



**The American Indian Student Union**  
*with the Native American Law Students' Association  
and the Virginia Indian Heritage Program at VFH*  
present  
*a Columbus Day lecture at UVA*

**Robert J. Miller**  
Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland, Oregon

***“American Indians:  
The Doctrine of Discovery  
and Thomas Jefferson”***

**11:00 a.m., Monday, Oct. 12, Harrison Auditorium**  
Mary and David Harrison Institute for American History, Literature, and Culture

*a reception will follow from 12:30-1:30 p.m., Main Lounge, Newcomb Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> floor*

All of the European countries that explored and colonized North America used the Doctrine of Discovery to claim sovereign, commercial, and property rights over the lands and Indigenous peoples. The Doctrine is an international legal principle that was developed in the fifteenth century by England, Spain, Portugal, and the Church to control acquisitions of non-European lands and interactions with native peoples. The United States Supreme Court expressly adopted Discovery in 1823 in *Johnson v. McIntosh*.

Thomas Jefferson and the Lewis & Clark expedition led a new phase of American expansion. In 1803, the Pacific Northwest was claimed by Russia, England, Spain, and the United States under the Doctrine of Discovery. Jefferson used the Doctrine of Discovery when he aimed Lewis and Clark at the Northwest. The American expansion that Jefferson started acquired the name “Manifest Destiny” in 1845. Long before then, however, American politicians and citizens were looking to acquire Indian lands across the continent. Manifest Destiny arose from the identical legal elements and principles that created Discovery. Thus, the ethnocentric, religious, and racial ideals behind Discovery also became the principles that developed and justified American Manifest Destiny, principles that remain in effect today.

**Robert J. Miller** is a professor at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon. He graduated from Lewis & Clark in 1991 and then clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He has taught and practiced Indian law since 1993. He has also been a part-time tribal judge for Northwest tribes since 1995 and is now the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals for the Grand Ronde Tribe. Bob has published numerous articles, books, editorials, and book chapters on Indian law issues and has spoken at federal, state, and private conferences in more than thirty states and in England, Canada, and Australia. In 2003, he was appointed by his tribal council to the Circle of Tribal Advisors, which was part of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. His first book, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny*, was published in hardback in 2006 and in paperback in 2008. Bob has finished the first draft of a book about American Indian economic development and is writing another book with Indigenous scholars from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. He is a citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and was elected to the board of the Oregon Historical Society in 2009. CSPAN interview:



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