peoples to independent justice systems, including traditional systems, with integrity and national support.

I'll put aside my gavel and take up the mouse because this is an important venture.