



## Jana M. Simmons

### Partner

801 South Figueroa Street  
Suite 2100  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
jana.simmons@ropers.com  
d (415) 972-6329  
m (989) 274-4470

Jana is an experienced civil defense litigator who represents businesses, public entities, and tribal governments in complex civil litigation spanning general liability, product liability, construction, and environmental matters. She has significant experience handling mass tort, asbestos, and silicosis matters, and currently serves as lead counsel in a large multijurisdictional matter involving hundreds of cases. Jana serves as national coordinating counsel for large multijurisdictional matters, strategically managing legal defenses across multiple cases and theories, ensuring consistent application of legal approaches, and overseeing a network of local defense counsel.

Jana is often called upon by tribal and non-tribal clients for her opinions and advice on building successful business relationships and economic

#### **PRACTICE AREAS**

Cannabis  
Insurance Services  
Native American Law  
Product Liability & Torts

#### **ACCOLADES**

Southern California Super Lawyers, Native American Law, 2026  
State of Michigan Resolution Honoring Jana Simmons, 2021  
Appointed to Board of Counseling by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, 2014, 2018  
Northern Michigan University's Distinguished Alumni Award, 2016  
Judge, Native American Law Students Association (NALSA), 2013  
Michigan Defense Trial Counsel Distinguished Service Award, 2011  
Michigan Super Lawyers Rising Star, 2009-2010  
Recognized by International Masters of Gaming Law

#### **COURT ADMISSIONS**

California

development in Indian Country, as well as questions about the impacts of tribal law, sovereignty, and jurisdiction. She has strong experience with tribal governance, including enrollment, elections, cannabis, and economic development. She has successfully litigated critical cases involving the interpretation of tribal constitutions and issues involving separation of powers in tribal courts.

Among her work in Indian Country, Jana assists tribal governments by creating and consulting on existing and future ordinances and regulations, advising on internal governance and external government-to-government relations, conducting independent investigations involving internal complaints and violations of tribal law, preparing advisory opinions to protect tribal governments and businesses, and providing legal representation in federal, state, and tribal courts.

Jana attained, with honors, a Master of Jurisprudence in Federal Indian Law degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law in December 2018.

## Representative Matters

### *Business & Commercial*

- Secured early dismissal of our client, an independent investigator, from a federal court case in California involving allegations of constitutional violations, negligence, defamation, and conspiracy against several defendants. The 300-plus-page complaint, brought by an aggressive plaintiff's law firm, was complex and

Michigan

Supreme Court of the United States

USDC: Central District of California

USDC: Eastern District of Michigan

USDC: Western District of Michigan

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

Gun Lake Tribe Tribal Court

Las Vegas Paiute Tribal Court

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Tribal Court

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Tribal Court

Oneida Nation Tribal Court

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Court

Hualapai Tribal Court

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Court

Intertribal Court of Southern California

Intertribal Court of Northern California (pending)

## EDUCATION

MJIL, University of Tulsa College of Law, 2018

JD, Roger Williams University School of Law, 1998

BA, Northern Michigan University, 1993

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Leader, Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association (ICIA) Partnership, 2023-present

Member, Claims and Litigation Management Alliance (CLM)

Member, National Native American Bar Association (NNABA)

Member, Southern California Tribal Bar Association

Member, American Indian Law Section, State Bar of Michigan (SBM)

Past Chairperson and Founder, Native Nations Law Task Force, The Voice of the Defense Bar, Defense Research Institute (DRI)

Former Chairperson, Disciplinary Subcommittee, Michigan Board of Counseling

Former Board of Editors, Michigan Lawyers Weekly

Former Member, American Indian Law Committee, State Bar of Michigan

sought significant damages resulting from the alleged defamation and termination of a teacher in a prominent school district. From the start, we maintained a strong defense position for our client and successfully persuaded opposing counsel to dismiss our client before the motion stage.

