



2024 Annual Members Business Meeting

President's Report

Aloha kākou,

It's a privilege to have served as this organization's 40th President during its 51 years of steadfast service to Native Americans in the legal profession and Native communities.

This was a productive year. I am grateful beyond words to the many helping hands from our board, member volunteers, and allies at numerous important partners, including the ABA and sister bar associations of color, for the contributions to our organization and in the pursuit of fulfilling our mission.

I'd like to highlight some of the impacts of our collective contributions across this bar year:

1. **Community Engagement and Advocacy** – NNABA was represented at 32 events nationwide with audiences including thousands of people raising awareness about the justice and inclusion issues facing Native Americans. The list of events is included as Appendix A to this report.
2. **Coalition Building** – NNABA sponsored 9 organizations and events this bar year to deepen our relationships and work with mission aligned organizations including the ABA, Indian legal organizations, and other affinity bar associations. The list of sponsorships is included as Appendix B to this report.
3. **Policymaking** – NNABA passed 5 resolutions and issued a statement on the *Brakeen* decision. The list of these resolution and statement are included as Appendix C to this report and are posted to NNABA's resolutions page online.
4. **Judicial Diversity** – NNABA worked independently and in collaboration with NCAI and NARF to submit letters of support for judicial candidates seeking 13 different state and federal roles.
5. **Communications** – NNABA launched and maintained social media accounts on Instagram and LinkedIn to help amplify the reach of our work and community.
6. **Development** – NNABA collected more than \$100k in resources to fund our meeting and other programs from a diverse community of tribes, philanthropic organizations, corporations, law firms, and individuals. This support allows us to continue our decision last year to eliminate member dues and make NNABA membership suggested donation.
7. **Governance & Committee Growth** – NNABA stood up 4 new committees this bar year to create more opportunities for members to opt into developing our work in important areas including:

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- a. the Firekeeper’s Circle to focus on the inclusion and success of Native women in the profession;
- b. the Intellectual Property, Traditional Knowledge, and Cultural Property Committee;
- c. a Justice is Medicine Annual Meeting Committee to continue the work to stewards and grow our annual meeting, awards, and award dinner; and
- d. a Sister Native Organizations Engagement Committee to build deeper relationships with regional bars and other native organizations for lawyers and judges.

These committees did remarkable work this year including the work to launch the first ever study on Native American women attorneys, which launched in the fall with the ABA Commission on Women, and the submission of comments in response to the US Patent and Trademark Office’s first ever tribal consultation regarding the advancement of US law and policy locally and in international negotiations regarding Indigenous genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

8. **Operational Maturation** – NNABA passed multiple resolutions to create clear controls and empowerment for the President to lead day to day operations for the association; engaged a CPA to assist NNABA to mature its financial management and preparation of financial statements in anticipation of a future in which we may want to invest in independent audits; and implemented the Microsoft 365 tenancy for our productivity platform to make the association operate more efficiently, securely, and with better ways of securing institutional knowledge and association work product.

A year moves incredibly fast, and you never get all the things done in that time that you would like. Notably, I believe we have important work still to do thinking about how we can mature our annual meeting to create an even more useful and impactful gathering for this community where many benefits are possible from opportunities to learn; engage in cultural exchange and experiences; strategize and advance advocacy; develop relationships; develop business; recruit/job hunt; and more. I also believe we urgently need to find the financial resources to move NNABA from an all-volunteer, largely board run, organization to one that is staffed with increased operational capacity. I believe we started the work on these important issues, but these topics remain in progress projects.

Despite the things we couldn’t get done, I am exceptionally proud of all of us for what we have done in a good indigenous way, with aloha for each other and all our Native peoples. This is reflected in all the above-mentioned highlights and all the things we’ve done collectively in the other parts of our careers as advocates that are consistent with NNABA’s mission.

As I pass the torch to our rising President Matthew Archer-Beck, I do so with complete faith that we are on a path to continue the work fulfilling our mission, under the care of his leadership and that of all our board members, committee leaders, and the volunteers and partners that are essential to our success.

I encourage the members to think about how to lean in and participate in an active way within NNABA. Bar associations can be incredibly powerful and impactful stewards of justice as well as platforms for enabling professional success. That said, they are only as powerful as the mana members put into them. It is the steadfast contributions of our founders and early NNABA members that have allowed us to enjoy this

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amazing aspect of their legacy, a 51-year organization with an evergreen mission and the ingredients necessary to achieve it. I look forward to continuing our shared work with all of you as a Past-President.

Me ke aloha,



Makalika Naholowa'a

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Appendix A: NNABA Events in the 2023-2024 Bar Year

