

# Dr. Lindberg's Mentorship

Dylan RAIN TREE<sup>1</sup> M.P.A., J.D., Esq.

*Attorney, Law Office of Dylan Rain Tree. Fresno, CA. U.S.A.*

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## 1. Introduction

I first met Dr. Lindberg in June 2009 while a summer intern at the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health (NLM). At the time, NLM was developing a new library exhibition focused on Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian health. At the end of my internship, Dr. Lindberg invited me to continue working at NLM to assist in the exhibit's development. I agreed and thus began my work and mentorship with Dr. Lindberg.

## 2. I Became an Attorney Because of His Encouragement

Dr. Lindberg was a formative influence in my life. While I am now a practicing attorney, I might not be one if it was not for Dr. Lindberg's encouragement.

During a private conversation in Dr. Lindberg's office, he once asked me what I wanted to do in life. I answered somewhat timidly that I wanted to help other Native Americans in a moment of honest emotional vulnerability. He listened and took a moment to think. He responded thoughtfully and said it seemed Native Americans could use 'good legal representation.' Dr. Lindberg immediately shared what he observed first-hand during his visits to 'Indian County' [1]. He said it looked like some tribes were still being taken advantage of and could excel with better lawyers.

His response heartened me. It solidified an aim - becoming an attorney - that had not become a determined goal. From that conversation, I began the process of applying to law school.

The latter episode is an example of Dr. Lindberg's generosity and impact. He took a significant amount of time to talk to me during my tenure at the NLM from 2009-2015. Dr. Lindberg was an active advisor who exemplified what a mentor should be. He would listen, ask several personal questions, and give sincere feedback rooted in his wisdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: dylanraintree@gmail.com

### **3. Personal Time Spent with Dr. Lindberg**

Several times, Dr. Lindberg invited me to his house for dinner, sometimes right after a late night at work. I enjoyed a healthy, delicious meal prepared by Mrs. Lindberg and spent time with Dr. Lindberg talking and learning.

Our dinner conversations would begin with a pre-meal drink in the living room, engaging in small talk. We would talk about the exhibit, current politics, and so on. When dinner was ready, we proceeded to the dining room, where Mrs. Lindberg prepared the dinner table. We continued our conversations. Often, Dr. Lindberg asked me more personal questions such as my opinions on U.S. policy towards Native American tribes to more random questions such as where I purchased my clothes.

During the entire time, Dr. Lindberg displayed his dry wit, curiosity, and listening skills. When dinner ended, I left feeling he cared about me. At first, the latter was sort of uncomfortable since it was rare (in my experience) for a mentor to care so much for a mentee. Amusingly, I began to think of Dr. Lindberg as my father on the East Coast of the U.S. while my birth father and family were on the West Coast. All along, I knew I could receive valuable insight and advice from Dr. Lindberg on anything.

### **4. Reflections After Leaving NLM**

The more I heard and observed his relationships with others, the more I realized Dr. Lindberg displayed the same care and concern for many others that he showed to me. He cared about many NLM employees, and this attitude created an emotional bond that fostered a sense of loyalty and admiration.

I met numerous people while working at the NLM who had worked with Dr. Lindberg for decades. Their relationship with Dr. Lindberg was like my own; an ongoing rapport boosted their professional lives.

After I left the NLM in 2015 to attend law school, I kept in touch with Dr. Lindberg. After I passed the California bar exam to become a licensed attorney, I informed Dr. Lindberg of the news. His response included: 'You're off and running now.' It was a great response, typical of his style. He was usually direct and concise while being personable. His answer provided me a feeling of satisfaction in my accomplishment and confidence in the world of possibilities ahead of me.

I am grateful for the time I spent with Dr. Lindberg, and I will continue to remember and imagine the advice he would provide me today. Dr. Lindberg's legacy endures in so many people and institutions where he devoted his time, care, and efforts. He was a wonderful person, and I was fortunate to have him as a mentor for several years.

### **Reference**

- [1] United States Code, 2006 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 18 – Crimes and Criminal Procedure; 1948.