

NALSA to host guest speaker

■ Cherokee Chief
Chad Smith is expected
to draw a crowd during his
visit on Monday

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

He is the great-grandson of Red-bird Smith, a Cherokee patriot who fought for the allotment of Cherokee lands at the turn of the century. His Cherokee name, Corn-tassel, was given to him by his grandmother.



SMITH

Chief Chad Smith, the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, will be speaking at the University on Oct. 9. Smith is a friend and former student of Renard Strickland, the Dean of the Knight Law Center.

Strickland, whose heritage comes from the Osage and Cherokee tribes, met Smith at the University of Tulsa, where Strickland founded the Indian Law Program.

Smith has a legal background in test cases designed to protect and expand the sovereignty of the Cherokee nation. He holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Georgia, a master's degree in public administration from the University of Wisconsin and a doctorate in law from the University of Tulsa. He is a professor of Indian Law at Dartmouth College.

Smith was appointed to his position as principal chief last year, and Strickland participated in the ceremony.

Donna Ralstin-Lewis, Native

American Law Student Association vice president, said Smith will attend a luncheon with tribal and University leaders in the Knight Library from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

From 2:30 to 3:45 p.m., Smith will be teaching the Indian Law class, regularly taught by Professor Mary Wood.

All area Cherokee people are invited to a meeting with Smith at 4:30 p.m. in the Knight Law Center. A community dinner will follow at 5:30 p.m. in the University Longhouse behind the Knight Law Center.

A public lecture will conclude the evening at 7:30 p.m. in Room 175 of the Knight Law Center. Ralstin-Lewis said the topic of Smith's speech is: "Challenges and Opportunities for a 21st Century Indian Tribe."

"It's important for law students because he is a very accomplished law attorney," Ralstin-Lewis said. "He is the chief of one of the largest sovereign nations in the United States, and I think it is important that we show him the respect he deserves."

Mike Miller, communications coordinator for the Cherokee Nation, said Smith will address the repression of Indian cultures that has existed for hundreds of years and is now being addressed by the federal government.

Miller said Smith will take a historical perspective of what the Cherokee Nation has experienced and where the future of the nation is headed.

"He has a very dry sense of humor combined with knowledge and passion for topics he is speaking on, and that makes for an interesting and powerful presentation," Miller said. "Usually, if he speaks

for five minutes, you feel like you are absorbing and learning a lot."

Miller said he encourages Native Americans and Cherokees to attend the event on Monday because it will be a chance to hear the head of the second-largest Native American nation, with more than 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States.

Laura Baxter, from the Pit River tribe, is a second-year law student at the University with a focus in Indian and Environmental Law. As this year's NALSA president, Baxter is looking forward to hearing Smith speak.

"We are such a small minority, Native Americans, and it is really important that other people see us," she said.

Baxter said people like Smith serve as role models for students studying Indian law. She said it is one of the hardest fields to understand because of the jurisdiction issues with which it is associated.

"[Smith] has done so much, and the Cherokee nation is so huge. It's a country of its own," she said. "It's like having the president come to speak, or a diplomat from another country."

Four years ago, Wilma Mankiller, the former president, spoke at Oregon State University, and Baxter said she drew a huge crowd. Ralstin-Lewis said they are expecting a crowd of over 200 visitors Monday.

"I hope students come away from his presentation with exposure of seeing the different nations and the different challenges they face day in and day out," Baxter said.

The presentation is hosted by University President Dave Frohnmayer, the School of Law and NALSA.



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