



July 2023 Issue



Photo by Jourdan Bennett-Begaye / ICT

Kimberly Jump-CrazyBear, Osage and Oglala, from Virginia, holds a sign in support of ICWA when oral arguments for *Haaland v. Brackeen* case began in November 2022. The Supreme Court handed down a major decision Thursday, June 15, 2023, affirming the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act by a 7-2 vote.

Supreme Court upholds Indian Child Welfare Act

By Kendra Germany-Wall

The US Supreme Court has ruled that Native American children can continue to be protected under federal law from removal from their tribal communities for fostering or adoption.

The court rejected a petition from a white couple who argued that the provision was a form of racial discrimination.

The Supreme Court's decision upholds the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which gives Native Americans and tribal members preference in adopting or fostering Native American children.

By a vote of 7 to 2, the justices rejected the challengers' claim that the requirement was a form of unconstitutional racial bias.

Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito were the lone justices to dissent.

In a majority opinion authored by Justice Amy Coney Barrett, the court turned down the challenges, a victory for the Biden administration and several Native American tribes that defended the law.

"The issues are complicated," Barrett wrote, adding that "the bottom line is that we reject all of petitioners' challenges to the statute, some on the merits and others for lack of standing."

The case ultimately pitched the Brackeen family of Texas against Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland representing the US government.

Haaland issued the following statement following the decision.

"Today's decision is a welcome affirmation across Indian Country of what presidents and congressional majorities on both sides of the aisle have recognized for the past four decades. For nearly two centuries, federal policies promoted the forced removal of Indian children from their families and communities through boarding schools, foster care, and adoption. Those policies were a targeted attack on the existence of Tribes, and they inflicted trauma on children, families and communities that people continue to feel today. Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978 to put an end to those policies. The Act ensured that the United States' new policy would be to meet its legal and moral obligation to protect Indian children and families, and safeguard the future of Indian Tribes."

President Joe Biden also weighed in shortly after the ruling, stating that ICWA is a vital law he proudly supports and stands with tribes.

In his statement, Biden stated that the ruling keeps in place a vital law that protects tribal sovereignty and Native children.

"Our Nation's painful history looms large over today's decision. In the not-so-distant past, Native children were stolen from the arms of the people who loved them. They were sent to boarding schools or to be raised by non-Indian families—all with the aim of erasing who they are as Native people and tribal citizens," the statement reads. "These were acts of unspeakable cruelty that affected generations of Native children and threatened the very survival of Tribal Nations. The Indian Child Welfare Act was our Nation's promise: never again," said President Biden.

The June 15 decision marks a historic win for tribes nationwide.

Tribes and tribal groups united in calling for a retention of the law, which requires Native children to be prioritized within their extended families, tribes or other Native communities. They argued that ICWA is essential for the survival of the tribes themselves.

"Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to right the extreme historical injustices committed against Native children and their families. The law remains a critical part of protecting Native American heritage and tribal sovereignty. We are glad to see the Supreme Court recognized the important benefits of ICWA and allowed the law to stand. The Choctaw Nation will continue to support children and families through its foster care system, Indian Child Welfare team, tribal attorneys and over 100 tribal services," said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

You can read more from Chief Batton on this subject in his monthly column on page two of the July issue of the Biskinik.

For more information on the Choctaw Nation's relationship with ICWA, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/indian-child-welfare/>.

Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978

What is ICWA?

ICWA is a statute passed by Congress to address the agency policies and practices that resulted in the wholesale separation of Indian children from their families.

State and private agencies were removing as many as 25 - 35% of Indian children from their families and placing many of these children in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes.

Congress determined that cultural ignorance and biases within the child welfare system were significant causes of this problem.

Congress recognized that it is in the best interest of the child to maintain Tribal connections and that children are vital to Tribes' continued existence, and enacted ICWA to "protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families."

What does ICWA do?

ICWA governs State child-custody proceedings in multiple ways, including: (1) by recognizing Tribal jurisdiction over decisions for their Indian children; (2) by establishing minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families; (3) by establishing preferences for placement of Indian children with extended family or other Tribal families; and (4) by instituting protections to ensure that birth parents' voluntary relinquishments of their children are truly voluntary. (See "Statute's Basics" later in this list for additional information).

Why is this rule needed now?

While ICWA has been in place since 1978, compliance with ICWA has been inconsistent across, and even within, States. As a result, many of the issues that ICWA was intended to address continue to exist today:

Native American children are still disproportionately more likely to be removed from their homes and communities than other children. Indian families continue to be broken up by the removal of their children by non-Tribal

public and private agencies. Nationwide, based on 2013 data, Native American children are represented in State foster care at a rate 2.5 times their presence in the general population. In some States, Native American children are represented in State foster-care systems at rates as high as 14.8 times their presence in the general population of that State.

Differing interpretations of ICWA provisions by individual States and State courts have created substantial variation in how this Federal law is applied. This final rule promotes the uniform application of an important Federal law to protect the rights of Indian children, their parents, and their Tribes, regardless of the child welfare worker, judge, or State involved.

Who is subject to ICWA?

ICWA applies to any State child-custody proceeding involving an "Indian child," based on the child's political affiliation with the Tribe. A child is an "Indian child" only if: (1) The child is himself or herself a member of a federally recognized Tribe; or (2) The child's parent is a member of a federally recognized Tribe and the child is eligible for membership.

What if I don't want ICWA to apply to me?

ICWA applies only if the child or parent is a citizen of a federally recognized Tribe. Parents may choose to not apply for Tribal citizenship for themselves or their child, or may renounce their Tribal citizenship. If a parent of the child is not a Tribal citizen, and the child is not a Tribal citizen, ICWA does not apply.

Does ICWA allow Tribes to "claim" children?

No. ICWA applies only to children who are citizens of a federally recognized Tribe, or who are eligible for citizenship and the child's parent is a citizen of the Tribe.

For more on ICWA, visit <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>.



Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

The Choctaw Nation will support its tribe, families

On June 15, the Supreme Court issued their opinion in favor of ICWA and tribal sovereignty, ensuring that tribal families will continue to be protected.

In 1978 Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to right the extreme historical injustices committed against Native children and their families. The law remains a critical part of protecting Native American heritage and tribal sovereignty. We are glad to see the Supreme Court recognized the important benefits of ICWA and allowed the law to stand.

The Choctaw Nation will continue to support children and families through its foster care system, Indian Child

Welfare team, tribal attorneys and over 100 tribal services.

Faith, family, culture. Those three words are the very foundation of the Choctaw Nation. It's how we live, thrive, and survive as a nation.

Keeping Choctaw families together is the most important service we can provide to our tribe. Making sure our tribe is strong and resilient is how our nation grows and remains great.

Recently, ICWA was challenged by state governments, politicians, and special interest groups who oppose tribal sovereignty. The U.S. Supreme Court in November convened to hear the states' argument that ICWA is unconstitutional, because it is a "race-based" classification system and advocated that the U.S. Supreme Court should strike down ICWA and its protections for tribal families. The decision in favor of ICWA issued by the Supreme Court is an important one for tribal sovereignty and tribal culture.

Before ICWA, the Association on American Indian Affairs research found that "somewhere between 25 and 35 percent of all American Indian children had been placed in adoptive homes, foster homes, or institutions. Around 90 percent of those children were being raised by non-Indians."

Many of those children would never see their families or tribe ever again.

To combat children being removed from their tribal families, ICWA was passed with three main components:

It requires tribal courts to hear child placement cases when possible and allows a child's tribe to take part in all state court child removal and placement proceedings.

If a Native child must be removed from the home, a system of placement preferences must be followed with the first preference being extended family members, followed by other tribal members, then other Native families, and finally non-Native homes approved by the tribe.

It allows a tribal government to have a say in who adopts a Native child in cases where both biological parents lose custody.

Additionally, ICWA requires child welfare workers to provide "active efforts" that encourage family reunification, such as drug treatment, parenting classes and counseling. These components have made ICWA the "gold standard" by many child welfare advocacy groups and it is argued these efforts should apply to any child in the foster care system.

The U.S. Supreme Court understands that ICWA is not only a right for tribal families, but it is our right as a sovereign nation. It is not a race issue, but a way to ensure that Choctaw families can make it together. As a Nation, we are better together and ICWA allows a chance for Choctaw families to get the assistance they need as a family with the help of their tribal neighbors and family.

ICWA remains the federal government's primary effort to keep families together and keep children with their tribe. ICWA is instrumental in supporting tribal sovereignty by supporting the tribe's ability to maintain social and cultural health and provides them with the ability to protect its most vulnerable population, children.

The Choctaw Nation will continue to support its tribal families and children.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

A perfect time to say Yakoke to the Choctaw Health Care System

Recently we were blessed to host a groundbreaking ceremony in McAlester for an exciting expansion to our health clinic. As I reflected on the ceremony that day, I was reminded about all the exciting projects on the horizon for the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) and I am going to take this opportunity to highlight some of those projects and to say Yakoke to some of our health care professionals who have been singled out by their peers.

The McAlester Clinic expansion will provide more services that include family medicine, internal, same-day clinic, pediatrics, podiatry, behavioral health, lab, radiology and pharmacy. The clinic will be adding GI, cardio, ENT, endocrinology, orthopedics, speech therapy and an Employee Health area.

The McAlester Wind Horse Behavioral Health recently celebrated 15 years. This facility has provided behavioral health visits while also housing multiple grant programs that schedule and create events for Native Americans all over the reservation.

The Poteau Wellness Center and Durant Wellness Center recently celebrated five years of providing wellness opportunities in June.

Also in June, for residency students who completed their program, there was a Choctaw Nation Family Medicine residency graduation at the Choctaw Nation Casino & Conference Center in Durant.

