

**Vanessa A. Racehorse**  
Associate Professor of Law  
University of Colorado Law School  
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## CURRICULUM VITAE

### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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#### **University of Colorado Law School, Boulder, CO**

*Associate Professor of Law*

August 2024-Present

*Visiting Associate Professor of Law*

June 2024-August 2024

- Affiliations: American Indian Law Program, Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies
- Courses: Tribal Law, American Indian Law II
- Service: Board member of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment; Colloquium Committee; Moot Court Coach, National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court

#### **University of New Mexico School of Law, Albuquerque, NM**

*Assistant Professor of Law*

May 2022-May 2024

- Affiliations: Law and Indigenous Peoples Program
- Courses: Indian Law; Indigenous Peoples & International Law; Tribal Law Journal Writing Seminar; American Indian Children, Youth & Families Law; Law of Indigenous Peoples; Indian Law Appellate Advocacy; Southwest Indian Law Clinic
- Faculty Advisor for the Tribal Law Journal (2023-2024; 2022-2023)
- Service: Academic Success Committee (2023-2024; 2022-2023); Student Retention, Suspension and Readmission Committee (2022-2023); Honors and Awards Committee (2023-2024); Moot Court Judge, National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court (2023-2024; 2022-2023)

#### **University of San Diego School of Law, San Diego, CA**

*Adjunct Law Professor*

January 2022-May 2022

- Course: Native American Law

### EDUCATION

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#### **Columbia Law School, New York, NY**

Juris Doctor, received May 2017

Activities: *Columbia Law Review*, Bluebook Editor

Native American Law Students Association (NALSA) Executive Board, President

National NALSA Moot Court Participant

National NALSA Board, Area 2 Representative

Human Rights Clinic

Research Assistant to Professor Amal Clooney

Awards: Parker School Recognition of Achievement in International and Comparative Law

#### **University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands**

LL.M in International Criminal Law, received May 2017

#### **University of Denver, Denver, CO**

Bachelor of Arts, received June 2013

Major: Psychology

Minors: Leadership and Art

Honors: Psychology Department Awards for Research & Citizenship, Dean's List

Activities: Native Student Alliance, Leadership Program, Psychology Club

Study Abroad: University of Western Australia, July 2011-June 2012

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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*Chaco Canyon: Connecting Cultural Resources Protection with Environmental Justice*, 96(3) COLO. L. REV. \_\_ (forthcoming 2025).

*Tribal Health Self-Determination: The Role of Tribal Health Systems in Actualizing the Highest Attainable Standard of Health for American Indians and Alaska Natives*, 55 COLUM. HUM. RTS. L. REV. \_\_ (forthcoming 2025).

*Achieving Climate Justice Through Land Back: An Overview of Tribal Dispossession, Land Return Efforts, and Practical Mechanisms for #LandBack*, 34 COLO. ENV'T L.J. 175 (2023) (co-authored with Anna Hohag).

## **WORKING PAPERS**

*The Indigenous Rights of Nature Movement* (Article)

*Advancing Water Equity in Indian Country* (Article)

*Urban Indian Healthcare* (Article)

## **BAR PUBLICATIONS**

*Indigenous Influence on the Rights of Nature Movement*, 38:3 NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT (ABA SECTION OF ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND RESOURCES) (Fall 2023).

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

*Ute Mountain Ute Tribe joins lawsuit against Colorado over sports betting*, COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO NEWS (Sept. 27, 2024), <https://www.cpr.org/2024/09/27/colorado-sports-betting-lawsuit-ute-mountain-ute-tribe/>.

*SCOTUS Ruling on ICWA a victory for welfare of Native American children*, SOURCE NM (June 15, 2023), <https://sourcennm.com/2023/06/15/scotus-ruling-on-icwa-a-victory-for-welfare-of-native-american-children/>.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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*Becerra v. San Carlos Apache Tribe*, panelist, Byron White Center for the Study of American Constitutional Law, University of Colorado Law School, 2024 Supreme Court Review, Boulder, Colorado (September 18, 2024).

*Chaco Canyon: Connecting Cultural Resources Protection with Environmental Justice*, presented at

Gathering of Indigenous Legal Scholars, UCLA School of Law, Los Angeles, CA (August 8, 2024)  
Natural Resources and Energy Law Works-in-Progress session, Association of American Law Schools 2024 Annual Meeting (January 5, 2024).

*Teaching at the Intersection of Federal Indian Law and Environmental Law Courses*, panelist, Vermont Law & Graduate School Environmental Law Center, Emerging Environmental Law Curriculum Conference, South Royalton, VT (June 21, 2024).