Member, Philanthropic Activities Committee, Defense Research Institute (DRI), 2019-2020

Advisory Board Member, National Native American Cannabis Association, 2019

Advisory Board Member, Native American Editorial Advisory Board, Law360, 2019

- Successfully prepared and presented pre-trial motions in California mass tort product liability litigation, resulting in a favorable settlement for the client in advance of trial.
- Successfully defended and resolved malpractice claims pending in a tribal court against a former attorney practicing outside of tribal land in state court and involving a tribal lending business conducted outside of tribal land.
- Secured summary disposition in favor of a defendant bar and then secured a favorable appellate opinion on remand from the Michigan Supreme Court in a dram shop lawsuit where the plaintiff suffered catastrophic injuries when the alleged intoxicated defendant rear-ended the stopped plaintiff driver on a highway. The successful defense focused on no proof of service to a visibly intoxicated person as required under Michigan law, even though the plaintiff's expert opined, after the fact, that the alleged intoxicated driver must have appeared intoxicated when served.
- Despite plaintiffs' eight-figure settlement demand, successfully resolved a lawsuit involving mobile home fire and burn victims in Michigan by pressing no causation, comparative fault, and no-duty defenses, and challenging the reliability of the plaintiffs' experts' opinions. The resulting settlement was a small fraction of the plaintiffs' demand.
- Secured dismissal in Michigan federal court against a California financial company whose employees committed fraud on clients, seeking coverage and extensive damages for alleged "bad faith" against its insurer, where the policy required that the parties first mediate disputes and then wait 180 days before pursuing litigation.
- Successfully argued as amicus curiae counsel on behalf of the Michigan Association of Counties and established Michigan case law precedent in favor of counties. This issue of first impression involved the inherent power of courts and fixing attorneys' fees payable by counties to attorneys retained by courts to sue counties for funding.

- Earned an award of summary disposition for a worldwide pump manufacturer, advancing sophisticated user and proximate causation defenses, among others. This complex product liability lawsuit in Michigan advanced theories of design defect, failure to warn, fraud, and misrepresentation against the manufacturer in conjunction with work-related burn injuries involving a pulp and chemical explosion at a paper mill.
- Successfully defended a matter at the trial and appellate level related to environmental remediation subcontractors involved in a six-year cleanup of the Pine River adjacent to an abandoned chemical plant in St. Louis, Michigan. Successful briefing and oral argument resulted in the dismissal of the plaintiffs' claims before the Michigan appellate courts and the United States Supreme Court.
- Successfully resolved claims against a subcontractor at an abandoned building in Detroit, Michigan, where the plaintiff suffered severe injuries after falling down an elevator shaft. The settlement reached was far below the case evaluation award.

### ***Tribal & Native American Law***

- Successfully represented a family faced with disenrollment by a tribe on allegations of "mistake of fact" and invoking questions of constitutional interpretation and tribal Court jurisdiction over enrollment matters. Successfully secured the re-enrollment of members as well as "back benefits" accumulated during the pendency of the disenrollment.
- Successful representation and favorable resolution for an attorney sued by the attorney's former tribal client in a tribal court in Oklahoma, alleging legal malpractice involving tribal lending business.
- Successfully represented and won a case of first impression involving land assignment claims for a tribal family in tribal court in California.
- Secured early dismissal in a tribal court in Kansas of a tribal casino based on tribal sovereign immunity and statute of limitations under tribal law, where the plaintiff argued that the tribe's gaming compact applied state tort claim law and permitted a longer statute of limitations period.
- Secured early dismissal in the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit District Court against a tribe based on tribal exhaustion, where plaintiff alleged wrongful conduct by the tribe's police and argued that state statutes applied to the tribe acting off-reservation.