- April 2023
 1. 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Dinner
- May 2023
 1. White House National Affinity Bars Meeting Regarding Voting Rights and Judicial Diversity, Washington, D.C. – Attended by Makalika Naholowaa & Matt Archer-Beck
 2. Investiture of Judge Sunshine Sykes, Riverside, CA – Attended by Makalika Naholowa'a & Heather Torres
- June 2023
 1. Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy, Minnesota, MN – Attended by Makalika Naholowa'a, Matt Archer-Beck, Tom Pack, Phil Brodeen, Blair Tarmn, Arielle Wagner, and 2 others.
 2. Sponsored – ASU Pathways to Leadership Program, Tempe, AZ – Board did not attend.
- July 2023
 1. LGBTQ+ Annual Conference, Chicago, IL – Attended by Tom Pack
 2. Podcast Uplifting Women Leadership in the Law for Thomson Reuters Podcast *The Hearing* – Recorded by Makalika Naholowaa
 3. Spirit of Excellence Nomination for Cherokee Nation AG Sara Hill Submitted – Prepared by Tom Pack, Geneva Thompson, and Makalika Naholowaa
- August 2023
 1. Adopted Resolution Regarding AMBER Alert System in Indian Country
 2. National Bar Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN – Phil attended.
 3. ABA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO – attended by Makalika Naholowaa, Matt Archer-Beck, Blair Tarman, Andy Snowball, and Sunshine Nichols
 - Sponsored Thurgood Marshall Award Dinner – attended by all board members noted above.

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- Attended Pro Bono Awards recognizing Judge Melissa Pope – attended by Patty, Makalika, Mary, Heather, and Sunshine
- Attended NAPABA Reception recognizing Marvin Dang ascending to ABA Secretary role and HI Supreme Court Justice Sabrina McKenna for receipt of the Margaret Brent Award
- Attended Margaret Brent Awards (no Native honoree)
- Attended passing of the gavel ceremony for Mary Smith at the ABA House of Delegates
- Attended reception by Mary Smith celebrating the start of her term.
- September 2023
 1. HNBA Annual Convention – Phil attended and provided land acknowledgement
 2. Sept 26 – Coalition of Affinity Bars Meeting, D.C. – Matt Archer-Beck attended with a sizeable NABA DC cohort.
- October 2023
 1. CA Indian Law Association Conference – Tom Pack attended.
 2. Affirmative Action Panel - ABA Equity Summit, Virtual, Oct. 23rd – Torey Dolan
 3. Investiture of Judge Keala Ede to Minnesota Court of Appeals – Makalika Naholowaa, Phil Brodeen, Tom Pack
 4. AISES Annual Conference, Spokane, WA – Makalika attended.
 5. White House Meetings with CBAC Leaders, D.C. - Torey attended.
- November 2023
 1. Publication of the Native American Women Attorney Study - Makalika moderated launch panel as part of ABA Presidential Speaker’s Series.
 2. NNALSA Midyear Meeting – Makalika spoke on a panel.
 3. NAPABA Annual Convention, Indianapolis, IN – Matt attended.
 4. NBC Internal Panel – Phil served.

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- January 2024
 1. Publication of ABA Human Rights Magazine dedicated to Native American Issues – Matt and Makalika submitted articles
 2. ABA Mid-Year Meeting, Louisville, KY (Jan 31 – Feb 7)
 - Spirit of Excellence Award Luncheon
 - Racial and Ethnic Diversity Caucus
 - House of Delegates Meeting
 - ABA Strategic Planning Offsite
 - Firekeeper’s Circle Native American Women Attorney Panel
- February 2024
 1. See ABA meeting above.
- March 2024
 1. National Judicial College “Democracy’s Last Line of Defense” Conference, Boston, MA (March 13 & 14) - Makalika spoke
 2. ABA Law Day, Virtual and Prerecorded (March 21, accessible online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPo2GThq7PE>) – Matt Archer-Beck (ABA National Law Day Chair) and Makalika spoke
 3. ABA Panel as part of UN Commission on Women Meeting titled “End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls”, Virtual, (March 19) - Makalika spoke. Linda Benally moderated the panel. Mary Smith and Lauren Van Schilfgaarde gave recorded remarks. Judges Sarah Deer and Melissa Pope attended and spoke.
 4. HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference, Seattle (March 22) – Makalika attended
 5. NALSA NYU Indigenous Law Symposium, New York City (March 29) - Makalika giving keynote
 6. Yale Indigenous Student Panel titled Indigenous Women at the Front of Native Law, New Haven and Virtual (March 30) - Makalika sat on panel

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- April 2024
 1. NNABA Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, NM (April 2 & 3) - All

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Appendix B: NNABA Sponsorships in the 2023-2024 Bar Year

1. ABA Thurgood Marshall Dinner
2. ABA Spirit of Excellence Awards
3. ASU ILP Pipeline Program
4. ABA Voting Rights Exhibit with Seattle University Indian Law Center
5. National Native American Law Student Association Midyear Meeting
6. Coalition of Bar Associations of Color 2023
7. Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy 2023
8. ASU ILP Virtual Conference of Tribal Leaders Regarding USPTO Consultation on IP, Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources
9. The National Judicial College "Democracy's Last Line of Defense" Conference held March 13 & 14 in Boston, MA

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Appendix C: Policies and Policy Statements for Bar Year 2023-2024

1. Resolution Denouncing Anti-Two Spirit, LGBTQ+, and SOGI Legislation and Discrimination – passed by NNABA on March 25, 2024.
2. Joint Resolution in Support of DEI Programs at Law Schools and Corporations lead by National Bar Association – passed by NNABA on December 6, 2023, and later adopted by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2024.
3. Resolution in Support of AMBER Alert System in Indian Country – passed August 2, 2023 by NNABA and later adopted by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2024.
4. Resolution to Protect Native Voting Rights – passed by NNABA on June 7, 2023
5. Statement regarding *Brackeen* – approved by NNABA board on June 16, 2023