



## National Tribal Trial College September 2020 Newsletter

We are proud to announce that the National Tribal Trial College is entering its 7th year of the Tribal Court Legal Advocacy Certificate course at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Our graduates are always welcome to attend our free legal webinars and training events.

[Visit our Website](#)

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### National Tribal Trial College COVID-19 Update

We hope this newsletter finds our NTTC community staying safe and finding ways to stay connected with one another during these unprecedented times.

The NTTC converted the last week of the Tribal Court Legal Advocacy Certificate—usually held on-site at the University of Wisconsin the week of July 13-17th—into a purely online, interactive format. While we were disappointed that we did not have the opportunity to meet and interact with each of our students in person, the online course was a resounding success resulting in the graduation of 29 students despite the continuing spread of COVID-19 in certain parts of the country.

Our team at NTTC quickly had to adapt and build a new way of presenting the information via pre-recorded plenary sessions with our faculty using Zoom®, on our learning management system, Canvas®. Students were able to access the final 40-hour week of hands-on training on Canvas by viewing pre-recorded plenary session videos by faculty and attending two live breakout sessions daily. During the breakout groups, students were able to interact with each other and with faculty in real time via Zoom and were able to master the art of litigating a protection order hearing telephonically. During these COVID-19 times, this is an extremely valuable skill set. As a result, this year's graduates have a distinct advantage over all other Tribal Court legal practitioners in successfully litigating protection for victims in remote hearings.

Amanda (Mandy) Cheromiah (Pueblo of Laguna), a doctoral student from the University of Arizona, College of Education, majoring in Higher Education, joined the NTTC this year as our online instructional learning consultant. She facilitated student breakout groups, the student welcome event, and the graduation ceremony while ensuring that the students, faculty and staff had a comfortable and successful learning experience online. Thank you, Mandy, for sharing your time and expertise with NTTC! We could not have done it without you!

Stay healthy and safe—your faculty and staff at NTTC.

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### 2021 NTTC Advocacy Course

The next National Tribal Trial College: Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy course is scheduled to be held from February 2021 to July

2021.

Applications will become available in November 2020 and the course will begin in February 2021. This 20-week course will conclude with a 40-hour, week long training in July 2021 that will either be delivered on-site at the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, Wisconsin, or as an interactive intensive online course (depending on CDC COVID-19 guidelines in effect).

Please email [info@nttconline.org](mailto:info@nttconline.org) to be added to our 2021 NTTC Certificate in Tribal Court Legal Advocacy interest list.

**Tell your friends, family and colleagues!**



The poster for the National Tribal Trial College (NTTC) features the college's logo at the top, which includes a scale of justice and a Native American figure. Below the logo, the text reads: "In 6 months YOU could earn your FREE certificate in TRIBAL COURT LEGAL ADVOCACY". It further states: "Learn to litigate civil Tribal Court cases to advance safety and justice for American Indian/Alaska Native survivors of domestic and sexual violence." The poster also mentions that the course is a 20-week program with a 1-week in-person training week in Wisconsin. It lists the course as being offered in partnership with the National Tribal Trial College at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Key partners mentioned include the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the University of Wisconsin Law School, and the Southwest Center for Law and Policy. The poster provides the application deadline as January 15, 2020, and the course start date as February 2, 2020. It also notes that admission is competitive and prioritized for advocates serving American Indian/Alaska Native survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. Contact information for registration is provided as [info@nttconline.org](mailto:info@nttconline.org), (202) 628-8182, and [www.nttconline.org](http://www.nttconline.org).

## Faculty Spotlight



Brenna Hanley



Brenna Hanley receives her certificate from the National Tribal Trial College at the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, WI in July 2017

### Brenna Hanley

Brenna Hanley is a distinguished graduate of the National Tribal Trial College Class of 2017 and was invited to serve as faculty for the 2020 NTTC course. She currently serves as a prosecutor for the Navajo Nation Office of the Prosecutor and is licensed to practice before the Navajo Nation Tribal Courts. Brenna represents victims in civil and criminal matters and also serves as an instructor for the Navajo Nation Police Academy. Her clans are the Kinyaa'áanii (Towering House), Tó'ahéédliinii (Water Flow Together), Ashijihí (Salt People), and Táchii'nii (Red Running Into the Water People). Brenna's background includes ten plus years of experience working in administration and management positions for the United States Air Force and for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. She aspires to someday graduate from law school.

