



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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## **Supreme Court, Tribal Court Leaders Unveil New ‘People of Three Fires’ Exhibit** *Interactive Learning Center experience demonstrates importance of relationships among courts*

LANSING, MI, October 31, 2018 — Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Stephen J. Markman and Chief Judge Michael Petoskey, of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe) tribal courts, jointly unveiled a new “People of Three Fires” exhibit in the Learning Center at the Michigan Hall of Justice today. The exhibit illustrates how federal, state, and tribal courts exist within frameworks of different governments and work together to better serve families.

“This exhibit does a superb job of highlighting the crucial collaborative efforts of federal, state, and tribal courts,” said Chief Justice Markman. “Students, teachers, and parents who visit the Learning Center will learn that collaboration across courts makes the system work better for all.”

Justice Bridget M. McCormack, who serves as the MSC liaison on tribal issues, gave opening remarks, and Justice Richard H. Bernstein, MSC liaison to the Learning Center, also attended the event. Members of the [Michigan Tribal State Federal Judicial Forum](#) and Michigan State College of Law students in the Indigenous-Law program were welcomed to the opening ceremony, followed by an informal tour of the Learning Center.

“We are so grateful to former Justice Michael Cavanagh for his dedication to building this collaboration,” said Justice McCormack. “The Tribal Forum encourages collaboration at the grass roots so that local courts can seamlessly address the needs of at-risk children.”

In the new exhibit, a touchscreen monitor offers an interactive experience through which visitors learn more about tribal courts and their jurisdiction, as well as the common ground among state, federal, and tribal courts, especially issues regarding children and families.

Michigan’s tribes are known as the People of Three Fires, or *Anishinaabeg* and share similar cultural values and teachings. Tribal courts resolve civil, criminal, and other legal matters within their jurisdiction. Some tribal courts resemble federal and state courts while others use traditional means such as peacemaking, elder’s councils, and/or sentencing circles. Some have both types of courts. In recent decades, Michigan’s state and tribal courts have worked together in the common interest to benefit their citizens. To make the relationship between state courts and tribal courts clear, the Michigan Supreme Court adopted a court rule in 1996 that ensures mutual recognition of state and tribal judgments.

The MSC Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tours are free, and typically last 60–90 minutes. Groups of 10 or more must schedule in advance for guided tours; self-guided, walk-in tours are available for smaller groups. The Learning Center offers online resources for educators and students, including lesson plans, educational games—such as “A Day in Court”—and an e-newsletter. More information: [www.courts.mi.gov/learningcenter](http://www.courts.mi.gov/learningcenter).

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