

## INDIAN LAW SECTION

Board of Directors

2008 Annual Report

December 30, 2008

### I. Activities Undertaken Since Last Report

The Indian Law Section, through the continued dedication of its directors and Section members, has had a very active and successful year. The various Section activities have attracted new members, which have proven to steadily increase not only the membership, but the interest of Section members to take an active role in the Section. Like prior years, the Board met on a regular bi-monthly basis, with four active committees. A summary of each committee's activities follows.

- **CLE Committee.** The CLE Committee, chaired by director Zackeree Kelin, planned and presented three CLE seminars during 2008. The first was a session entitled, "Key Concepts for the Practicing Criminal and Civil Attorney" presented by Section member Vincent Knight at the State Bar Annual Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona in July. The presentation aimed to inform new attorneys on the basics of Federal Indian Law and what to expect in tribal court. Mr. Knight presented for a second time at the Young Lawyers Division's Bridge the Gap CLE in October. The third CLE was a half-day presentation at the State Bar Center in November preceding the Section's annual membership luncheon and meeting. That CLE explored issues surrounding traditional dispute resolution. Presenters were Section members Rosalie "Lisa" Chavez and Paul Spruhan. Philmer Bluehouse, a traditional peacemaker, also participated in the presentation.
- **Media Committee.** The Media Committee, co-chaired by directors Pablo Padilla Jr. and Georgene Louis, oversaw both the Section's webpage and the publication of its newsletter. Updates were made to the webpage to include general information about each committee. The website was also updated to congratulate the Bar Preparation Scholarship recipients and acknowledge the generosity of the scholarship donors. The newsletter, which was posted on the webpage and distributed by email to Section members, contains both Section news and articles submitted by Section members dealing with current topics in Indian Law.
- **Outreach Committee.** The Outreach Committee was created to build Section membership and involve the members more actively in the work of the Section. Chaired by director Helen Padilla, the Committee hosted two Section mixers during the year, each of which attracted more than 30 attendees. The Committee was very successful in attaining gifts donated by various companies to give as door prizes to mixer attendees. The Committee also conducted an active outreach effort through the Summer Policy Academy and to Santa Fe Indian School students to implement the "Choose Law" program, an ABA YLD-sponsored effort to encourage minority high school students to consider careers in law.

- **Scholarship Committee.** The Scholarship Committee, chaired by YLD Section liaison Sarita Nair, conducted the Section's third annual Bar Preparation Scholarship program. The program helps defray the costs of bar examination application fees and preparation courses for third-year UNM law students who intend to take the New Mexico Bar and practice Indian Law. The Committee led a successful Board fund raising effort, solicited eight student applications, and selected three students to receive the scholarships. This year's recipients were Gertrude Lee, Carrie Martell and Jonathan Tsosie.

## **II. Ongoing Activities**

For 2009, the Section's Board of Directors is committed to building upon this year's successes. The Board plans to:

- Continue its bi-monthly Board meetings and active committee work between meetings;
- Conduct CLE seminars at the State Bar annual meeting and in conjunction with the Section's annual luncheon and membership meeting;
- Actively seek authors for current Indian law issues for publication in spring and fall newsletters, and continue to improve the Section's webpage;
- Expand the number of Section mixers to four, continue the outreach effort to UNM law students, and continue to present and expand the "Choose Law" program for minority high school students;
- Recruit attorneys to begin mentorship with UNM law students interested in working in Indian law; and
- Implement the fourth year of the Section's Bar Preparation Scholarship program, with great attention to increasing its fund raising base and attracting more scholarship applicants.

## **III. Issues Requiring Board of Bar Commissioner Action: None.**

Finally, the Section's Board of Directors extends its sincere appreciation for the support it has received from the State Bar staff, especially Christine Morganti and Tony Horvat for their continued invaluable assistance to the Section.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgene Louis, Chair  
Indian Law Section