



THE NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION #2024-01

TITLE: Creation of the Firekeepers Circle

WHEREAS, the National Native American Bar Association (“NNABA”) was founded in 1973 and serves as the national association for Native American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students, and NNABA promotes and addresses social, cultural, political, and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the NNABA has worked to increase the inclusion and visibility of Native American attorneys in the legal profession through mentorships, scholarships, Continuing Legal Education programs, partnerships with sister affinity bars and the American Bar Association (“ABA”), and through research studies; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, NNABA released the first-of-its-kind study of Native American attorneys entitled “The Pursuit of Inclusion: An In-Depth Exploration of the Experiences and Perspectives of Native American Attorneys in the Legal Profession,” which provided the first comprehensive look at the issues confronting Native American attorneys across all settings, including private practice, government practice in state, federal and tribal sectors, the judiciary, corporate legal departments, and academia; and,

WHEREAS, in 2023, about a decade after the NNABA’s first comprehensive research on Native American attorneys, the NNABA, in collaboration with the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, released the second research study on Native American attorneys focused on Native American women attorneys entitled, “Excluded and Alone: Examining the Experiences of Native American Women in the Law and a Path Towards Equity; (“Path Towards Equity Report”) and

WHEREAS, the Path Towards Equity Report builds on the 2015 NNABA study, with a goal of thoroughly examining the unique experiences of Native American women who navigate the intersection of tribal identity, race, and gender in the legal profession, and seeking to understand the generational perspectives of Native American women; and,

WHEREAS, NNABA urged at the outset of the project to be intentional about the inclusion of Native American voices on an advisory group with Native American representation to guide the study; and

WHEREAS, when Native American communities gather to fulfill a responsibility, for ceremony, for celebration, or a purpose like the 2023 study, the community relies on the guiding aspect of the natural elements, like the sacred fire, which is the premise of the Firekeepers Circle; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, the NNABA and ABA convened the Firekeepers Circle to guide the study, an advisory council premised on Native American thought and culture, comprised of NNABA and ABA representatives, including lawyers in various stages of their careers and from different Indian Nations; and

WHEREAS, the Firekeepers Circle is invested in developing solution-focused recommendations, and envisioned and defined a more inclusive legal profession for Native American women; and

WHEREAS, the foundation of the Path Towards Equity Report and the Call to Action is embedded in the work of the Firekeeper Circle; and,

WHEREAS, the Path Towards Equity Report includes a detailed call to action for legal professionals—including individuals, law schools, bar associations and policy advocates, employers, and philanthropic organizations—urging efforts to learn about Native American women’s experiences, needs, and challenges, to commit to sustained allyship and be an advocate, and to take deliberate and tangible supportive action; and

WHEREAS, the Firekeepers Circle represents a symbolic role, that they will stand watch over the fire so the fire burns brightly until the NNABA’s Call to Action and its mission, goals, and objectives are met and sustained for the present and future generations of Native American law students and attorneys.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NNABA Board of Directors supports and approves the creation of the Firekeepers Circle;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, according to Article III, 3.1 of the NNABA Bylaws, the NNABA Board of Directors creates the Firekeepers Circle as part of its governing and organizational structure to serve as an advisory council, comprised of former NNABA Presidents, members or representatives of sister affinity bar associations, that members will be nominated by Directors and approved by the NNABA Board, and each member shall serve 2 years with renewable terms; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Firekeepers Circle sheds light on the past study, present Call to Action and recommendations, and future work or reports focused on a more inclusive legal profession for Native American women attorneys and law students, and is supported by the NNABA, and purposes otherwise determined and delegated to the Firekeepers Circle by the NNABA Board of Directors.

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CERTIFICATE OF CORPORATE SECRETARY

I, Sarah Crawford, do hereby certify that I am the Secretary of the National Native American Bar Association (**NNABA**);

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY THAT Makalika Naholowaa, Phil Brodeen, Matthew Archer-Beck, Andrea Snowball, Thomas Pack, Geneva Thompson, Eldred Ledansee, Paulene Abeyta, Torey Dolan, Sunshine Nicholson, Blair Tarman, and I are the currently serving directors of NHLC; and

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY THAT attached hereto as is a true and complete copy of a resolution titled "Creation of the Firekeeper's Circle," duly adopted according to NNABA's Bylaws by the Board of Directors of NNABA at a Regular Meeting of the NNABA Board of Directors on March 6, 2024 and effective as of that same date;

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY THAT said resolution has not been altered, amended, or rescinded and is now in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this 6th day of March 2024.



Sarah Crawford
Secretary, National Native American Bar Association