Upcoming on July 12, the Atoka Clinic will celebrate 15 years of service. This clinic specializes in Family Practice, Immunization, Lab/X-ray, WIC, Diabetes Education, Nutrition and Pharmacy (including a drive-thru).

The Choctaw Nation Employee Prescription Program has reached a total of 992,120 so far in 2023; that total is up 5% from this time last year.

The healthcare system has grown by 779 associates since October 2022.

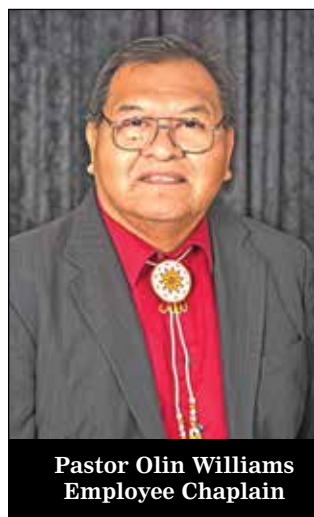
CNHSA has a total of 58,489 patients and has patient encounters totaling 667,677, a 2% increase from this time last year. Pediatrics (our highest growing department) has a total of 8,838 patients, and so far this year, there have been 20,754 encounters (a 27% increase in encounters vs. this same timeframe last year).

Some of our Choctaw healthcare associates have been highlighted for their exemplary work as well. Among those honored:

- Kayla Adams has been singled out as a Bright Idea winner. Kayla's idea of writing an article for the Biskinik to provide diabetes education to tribal members is now a monthly feature.
- General Surgeon Dr. Amanda Chisum-Price was awarded the National Indian Health Board Area/Regional Impact Award for 2023 in recognition of outstanding service to advance American Indian and Alaska Native Health. Dr. Chisum-Price also received the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine Gold Humanism Honor Society Award.
- Also, at the 2023 Oklahoma Osteopathic Association annual convention, Dr. Eric Gillette received the Oklahoma Rookie Physician of the Year Award for contributions and service to his/her school, community, and association and impacted medical education in and outside of Oklahoma.
- Dr. Larry Ellis received the A.T. Still Award of Excellence. This award is given to the physician that most exemplifies the teaching philosophy of the founder of our revered profession.
- Dr. Gary Lawrence, Director of Nursing Services, is a contributing author in a text entitled "A Population Health Approach to Health Disparities for Nurses-Care of Vulnerable Populations." The chapter begins with our Chief, Gary Batton, speaking about the Choctaw people's experience and how we are overcoming Historical Trauma to become stronger, healthier people.

Some of our Choctaw Health Care System Departments have received new accreditations, including the Breast Cancer & Cancer Survivorship Clinic - Center of Excellence and the Diabetes Program - Center of Excellence.

For all the reasons mentioned above and many more, the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority is proving to be one of the best healthcare providers in the area. The Choctaw Nation is very lucky to have these professionals working for our tribal members daily to provide top-quality health care and services. Please join me in saying Yakoke to our wonderful team of healthcare professionals!

Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

Throwback message: Put up thy sword

Editors Note: This is a throwback message from Olin Williams, written for the June 2018 issue of the Biskinik. We hope that Pastor Williams will be back with a new message soon.

The Christian is a citizen of Heaven and subject to its law, which is unconditional love. In the kingdom of God, one conquers not by fighting, but by submitting.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth these instructions: "And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 4:12,13).

Paul the elder taught the younger preacher Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane when he was betrayed by one of his own, and the soldiers came to arrest him. Then, one of his disciples drew out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

In Matthew 26:52 we read the response of Jesus. Then said Jesus unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Mankind by nature is a fighter. This is the law of the carnal nature. Mankind fights with his fist and sword, the tongue and wit. His kingdom is of this world so he fights for it with such weapons as this world provides. But the Christian is bound by the law of the new life in Heaven.

By recognizing this and obeying it, that new life can be sustained and passed on to others. Putting up the sword (tongue) is much needed today. James said we control the great ships and the animal life but cannot control our tongue. He says in James 3:8, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

Choctaw Nation announces 2023 Labor Day Festival entertainment

Diamond Rio and Neal McCoy headline festival

DURANT, Okla. (June 5, 2023) – The 2023 Choctaw Labor Day Festival concert lineup will feature some of the biggest names in classic country and gospel. This year's festival runs Sept. 1-3 on the Historic Choctaw Capitol Grounds at Tvshka Homma.

GRAMMY winner Diamond Rio will headline the festival Sept. 2, along with platinum recording artist Neal McCoy opening the show.

On Sept. 3, Dove Award's New Artist of the Year Zach Williams will take the stage. Returning to the Labor Day festival is GRAMMY Award-winning Christian artist Jason Crabb. Also, performing that evening will be the Mark Trammel Quartet and the Kingsmen Quartet.

Diamond Rio became the first country music group in history to reach No. 1 with a debut single. The band's first nine albums have sold more than 10 million copies with

hits like "One More Day" and "How Your Love Makes Me Feel." A 10th album, "I Made It" has just been released, as Diamond Rio celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Neal McCoy has 10 studio albums to his credit. His platinum-certified album "No Doubt About It" produced back-to-back number one singles on the country charts, "No Doubt About It" and "Wink."

Rocker-turned-Christian artist Zach Williams's single "There Was Jesus" included a duet with Dolly Parton, and his song "Up There, Down Here" was covered by a contestant on Season 21 of "American Idol."

In addition to winning a GRAMMY, Christian artist Jason Crabb has been named Gospel Music Association's Male Vocalist of the Year, along with receiving Song of the Year.

Admission is free and open to the public. Performances will be in the outdoor amphitheater. Lawn chairs are welcome. Festival schedules will be continually updated. For information, visit <https://choctawnation.com/labor-day>.

2023

CHOCTAW NATION LABOR DAY ENTERTAINMENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2



NEAL MCCOY



DIAMOND RIO

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3



KINGSMEN QUARTET



MARK TRAMMEL QUARTET



ZACH WILLIAMS



JASON CRABB

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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Choctaw Nation Warrior Wellness



Choctaw stickball, the game of our ancestors

By Shelia Kirven

Choctaws have played stickball for centuries. One of the oldest organized sports, it is an integral part of our culture and is commonly known as “little brother of war.”

The game was rough, aggressive and highly competitive in the old days.

It was played to settle disputes and keep warriors strong and fit, ready for possible warfare.

The historic game could be dangerous and last for days.

A goal post was set at each side of the field, and scores were made when balls hit the posts.

No protective clothing or shoes were worn, and the only tools players had were a set of sticks made from hard wood with leather lacing to hold a ball made from woven leather strips.

Players fasted, danced, meditated and used traditional medicine to prepare.

For guidance, drummers and spiritual leaders were required at games, and spectators danced, sang, feasted and gambled.

There are visual examples of historic Choctaw stickball games in paintings by Philadelphia lawyer and artist George Catlin, who specialized in portraits of Native Americans in the Old West during the 1800s.

Catlin described the game he witnessed Choctaws playing as “a school for the painter or sculptor equal to any

of those which ever inspired the hand of the artist in the Olympian games or the Roman forum.”

The game of stickball in Indian Territory continued until the early 1900s, at which time U.S. Marshalls and Choctaw Lighthorsemen needed to intervene during an incredibly intense game.



Photo by Hermes H. Knoblock/Image courtesy of the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives.

Choctaw men playing stickball near Philadelphia, Mississippi, in July 1925.

After that time, it was noted that stickball wasn't played as much in public as it had been previously.

By the 1970s, the game began to see a revival.

With more rules and a less aggressive nature, many have shown an interest in being a part of the teams, and the numbers continue to rise.

In 2009, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma formed its first official team and began traveling to the World Series of Stickball in Mississippi.

A women's team, Tvshka Homma Ohoyo, was formed in 2017.

Today, stickball is played by anyone interested in learning about the sport.

Workshops are also held on how to make stickball sticks and balls.

Choctaw Nation teams participate in exhibition games and compete at local and regional tournaments, including the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival and World Series of Stickball in Mississippi.

Jared Tom is a cultural educator for the Choctaw Nation Cultural Center and works with the stickball teams.

Tom is excited about the upcoming World Series of Stickball in Mississippi

in July, where the men's team, men's 35 and over, and women's team will compete, and the Choctaw Labor Day Festival at Tvshka Homma.

There have also been state games for the kids, which took place in June. “We are talking about taking a youth team in the future,” said Tom.

Jared hosts the stickball tournaments during the Labor Day Festival.

According to Tom, the tournament was a double elimination bracket in the past, but it will be single elimination this year.

The tournament begins on Friday, September 1, and ends on Sunday, September 3, with two championship games.

There will be six men and women teams from Oklahoma and Mississippi.

For more information on the Choctaw Nation stickball teams or how to participate visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/about/culture/traditions/stickball/>, or contact Jared Tom at jaredt@choctawnation.com.

To check out frequently used Choctaw words and terms used in stickball, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/about/language-archive/choctaw-lesson-ishtaboli/>



Photos by Traci Umsted

Tvshkahomma Ohoyo (top) and Tvshkahomma Men's and 35+ (bottom) teams at the 2023 Stickball Banquet.



Smithsonian American Art Museum

George Catlin, Ball-play of the Choctaw-Ball Up, oil on canvas, 1846-1850.

Choctaw Cultural Night

The Choctaw Cultural Center partnered with the Durant Area Chamber of Commerce to help kick off this year's Magnolia Festival.

On June 1, 2023, the Cultural Center extended its hours of operation for gallery touring, dining in the Champuli Café and shopping in the Hvshi Gift Store.

