

FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI COMMUNITY

P.O. Box 340
Crandon, Wisconsin 54520



POTAWATOMI
(Keeper of the Fire)

Tribal Court
EUGENE L. WHITE-FISH - Chief Judge
JERYL PERENICH - Associate Judge

September 29, 2010

Clerk of the Supreme Court
ATTN: Carrie Janto, Deputy Clerk
PO Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701-1688
VIA U.S. MAIL AND E-MAIL (carrie.janto@wicourts.gov)

RECEIVED

OCT - 4 2010

CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN

RE: Review of Wis. Stat. § 801.54

Dear Clerk of Supreme Court:

I am writing in response to Supreme Court Commissioner Julie Rich's invitation to share my views and experience with Wis. Stat. § 801.54. My experience with the statute has been positive and exactly what I expected: a vehicle for continued tribal and state court cooperation.

I currently serve as the Chief Judge of the Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Court and have held that position since 1994. I am also served four terms as the President of the National American Indian Court Judges Association. I am an active member of the Wisconsin Tribal Judges Association.

In reviewing this issue with my staff, we were able to identify two cases transferred to Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Court under Wis. Stat. § 801.54. In one matter, an elderly tribal member appeared to be suffered from dementia or a similar affliction. Forest County had filed an action in state court; a similar action was filed in Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Court.

Judge Leon Stenz brought his court reporter to my courtroom and we held a joint hearing with all concerned. After a productive hearing, Judge Stenz and I conferred and agreed the case should be heard in tribal court. It was a textbook example of working together.

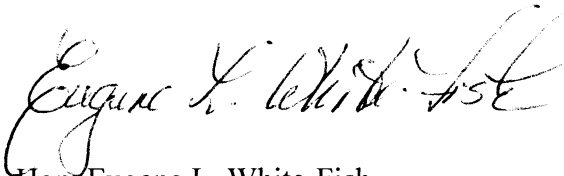
The other case transfer was routine and involved a post-judgment paternity matter.

Judge Stenz has worked well with the tribal court as needed. Wis. Stat. § 801.54 is an important tool for state judges to get appropriate cases to tribal court.

In talking with my tribal and state judicial colleagues around the country, Wisconsin is hailed as a pioneer and positive example of what can be accomplished by communicating and cooperating with a mind towards delivering justice to our constituents.

Thank you to the Court for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eugene L. White-Fish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hon. Eugene L. White-Fish
Chief Judge
Forest County Potawatomi Tribal Court