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Lottie Cunningham Wren Returns to Eugene

Posted October 1st, 2002 by Anonymous in [E-Bulletin](#), [Central America](#)

Nicaraguan Attorney Brings Indigenous Human Rights Case to University of Oregon

October 2, 2002

E-LAW U.S. is co-sponsoring an exciting event this week. On Thursday, October 3rd, Lottie Cunningham Wren, a Miskito Indian lawyer, will speak at the University of Oregon School of Law about an inspiring victory for the human rights of indigenous people of Nicaragua.

Lottie represents Mayagna Indians who seek to protect their native lands on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Lottie helped the Mayagna win a stunning victory before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Court ruled that the government of Nicaragua violated the human rights of the Mayagna by allowing a foreign logging company to clearcut their lands. The Court directed the Nicaraguan government to help the Mayagna demarcate the lands and gain legal title to them. The forests have not been cut.

This victory has enormous ramifications: a respected international body has ruled that a national government must respect the fundamental human rights of indigenous people to their traditional lands. Lottie is now working with communities to implement the Inter-American Court's ruling.

At the Thursday evening event, Lottie will show a video about the communities and their legal victory, and speak about her work.

Please see the press release below.

E-LAW U.S PRESS RELEASE:

Nicaraguan Attorney Brings Indigenous Human Rights Case to University of Oregon

Eugene, OR - September 30, 2002 -- A Nicaraguan lawyer and Miskito Indian, Lottie Cunningham Wren, brings the story of an unusual international court case to the Eugene community at a public lecture on October 3 at the University of Oregon School of Law.

The Mayagna Indians of the Awas Tingni community sued the government of Nicaragua in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to block the government from giving their forest away to a foreign logging company.

In September, 2001, the community won - the first such legal victory at the international level by an indigenous people anywhere in the world. The ramifications of the case are now echoing as governments scramble to assess the implications of the precedent.

Dr. Cunningham will present the full story and film, "Children of the Sun," on October 3 at 7:00 pm, Knight Law Center, Room 175, 1515 Agate Street.

Dr. Cunningham collaborates with grassroots advocates around the world through the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (E-LAW). E-LAW's U.S. office is in Eugene.

Dr. Cunningham will be the first in a series of human rights scholars to visit the University through "Human Rights for ALL," a program designed to expose the University community and Eugene to a broad range of human rights issues. The program was designed by Professor Svitlana Kravchenko of Ukraine, the 2002-2004 Carlton & Wilberta Savage Visiting Professor in International Relations and Peace.

"Human rights is a term often used to mean only political freedoms," said Dr. Kravchenko, who for 25 years has taught environmental law, first in the Soviet Union and then in an independent Ukraine. "But social, economic, and environmental rights are equally important. Men and women do not live by free speech alone."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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