- Secured judgment on the pleadings in the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit of a tribal college against a plaintiff's allegations of violation of federal law based on "arm of the tribe" analysis in favor of tribal sovereign immunity for the college.
- Extensive experience with drafting and analyzing tribal ordinances related to the legalization of medical and recreational marijuana and the regulation of cannabis on tribal land.
- Extensive experience with drafting and analyzing tribal ordinances related to tribal elections and enrollment.
- Created and presented full video training for tribal officials, executives, and employees on anti-harassment protocol in the workplace under various laws, including tribal law.
- Successfully won a lawsuit pending in a tribal court for an adopted Native American child who was rejected for enrollment with his adoptive father's tribe following the tribal council's amendment of enrollment criteria. The tribal court issued an order in favor of the enrollment of the child.
- Served as legal counsel for a tribal council in a lawsuit pending in tribal court involving a matter of first impression involving the powers of the tribal council versus a tribal chairman under the tribal constitution. The lawsuit was won, and the tribal court issued a precedential opinion in favor of the tribal council.
- Successfully resolved a dispute pending in a tribal court between a tribal member(s) and a tribal election board, where it was alleged that the election board did not follow proper procedure. The lawsuit was dismissed, and fees collected by the election board were returned to the tribal member(s).
- Successfully resolved claims by an elected tribal official concerning a tribal health plan and retirement benefits, and coordinated with a tribal insurance company to negotiate a reasonable settlement before the lawsuit was filed in a tribal court.
- Successfully resolved claims by a tribal employee seeking work-related injuries against the tribe and the tribe's insurance company.
- Secured a nominal settlement and avoided protracted litigation involving the tribal employee, the tribe, and the tribe's insurance company.
- Extensive experience with internal tribal investigations involving harassment and other sensitive employment matters, reporting, and recommendations for the protection of tribal

businesses and governments.

- Expert consultation on tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction with a Chicago-based law firm on insurance policy with tribal insured and anticipated coverage disputes.
- Presently providing expert consultation with a California-based firm on matters involving a contract between a non-tribal entity and a tribe and indemnification issues in a personal injury lawsuit.
- Expert consultation with a Michigan-based bank on building relationships with tribes and contract provisions involving matters of tribal sovereign immunity, choice of law, and jurisdiction.

### ***Cannabis***

- Representation and consulting with tribal cannabis regulatory bodies and related businesses to create tribal product liability and gram shop ordinances.
- Serving as legal counsel for tribes and their cannabis regulatory commissions, including drafting ordinance language and amendments, contract negotiations with third-party vendors, representing a client in regulatory and administrative hearings involving licenses, ordinance violations, etc., and assisting the client with interfacing with federal, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies and legislators.
- Successfully litigated and defended a security guard company at a marijuana dispensary involved in a shooting incident with a patron.
- Served as legal counsel for a tribal regulatory commission in contract negotiations involving the creation and structure of tribal cannabis operations.
- Developed and presented a roadmap for creating tribal treaty rights and inter-tribal trade to tribal leadership.
- Consulting with cannabis businesses on employment practices, policies, and accepted industry regulations.

## Articles

---

### **Tribal Member's Case Could Reshape How Public Law 280 Applies to Cannabis Rights**

*Tribal Business News*

November 08, 2025

Jana M. Simmons provided insight into the potential implications of the Thompson case in a recent *Tribal Business News* article

### **Recent Developments in Cannabis Law**

*ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Law Journal*

September 27, 2023

Jana Simmons authored an article for the American Bar Association's TIPS Law Journal

## Events

---

### **Ropers Majeski Sponsored the Perrin Conferences Artificial Stone Silicosis Litigation Conference**

April 29, 2026

Partners Jana M. Simmons and Farid Zakaria joined legal and insurance professionals to discuss developments in artificial stone litigation

### **Ropers Majeski Sponsored the ICIA International Indigenous Cannabis Meet & Greet at RES 2026**

March 27, 2026

Jana M. Simmons attended the event, which brought together Indigenous leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers shaping the future of sovereign cannabis economies

### **Jana M. Simmons Attended the AMERIND Tribal Risk & Insurance Convening**

August 27, 2025

This event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with tribal professionals and thought leaders through in-depth sessions that strengthen tribal nations, enterprises, and communities

### **Ropers Majeski Sponsored the 10th Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference**

June 25, 2025

Our Partners, Jana M. Simmons, Stephan Choo, and Spiros E. Fousekis, joined industry experts, tribal leaders, and decision-makers in Temecula, CA, to explore the evolving legal landscape of the cannabis and hemp sectors