A stickball exhibition game was played on the Cultural Center's lighted Stickball Competition Field. Arena lights were turned off at dusk for the fireworks display at the Choctaw Event Center.



Photos by Rylee Tollett



CNO ISHTABOLI BANQUET

The Choctaw Nation Stickball Banquet was held in January at the Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant. Award winners were as follows:

2022 Tvshkahomma Men's Team:

- Shooter of the Year: Tyler McKinney
- Centers of the Year: Billy RunningBear Eagle Road and Jose Gonzalez
- Defensive Player of the Year: Marcus Bobb
- Most Improved: Marcus Bobb
- MVP: Billy Eagle Road

2022 Tvshkahomma Ohoyo Team:

- Shooter of the Year: Gennavie Tom
- Center of the Year: Aliyah Myers
- Defensive Player of the Year: Shelby Factor
- Most Improved: Masheli Watson
- MVP: Shelby Factor

2022 Tvshkahomma 35+ Team:

- Player of the Year: Dewayne Hornbuckle
- MVP: Steve Dixon

Coaches:

Men's team – Billy Eagle Road (head coach), Derrick Willis, Brad Willis, Kyle Anderson, Kelly Anderson, Javin Shomo and Jared Tom

Women's team – Jared Tom (head coach), Kelly Anderson, Kyle Anderson, Brad Willis, and Derrick Willis

35+ team – Dewayne Hornbuckle (head coach) and Jared Tom

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Grab & go meals for all children ages 1-17

LOCATION	SERVE DAYS	SERVE TIMES
AMTLER'S COMMUNITY CENTER 302 SW O STANTLEYS, OK	TUESDAY 5/23/23 - 8/17/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
ATOKA COMMUNITY CENTER 1625 W LIBERTY RD, ATOKA, OK	MONDAY 5/22/23 - 8/14/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
COLLEGE COMMUNITY CENTER 103 E CALIFORNIA AVE, COALGATE, OK	MONDAY 5/15/23 - 8/07/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
DARBY COMMUNITY CENTER 2746 BIG LOTS PKWY, DURANT, OK	TUESDAY 5/30/23 - 8/08/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
HUBB COMMUNITY CENTER 1304 W VICTOR ST, HUBB, OK	TUESDAY 5/23/23 - 8/08/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
IDA BEL COMMUNITY CENTER 2408 E LINCOLN RD, IDABEL, OK	TUESDAY 5/22/23 - 8/14/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
POTSAH COMMUNITY CENTER 208 S ST, POTSAH, OK	TUESDAY 5/23/23 - 8/08/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
SMITHY HILL COMMUNITY CENTER 38476 N US HWY 250, SMITHVILLE, OK	THURSDAY 5/18/23-8/03/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
STIGLER COMMUNITY CENTER 2208 E MAIN ST, STIGLER, OK	THURSDAY 5/17/23 - 8/03/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
TALIHMA COMMUNITY CENTER 100 RAILROAD ST, TALIHMA, OK	TUESDAY 5/16/23 - 8/08/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM
WILBURTON COMMUNITY CENTER 516 CENTER POINT RD, WILBURTON, OK	THURSDAY 5/18/23 - 8/10/23	11:00AM - 2:00 PM

Equal Opportunity Program | No CDIB required

Choctaw Nation Nutrition Services

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For more information on the 2023 Camp Chahta scan the QR code

Choctaw Nation College Freshman Year Initiative



Eddie Bohanan

District 3

Remembrance. The act of remembering.

As I reflected back over the past few months, I realized that we had devoted a lot of that time remembering those that have come before us, those that have served us, those that sacrificed, and those that are still sacrificing.

We celebrated our elders on Elder Appreciation Day, our ancestors with the Trail of Tears walk, and our veterans on Memorial Day. These are the ones whose strength, perseverance and wisdom that has brought us to today's Choctaw Nation, a thriving tribe that I am proud to have the honor of serving.

As Councilman for District 3, I am privileged to have the opportunity to see, meet, and work alongside those that will be taking the tribe forward.

The school year ended, and I met many graduating seniors. The Choctaw Nation District 3 Princess pageant was held, naming the new District 3 Choctaw princesses. Our Chief and Asst. Chief will be serving another term, and my wife and I welcomed a new granddaughter. The future of the Choctaw Nation does look bright.

Congratulations to the graduating seniors, Chief Batton and Asst. Chief Jack Austin Jr. and welcome to the 2023/2024 District 3 Chahta Princesses.

District 3 Little Miss Addyson York, District 3 Junior Miss Emma Battiest, and District 3 Senior Miss Diamond Henry.

I am very proud of each of these young ladies, and I know they will serve the Nation well.

Chi Pisa La Chike,
Councilman Eddie Bohanan



Jess Henry

District 4

Halito, Greetings to all. As summer unfolds, it's a joyous time to share some remarkable events that have taken place in District 4. Let's dive into the recent happenings and celebrations.

In April, we had the privilege of honoring Sam Moore from Poteau, who received recognition for his 25 years of service in the Choctaw Color Guard. As Councilman for District 4, I had the honor of presenting Mr. Moore with a well-deserved plaque. We extend our heartfelt yako to Mr. Moore for his outstanding commitment.

Moving into May, we held a special gathering in Durant to show our appreciation for our seniors during Elder Appreciation Day. It was a memorable occasion to honor their wisdom and contributions

to the Choctaw Nation.

Additionally, we celebrated a momentous occasion in Spiro with the ribbon-cutting ceremony for ten new Affordable Rental Homes. Ten deserving families received the keys to their new homes, marking a significant milestone in their lives. Following the ceremony, lunch was served, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.

Our seniors continue to enjoy enriching experiences. Spiro seniors embarked on a delightful trip to Muskogee, where they enjoyed a scrumptious meal at the Amish Restaurant. Meanwhile, Poteau seniors visited the First American Museum in Oklahoma City, immersing themselves in the rich cultural heritage of our ancestors.

For those craving a delicious meal, Poteau seniors organize an Indian taco sale on the first Friday of each month. From 11:00 a.m. until sold out, you can enjoy an Indian taco for just \$7. Don't miss out on this tasty opportunity.

As we observed Memorial Day, we solemnly gathered at Tvshka Homma to honor and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our nation. The ceremony served as a poignant reminder of the bravery and dedication exhibited by these individuals.

Moreover, we witnessed a display of talent and grace at the Princess Pageant held at the Dale Cox Community Center in Poteau. Congratulations to our District 4 winners, Little Miss Tenley Reece, daughter of Brandon and Patti Reece, and Junior Miss Micah Davidson, daughter of Michael and Jennifer Davidson. We wish them a fulfilling reign for the 2023/2024 term.

The Summer Food Service Program, grab-and-go meals, is available to all children ages 1-17 at the Dale Cox Community Center in Poteau. Meals can be picked up from May 23, 2023, through August 8, 2023, on Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Finally, in June, we commemorated the fifth anniversary of Chahta Achukmaka (Choctaw Wellness), a dedicated gym facility where Choctaws can exercise and prioritize their health. This milestone reminds us of the importance of physical fitness and well-being within our community.

As we continue to progress through the summer, let us embrace these wonderful events and celebrate the spirit of unity and resilience that defines our district. Together, we can build a brighter future for Choctaw Nation District 4.

Ott is First Language Speaker of the Month



Lillie Taylor Ott was named the First Language Speaker of the Month at the June 10 Choctaw Tribal Council Meeting. Lillie has been a long-time employee of the Choctaw Nation as a language instructor. She has traveled across the country and even to Ireland to represent the Choctaw Nation and teach the language to others.

Brimage is Veteran of the Month

Donald Ray Brimage was born in 1938 in Caddo, Okla., to George and Lucille (Jackson) Brimage. After moving to Amarillo, Texas and attending school there and in Big Springs and Midland, he and his family returned to Durant in 1953, where he completed high school. He lettered in football for three years and track for four years.

Brimage joined the Tank Co., 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Division of the Oklahoma National Guard in June 1955 and married Brownie Sue Robertson in 1959. He received the rank of SFC E-6 and was Platoon Sergeant. In 1960, he transferred to the 95th Army Reserve Unit and requested a reduction to SGT E-5 in 1961 for active duty. He was inducted into the US Army February 3, 1961, at Ft. Hood.

Sgt. Brimage received many promotions, attended numerous training sessions and advanced to the rank of Major. He retired on April 30, 1981. During his career, he received The Distinguished Flying Cross, The Meritorious Service Medal, Bronze Star with 2 Oak Leaf Cluster Good Conduct Medal, the Purple Heart, the Air Medal with numeral 42, the Army Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, the National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Master Army Aviator Badge,



and Expert Pistol Badge. He was the Project Officer in charge of overseeing the funeral planning for President Harry S. Truman.

Maj. Brimage received a Master of Science in Business Management from American Technical University in Killeen, Texas, in 1981.

After retirement, he was a business owner, consultant, funeral director and embalmer. He and his wife of 38 years, Aleyth, have three children, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He engages in many charitable and civic organizations. He enjoys arranging reunions of classmates and military personnel and playing golf.

The Choctaw Nation holds our Veterans in the highest esteem and appreciates the sacrifices and contributions they have made to preserve our freedoms and the way of life we hold dear.



CONNECTING KIDS TO COVERAGE

INSURANCE IS COMPLICATED, BUT WE CAN HELP!

580-916-9140 EXT 83731 OR 83830
CELL: 580-380-2102 OR 580-380-7481

For more information scan the QR code.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | CHOCTAWNATION.COM

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE

The Vocational Development Program can offer financial assistance and incentive for education/training programs.

