

James Washinawatok

James Washinawatok was raised on the Menominee Reservation in Northeast Wisconsin. He now lives near the Navajo Reservation with his wife and two children. He has worked with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe for the past 15 years.



PROFILE

Hometown:

Keshena, Wisconsin

Law School:

University of Wisconsin

Lives in:

Farmington, New Mexico

Works at:

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Practice Areas:

Indian law and various components of federal Indian law

CBA Member Since:

2008

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Outside of the law, what are your hobbies?

During the pandemic, and through the work of many on the Menominee Reservation, I have been able to continue learning the Menominee language online. Since few Menominee speakers remain, it's important to me to continue learning and to support those working to revitalize and foster its continuation to future generations. Check out and support MenominiyoU at <https://menominiyoU.org>.

Favorite spot in Colorado:

Ouray and anywhere in the mountains.

Most random job you have ever had:

In college, for work study, I cleaned mice cages for a science lab.

How do you find work/life balance?

Getting regular physical exercise, if even just going for a walk for 10 to 20 minutes a day.

What are the greatest challenges you face in your practice, and how do you manage them?

Some of the greatest challenges as an in-house attorney working for a tribe are the various demands that we encounter day-to-day, from reviewing a contract, to revising a code, to participating in meetings with other local jurisdictions, to other unexpected urgencies that inevitably arise. These are handled with a team of other great attorneys who support one another. In addition, we need to remember what's important in our lives and to focus on our priorities and what we can control, including our attitude.

What is your favorite thing to cook?

I came across the *Nourishing Traditions* cookbook and have enjoyed cooking various recipes in it, from broths to sourdough bread. In addition to the recipes, the cookbook includes tons of useful nutritional information on foods and the modern diet.

When you aren't working, how do you like to spend your time?

I enjoy spending time with my wife and two kids, reading, and walking outside with our two dogs.

Who is your hero and why?

My mom raised my older brother, my younger brother, and me as a single parent. She went from being on welfare to getting her college degree, and that example taught me that it's within our capability to better our situation. She sacrificed and endured to provide us with the best childhood that she could.

What advice would you give a new lawyer?

It is called "practicing" law for a reason. Like with anything, we get better at it with more practice. 