



## NNBA NEWS

President's Newsletter

### NNBA CONFERENCE SETS ATTENDANCE, FUNDRAISING RECORDS

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The verdict on this year's NNBA annual conference is in, and it's good news for NNBA members. The conference, held at Twin Arrows Resort and Conference Center on June 6-7, record member attendance and a netted more than \$20,000 in additional profit for our organization compared to just two years ago.



*Dóók'ód'slíid at dusk on the opening day of the NNBA conference*

Plenary panel sessions on Navajo Fundamental Law dominated this year's event, which also included an oral argument before the Navajo Supreme Court. Keynoted by Hilary Tompkins (*Diné*), Solicitor of the Interior in President Barack Obama's Administration, the conference featured

the Navajo Nation's first-ever Fireside Chat. This was an informal conversation with John Echohawk, Executive Director of the Native American Rights Fund for the past 43 years, and Judge Harris Hartz of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit, facilitated by their mutual friend, Judge Allison Eid. Echohawk and Hartz, who have been lifelong friends since their elementary school days together in Farmington, NM, shared humorous and sometimes very moving experiences of growing up in *Diné'tah* during the 1960s and, later as distinguished jurists, helping to shape the development of Federal Indian Law.



2019 NNBA Bar Conference participating included (top row, from left to right) Troy Eid, John Echohawk, Judge Harris Hartz, Judge Allison Eid; (Bottom row, left to right) Julia Guarino, Neomi Gilmore, LaVerne Garnenez, and Ethel Branch.

The conference included senior leaders past and present from all three branches of the Navajo Nation government as well as attorneys, advocates and judges from the Four Corners and beyond.

“Thanks to our members and the generous financial support of our donors, this year’s NNBA conference was a success and brought our entire organization closer together,” said NNBA President Troy Eid. “We’re now in an even stronger position to serve the Navajo people in the months and years ahead. **Please mark your calendars for next year’s conference, which will return to Twin Arrows on June 4-5, 2020.**”

## **BOARD OF BAR COMMISSIONERS MOVES FORWARD WITH BAR EXAM REFORMS**

Meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup> at Twin Arrows, the NNBA Board of Bar Commissioners voted to adopt the first component of the Yazzie Plan to strengthen the Navajo Bar Examination. The Plan, which is being spearheaded by the Honorable Robert Yazzie, Chief Justice Emeritus of the Navajo Supreme Court, is aimed at closing the performance gap between attorneys and tribal court advocates by emphasizing the increased importance of *Diné* Fundamental Law and its practical application to the Navajo Justice System. As part of these reforms, the BOBC voted to reduce the number of subjects tested on the semi-annual NNBA exam from approximately 25 to 14 total subjects. This is much more in keeping with the bar exams of neighboring jurisdictions, which test between six and a dozen subjects. For more information on the Yazzie Plan, and to get more involved, go to [www.navajolaw.info](http://www.navajolaw.info).



The Honorable Albert Hale, former President of Navajo Nation and Arizona State Senator and Representative, joins keynote speaker Hilary Tompkins



## **NNBA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS**

Congratulations to **Lucas Babycos, Francesca Ciliberti, Brian Curley-Chambers, Liliana Benitez De Luna, Elizabeth Fella, Laura Horton, Alexandra Kinsella, Kristin McPhie, Alyssa Mercado, Luis Ochoa, Kelsea Raether, Matthew Tso and Keatan Williams** for passing the March 2019 NNBA Bar Exam! **The Honorable JoAnn Jayne**, Chief Justice of Navajo Supreme Court,

swore them in at a ceremony June 10<sup>th</sup> in Window Rock. With the addition of these new members, NNBA now has more than 630 total members (active and inactive) and is the largest legal services organization in the United States that directly serves a federally recognized Native American tribe.



**Navajo Nation Bar Association Inc.**

## **NAVAJO SUPREME COURT SUSPENDS *PRO HAC VICE* ADMISSION**

NNBA has been working closely with the Navajo Supreme Court and the Judicial Branch in light of the Court's decision to suspend new *pro hac vice* admission. Prior to the Court's order in May, NNBA was administering this system pursuant to Article II of our Bylaws. Those admitted on a *pro hac* basis to practice in the Navajo courts pay a \$300 fee to the NNBA and are admitted after providing the requisite paperwork to the NNBA Admissions Committee. *Pro hac* attorneys are responsible for honoring their *pro bono* service requirement that same as active NNBA members, which means accepting such cases when appointed by the courts. There are reportedly a total of 21 *pro hac vice*-admitted attorneys practicing on the Nation. For more information and the Court's order, go to [www.navajolaw.info](http://www.navajolaw.info).

