Native Peoples Law Caucus Annual Report 2013

The focus of the NPLC continues to keep law librarians aware of major issues and changes taking place Federal Indian and Tribal Law, including challenges in accessing to the resources relating to these areas. This year, the NPLC sponsored an Annual Meeting session, American Indian Law: Access and Collections, coordinated and moderated by Catherine Kellett, with University of Washington Law Professor Robert Anderson and members, Eugenia Charles-Newton, David Selden and Sherri Thomas rounding out the panel.

With the recent passage of federal legislation (Tribal Law and Order Act (2010) and the re-enactment of the Violence Against Women’s Act (2013)) and important U.S. Supreme Court decisions that impact Indian country (Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl (2013), regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act and Shelby County v. Holder (2013), regarding the Voting Rights Act), our Caucus is looking forward to what programming content and type we need to offer at forthcoming Annual Meetings. We are considering offering a pre-conference or Deep-Dive session on how access tribal laws. Also, a Deep Dive or Hot Topic session on Jurisdiction in Indian country is also being considered.

Additionally, the NPLC continues to track the development of the Library of Congress reclassification of materials relating to Federal Indian Law or Tribal/Indigenous/Aboriginal law. This reclassification been an important and Herculean effort carried out Jolande E. Goldberg, Library of Congress Senior Cataloging Policy and Law Classification Specialist. Caucus members are also making assessments of how reclassifying their respective institutional libraries with the new KIA-KIX schedule will impact the institutions on fiscal and labor levels.

Partnerships are important to a specialized Caucus like ours, so we continue to engage in our longstanding partnerships developed through our membership. For instance, for the second year, David Selden brought forward a project, joined by the Social Responsibilities SIS, to ask the AALL membership to pledge a donation as a carbon offset for travel to the Annual Meeting. The donations assist a non-profit organization, Trees, Water & People, raise money to build and install solar heaters, replacing coal-based electric heating in reservation households and assist low income Native American families pay winter heating bills.

However, the Native Peoples Law Caucus is also looking outward for partnerships with other organizations within and outside of AALL. Natural partnerships with SISs and sub-sections (SR-SIS and FCIL-SIS Indigenous People Law Interest Group) for programming and project work need to be better maintained as we move forward with our projects to bolster our impact as a caucus, as well as strengthening the effectiveness of any actions or projects we take on. Also, reaching out to other associations with similar interest like the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums, the American Library Association’s Rural, Native and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds Committee will help create awareness of AALL and the NPLC, as well as aid in identifying potential new law librarians that are interested in Federal Indian and/or Tribal Law.

Submitted by
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NPLC Chair 2012-2013