#### ***How would you describe your NTTC experience?***

I graduated in July 2017. My experience was amazing from start to finish, the online material was clearly stated, the videos were personal and very enlightening, and the in-person week in Wisconsin was engaging. I absolutely loved every minute of NTTC. The entire staff are amazing people who make the course more exceptional. I learned a great deal that contributed to my passing the Navajo Nation bar exam and helped me hit the ground running as a tribal prosecutor. I took the bar exam while attending NTTC and was sworn in to practice shortly before I becoming a Certified Tribal Court Legal Lay Advocate. NTTC will forever be a part of my foundation in my pursuit of seeking tribal justice.

#### ***Did the NTTC training influence your advocacy for your clients and/or community?***

My certification experience heavily influenced, and continues to enhance, my ability to highlight victim rights as a tribal prosecutor. I represent victims and the Navajo people in an in-depth and cultural manner that may have taken me several years to master without NTTC training.

***What was your takeaway from serving as faculty for the 2020 NTTC course?***

I looked forward to sharing my perspective of, "If I can do it, you can too!" With the quality training, having a positive mindset and the motivation to help victims, the students can be amazing factors for justice throughout Indian Country.

***Do you have any advice for the Class of 2020?***

I want them to know they already are doing a great thing for Indian Country and to keep going. I encourage every class member to take pride in protecting our people and everything we represent. Lastly, have fun and smile!

## NTTC Student Spotlight

### Phyllis Smoke Named Ho-Chunk Executive Director of Administration



The National Tribal Trial College reached out to Phyllis Smoke, Class of 2019, to share with us a little about herself and what she has been doing since receiving her certificate.

"Since completing the course through NTTC, I have assisted with the Ho-Chunk Nation Judiciary Branch to move the Peacemaker's Project forward by being an active participant. The course through NTTC was a compliment to the projects."

She received a Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in Tribal Administration and Governance in May 2018.

Her position of 20 years was with the Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature in various positions and lastly as the Chief Clerk.

Phyllis states, "As a Ho-Chunk Nation tribal member, I'm always looking for ways to improve myself and ways to help our Ho-Chunk people."

On November 19, 2019, Phyllis Smoke was appointed by the Ho-Chunk Nation President Marlon White Eagle and confirmed by the Ho-Chunk Nation to serve as the Executive Director of Administration. This position has six divisions that it oversees. The administration covers: Information Technology, Transportation, Facilities, Realty, Newsletter, Planning & Development Division for the Ho-Chunk Nation. The Ho-Chunk Tribe has Branch Offices through Wisconsin, one in Minnesota and Illinois. The Branch offices provide services to the tribal membership from transports to referral of services.

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If you would like to be featured on our next newsletter, please send our staff an email at [info@nttconline.org](mailto:info@nttconline.org).

## Resources for Students



# McGirt v Oklahoma

On July 9, 2020, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in "The most significant Indian Law case of the century" in McGirt v Oklahoma.

Check out this landmark supreme court decision significantly affecting jurisdiction in the eastern part of Oklahoma:

[https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/1-18-9526\\_9okb.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/1-18-9526_9okb.pdf)

This video produced by Arizona State University's Indian Law Program, does a great job at explaining the impact of this decision on Indian Country in Oklahoma and across the nation.

[Click here to watch the video](#)



Indian Legal Program

The most significant **Indian** Law case of the century: **McGirt v. Oklahoma**

ASU Arizona State University

## Upcoming Webinars



## Police Report Writing in Tribal Domestic and Sexual Assault Crimes

### What:

This one hour webinar will provide practical tips on documenting witness and suspect statements, overcoming hearsay, and diagramming the crime scene to increase successful prosecution and conviction rates.

### When:

Monday, September 21, 2020  
8 a.m. AKT / 9 a.m. PT / 10 a.m. MT / 11 a.m. CT / 12 p.m. ET

### Who:

Those serving American Indian/Alaska Native survivors of sexual violence including tribal law enforcement, VPSOs, VPOs, victim advocates, prosecutors, National Tribal Trial College alumni and SAFESTARS.

### Cost:

Free

### How to Register:

<https://ta2ta.org/webinars/registration/police-report-writing-in-tribal-domestic-and-sexua.html>

Check the NTTC website for more information on upcoming webinars!

