

FILED

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IN THE TRADITIONAL RIGHTS COURT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

ASSISTANT CLERK OF COURTS
REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

CANSE JORKAN ALIK, Plaintiff, vs. ROBINSON ABNER, Defendant.	SUPREME COURT CASE NO. 2025-00297 <i>HIGH</i> <i>2017-00</i> <i>226</i> Opinion and Answer of the Traditional Rights Court
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Members of the Panel : Chief Judge, Grace L. Leban
: Associate Judge, Nixon David
: Associate Pro Tem Judge, Milton Zackios

Summary in Brief

The Traditional Rights Court (TRC) acknowledges and respects the question referred by the Supreme Court concerning the TRC's decision declaring Robinson Abner the current rightful holder of the Senior Dri-Jerbal Right, as set forth in its Opinion and Answer of March 11, 2021. The TRC reiterates that, in reaching its decision in HC CA No. 2003-059 and HC No. 2017-226, it relied upon the order of succession reflected in Liriwa's genealogy chart (Intervenor's Exhibit B), the evidence presented by the parties, and the applicable principles of Marshallese custom.

Analysis and Reasons

In response to the Supreme Court's question, the TRC again reviewed Liriwa's genealogy chart (Intervenor's Exhibit B), together with the exhibits, testimonies, and other evidence presented in HC CA No. 2003-059 and HC No. 2017-226, as well as the relevant principles of Marshallese custom. Upon review, the TRC reaffirms its prior conclusion that Robinson Abner is the person presently entitled to exercise the Senior Dri-Jerbal right and interest.

The genealogy chart shows that the parties are descendants of Liriwa's two daughters: the elder bwij, Likbad, and the younger bwij, Liwabat. Likbad bore Nebun, while Liwabat bore Abner. The chart further demonstrates that the Botoktok originated with Abner and subsequently passed to Kotmene, from whom it has now flowed to Robinson.

Cansee is the daughter of Lisos, who is of the Botoktok line. However, Lisos is a matrilineal descendant of the bwij through the female line. Although Cansee belongs to the older bwij, the genealogy chart and the applicable principles of Marshallese custom establish that the Botoktok commenced with Abner. This senior Botoktok line has not become extinct, having passed from Abner to Kotmene and presently to Robinson in accordance with custom.

Conclusion

The TRC respectfully thanks the Supreme Court for the opportunity to clarify its Opinion and Answer concerning the Senior Dri-Jerbal right at issue in this case. The TRC reaffirms that, based upon the genealogy, the evidence presented, and the applicable principles of Marshallese custom, Robinson Abner is the rightful person presently entitled to exercise the Senior Dri-Jerbal right and interest.

Date: 5/26/2026

_____/s/_____
Grace L. Leban

Presiding Judge, TRC

_____/s/_____
Nixon David

Associate Judge, TRC

_____/s/_____
Milton Zackios

Associate Pro Tem Judge, TRC