## **Ropers Majeski Sponsored ICIA's Masters of the Green Golf Fundraiser**

May 12, 2025

Partner Jana M. Simmons participated in ICIA's first annual fundraising golf tournament, which supported the protection of tribal self-determination and sovereignty in plant medicine

## **Jana M. Simmons Attended the 2025 Reservation Economic Summit**

March 19, 2025

Hosted by The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, this multifaceted annual event is Indian Country's largest economic development gathering

## **Ropers Majeski Was a Proud Sponsor of the 2025 Wisconsin Cannabis Industry & Policy Summit**

February 28, 2025

This transformative event brought together cannabis advocates, tribal nations, entrepreneurs, policy experts, and community members to amplify understanding and access to plant medicine

## **Jana M. Simmons and Ropers Majeski Were Proud to Sponsor the ICIA National Indigenous Cannabis Policy & Advocacy Summit**

November 19, 2024

Jana participated in a panel, "The Landscape of International Trade and Commerce in Cannabis," which provided insights on global market trends, regulatory challenges, sovereignty, and opportunities for businesses looking to expand across borders

## **Jana M. Simmons and Ropers Majeski Were Proud to Sponsor the 19th Annual Protecting Tribal Families Golf Fundraiser**

April 29, 2024

Since 2004, this event has raised more than \$600,000 to assist Native American organizations

## **Jana M. Simmons and Kalisha M. Crawford Were Proud to Participate in the 2024 Reservation Economic Summit**

March 15, 2024

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons was joined at the event by Director of Marketing & Business Development Kalisha M. Crawford

## **Jana M. Simmons and Ropers Majeski Were Proud to Sponsor the ICIA National Indigenous Cannabis Policy Summit**

November 06, 2023

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons presented "Cannabis on Our Lands: Protecting Research and Intellectual Property in Cannabis"

## **Ropers Majeski and Jana M. Simmons Were Proud to Participate in the 2023 Combined Claims Conference**

August 17, 2023

Jana M. Simmons presented at the conference

## **Ropers Majeski Was a Proud Sponsor of Native Nation Events Eighth Native American Cannabis & Hemp Conference**

*Native Nation Events*

June 09, 2023

Jana M. Simmons moderated a panel at the conference

## **Ropers Majeski Was Proud to Be a Part of the Reservation Economic Summit 2023**

*The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development*

April 07, 2023

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons attended the Summit

## News

---

## **Jana M. Simmons Selected to 2026 Southern California Super Lawyers List**

May 14, 2026

Jana is recognized for her exceptional experience and success in the legal field

## **Ropers Majeski Incredibly Honored to Receive the 2023 Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association Business Ally of the Year Award**

November 10, 2023

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons proudly accepted the award on behalf of the firm

## **Ropers Majeski Partner Jana M. Simmons Reappointed to American Indian Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan**

October 05, 2023

Ropers Majeski congratulates Jana M. Simmons for this achievement

## **Tribal Civil Jurisdiction Over Non-Tribal Companies: Right of Exclusion Sets the Stage**

February 22, 2023

Ropers Majeski Partner Jana M. Simmons provides an overview of tribal exclusion and emerging federal case law upholding tribal civil jurisdiction over non-tribal companies

## **Five Key Takeaways from the State Bar of Michigan Cannabis Law Conference: Potential Impacts on Tribal Cannabis Businesses**

October 24, 2022

Ropers Majeski Partner Jana M. Simmons discusses the important takeaways from the conference

## **Ropers Majeski Partner Jana M. Simmons Appointed to the American Indian Law Section for the State Bar of Michigan**

October 05, 2022

Ropers Majeski congratulates Partner Jana M. Simmons on her appointment

## **Speaking Engagements**

---

### **Jana M. Simmons Participated in Panel on California Artificial Stone Litigation at Perrin Conferences Artificial Stone Silicosis Litigation Conference**

April 28, 2026

The session covered key developments shaping artificial stone litigation, including filing trends, emerging jurisdictions, legislative updates, and expectations for 2026 and beyond

