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Introduction

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2000 NATIVE AMERICAN LAW SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTION

THE HONORABLE YVONNE KAUGER*

As a result of his service on the Indian Affairs Committee at the National Chief Justices' Conference, Chief Justice John B. Doolin recognized the need for a forum to address Native American issues. Under his tutelage, the Sovereignty Symposium was established when the Chief Justice directed me to coordinate a conference. I have been honored to act as the Sovereignty Symposium Coordinator since its inception in 1988.

The Sovereignty Symposium was established to provide a forum in which ideas concerning common legal issues can be exchanged in a scholarly, non-adversarial environment. The Supreme Court espouses no view on any of the issues, and the positions taken by the participants are not endorsed by the Supreme Court. As coordinator of the Sovereignty Symposium, I hope students of the University of Tulsa and others who benefit from this year's publication based on Sovereignty Symposium 2000 will take advantage of the Symposium's scholarship opportunities and will plan to attend Sovereignty Symposium XIV,

* Yvonne Kauger is a Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. She is a fourth generation Oklahoman from Colony, Oklahoma. Justice Kauger serves as the Coordinator of the nationally recognized Sovereignty Symposium. As a co-founder, Justice Kauger is referred to as "The Mother of Red Earth." In 1999, Justice Kauger was awarded the Herbert Harley Award by the American Judicature Society in recognition of her outstanding efforts to improve the administration of justice. In November of the same year, she was honored by the Oklahoma Bar Association with the Judicial Excellence Award. In 2001, Justice Kauger will be inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame.

2001, *A Tribal Odyssey*. The dates are June 4-6, 2001, and we will be in Oklahoma City for the first time in eight years at the new Renaissance Hotel with the meeting to be held in our revamped Myriad Convention Center.

Sovereignty Symposium 2000, *A New Journey*, was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 5-7, 2000, in conjunction with the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission, Sovereignty Symposium, Inc., the Oklahoma Arts Council and the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The Symposium is the nation's largest symposium on Indian Law drawing nationally and internationally recognized panelists and attendees from around the world. Recognized as the premier Symposium on legal and administrative issues facing indigenous peoples in the Americas, the Symposium deals with a myriad of issues of concern to tribal leaders, lawyers, generalists, students, and educators. Panels cover a myriad of topics dealing with environmental concerns, international indigenous peoples' issues, gaming, taxation and the relationships of all branches of state, tribal and federal governments.

The Sovereignty Symposium has been fortunate to have many outstanding mentors. The Sovereignty Symposium recognizes three of those individuals each year through the provision of scholarships. Chief Justice Doolin loved to read and write, collect Indian art and buy Navajo rugs. His devotion to the Symposium is recognized through a law student writing competition, open to all students enrolled in accredited law schools in the United States, its territories or Canada. Cash awards range from \$200.00 to \$500.00 and winning entries are published in the Symposium's annual publication.

Ed Edmondson served in the United States Congress representing Oklahoma for twenty years. During his time in Congress, he was an active supporter of Native American concerns and education. When the Symposium was born, Oklahoma's former Representative became one of its biggest supporters. He attended the early sessions of the Symposium, addressing the attendees on numerous occasions. Today, tuition only scholarships are offered in his name in appreciation for his support and efforts during the founding years of the Symposium.

Susan J. Ferrell served as an Attorney Advisor in the Oklahoma City office of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Susan worked in HUD's Native American programs and was a panelist on housing issues for the Symposium. After she was killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, the Symposium established a full scholarship to the Symposium in her memory. The scholarship is awarded to the applicant who best demonstrates an interest in and contribution to Native American legal issues.

The University of Tulsa College of law has played an active role in the Sovereignty Symposium. Professors from the Law School have appeared as panelists. Students have entered writing competitions and have attended sessions of the Symposium. In addition, the Law School has been generous in sponsoring receptions where attendees and panelists have the opportunity to come together to discuss the topics presented and to get to know each other in an unstructured

and congenial setting. I am excited to announce in 2001, the College of Law will be even more involved in the activities of the Sovereignty Symposium in the role of sponsor. I commend the University of Tulsa in its second-annual attempt to present a summation of the Native American issues presented at the Sovereignty Symposium.

More information on the Sovereignty Symposium can be obtained on the world wide web by visiting the Oklahoma Supreme Court's website, www.oscn.net or by writing to Julie Rorie, Administrative Office of the Courts, 1915 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105. I hope each of you will join Dean Martin Belsky and I at Sovereignty Symposium XIV next June.