GUIDELINES:

- At least 1/8 Native American and have a CDIB showing the degree of Native American blood
- Be a high school graduate or have completed a GED course
- Live within the Choctaw boundaries
- Be enrolled at a program-approved, college, training institute or career tech as a full-time student

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 866.933.2260

Choctaw Nation Vocational Development
CHOCTAWNATION.COM

CHOCTAW ARTIST REGISTRY

NOW AVAILABLE ON CHAHTA ACHVFFA

Are you a Choctaw tribal member who practices creative art (beadwork, painting, pottery, traditional clothing maker, writer, musician, actor, etc.?) if so, please enroll as a Choctaw registered artist.

- Be officially identified and recognized as an official Native American artist.
- Have an avenue to share your gifts with others.
- Make extra money from your art.

NOTE: Current Choctaw Nation registered artists are encouraged to update their information by enrolling on Chahta Achvffa's Choctaw Artist Registry link. Benefits include an updated artist registry certificate and profile on the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's new website.

TO ENROLL, VISIT
CHAHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/ARTIST-REGISTRY/


Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


CALL OR TEXT **988** MENTAL HEALTH LIFELINE

ONE CALL CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING. THERE IS HOPE.


Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

EVENTS


- 


Independence Day Tribal Holiday
All Offices will be closed for a tribal holiday to celebrate Independence Day.
All Locations
- 

Choctaw Nation General Election: Early Voting/Same-day Registration
Vote early and/or register for same-day voting for the upcoming tribal elections.
Choctaw Nation Headquarters - Voting locations to be announced
- 

Choctaw Nation General Election: Mail-in Ballot Deadline
Any ballots being mailed in must be postmarked on this day.
All Locations
- 

Choctaw Nation General Election: Same-day Registration
Choctaw Nation Election Day
Choctaw Nation Headquarters - Voting locations to be announced
- 

Dark and Dirty Miles Run
Challenge yourself with the nighttime run offering 5K, 10K, 15K and 50K distances on rocky single-track trails or gravel roads.
Nobles Creek State Park - Near the Redbat Campgrounds
- 

Warrior Wellness Guided Fishing Trip (3 of 3)
Native American veterans are invited to spend the day on a guided fishing trip on Lake Tullahoma.
Lake Eufaula State Park
- 

Choctaw Tribal Election – Contest of Irregularities, Death or Fraud Period
Designated days to contest 2023 Choctaw Nation tribal elections.
Choctaw Nation Headquarters - Headquarters (Headquarters) Room #1211
- 

Lead Awareness Curriculum Session – Durant
Help your child to learn about lead, its impacts, and actions to protect themselves from childhood lead exposure in the free class using the Lead Awareness in Indian Country: Keeping our Children Healthy! curriculum.
Durant Community Center
- 

Lead Awareness Curriculum Session – McAlester
Don't miss the opportunity to learn about lead, its impacts, and actions to protect themselves from childhood lead exposure in the free class using the Lead Awareness in Indian Country: Keeping our Children Healthy! curriculum.
McAlester Community Center
- 

Jarid Taylor Memorial Run
5k and 10k Run to honor a fallen Brave Heart Sheriff Deputy Jarid Taylor.
Ogden House Collier - On the south side of Eufaula

FALL CRAFT, FOOD & GIFT BAZAAR

Friday, August 25 -1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, August 26 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 2608 West Kenosha Street, #120 Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 74012.
We have 75 Oklahoma "mom & pop" vendors, Oklahoma non-profit organizations, Oklahoma Food Trucks and small Oklahoma businesses in our 2-day FALL CRAFT, FOOD & GIFT BAZAAR: **Friday, August 25 and Saturday, August 26.**
This AIR CONDITIONED, INDOOR AUGUST show at the Central Park Community Center, 1500 South Main Street, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 74012 has NO ENTRANCE FEE, lots of FREE parking and FREE Face Painting for the Kids. Tables and chairs will be available in the Community Center for visitors who want to sit down.
Food Vendors sell: Bundt cakes, decorated sugar cookies, gluten-free desserts, fudge, etc.
Craft Vendors sell: birdhouses, Raggedy Ann & Andy dolls, baby quilts, jewelry, soap, etc.
Gift Vendors sell: Scentys, children's books, collectible Santa's, kitchen towels, vintage patches, etc.
These are just a few things you will see at the show, it might be a good time to shop for the Holidays. If you want more information please feel free to contact me. Gretchen, organizer (918)964 9191, gnternational2603@gmail.com.

Biskinik

Announcement Guidelines

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.
Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.
News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows.
We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.
All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.
Mail to: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double-spaced. You must include an address and phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received. Faxed photos will not be accepted.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department would appreciate hearing from you at ext. 4028.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation. Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run in the following month.

Editor's note: Views and opinions in reader-submitted articles are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Choctaw Nation.

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL SESSION AGENDA

May 16, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
3. ROLL CALL
4. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Approve the Appropriation, Allocation, Commitment, and Obligation of Fiscal Relief Fund Monies Received from the United States Department of the Treasury under the American Rescue Plan Act.
 - b. Approve Rescission of CB-48-23, Funding for an Equity Investment in, and the Guarantee of a Line of Credit for, a Restaurant to be Located in Atoka, Oklahoma.
- 5) OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- 6) OLD BUSINESS
- 7) ADJOURNMENT
- 8) CLOSING PRAYER

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

June 10, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER
 2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
 3. ROLL CALL
 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session May 13, 2023
 - b. Special Session May 16, 2023
 5. WELCOME- GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - a. Veteran of the Month – Donald Brimage, District #9
 - b. First Language Speaker – Lillie Ott, District #9
 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - a. Angela Shalombisha – Individual Speaker – Functional Medicine Field
 7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 8. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Dispose of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment
 - b. Dispose of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
 - c. Approve Application for the FY23 Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services in Indian Country Grant
 - d. Approve Application to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing Grant FY23
 - e. Approve Application to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Service for the FY23 Community Connect Grant Program
 - f. Approve Funding for Capital for Development of Digital/Mobile Gaming
 - g. Request that the Secretary of the Election Board Establish Additional Voting Locations for the 2023 Tribal Election
 - h. Adopt Contingent Procedures for Mail-In Ballot Retention and Security
 9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 10. OLD BUSINESS
 11. ADJOURNMENT
 12. CLOSING PRAYER
 - 13.
- All council bills passed unanimously

Chahta Anumpa Aikihvna - July Language Lesson

Common Questions

Katimi ho/na- Why?

The interrogative word for 'why' is 'katiohmi ho' or 'katiohmi na'.
Con conversationally 'katiohmi' can be shortened to 'katimi ho' or 'katimi na'. 'Ho' and 'na' can be used interchangeably.

Katimi na tvamaha ish ia tuk?	Why did you go to town?
Katimi ho tvamaha chik iyo tuk	Why did you not go to town?
Katimi na chi nukowa?	Why are you mad/angry?
Katimi na impa ik chi bvno?	Why do you not want to eat?
Katimi ho chik impo?	Why are you not eating?
Katimi ho okla chi ponaklo tuk?	Why did they ask you?
Katimi na chi na yukpa?	Why are you happy?
Katimi na tvamaha ish ia chi?	Why are you going to town?
Katimi na ik chim vlhto-bo tuk?	Why did you not get paid?
Katimi ho okla aiyvla chi?	Why are they coming?
Vlla mvt katimi na yaya?	Why is that child crying?
Hattak mvt katimi ho kafi ikbvno.	Why does that man not want coffee?
Katiohmi ho ant chi pisa tuk?	Why did he/she come to see you
Katiohmi na chi hvshaya?	Why is he/she being sulky (to you)?
Katiohmi ho okla ant chi nowa tuk?	Why did they come and visit you?
Katimi na chi chukka okla abinachi tuk?	Why did they stay overnight at your house?
Katimi ho alikchi ish pisa?	Why are you seeing the doctor?
Katimi na chik talowo tuk?	Why did you not sing?

NOTES

OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Visits Choctaw Cultural Center
Our OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance children's language class visited the Choctaw Cultural Center on Saturday, June 17, 2023.

We were so happy to be given a special tour by Dr. Ian and Amy Thompson. The children enjoyed Mr. Luski's house and wanted to stay!
Yakoke to Chef Tanya and staff for accommodating our huge group.

Sherrie Stewart, OCTA President



Choctaw Nation Election Board

Second PUBLIC NOTICE of Open Voting Locations for the Choctaw Nation General Election 2023

To the Tribal Members of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 15, 2023
In accordance with the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance, adopted by CB-13-22, notice is hereby given.
Early Voting will be July 7th from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and General Election will be July 8th from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with Same Day Registration offered as an additional service to eligible tribal members to update their voter information.
Affiliated voters may choose to vote by mail or go to vote in person at any open voting location listed as such:

Council District 2 Choctaw Community Center at 1346 E Martin Luther King Dr, Broken Bow, OK 74728	Council District 3 Choctaw Community Center at 100 Railroad St, Tallhina, OK 74957
Council District 2 Choctaw Community Center at 3839 Battiest Pickens Rd, Battiest, OK 74728	Council District 3 Choctaw Community Center at 39618 N US Hwy 259, Smithville, OK 74957
Council District 8 Choctaw Community Center at 1304 West Victor, Hugo, OK 74743	Council District 3 Choctaw WIC Building at 501 West 1 st St, Heavener, OK, 74937
Council District 11 Choctaw Community Center at 3274 Afulloa Hina, McAlester, OK 74501	

Ballots for districts having an election will be released on Friday, June 16th. Ballots will continue to be mailed to new and voters with address updates through Friday, June 30th.
To check on the status of your Voter Registration, contact the Voter Registration Department at (580) 642-8600 or by email at VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com.
For more information about Choctaw Nation elections, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact the Election Board Secretary by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com or by phone at (580) 634-0679.
Approved by the Election Board on 6/14/2023
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/ELECTIONS

CHOCTAW VETERAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Are You a Choctaw Veteran?
Let us help guide you to the benefits and services that you have earned.

