
About the Authors

Kelly Gaines Stoner (Cherokee descent) graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in December 1988. Ms. Stoner was in private practice in Cherokee, Oklahoma, for several years prior to moving to New York, where she took the New York bar exam and practiced for several years for the Department of Human Services agency, working on child abuse/neglect cases. Ms. Stoner then relocated to North Dakota, where she directed the Native American Law Project and taught at the University of North Dakota School of Law for more than eight years. The project served clients of the Spirit Lake Reservation. She represented clients and tribal agencies in tribal and state courts. Professor Stoner serves as a tribal consultant for the Spirit Lake Tribe, specializing in domestic violence issues, children’s issues, and elder issues. For the past six years she has been the director of the Native American Legal Resource Center at Oklahoma City University School of Law and is also director of Clinical Programs. The Native American Legal Resource Center provides services to tribal communities and creates opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the broader university community to utilize knowledge and resources to serve the needs of Oklahoma’s 37 federally recognized Indian tribes. Professor Stoner teaches in the areas of Indian law, tribal law, family law, and domestic violence. She speaks nationally on issues affecting Indian Country and has published in the areas of family law, Indian law, and domestic violence law.

Mark C. Tilden (Navajo) is a graduate of Creighton University and University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. He was with a private law firm before joining the nonprofit Native American Rights Fund (NARF) as a staff attorney in 1994. He left NARF in 2010 to form the law firm of Tilden McCoy + Dilweg LLP. And in August, 2016, he formed the law firm of Tilden Toelupe LLC with Brandy Toelupe. He represents tribal governments and Native peoples with an emphasis on general counsel representation, tribal governance, federal recognition, tribal housing, Indian gaming law and economic development, legislative advocacy at the state and federal level, and Indian child welfare and protection services law. Since 1992 to the present, he writes, lectures, and provides training ranging on topics from the Indian Child Welfare Act, Indian Housing law, Water law, Tribal Sovereignty, Indian Education, and general topics related to Federal Indian law. He was awarded the Environmental Achievement Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for outstanding work with the Oglala Sioux Tribe on developing a tribal environmental code. He is an author and contributing author to a number of books and publications, including as a contributing author, lead attorney and project manager of NARF’s A Practical Guide to the
Indian Child Welfare (online at www.narf.org/icwa) and author of the Tribal Constitution Handbook, A Practical Guide to Writing or Revising a Tribal Constitution (2011). He has participated in ICWA cases, including at the appellate level in a number of states, and is currently working on a ICWA compact between a tribe and state. He has worked or testified on ICWA legislation at the federal and state levels including testimony in 1995 before the U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Native American and Insular Affairs of the Committee on Resources, and Colorado in 2002 and Wisconsin in 2009. He is admitted to a number of professional associations and memberships, past and present, including the ABA Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity in the Profession, Teen Dating Violence Prevention Initiative ABA Advisory Board, ABA Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children and ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty. Colorado Governor Hickenlooper appointed him to serve on the Board of Directors to the Colorado Children’s Trust Fund from 2011 to 2013. And, he served on the Board of Trustees to Boys Town from 2012 until 2016.

Jack F. Trope is a Senior Director in Indian Child Welfare Programs at Casey Family Programs where he works on national and local initiatives aimed at promoting compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act, increasing tribal access to the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program and improving child welfare outcomes for children and families in state and tribal systems through training and systems improvement. Previously, Jack served as the Executive Director of the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) for more than 13 years (and as Staff Attorney earlier in his career) where he worked on a variety of legal and policy matters, with a heavy emphasis on issues related to youth and the protection and preservation of Native American Indian tribal cultures, particularly the protection of sacred places and the repatriation of human remains and cultural items to Indian tribes. He has also served as Director of the Albuquerque-based Western Area Office for the Save the Children Federation, was a partner with the law firm of Sant’Angelo & Trope, an Assistant Counsel to two New Jersey governors, and clerked for a New Jersey Supreme Court Justice. He is a graduate of Rutgers College and Harvard Law School. Mr. Trope has worked on Indian child welfare matters since 1985 including litigation, amicus briefs in a number of cases including the two ICWA cases decided by the United States Supreme Court, training for tribal, state and local judges, attorneys, social workers and government leaders, and advocacy involving both the legislative and executive branches of government. He has authored articles on the ICWA for the Federal Lawyer magazine and the American Indian Law Journal, was a contributing author for A Practical Guide to the Indian Child Welfare Act published by the Native American Rights Fund, and has written a number of papers and pamphlets on Title IV-E as it pertains to Indian tribes.