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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 9, 2021

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**JUDGE CLAUDETTE WHITE AND GENEVA E. B. THOMPSON
TO BE HONORED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN INDIAN LAW**

DAVIS, CA - The California Indian Law Association, Inc. (CILA) is proud to announce that it will award the 2021 Outstanding Achievement in California Indian Law Award to the Honorable Claudette White (posthumously) and the 2021 Outstanding Young Attorney Award to Geneva E. B. Thompson at the 21st Annual California Indian Law Conference.

The California Indian Law Association, Inc. ("CILA") is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization dedicated to serving as a strong representative of the Indian law profession in Tribal communities across California. **The 21st Annual California Indian Law Conference will be hosted in-person at Morongo Casino, Resort and Spa on October 6-8, 2021.** For the full agenda and details, visit the CILA website: www.calindianlaw.org

CILA's Outstanding Achievement in California Indian Law Award honors one legal professional annually who has made significant contributions to California Indian law. Previous recipients of this award include *Judge Abby Abinanti*, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe; *Dorothy Alther*, Executive Director of California Indian Legal Services; and *Carole Goldberg*, Distinguished Research Professor and *Jonathan D. Varat*, Distinguished Professor of Law Emerita at UCLA School of Law.

CILA's Outstanding Young Attorney Award recognizes attorneys in practice for ten years or less who exemplify high achievement, innovation, leadership, and service within the field of Indian law. Previous recipients of the Outstanding Young Attorney Award include *Christina Snider*, Tribal Advisor to Governor Gavin Newsom; *Fatima Abbas*, Senior Advisor at the U.S. Department of the Treasury; and *Lauren van Schilfgaarde*, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Tribal Legal Development Clinic Director at UCLA School of Law.

For the Outstanding Achievement Award, no one is more deserving than the late Hon. Judge Claudette White. "*Judge White was a visionary leader in advancing Tribal Justice, an advocate for incorporating restorative justice in the American court system, and an inspiration for generations of Tribal leaders to continue preserving and protecting the rights and interests of our communities,*" said Janet Bill, Vice President of the CILA Board of Directors.

Geneva E. B. Thompson has already made a substantial impact in her legal career, meriting the Outstanding Young Attorney Award. "*From supporting the next generation of Indigenous attorneys as NALSA President and as a CILA Board member, to her current role as Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs at the California Natural Resources Agency, Geneva has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the California Indigenous community. Geneva's devotion to protecting the environment and tribal*

resources deserves our recognition and we are honored to celebrate her.” said Erica Costa, President of the CILA Board of Directors.

Judge White and Geneva Thompson will be celebrated during the CILA Awards Dinner on **Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM**, during the 21st Annual California Indian Law Conference, which is being held October 6-8, 2021 at the Morongo Casino, Resort and Spa. Registration for the Conference is not limited to legal professionals. For more information, contact the CILA Conference Committee at calindianlaw@gmail.com.

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AWARD RECIPIENT BIOGRAPHIES

Hon. Judge Claudette White

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Claudette White (Quechan Tribe) was the Chief Judge of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Tribal Court, as well as, the Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribal Court and a Quechan Tribal Council Member. Judge White is remembered for her kindness, her leadership, and her approach to restorative justice, which will surely inspire generations to come.

The first in her family to attend college, Judge White earned a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ in 1995. Judge White was elected for her first term on the Quechan Tribe’s council, becoming their youngest elected leader, while still in her last year of the bachelor’s program at Northern Arizona University. She later went on to manage the Tribe’s casino operation. In 2002, Claudette received a full ride scholarship from the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. Judge White was an active participant in the Indian Legal Program and earned her Juris Doctorate in 2005. Later, Judge White started her own business, which provided legal advice for individuals in Tribal court.

Starting in 2006, Judge White served as her Tribe’s Chief Judge for more than a decade. Beginning in 2008, Claudette spent two years as the Chief Judge for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. Judge White also served as a Circuit Court Judge serving Native communities in Southern California; a member of California’s Tribal Court-State Court Forum; and a Board Member of the National American Indian Court Judges Association. As a Tribal Judge, Claudette practiced a judicial model known as restorative justice, which aims to heal and rehabilitate offenders and their victims as an alternative to punishment.

Judge White’s work was the subject of “Tribal Justice,” a documentary film by Anne Makepeace that aired in 2017. The film followed the stories of Native Americans who appeared in Tribal courts, and showed the successful practice of the restorative justice model. Lastly, [Judge White led a group of Quechan performers](#) in a traditional song of creation during President Biden’s virtual inauguration celebration.

Sadly, Judge White passed away on February 5 of this year. However, her legacy lives on in her son, Zion, and her work for Tribal communities in California. CILA is proud to recognize Judge Claudette White.

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Geneva E. B. Thompson

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Geneva E. B. Thompson (Cherokee Nation) is the recently appointed Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs at the California Natural Resources Agency. She is the first person to serve in this position, which was created to cultivate the participation and inclusion of Tribal communities in the work of the California Natural Resources Agency.

Prior to her appointment, Thompson had been an Associate General Counsel at the Yurok Tribe since 2019. While at Yurok, she was extensively involved with the Tribe's environmental and cultural resources protection issues, including the successful resolution to grant personhood to the Klamath River, the movement for dam removal on the Klamath, and federal litigation protecting the Tribe's water rights. She also held multiple positions at Wishtoyo Foundation from 2016 to 2019, including Staff Attorney and Legal Fellow.

In addition to her legal work, Thompson has given her time to professional organizations dedicated to advancing the interests of Native lawyers and Indian law practitioners. She is a board member of the National Native American Bar Association and former chair of its Young Lawyers Committee. Thompson is also a member and past board president of the California Indian Law Association, Inc..

Thompson earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, with specializations in Critical Race Studies and Public Interest Law and Policy. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Utah.

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