580-642-8451 | BIT.LY/CNO-VETERANS-ADVOCACY

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement and agriculture loans. The Choctaw Revolving Loan Program offers micro-loans, available for emergency home improvements and small businesses.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at (580) 924-8280 ext. 2161, ext. 2158 or toll-free (800) 522-6170.

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan
To Be Eligible to Apply:
- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
To Be Eligible to Apply:
- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

If you are interested in applying for a loan a representative will be available at the:

Crowder Community Center
July 14, 2023
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

ITI FABVSSA

Community Collaboration and the Making of the “Bok Abaiya: Practiced Hands and the Arts of Choctaw Basketry” Exhibit

After stopping for directions at the mercantile store in Wright City, a young Carolyn Bradshaw and her husband Ron arrived in front of a small house belonging to Laura and Wilsie Willie, two Choctaw rivercane basket makers. Although the pair of sisters-in-law only spoke Choctaw, they understood that Carolyn wanted to purchase rivercane baskets from them. The first basket that Carolyn bought from the duo was an elbow basket, a type of basket that she had not seen before. This moment in 1976 marked the beginning of a relationship that resulted in a large collection of rivercane baskets created by both Laura and Wilsie. Under Carolyn's care for many years, this collection is now the largest known collection of rivercane baskets made by the two Oklahoma Choctaw women. Some of these exquisite pieces from Carolyn's personal collection will be shown at the Choctaw Cultural Center in a new temporary exhibit, “Bok Abaiya: Practiced Hands and the Arts of Choctaw Basketry.” This month, we are sharing some stories from working with our community, who have helped to bring together the new exhibit that opens on July 22, 2023.

In December 2022, Iti Fabvssa wrote about the Choctaw baskets held at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. and how our community has been able to learn from those old baskets. After reading the article, tribal member Carolyn Bradshaw reached out to Historic Preservation and shared that she had a collection of Choctaw baskets. After a visit to her home, we were shocked to find such a large Choctaw rivercane basket collection in such pristine condition. Carolyn, who has been interested in baskets since she

was a young girl, began collecting baskets in college. With her husband Ron, a Cherokee citizen who was also interested in Native arts, Carolyn would attend the annual Cherokee National Holiday and make friends with the basket makers and buy from them. Carolyn recalled how a Cherokee basket maker once told her that it was good that she was buying baskets because their daughters were not going to be basket makers and that there would not be any more baskets. This stayed with Carolyn and instilled in her the importance of Native basketry.

Since she was Choctaw, Carolyn also wanted to collect Choctaw baskets. This led her to ask someone where she might purchase some; they suggested she go to Wright City. After their first meeting with Laura and Wilsie, Carolyn and her husband returned periodically, driving from their home in Tulsa to Wright City to purchase baskets from the two women. Carolyn never knew what kind of basket she might get until she got there. Despite the language barrier, the three ladies found a way to communicate as the delicious smell of beans cooking on the stove filled the house in the background. Over the years, Carolyn amassed a large collection of baskets made by the two. Her experiences working as a curator at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa taught her how to best care for the baskets. She even mentioned how she would worry about the baskets whenever she and her family went away on vacation since she could not afford to leave the air conditioner on to ensure that they were stored at a consistent temperature, as is the standard in museums.

Rivercane baskets, once kept in Choctaw homes due to their use in daily life for generations, are now difficult to find. Many of the existing baskets are held at museums all over the world, which presents a different set of challenges when it comes to borrowing and bringing them to display at the Choctaw Cultural Center. Not only is rivercane hard to find and there are only a few Oklahoma basket makers who work with rivercane, but not many older baskets survived into the present. While some rivercane baskets can be found tucked away in the corners of houses, Choctaw people often used their rivercane baskets until they broke. Sifter baskets, which helped to separate corn used in dishes like *tanchi labona*, were among the most frequently used; several such baskets in museum collections have broken parts due to use. In the home of Laura and Wilsie Willie, rivercane baskets used to fill their kitchen and front room. But the pieces they made did not stick around long due to people's interest in their baskets. Selling baskets quickly became a way for the two to make a living. Community members and collectors alike were interested in their baskets, so they had a steady stream of customers.

Laura Willie (formerly Williams) was the daughter of rivercane basket maker Fannie Battiest Wesley. In the early 1900s, Fannie and her family moved to Choctaw territory from Louisiana. Fannie brought with her the knowledge of Choctaw rivercane basketry that had been developed by hundreds of generations of Choctaw people. She taught her daughters, Laura and Elsie, how to make rivercane baskets. The two would make baskets throughout their lives and teach their own respective daughters, Rose Billy and Eveline Steele. Laura even taught her sister-in-law Wilsie, whom she lived with, how to make these baskets. Together, they would collect cane from stands near water and then strip the cane and weave baskets in their yard. Today, the grand-



Laura (left) and Wilsie (right) Willie with rivercane baskets that they made.

daughters of Fannie Battiest Wesley, Eveline and Rose have carried on the tradition of basketmaking by continuing to make and weave baskets as well as teaching the new generation of Choctaw basket makers. Both will have their baskets on view in the upcoming exhibit.

During our visit to Carolyn's home, she gave us a photograph that she had taken of Laura and Wilsie during one of her visits to Wright City. She mentioned that she wanted the descendants of the women to have the photograph. Later on, while collaborating on the exhibit with Laura's daughter Rose Billy, we gave her that photograph of her mother and aunt, which she was happy to have. In the process of putting together this exhibit, Carolyn also decided to donate the baskets she loaned to the Cultural Center's permanent collection. This donation and her conversations with the Historic Preservation and Cultural Center staff have greatly grown the Center's basketry collection as well as our knowledge of Oklahoma Choctaw basketry history.

By working with the Choctaw community to create the upcoming Choctaw basketry exhibit at the Choctaw Cultural Center, we have learned so much about Oklahoma Choctaw rivercane basket makers and how they have shaped the knowledge of our community today. Without them, other basket makers, and those whose names have been lost to history, we would not have the history and knowledge of Choctaw basketry that they worked throughout their lives to teach to the next generation. With the help of community members like Carolyn, Rose, Eveline, and the many other people who have contributed to the new exhibit, we are working to revitalize the traditional art of Choctaw rivercane basketry as well as innovate the form with different materials and mediums. We hope that if you have stories about Choctaw basketry and/or other Choctaw arts and culture, you would like to share them too.

The Choctaw Cultural Center's “Bok Abaiya: Practiced Hands and the Arts of Choctaw Basketry” exhibit opens on July 22, 2023, and closes on March 30, 2024. In this exhibition, visitors can view over 50 Choctaw baskets, 14 artworks by Choctaw artists, and various other items related to Choctaw basket weaving. For more on the exhibit, visit the Choctaw Cultural Center website, www.choctawculturalcenter.com.



Wilsie (right) and Laura (left) Willie outside of their home in Wright City. This photo was taken by Carolyn Bradshaw during one of many visits to their home to purchase rivercane baskets.

Keeping Our Heritage: Choctaw People, Life, and Kinship

From April 11 to October 14, 2023, “Keeping Our Heritage: Choctaw People, Life, and Kinship,” an exhibit of District Nine elder and registered Choctaw artist Carole Ayers' work, will be on display here at the Choctaw Cultural Center. Carole's watercolor paintings illustrate various aspects of Choctaw heritage and celebrate culture in its diverse forms. (Admission is complimentary for Choctaw tribal members and Choctaw Cultural Center Membership holders.)



IT'S A SCORCHER OUT THERE

THE CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER IS COOL

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

FASTPITCH SOFTBALL

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Registration Deadline: August 4, 2023

Mail Entries to:

Hoss Ward
13457 SE 202nd Rd. Talihina, OK 74571
or sign up online at choctawnation.com/labor-day

Team Name: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Mary Welker

Mary Welker, 87, passed away June 1, 2023.

Mary was born Oct. 30, 1935, in Pocola, Okla., to Esta Alice (Gregory) and Andy Pipkins.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Linda Pipkins; and brothers Gary Pipkins and Tom Pipkins.

Mary is survived by her husband Winford; daughter Connie Hancock and spouse Larry; son Dewayne Welker and spouse Debbie; grandchildren Allison Blankenship and spouse Justin, Matthew Welker and spouse Mikka; Shauna Himes and spouse Heath, Bradley Hancock and spouse Kelsey; and Ky Asher; great-grandchildren Hunter, Brayle, Laurel, Winston, Heaton, Hattie, Heston, and Hudson; sisters Melba Large and spouse Gary; brothers Dave Pipkins, Aaron Pipkins, Dan Pipkins and spouse Shirley, Kenny Pipkins and spouse Karen, and Gerald Pipkins and spouse Nancy; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Mallory Martin Funeral Home](#).

**Maudine Johnson**

Maudine Oakes Johnson, 95, passed away June 5, 2023.

Maudine was born May 18, 1928, in Frogville, Okla., to Frank and Ella (Richards) Oakes.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband William R. "Johnny" Johnson; daughter Donna Marie Dilbeck; brothers Homer Edward Oakes, Tommie Oakes, Henry "Man" Oakes, Edward "Judge" Oakes, and Paul Ray Oakes Sr.; sisters Goldie Juanita Oakes, Corrine Springs, Florence Higgins, Bealey Green, Janette James, and Frankie Yeley.