*The Trust Relationship*, panelist, Cornell Law School, Indigenous Law Summit, Ithaca, NY (April 13, 2024).

*A Year After Dobbs: Women's Health in Indian Country*, Federal Bar Association, CLE Event, 49th Annual Indian Law Conference, Albuquerque, NM (April 5, 2024).

*Reflections on the History and Future of Tribal Self-Governance*, American Indian Law Review's 50th Anniversary Symposium, University of Oklahoma College of Law, Norman, Oklahoma (March 8, 2024).

*Healthcare in Indian Country*, Guest lecture, Health Law course (Prof. Thomas Williams), American University Washington College of Law (February 2024).

*Tribal Health Self-Determination: The Role of Tribal Health Systems in Actualizing the Highest Attainable Standard of Health for American Indians and Alaska Natives*, presented at

New Voices in International Human Rights panel, Association of American Law Schools 2024 Annual Meeting (January 3, 2024).

Gathering of Indigenous Legal Scholars, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law (September 14, 2023).

Faculty Colloquium, UNM School of Law, CLE event (September 6, 2023).

*Indian Law 101*, State Bar of New Mexico, CLE Event, 2023 Annual Meeting, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM (July 27, 2023).

*Human Rights in the Supreme Court: Haaland v. Brackeen*, panelist, University of Iowa Center for Human Rights, Zoom event (July 12, 2023).

*Constitutional and Administrative Legal Matters in Indian Country*, co-panelist, Hot Topics in Indian Law Symposium, University of Idaho College of Law, Zoom event (February 17, 2023).

*The Constitutional Status of Tribal Nations*, Guest lecture, Constitutional Law course (Prof. George Bach and Prof. Vinay Harpalani), UNM School of Law (February 2023).

*Ethical Lawyering when Confronted with Legal Quandaries*, UNM Law Recent Graduate Chapter, Ethics CLE, Zoom event (December 9, 2022).

*Two Years Under the Haaland Administration: Tribal Co-Stewardship of Public Lands and Waters*, panelist, California Indian Law Association, 2022 California Indian Law Conference, Cabazon, CA (October 3, 2022).

*Advancing Water Equity in Indian Country*, California Indian Law Association, CLE Event, 2022 Spring Indian Law Speaker Series, Zoom event (April 28, 2022).

*The Contemporary Fight for Tribal Sovereignty*, University of San Diego School of Law speaker series, Perspectives on Justice, Equity, and the Law, San Diego, CA (November 30, 2021).

*A.B. 658 and its Ramifications for Tribes*, Law Seminars International, Seventh Annual Advanced Conference on Tribal Water in California, Zoom event (October 19, 2020).

## **OTHER LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Native American Heritage Commission**, Sacramento, CA

*CalNAGPRA Attorney*

April 2021-March 2022

Managed implementation of the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CalNAGPRA). Drafted regulations for CalNAGPRA and provided legal research for issues impacting the Native American Heritage Commission.

**Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry, LLP**, San Diego, CA

*Associate Attorney*

August 2019-November 2020

*Summer Associate*

May 2016-August 2016

Worked in all areas of the firm's practice. Conducted research and wrote memoranda on a wide array of legal issues, including property law, environmental law, gaming, tax law, employment law, child welfare, treaty interpretation, cultural resources protection, the fee-to-trust process, and water rights. Drafted and revised pleadings for litigation matters.

**Colorado River Indian Tribes**, Parker, AZ

*Deputy Attorney General*

May 2018-July 2019

Provided legal representation to the Colorado River Indian Tribes, its Tribal Council, Departments and enterprises. Drafted and reviewed contracts, leases, tribal policies, legislation and court pleadings. Represented the Tribes in Indian Child Welfare Act proceedings. Provided legal opinions on various matters, including environmental law, property law, criminal law, law enforcement, human resources, and business law.

**Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights**, Harare, Zimbabwe  
*Legal Intern, Human Rights Internship Program Fellow*

June 2015-July 2015

**Anishinabe Legal Services**, Cass Lake, MN  
*Pro Bono Caravan Leader, Participant*

March 2016 and March 2015

**Native Vote and Four Directions**, Pine Ridge, SD  
*Volunteer Non-partisan Election Monitor*

November 2014 and November 2024

**BAR ADMISSIONS**

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California (Bar No. 317737)  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
U.S. District Court, Central District of California

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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Member, Association for American Law Schools (AALS)  
Board Member, AALS Indian Nations and Indigenous Peoples Section  
Member, American Bar Association  
Member, Native American Bar Association