## **RULES COMMITTEE SEEKS INPUT ON POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS**

NNBA's new Rules Chair, Alvina Earnhart, has convened the reconstituted Committee and is developed a survey so members can prioritize areas where our rules of practice need strengthening and clarification. This includes the Criminal Procedure Rules amendments. The Rules Committee's NNBA Members' Survey is now live at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NNBARulesCommitteeSurvey>. Special thanks to Alvina Earnhart and the Rules Committee, and to Julia Guarino, for putting the survey. We encourage all of you to complete the Survey, which will be emailed to members and also posted at [www.navajolaw.info](http://www.navajolaw.info).

## **NICHOLS CONTINUES TO SERVE NNBA AS COUNSELOR**

Former NNBA Treasurer Brian Nichols has accepted a new role with our organization as its first Counselor. The role of Counselor is to help NNBA provide greater transparency and responsiveness to our members by serving as an advisor to the organization.

Nichols said he would continue to work with NNBA Treasurer Neomi Gilmore to put NNBA on a more solid footing financially while strengthening its legal compliance program.

"Stronger legal and financial oversight is essential to meeting our objectives," said NNBA President Troy Eid. "Many NNBA members still remember the scandal that afflicted our bar association some years ago when money and various key documents, including bank statements and other financial information, went missing. As a result, NNBA lost its tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service and the Navajo Nation Tax Commission. A number of our members volunteered at that time to help dig NNBA out of this hole. It took considerable time to regain our tax-exempt status while strengthening credibility in the NNBA's back-office operations. We never want to travel that path again."



**Navajo Nation Bar Association Inc.**

## Board of Bar Commissioner Election Results

The Navajo Nation Bar Association Inc. (NNBA), has completed the review of the ballots submitted for the following districts, Tuba City, Alamo/Ramah/Tohajiilee and Window Rock

Congratulations,

**Dennis Glazer**, Tuba City District

**Alisha Thompson**, Alamo/Ramah/Tohajiilee District

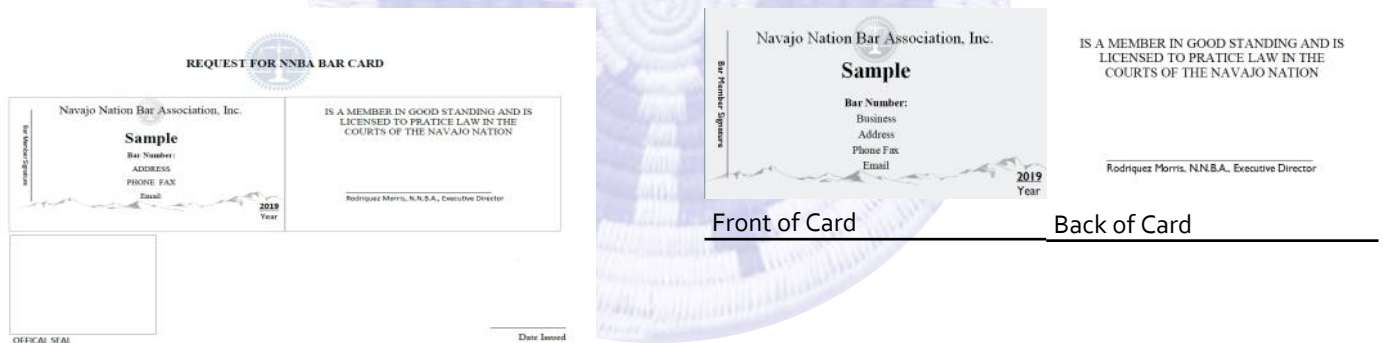
**Lisa Yellow-Eagle**, Window Rock District

For more information, visit the website at [www.navajolaw.info](http://www.navajolaw.info).

## NNBA BAR NUMBERS

The Navajo Nation Bar Association Inc. (NNBA), announces the assignment of bar numbers for record purposes for all members. You may request for bar cards from the NNBA online at [www.navajolaw.info](http://www.navajolaw.info).

Your bar card will then be mailed out to your home of record. For more information, please contact the NNBA office at 928-871-2211.



Official Document (can be used as card)

## IT CORNER

If you have any technical difficulties with the website, please contact the Webmaster, Alexandria Wauneka at: [admin@navajolaw.info](mailto:admin@navajolaw.info) or call the office at (928) 871-2211. Email would be the best way to contact me if you have any recommendations for improvements on the website or any issues that persist throughout your visit to the site. The "Contact Webmaster" form on the website under contact us tab is another way contact me. Thank you for your time.



Navajo Nation Bar Association Inc.

## ***JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS***

FOR INFORMATION VISIT: <https://www.navajolaw.info/>

### **SUPREME COURT OF THE NAVAJO NATION**

***ASSOCIATE JUSTICE***

### **NAVAJO NATION JUDICIAL BRANCH**

***DISTRICT COURT JUDGE***

### **CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA**

***CITY ATTORNEY***

**MARTHA L. KING, PC**

***ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY***

### **NAVAJO HOUSING AUTHORITY**

***GENERAL COUNSEL***

***STAFF ATTORNEY***

**NAVAJO NATION BAR ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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