Maudine is survived by her son Ricky Dale Johnson and spouse Angela; grandson William Robert "John" Johnson II; along with a host of nieces, nephews, friends and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit [Miller & Miller Funeral Home – Hugo](#).

**Philip Blane Miller**

Philip "Flip" Blane Miller, 70, passed away May 26, 2023.

Philip was born April 21, 1953, in Phoenix, Ariz., to Frank Cody and Noweta (Jackson) Miller.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brother Johnny Miller.

Philip is survived by his wife Marcia Elaine Miller; children Stephanie Miller, Dakota Miller-Wheeler and spouse Ryan, and Kelsi Frost and spouse Stetson; grandchildren Harrison Cody Frost, Hudson Blake Frost, and Katelyn Harper Frost; siblings Mike Miller and spouse Cleta, and Colette Harper and spouse Dr. Ben; along with numerous beloved nieces and nephews; special acknowledgements Delores Prater, Gayla and Becky Cole, Ronda Holstine, and the entire El Adobe family.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brown's Funeral Home – Atoka](#).

**Sandra K. Michaelis**

Sandra K. Michaelis, 76, passed away June 2, 2023.

Sandra was born Dec. 28, 1946, in Tulsa, Okla., to Johnny and Betty (Anderson) McKelvey.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and daughter Tracy Michaelis.

Sandra is survived by her husband DeWayne; daughter Charlene Michaelis; and grandson Tyler Michaelis.

For the full obituary, please visit [Fitzgerald Funeral Home](#).

**Mary Frances Olive Wood**

Mary Frances Olive Wood, 91, passed away May 1, 2023.

Mary was born Aug. 20, 1931, in Antlers, Okla., to Thomas Jefferson Olive and Lillian Thelma Hudson Olive.

She was preceded in death by her husband Oliver Carl Wood Jr.; her parents; brother John Olive; and sister Bette Olive Wood.

Mary is survived by her children Vicky Belinda Wood and spouse Bill Trumbly, Carl Thomas Wood and spouse Diedra, and Julia Berry Wood and spouse Tim; grandchildren Lauren Ashley Wood Ames (Seth), Mary Elizabeth Wood Murphy (Cody), Krysten Berry Baker Longoria (Julian), and Joshua Ray Baker (Katy); great-grandchildren Andrew Thomas Ames, Emma Kate Ames, Rhett Hudson Murphy, Piper Berry Longoria, Pippa Mary Longoria, Ellie Mae Baker, and Mabrey Rae Baker; and sisters Sharon DeLoache and Deborah Moran.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

**Joe Alfred Folsom**

Joe Alfred Folsom, 96, passed away May 4, 2023.

Joe was born April 4, 1927, in Pueblo, Colo., to Joe Schley and Sarah Ruby Folsom.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Ruby Jean; wife Virginia Frost; and grandson Charles Joseph McCrea.

Joe is survived by his children Cynthia Cortese, Pamela Decker, and Daniel J. Folsom; numerous grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Cope Memorial](#).

**Eldonna Carrie Carney**

Eldonna Carrie (Nelson) Carney, 74, passed away June 8, 2023.

Eldonna was born Feb. 4, 1949, in Okla. City, Okla., to Theodore and Carrie Dona (TeKubbe) Nelson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; children Jonthan William Allen, Michelle Allen, and Eric Dewayne Allen; great-grandson Da'mani Josue Brooks; and siblings Naomi Moore, Arnold Nelson, Cavin Nelson, and Marvin Harvick.

She is survived by her daughters Elizabeth Camp and Salomon Pedraza, Charlotte Cooper, and Gina Allen McGehee and spouse Garth; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; siblings Nathan Nelson, Uhla "Shady" Nelson, James Nelson, and TR Nelson Jr.; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of many dear friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brown's Funeral Service – Atoka](#).

**Fredia Louise Markham**

Fredia Louise (Vaile) Markham, 96, passed away April 8, 2023.

Fredia was born June 11, 1926, in Wright City, Okla., to Beulah (Herndon) and Amos Vaile.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and husband Oval Markham.

Fredia is survived by daughters Nancy and Jeanette; son Darryl; grandchildren Tammara Kay, Jason, Brian, Tim, Christine, and Eddie; 13 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

For the full obituary, please visit [Gardner Funeral Home](#).

**Leslie Cusher**

Leslie "Les" H. Cusher, 82, passed away May 5, 2023.

Les was born Feb. 24, 1941, in Idabel, Okla., to Leslie and Martha Jane (Crapo) Cusher.

He was preceded in death by his wife Mary (Brock) Cusher; his parents; and brother John M. Cusher.

Les is survived by his son Aaron and spouse Becca; granddaughter Anna Cusher; sister Phyllis Cusher; and several nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

**Lola Fay Ferebee**

Lola Fay Ferebee, 83, passed away Jan. 22, 2023.

Lola was born Aug. 28, 1939, in Beachton, Okla., to Elvey and Mamie Mowdy Shaw.

She was preceded in death by her husband John Ferebee; her parents; brothers Ronnie Mowdy, Perry Mowdy, and Jimmy Mowdy; and sisters Mallie Smelser and Kay Mowdy.

Lola is survived by her siblings Andy (Tannie) Mowdy, Sue Ash, Leonard (Jeannie) Mowdy, and Frankie (Tony) Sunserland David Mowdy; her children Dan (Kathy) Boyd, Bobby (Doreen) Boyd, Brenda (Jerry) Miller, Jeff (Leslie) Boyd, Andrea Evans, and Terry (Sarah) Ferebee; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

**Sharon Gail Deal**

Sharon Gail (Wickson) Deal, 49, passed away May 20, 2023.

Sharon was born May 10, 1974, in Tahihina, Okla., to David "Dave" Wickson Jr. and Shirley (Noah) Wickson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother David Wickson; sister Veanna Wickson; and grandson Bailor Jones.

Sharon is survived by her son Kyle Dewayne Martin; daughter Kara Renee Jones and spouse James; significant other Cecil Hare; sisters Jackie Wilson and significant other Tony Jackson; Rhonda Wickson and significant other Donald, and Rachel Battiest and spouse Frederick; along with a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other family members, friends and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit [Miller and Miller Funeral Home – Hugo](#).

**Susie Ann Wallace**

Susie Ann Wallace, 80, passed away Feb. 28, 2023.

Susie was born Jan. 11, 1943, in Stratford, Okla., to Lee Poe and Sadie (Lewis) McDonald.

She was preceded in death by her husband Roven Edmond "Bobby" Wallace; her parents; daughters Sharion Cruz and Karion Douglas; son Brian Wallace; grandsons Richard Jones and K.C. Taylor; granddaughter Lucinda Brown; great-grandson Killian; and five siblings.

Susie is survived by daughters Louella Thomas and Bobby, Mary Taylor, and Frances Lewis; sons Edward Eugene Wallace and Evangeleen, and James McArthur Wallace; nephew Dale McDonald; several grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [DeArman Funeral Home](#).

**James William Cox**

James "Jim" William Cox, 85, passed away April 4, 2023.

Jim was born Aug. 12, 1937, in Durant, Okla., to Johnnie Laverne and James Arvin Cox.

He was preceded in death by his wives Carol Diana Cox and Ann Dorothy Cox; his parents; sisters Susan and Mary Yvonne; and granddaughter Amanda.

Jim is survived by his wife Carol; son James Cox and spouse Jennifer; daughter Shelley Ford and spouse Tim; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; siblings Billy Cox, Lucretia Wood and spouse Pat, Martha Kay Wright, Sheila Diane Arnett and spouse Jack, Jerry Don Cox and spouse Toni, and Barbara Ann Mozeyko and spouse Mark; along with countless friends and relatives.

For the full obituary, please visit [Sayland Funeral Home](#).

**Ruth Lucial Morris**

Ruth Lucial Morris, 78, passed away March 23, 2023.

Ruth was born March 16, 1945, in Higgins, Okla., to Mandy (Owensby) Way and Lester Battles.

She was preceded in death by her husband Johnny Morris; her parents; numerous siblings; and grandson-in-law Nathan McLaughlin.

Ruth is survived by her daughters Denise Carson and Joann Nichols Rogers and spouse Jeff; grandchildren Bridget Nipp and spouse Michael, Jessica McLaughlin and partner Timmy Murray, John Dillon Carson and fiancée Amanda Sananikone, Caitlin Carson, Bryson Nichols and partner Chelsey Cawley, Joshua Nichols, Tayler Gurley and spouse T.J., and Lindsey Rogers; great-grandchildren Kylee McLaughlin, Kadence McLaughlin, Kolton McLaughlin, Kennedy Murray, Michael Nipp II, Lucase Nipp, John Davy Carson, Jules Nichols, Silas Cawley-Nichols, and Savannah Cawley-Herrin; brothers Bill Battles and spouse Ramona, and Claude Battles and spouse Earleine; sister Clara Luker; numerous nieces and nephews; and other relatives and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit [Evans and Miller Funeral Home](#).

**Peyton Michael Sims**

Peyton Michael Sims, 18, passed away April 17, 2023.

Peyton was born Dec. 12, 2004, in Okla. City, Okla., to Eric and Jamie (Gross) Sims.

He is survived by his parents; sister Paige; grandparents Wayne and Carolyn Sims, Lea Ann Sims, and John and Mary Gross; aunts and uncles Wes and Sarah Sims, and Tony and Rebekah McBride; and cousins Charlotte and Ellery Sims, and Ben McBride.

For the full obituary, please visit [McNeil's Funeral Service](#).

**Frankie Lee Derryberry**

Frankie Lee Derryberry, 70, passed away Jan. 11, 2023.

