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Rennard Strickland to receive honorary doctorate, deliver NSU commencement address

TAHLEQUAH -- Rennard Strickland, a 1962 graduate of Northeastern State University recognized nationally as an expert in American Indian law, will receive an honorary doctorate from his alma mater and deliver the spring 2010 commencement address at NSU on Saturday, May 15.

A legal historian of Cherokee and Osage heritage, Strickland is regarded as a pioneer who introduced American Indian law into university curricula. He is currently the senior scholar in residence at the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy at the University of Oklahoma Law Center, where he served as founding director from 1990 to 1995.

A native of Muskogee, Strickland earned a law degree and the doctor of juridical science from the University of Virginia, and a master of arts from the University of Arkansas.

He has taught law at several universities and colleges nationwide, and his professional service and achievement has earned him numerous awards and accolades.

He has written and edited more than 35 books and is frequently cited for his work as revision editor-in-chief of the "Handbook of Federal Indian Law," as well as an extensive history on the Cherokee legal system and other significant works about American Indian law, policy, and culture. His most recent publication, released in 2010, is entitled "Building One Fire: Art and World View in Cherokee Life," co-authored with Cherokee Principal Chief Chad Smith.

In the early 1990s, Strickland served as chair and arbiter of the Osage Constitutional Commission. Notably, he is among a handful of legal education leaders who have served on the governing boards of all three major national legal education organizations: the ABA section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, the Law School Admission Council, and the Association of American Law Schools.

Strickland was named dean of the Oklahoma City University School of Law in 1995, and after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building spearheaded a community project to use model trials to offset trauma in the city public school system. As dean of the University of Oregon School of Law from 1997 to 2002, he co-founded the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and is the school's Philip H. Knight Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus.

Regarded as an authority on Native American art, Strickland donated his more than 200-piece collection to the University of Oklahoma art museum last year in memory of his mother, Adell Tucker Strickland.

He was selected to receive an honorary doctorate from NSU in recognition of his scholarly achievements and distinguished career in higher education, spanning nearly four decades.

NSU's Tahlequah commencement ceremony is scheduled for at 10 a.m. on Gable Field at Doc Wadley Stadium. Commencement for NSU-Broken Arrow will be held Monday, May 17th, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the Union Multi-Purpose Activity Center.



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