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A Lawyer in Indian Country

Alvin J. Ziontz, Charles Wilkinson

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In his memoir, Alvin Ziontz reflects on his more than thirty years representing Indian tribes, from a time when Indian law was little known through landmark battles that upheld tribal sovereignty. He discusses the growth and maturation of tribal government and the underlying tensions between Indian society and the non-Indian world. *A Lawyer in Indian Country* presents vignettes of reservation life and recounts some of the memorable legal cases that illustrate the challenges faced by individual Indians and tribes.

As the senior attorney arguing U.S. v. Washington, Ziontz was a party to the historic 1974 Boldt decision that affirmed the Pacific Northwest tribes' treaty fishing rights, with ramifications for tribal rights nationwide. His work took him to reservations in Montana, Wyoming, and Minnesota, as well as Washington and Alaska, and he describes not only the work of a tribal attorney but also his personal entry into the life of Indian country.

Ziontz continued to fight for tribal rights into the late 1990s, as the Makah tribe of Washington sought to resume its traditional whale hunts. Throughout his book, Ziontz traces his own path through this public history - one man's pursuit of a life built around the principles of integrity and justice.

"An important and compelling story of one man's remarkable career representing Indian tribes during the golden age of the modern Indian rights movement." - Robert T. Anderson, University of Washington School of Law

"Ziontz's memoir draws us into the inner world of tribal and legal strategy that shaped one of the most important social movements of the twentieth century - the struggle of Native Americans to reclaim their resources and sovereignty. Lawyers, scholars, and activists can all learn from his revealing account of partnership between a developing Indian lawyer and his tribal clients." -Carole Goldberg, Distinguished Professor of Law, UCLA

"As one who was born to and lived where Al Ziontz went - Indian Country - I am deeply grateful for this memoir. *A Lawyer in Indian Country* is the story of a gifted attorney on the frontlines of Native legal reform who also brought great conscience to his work. As a Southern Cheyenne, I value both immensely, but in the end it is his defining and transcendent empathy and humanity regarding Native America that matter to me most." -W. Richard West, Jr., Founding Director and Director Emeritus, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

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