Frankie was born April 26, 1952, in Treece, Kansas, to Thomas and Frances Cole Derryberry.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and siblings Faye Derryberry, Tommy Harold Derryberry and Beverly Derryberry.

Frankie is survived by daughters Suzanne Delap and spouse Anthony, and Carrol Lee; granddaughter Rebekah Monroe and spouse Kyle; grandsons Elliott Delap and Montgomery Delap; and siblings Kaye Derryberry and Steven Derryberry.

For the full obituary, please visit Jones [Harkins Funeral Home](#).

**Robert L. Pate Sr.**

Robert "Bob" L. Pate Sr., 82, passed away May 12, 2023.

Bob was born April 22, 1941, in Tuskahoma, Okla., to Kenneth Pate Sr. and Rena Mae (Harvey) Pate.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son Robert Pate Jr.; and siblings Kenneth Pate, Johnny Pate, Jack Pate, Beatrice Anderson, and Lavada Phipps.

Bob is survived by his sons Rickey "Rick" Pate and Tina Ramsey, and Rodger Pate; grandchildren Isabelle Caruso and Alex Hammer, Loni Jackson, Ashton Pate, and Priscilla Kirkes and spouse Austin; great-grandchildren Braden Pate, Dacen Pate, Kynlee Pate, Brecken Pate, Kylie Kruswicki, Dawson Kirkes, Sawyer Kirkes, Payten Kirkes, and Suttyn Kirkes; life-long friend Terry Pate; sister Lahoma Hotubbee; and several nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Chaney-Harkins Funeral Home](#).

**Mary Jane Jefferson**

Mary Jane Jefferson, 80, passed away May 18, 2023.

Mary was born Oct. 3, 1942, in Honobia, Okla., to Ray D. and Adeline Johnson Ludlow.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sons Franklin Jefferson and Jerry Jefferson; daughters Theresa Colbert and Beverly Jefferson; brother Orin Ludlow; grandchildren Thomas Jefferson, Rindi Franklin, and Damian Cash Matthews; son-in-law Allen Willis; and brother-in-law Benny Tushka.

Mary is survived by daughters Ramona Willis, and Phyllis Roberts and husband Elias; brother Lolin Ludlow; sister Sarah Ludlow; 16 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bowser Funeral Home](#).

**Obituary Policy**

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw Nation tribal members only and are free of charge.

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

Family members/individuals may submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspaper through a funeral home service.

Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws. Therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice.

Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. The online issue of the Biskinik will contain links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik
PO Box 1210
Durant OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com



Brown turns 97

Georgina "Jacks" Brown of Ardmore, Oklahoma, turned 97 on April 26, 2023. Happy birthday, Georgina!

Ince among seven Indigenous student athletes at AIAHOF Induction Ceremony

The American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame (AIAHOF) is an organization that recognizes the American Indian athlete who has excelled in his or her sport on a national level. This year's inductees are Johnny Bench (Choctaw) and Sam Bradford (Cherokee).



The ceremony was held on April 28 at the First American Museum in Oklahoma City. In an effort to inspire young American Indian athletes, the Board of Directors for the AIAHOF has provided seats at the induction ceremony for seven high school American Indian athletes.

Kaleb Ince (Choctaw) of Lindsay, Oklahoma, was one of the students nominated.

"Congratulations to Kaleb Ince (Choctaw) for being one of the seven selected to attend. Lindsay Public Schools is very proud of you." – Lindsay Public Schools

Maverick Dean Leonard



Proud parents Alexis Stam (granddaughter of Edwin Gail Dean) and Kevin Leonard are happy to announce the birth of their son, Maverick Dean Leonard.

Born 10 weeks early on March 19, 2023, he has had an extended stay in the NICU at Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, Utah. Maverick was born weighing 3 pounds, 15 ounces and 16 1/4"

long. He is his parents' first child and grandchild for both sets of grandparents. Little Mav is growing quickly and is expected to come home soon.



Smith turns 91

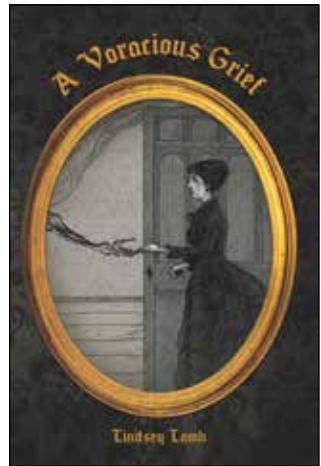
E. George Smith celebrated his 91st birthday on May 2, 2023. George was born in Erick, Oklahoma, in 1932, the tenth of 14 children of Dora Mae Moss Smith and Joel Hinton Smith.

He attended schools in Lebanon and Madill. George served in the US Air Force before marrying Martha Brandon Smith in 1954.

They reside in Wichita Falls, Texas and have 3 sons, 8 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

George's remaining siblings are Floye Stewart of Marietta and Delnia Crum of Robson Ranch, Texas.

Lamh announces new book



As someone who suffers from chronic pain, Lindsey Lamh's writing explores the harsh landscape of a trauma-marked life. She doesn't shy away from asking scary questions and giving words to doubt.

A devout Anglican, Lindsey enjoys symbolism in art and literature. Like a stained glass window, Lindsey believes symbolism is a means of representing life's painful experiences shot through with beams of hope. Her stories are dark, but they're

stories filled with comfort for the kinds of people who've been through a lot, who often suffer in silence.

"A Voracious Grief" will release on October 1, 2023. It's a gothic psychological horror novel about a brother and sister who are grieving, unaware that a monster lurks in their mansion. It's about relational tension, but more than that, "A Voracious Grief" is a book about the purpose of pain and how we evolve beyond our traumas.

Akins celebrate 50 years



Phil and Anita Akin of Ada, Oklahoma, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 11.

The high school sweethearts were married in Ada, Oklahoma, on June 11, 1973. They lived for over 30 years in Oklahoma City and returned to their hometown of Ada to enjoy retirement.

They love spending time with friends, their Church, and family, including their seven grandchildren. The couple is celebrating by going on a trip to Colorado and taking family photos in the Church they were married in and currently attend.

Mckinney sets personal records at Legion of Iron powerlifting meet



On April 8, 2023, 11-year-old John Mckinney participated in the Legion of Iron SPF open powerlifting meet in Mamoa, Louisiana.

John set his all-time personal records on all three lifts: bench, squat and deadlift. He squatted 242 lbs, bench pressed 106 lbs, and deadlifted 276 lbs with a total of 624 lbs.

His bench press and deadlift attempts set the SPF National records for pre-teens 165lb weight division. John has powerlifted for three seasons and is looking forward to his fourth season as a pre-teen lifter.



Howerton receives honorable mention

Vivian Howerton won an honorable mention at the Northeastern State University art competition at the 21st Annual Juried Art Exhibition.

Her award was in the drawing category, and her work was titled "No. One Dad."

Vivian is a Choctaw tribal member, a sophomore student at Northeastern, and a 2021 graduate of Poteau High School. She is the daughter of Bobbi Gillham (JOM Director for Poteau Public Schools) and Troy Howerton.



Veca graduates from UNT Dallas College of Law

We are pleased to announce the Law School graduation of Desiree Veca. Desiree graduated from UNT Dallas College of Law, maintaining her position in the top 10% of her graduating class with a 3.6 GPA.

She is a Senior Editor of On the Cusp Law Review, a member of the Board of Advocates, and a national ABA Moot Court Competitor for the school.

While in law school, Desiree served as a term law clerk for the Fifth District Court of Appeals in Dallas, as well as a research assistant, focused on Native Nations in Energy Transition. Desiree volunteered for Oklahoma Indian Legal Services and the Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center.

Prior to law school, Desiree graduated from the University of Oklahoma and dedicated her career to working in the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault. She is excited to continue that good work after graduation.

Davis chosen as member of All-American Varsity Squad



Natalie Davis is the daughter of Travis Davis of Ardmore and Beth and Robert Brower of Marietta.

She is the granddaughter of Glenn and Lois Davis. Natalie was chosen as a member of the All-American Varsity Squad for Cheer, performing in the 80th Memorial Pearl Harbor Parade in Waikiki, Hawaii, in 2021 and then again in the London New Years Day Parade in London, England, this year.

Like her dad and Grandpa Glenn, Natalie is proud to be Choctaw! She would like to thank God and all her family and friends for supporting her along the way.



Strickland turns 90

Walter Floyd Strickland, proud Choctaw.

Originally from Leflore, Oklahoma recently turned 90 years old.

Strickland is pictured with his blanket from Chief Batton.

Thompson and Youree donate Choctaw flint knapping knife



Gunnar Thompson of Poteau, Oklahoma, a Health and Human Performance major at Emporia State University, along with his grandfather, Dr. Gary Youree of Heavener, Oklahoma, contributed Dr. Youree's Choctaw flint knapping knife to Laps4Landon, a benefit supporting cystic fibrosis.

Gunnar will graduate with a Bachelor's degree in May 2023 and further his education to become a Physical Therapist. Dr. Youree is a retired dentist of 46 years. Both are tribal members of the Choctaw Nation.



Hammon is a State Champ

Jacelyn Hammon is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and is representing well. She is currently the #1 high jumper in Oklahoma, 5'8", and is the number one 400-meter sprinter in class

4A and 10th in all State classes, with a time of 59.18.

She is a junior at Plainview High School Ardmore, a member of NHS and is on the Superintendent's honor roll.

Jacelyn is now the Class 4A State Champion in the High Jump and the 400M. 400 time 58.02 seconds High Jump 5'6."



Amos turns 96

The Amos family celebrated Louise Amos' 96th birthday at Red B's in Idabel.

Mike Amos' family from Broken Bow and Nancy Williams' family from Oklahoma City were there to celebrate. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship.

