



# PONCA TRIBE OF NEBRASKA

6/26/09

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Nebraska Supreme Court rules in favor of Ponca Tribe in child welfare case.**

The Ponca tribe of Nebraska is extremely pleased with the Nebraska Supreme Court's finding in Ponca Tribe of Nebraska vs. Dakota County in re: The Interest of Elias L and Evelyn M.

This decision to allow tribal ICWA professionals to represent the interests of Native American children is in keeping with the spirit and directives of the Indian Child Welfare Act and upholds the sovereignty of tribes in identifying their qualified representatives. This decision promotes the rights of tribes to protect their families and children within the state's judicial system. Jill Holt, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska's ICWA specialist, looks forward to providing resources, advocacy, intervention, guidance and support for our children and families who find themselves within the state systems.

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska is grateful to our legal counsel, Brad S. Jolly of Smith and Jolly, LLC and our many allies in this effort: Filing amicus briefs were Sarah Helvey and LaShawn Young—Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest. Rosalynd J. Koob—Heideman Law Firm, L.L.P. for the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Mark C. Tilden—Native American Rights Fund for the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Ben Thompson—Thompson Law Office, L.L.C. for the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska.

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska wishes to thank the Nebraska Supreme Court Justices for their unanimous decision to uphold tribal interests in the representation of our children and families.

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