### **Jana M. Simmons Joined Panel on Global Tribal Commerce, Sovereignty, and FTZs at RES 2026**

March 30, 2026

The panel highlighted tribes at the forefront of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ), economic, and digital zone development

### **Jana M. Simmons Participated in Hemp Policy and Sovereignty Panel at ICIA Great Lakes Indigenous Cannabis & Hemp Summit**

March 02, 2026

The panel, "Hemp Policy, Sovereignty, & the Post-Federal Reset: Hemp Regulation, Federal Rescheduling, & Tribal Authority," examined how federal rescheduling, Farm Bill changes, and Wisconsin hemp legislation intersect

### **Jana M. Simmons Shared Insights on Tribal Joint Ventures and Foreign Trade Zones at Indigenous Biz Con 2025**

October 14, 2025

The panel examined how tribes can unlock new economic opportunities through underutilized strategies, while also exploring sovereignty, equity, and ownership models that protect tribal interests

## **Jana M. Simmons Provided Insight on Foreign Trade Zones at IBG's Wisconsin Contractor Connection**

August 29, 2025

Jana's presentation highlighted how FTZs offer Native Nations a powerful tool to advance economic sovereignty, reduce costs for imported goods, and build infrastructure that supports local jobs and enterprise growth

## **Jana M. Simmons Joined a Panel on How Tribal Courts Handle Claims at the AMERIND Tribal Risk & Insurance Convening**

August 13, 2025

The discussion covered how tribal courts handle claims, from incident notice through defense and resolution, offering attendees practical insights into tribal sovereignty, litigation strategy, and defense considerations unique to tribal legal systems

## **Jana M. Simmons Joined a Panel on Legal Issues in Obtaining Insurance Coverage at the AMERIND Tribal Risk & Insurance Convening**

August 13, 2025

The discussion explored the legal complexities of securing and maintaining insurance for Native American communities and businesses, highlighting common challenges they often face

## **Jana M. Simmons Spoke on Protecting Tribal Assets at the 10th Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference**

June 11, 2025

The panel discussed best practices in securing capital, building banking partnerships, and leveraging cannabis revenues to promote sustainable tribal economic growth

## **Jana M. Simmons Joined a Panel on Tribal Cannabis Regulatory Development at the 10th Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference**

June 10, 2025

The session explored the dynamic evolution of tribal cannabis regulation over the past decade, highlighting the shift from prohibition-focused policies to frameworks centered on consumer safety, public health, and community empowerment

## **Jana M. Simmons Led ICIA's Webinar on Tribal Sovereignty and the Round Valley Raids**

May 19, 2025

During the session, Jana discussed the federal lawsuit filed by the Round Valley Indian Tribes (RVIT) against the Mendocino and Humboldt County Sheriffs and the California Highway Patrol

## **Jana M. Simmons Was a Panelist at the 2025 Wisconsin Cannabis Industry & Policy Summit**

March 05, 2025

Jana's panel, Legislative Updates: Shaping the Future of Cannabis Policy in Wisconsin, shared insights on the unique legal and business challenges within the tribal cannabis and hemp industries, highlighting key opportunities for growth and collaboration

## **Jana M. Simmons Moderated a Panel for the Ninth Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference: State of Cannabis and Hemp Industries in 2024**

June 19, 2024

Jana facilitated a discussion on the current regulatory updates in cannabis and hemp

## **Jana M. Simmons Spoke on a Panel for the Ninth Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference: Cannabis and Hemp Industries Legislative Update for 2024-2025**

June 19, 2024

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons spoke on the evolving legislative landscape in cannabis and hemp

## **Jana M. Simmons Was Proud to Participate in the ICIA 2024 Wisconsin Cannabis Industry & Policy Summit**

March 06, 2024

Jana joined the panel, "Policy & Regulatory Framework: From Public Health & Consumer Safety to Banking, Finance & Technology"

## **The Intersection of Tribal Law and Cannabis**

*Midwest Hemp Council*

March 16, 2023

Ropers Partner Jana M. Simmons joined Midwest Hemp Council for a podcast examining the intersection of tribal law and cannabis