

Insights: News Releases

Ambassador Keith M. Harper Rejoins Kilpatrick Townsend

February 2, 2017

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Council Was First Native American to Serve as an Ambassador

WASHINGTON, D.C. (FEBRUARY 2) – Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton announced today that [Keith Harper](#), the former United States Ambassador to the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva, Switzerland, rejoined the firm on February 1. The first-ever member of a federally-recognized Indian Tribe to serve as a U.S. Ambassador was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in June 2014 and served under President Obama until January 2017. Mr. Harper will be a Partner of Kilpatrick Townsend's nationally recognized [Native American Affairs Team](#) and will work from the firm's Washington, D.C. office. Ambassador Harper will also look to broaden the scope of the firm's international work.

"I was humbled and feel distinctly privileged to serve this great nation and President Obama while representing the U.S. at the United Nations Human Rights Council to promote the protection of all human rights around the globe," said Ambassador Harper. "I am delighted to be coming home to Kilpatrick Townsend. This is a premier firm with a deep and fervent commitment to representing Indian Country on a wide range of matters. It also has a substantial international footprint. I look forward to working once again with my outstanding colleagues and clients at Kilpatrick Townsend."

Mr. Harper, since inception of the case, represented the plaintiff class of 500,000 individual Indians in the landmark Indian trust fund lawsuit, *Cobell v. Salazar*. As class counsel with Kilpatrick Townsend, he helped settle the case for \$3.4 billion which represents the largest settlement of a lawsuit against the United States in history.

"Our firm is proud of Keith's service to the country as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council," said [Henry Walker](#), Kilpatrick Townsend Chair. "Before he was an ambassador, Keith helped build our prominent and growing Native American practice. We are excited to have him back as a partner in that practice after serving in such an important role for our nation."

"We are honored to have the Ambassador back at Kilpatrick Townsend," said [Catherine Munson](#), Washington, D.C. Office Managing Partner and Co-Leader of the Native American Affairs Team. "Keith is not only a colleague and a tremendous attorney but he is a good friend. He brings an outstanding track record of success."

"Keith's experience will expand the Native American Affairs team's already tremendous reach and capabilities



throughout Indian Country,” added [Rob Roy Smith](#), Co-Leader of the Native American Affairs Team based in Seattle. “In addition, his international legal and business acumen will enhance our firm in this increasingly globalized world.”

Mr. Harper, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, will focus his practice on Native American affairs, litigation, and international clients from the private as well as the public sector. Throughout his career, he has represented tribes and individual Indians. Mr. Harper served as a Principal Advisor and Chair of the Native American Domestic Policy Committee for the Obama campaign and as a Member on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Previously, he was Senior Staff Attorney for the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) from 1995 to 2006. From 2007 to 2008, Mr. Harper served as a Supreme Court Justice on the Supreme Court of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and from 2001 to 2007, he was as an Appellate Justice on the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Court. From 1998 to 2001, he served as an adjunct professor at the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, and from 1999 to 2001, he was a Professorial Lecturer at the American University Washington College of Law. Mr. Harper served as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Lawrence W. Pierce on the Second Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals.

The *National Law Journal* selected Mr. Harper as one of 50 “Most Influential Minority Lawyers in America” in 2008. He is listed in the 2013 and the four years immediately preceding editions of *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*. Mr. Harper was recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America®* for Native American Law in 2013 and the five years immediately preceding. He is listed as a 2010, 2012 and 2013 Washington D.C. "Super Lawyer" in Native American Law by *Super Lawyers* magazine. *Diversity & The Bar* magazine selected Mr. Harper as one of 14 minority "Rainmakers."

Mr. Harper received a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and a J.D. from New York University School of Law.

Follow Mr. Harper on Twitter: [@AmbHarper](#).

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