

# Noted American Indian law expert speaks at University

Charles Wilkinson, author of a new book discussing American Indian issues, visited campus Thursday

By Reese Lee  
Freelance Reporter

Charles Wilkinson, a noted American Indian law expert, gave a speech on his new book, "Blood Struggle: The Rise of the Modern Indian Nations" at the Knight Law Center Thursday night. His lecture touched on issues such as efforts by American Indians to regain land that formerly belonged to them.

The lecture began with an introduc-

tion by University President Dave Frohnmayer. He welcomed American Indians as well as audience members and introduced Wilkinson to the audience as a man "with passion that is admirable and intellectual heroism that is stunning."

Wilkinson, a former University School of Law professor, encouraged audience members to continue in the fight of the American Indian for tribal sovereignty and land rights. He dedicated his lecture to the "Indians with us here." He also spoke on cultural oppression and economic problems.

Wilkinson became involved in the Native American Rights Fund as a lawyer in Denver nearly 30 years ago. He said he has been "captivated by

these people," and he has visited more than 100 American Indian reservations.

Wilkinson said Indian culture, such as some native dance, has been oppressed by churches, an act he compared to "outlawing religion."

First-year law student Rachel Kastenberg said she attended the talk because she was "interested in Native American issues, how it's connected to environmental problems and mining on tribal lands."

Wilkinson read passages from interviews with American Indians. He showed the struggles American Indians have gone through and efforts they have made and are currently making to fight back to regain their land, replant trees and revive their religion.

"Drums were played on the Oregon coast, which had not been heard there for 40 years," Wilkinson said about the rise in Native American traditions.

"(Wilkinson) has been very instrumental in getting restoration (of our land) back in 1986," said Taylor David, public information officer for Klamath Tribes, of the termination of the original Klamath tribe in 1954. "We are now in the process of regaining federal land."

In a press release for the event, Wilkinson said the highlights of his book include a discussion of treaties and the hard work of tribal leaders to make sure treaties are honored.

"In this book, I recount tribal victories in major conflicts in contemporary America," he said. "The modern tribal sovereignty movement deserves to be spoken of in the same breath as the civil rights, environmental and women's movements."

Wilkinson's book will be published by W.W. Norton next year.

Reese Lee is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

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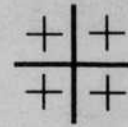
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