

**Tessa Chesher**

Dr. Tessa Chesher is an associate clinical professor at Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. She is dually board-certified in general psychiatry as well as child and adolescent psychiatry. She received her general psychiatry training at the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine and her child and adolescent psychiatry training at Tulane University School of Medicine where she also completed a Harris Fellowship in Infant and Early Childhood Psychiatry. Dr. Chesher's professional interests include infant and early childhood mental health, early childhood trauma, and pediatric consultation-liaison psychiatry. She focuses on increasing infant mental health knowledge in the medical and mental health communities through education and consultation across Oklahoma.

**Sara Coffey**

Dr. Coffey is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences (OSUCHS). Dr. Coffey completed her adult psychiatry residency at the University of Chicago and her child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at Harvard Medical School's Cambridge Health Alliance. During her adult psychiatry training, Dr. Coffey served as the chair of the Public Health Committee for the American Medical Association's Resident's Committee. She served as a public psychiatry fellow for the American Psychiatric Association for two years during her psychiatry training. Dr. Coffey has extensive experience working within the public-school system in both Cambridge, Massachusetts and Tulsa Area Public Schools. Dr. Coffey is a regionally known speaker on the effects of trauma in the classroom and integrated care. Dr. Coffey is currently contracted with the Department of Mental Health to provide technical assistance in the implementation of Oklahoma Health Homes. In this line of work, Dr. Coffey serves as an expert in integrated care models and best practices of integration and collaboration between primary care and behavioral health. Through her partnership with the Department of mental health she has provided on-site consultation to the majority of health homes in Oklahoma and has lectured on both collaborative care models in pediatrics, as well as, preventative care in children. Dr. Coffey serves as a consultant for the Department of Human Services Child Welfare and is a Co-Lead on OSUCHS's Pediatric Behavioral and Emotional Health ECHO. Additionally, Dr. Coffey serves as the Behavioral Health Medical Director for the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Health Access Network.

**Honorable Timothy P. Connors**

Judge Tim Connors has been a Michigan State Court Judge since 1991. For eleven of those years he served as a Chief Judge. He has served by appointment as Judge Pro Tem for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Judge Connors is the Presiding Judge of the Washtenaw County Peacemaking Court. He also presides over cases in the Civil and Domestic Divisions of the Washtenaw County Trial Court and handles the Neglect and Abuse docket for the Juvenile Court.

**Kathryn Fort**

Kate is the Director of the Indian Law Clinic at the Michigan State University College of Law. In 2015, she started the Indian Child Welfare Act Appellate Project, which assists tribes in ICWA cases across the country. She is also the author of *American Indian Children and the Law*, published by Carolina Academic Press. In her role with the Center she teaches the Indian Law Clinic class and traditional classes in federal Indian law, researches and writes

on behalf of Center clients, and manages administrative aspects of the Center. Ms. Fort has written articles on laches and land claims and has researched and written extensively on the Indian Child Welfare Act. Her publications include articles in the Harvard Public Health Review, George Mason Law Review, Saint Louis University Law Journal, and American Indian Law Review. She co-edited Facing the Future: The Indian Child Welfare Act at 30 with Wenona T. Singel and Matthew L.M. Fletcher (Michigan State University Press 2009). She co-edits the popular and influential Indian law blog, TurtleTalk with Matthew Fletcher. Ms. Fort graduated magna cum laude from Michigan State University College of Law with the Certificate in Indigenous Law, and is licensed to practice law in Michigan. She received her B.A. in History with honors from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia.

### **Chief Judge Michael Petoskey**

Michael Petoskey has been the Pokagon Band's Chief Judge since his appointment in February 2002. He is a Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians tribal member. Judge Petoskey has been a judge for various Michigan Indian tribes since 1986. He has served on the bench in each of the seven (7) federally-recognized Tribes in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Judge Petoskey began his judicial career with the planning, implementation and development of the courts for his own Tribe from just a dream, while he was a staff attorney for Michigan Indian Legal Services. He was the Chief Judge at the Grand Traverse Band for over sixteen (16) years until his retirement from the position. During the course of his career, Judge Petoskey has worked with four other Michigan Indian tribes to plan, implement and develop their courts, serving as the founding Chief Judge. He continues to serve two of those tribes in that capacity. Additionally, he has served as an appellate court judge for the remaining two Lower Peninsula of Michigan Indian tribes.

### **Vivek Sankaran**

Vivek Sankaran advocates for the rights of children and parents involved in child welfare proceedings. His work focuses on improving outcomes for children in foster care by empowering their parents and strengthening decision-making processes in juvenile courts.

A clinical professor of law at the University of Michigan Law School, Professor Sankaran directs both the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic, through which law students represent children and parents in trial and appellate proceedings. Professor Sankaran has written numerous articles focused on improving the child welfare system and has litigated cases before the Michigan Supreme Court. In addition, he conducts state and national trainings and works on child welfare initiatives with various national groups, including the American Bar Association, Casey Family Programs, and the National Center for State Courts.

In 2001, Professor Sankaran received a Skadden Fellowship to represent children at The Children's Law Center in Washington, D.C., where he remained until 2005, when he joined the Law School faculty. In 2009, Professor Sankaran founded the Detroit Center for Family Advocacy, the first organization in the country to provide multidisciplinary legal assistance to families to prevent the unnecessary entry of children into foster care. In 2011, he was named Michigan's Parent Attorney of the Year. Most recently, Professor Sankaran co-edited both the first national book for family defense lawyers and the third edition of *Child Welfare Law and Practice*, a widely recognized resource used by child welfare lawyers across the country.

**Sheldon Spotted Elk**

Sheldon Spotted Elk works as the Director of Tribal Justice Relations at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He has a background and presents regularly on tribal law, child welfare and the ICWA. He is currently a judge on the Ute Indian Tribe Court of Appeals (Fort Duchesne, Utah) in a jurisdiction he once represented children in child welfare and juvenile delinquency matters. He has worked as an adjunct professor teaching a law school course on Family Law in Indian Country.

He was recognized as a NCAIED 40 Under 40 recipient, a prestigious award which recognizes 40 emerging American Indian leaders from across Indian Country. He has published an influential law review article on tribal constitutional reform and has authored articles on the ICWA. Sheldon is a graduate from University of New Mexico School of Law and received the Certificate in Federal Indian Law. He completed his undergraduate degree from University of Utah College of Social Work. And he and his two sons are members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

**Jack F. Trope**

Jack F. Trope is a Senior Director in Indian Child Welfare Programs at Casey Family Programs where he works on national and local initiatives aimed at promoting compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act, increasing tribal access to the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program and improving child welfare outcomes for children and families in state and tribal systems through training and systems improvement. Previously, Jack served as the Executive Director of the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) for more than 13 years (and as Staff Attorney earlier in his career) where he worked on a variety of legal and policy matters, with a heavy emphasis on issues related to youth and the protection and preservation of Native American Indian tribal cultures, particularly the protection of sacred places and the repatriation of human remains and cultural items to Indian tribes. He has also served as Director of the Albuquerque-based Western Area Office for the Save the Children Federation, and held a number of legal positions including being a partner with the law firm of Sant'Angelo & Trope. Mr. Trope has worked on Indian child welfare matters since 1985 and is a co-author of the 3rd Edition of the Indian Child Welfare Act Handbook published by the American Bar Association.