"We are thankful and blessed for Louise's life," said Nancy Williams.



Howard is State Champion trap shooter

Landyn Howard of Valliant recently won the State Championship in Trap Shooting in El Reno and was named the most

outstanding shooter in his division.

Landyn, an 8th grader at Valliant Middle School, shot a perfect 25 for 25, then defeated a student from Woodward in the championship round by two shots to win the title in the junior division.

The son of Rachel and Tommy Howard, Landyn is Valliant's second-ever State Champion trap shooter.

A special thank you to the Choctaw Wildlife Youth Camp, where he first experienced this sport last summer. Congratulations, Landyn!

Humphrey-Hernandez graduates from the University of Texas Permian Basin



Austin Humphrey-Hernandez graduated from the University of Texas Permian Basin on May 13, 2023, with his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

He will be working for Mewbourne Oil Company as Production Engineer.



Bennington youth celebrate Choctaw Heritage Day

Bennington Child Care/Headstart Partnership celebrated May's CNO Heritage Day with a Choctaw Code Talker presentation.

Solomon Bond Louis and Ben Hampton both resided in the area, and focus was placed on Code Talker descendants as well.

Each child was awarded a Junior Code Talker certificate for participating in the hands-on learning demonstration. Steps to Early Literacy shared the book: Toby and the Secret Code.

The School of Choctaw Language helped by providing a hands-on Choctaw Language experience.

Two of the staff from the School of Choctaw Language are members of CCTA and are descendants of code talkers. We also enjoyed social dancing and a delicious meal!

We want to say thank you to everyone who made this educational experience a great success.



Rector graduates from San Diego State

Lyndsey Nicole Rector graduated from San Diego State University with a degree in Liberal Studies with Emphasis on Elementary Education. She graduated with a 3.8 GPA Summa Cum Laude. She plans on earning her master's degree in counseling.

Lyndsey is the great-granddaughter of Joel and Mabel Duggins, the granddaughter of Russel and Glenna Duggins, and daughter of Traci and Bobby Rector.

We want to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for all the financial help Lyndsey received.



Rankin graduates from Texas State

Emily Rankin graduated Magna Cum Laude from Texas State University on May 11, 2023, with a Bachelor of Science in Communication Disorders.

She will pursue a Master of Science in Communication Disorders, also at Texas State University, beginning in the fall of 2023.



STUDENT SCHOOL AND ACTIVITY FUND

APPLICATION IS NOW OPEN
JUNE 1 THROUGH AUGUST 31

Offers an annual \$100 grant to purchase school supplies and clothing for Choctaw students possessing a tribal membership card.

ELIGIBILITY

- Choctaw tribal members who attend school. The SSAF Program will verify each student's membership status.
- Must be enrolled at an accredited school or daycare to receive funds.
- Home school students are eligible to receive the grant.
- Must be at least 3 years old at the time an application is submitted
- Students attending a day care, head start, or home school are eligible.
- If the student is between ages 19 to 21 attending high school, additional school enrollment documentation will be required.
- High school students do not qualify after graduation.

APPLY IN THE CHAHTA ACHVFFA MEMBER PORTAL

JONES ACADEMY GRADUATING CLASS OF 2023

Jones Academy proudly announces its graduating class of 2023.

Founded in 1891 by the Choctaw Nation, Jones Academy is a no-cost American Indian boarding school located four miles north of Hartshorne in Eastern Oklahoma. The school is nestled among 540 acres of rolling pastures and trees at the foot of the Pochontas Mountains in Oklahoma's Ouachita Mountain range.

Approximately 200 students attend grades 1st-12th each year from tribal nations across the United States, in particular our neighboring communities in Oklahoma. There is no fee for students to attend Jones Academy. Admission includes travel, housing, and meals.

Jones Academy and its partners are transforming learning experiences for Native youth by helping them discover life pathways and cultivate a sense of cultural identity.

Education at this American Indian boarding school isn't only about book knowledge. It's also about the life lessons that create mature, balanced, responsible and compassionate adults.



Kaylyn Renee Porter, age 17, is the daughter of Cody and Wanda Porter of Lindsay, Okla. Kaylyn is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She is the maternal granddaughter of David and the late Barbara Webster. She is the paternal granddaughter of Patty Porter. Kaylyn was an active member of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America at Hartshorne High School. In the evenings this past spring, Kaylyn helped with the elementary school children as a librarian assistant at Jones Academy. She has a passion for reading. Her plans include getting a four-year degree at East Central University and then a master's in Library Science.



Tushka Humma "Tuck" Watson, age 18, is the son of Lucinda Williams of Albuquerque, NM and Curtis D. Watson of Talihina, Okla. Tushka Humma is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He participated in Future Farmers of America and 4-H at Jones Academy. His hobbies include lifting weights and boxing. He is enrolling at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in Okmulgee, Okla. in the fall, where he will pursue a career in Electrical Construction.



Elijah Charles Witcher, age 17, is the son of Lisa Hall of Durant, Okla. Elijah is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He was an officer of the United National Indian Tribal Youth organization at Jones Academy. Elijah represented Jones Academy at the American Indian Science and Engineering Conference in Palm Springs, Calif., this past fall. Elijah is exploring his career options at this moment and is interested in Safety Management.

Due to space limitations, the Biskinik does not run submitted high school graduation or GED announcements. Jones Academy is owned and operated by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and the Adult Education is a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma program; this is why these graduates are featured in the Biskinik.



Sanders graduates from WOSC

Rheyllyn Sanders graduated on May 12, 2023, from Western Oklahoma State College in Altus, Oklahoma. Sanders earned her associate degree in kinesiology and exercise science. She plans to transfer to Southwestern Oklahoma State University to obtain her bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences and further her education, eventually becoming a physical therapist.



Three McCarters graduate

Mother Lindsay McCarter and daughters Katlyn and Emily McCarter graduated within three weeks of each other with three levels of degrees. Lindsay graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University with a Master of Education with educational technology emphasis on May 5, 2023. Katlyn graduated from SOSU with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics on May 6, 2023. Emily graduated from Tishomingo High School on May 19. Lindsay dreamed of taking this picture with her daughter for two years. The photo was taken by tribal member Morgan House-Curtis, daughter of Michelle and Jody House.



Harper earns master's from SNU

Madalyn Paige Harper graduated on May 13, 2023, with a Master of Science in health and human performance. Not only is she graduating. She completed her master's in one additional year after receiving her bachelor's in exercise science in Spring 2022. Madalyn is currently teaching fifth grade in the Putnam City School District and was a full-time collegiate athlete running a 5th year of NCAA DII for Southern Nazarene University while finishing her master's, graduating with honors, maintaining a GPA of at least 3.8 or higher with 70 credited hours. This resulted in her receiving the Distinguished Scholar-Athlete Award for the Great American Conference. Madalyn was offered an Assistant Cross country/Track coaching position collegately this upcoming fall at SNU and continuing to teach for Putnam City schools. Lastly, Madalyn is a first-generation college graduate in our family.



Young graduates from UA

Alexa Cheyenne Young graduated from the University of Alabama with a Bachelor of Science and Nursing Degree on May 6, 2023. Alexa is the daughter of Tracey Tolbert and Timothy Young of Hurler, Mississippi and the granddaughter of Barbara (Noah) and Buford Tolbert of Ocean Springs, Mississippi and great-granddaughter of the late Peter (Sonny) Oklahoma and the great-great-granddaughter of original enrollee late Emiline Colbert Noah of Hugo, Oklahoma.



Duffy graduates from SMU

Weston Duffy, son of John and Stacy Duffy and grandson of Donna Goswick, graduated from Texas Christian University on May 13, 2023. Duffy double majored in finance and accounting with a minor in financial technology and has been accepted into Southern Methodist University's Masters of Science in Finance program.



Engler graduates from EOSC

Derrick Lee Engler of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, graduated from Eastern Oklahoma State College on May 5, 2023. Engler earned an Associate of Applied Science degree. He was awarded Outstanding Nursing Student for the McCurtain County Campus in Idabel, Oklahoma. "Thank you, Choctaw Nation for assisting me with the RN program," said Engler.



Griffith graduates from LU

Amber Griffith of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in university studies from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. Her ultimate objective is to secure a classroom teaching position for the upcoming 23-24 school year.



Medcalf graduates from USAO

Alexandra Delaney Medcalf graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma on Saturday, April 29, 2023, earning a Bachelor of Science in Biology with minors in chemistry, psychology and liberal arts. She received the School of Science and Physical Education Faculty Association Outstanding Graduate Award, Alumni Association Distinguished Graduate Award and Baccalaureate Research Education Program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, which begins this summer. Medcalf wishes to thank the Choctaw Nation for supporting her educational endeavors throughout her life.



Samuel Cecil Kaniatobe, is the son of Samuel Kaniatobe of Ardmore, Okla. and Amber Franks of Oklahoma City. Samuel is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He first enrolled at Jones Academy when he was in the third grade. Samuel was a member of the Hartshorne High School band for six years and placed second at district competitions this year as a baritone soloist. He was voted Band King by his peers in 2023. During his years at Jones Academy, he was a member of the school's STEAM Program and the robotics Botball team. Samuel is also an accomplished and gifted artist. He is registered to attend classes at Haskell Indian Nations University this coming fall. He has a desire to be a Native American artist.



Corbin Macario Tomas, age 18, is the son of Eduardo Macario Tomas and the late Rose Macario Tomas of Philadelphia, Miss. Corbin is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. While at Jones Academy, Corbin was an integral part of the popularity and success of the Jones Academy's stickball team. He also enjoys recreational basketball. In February, Corbin lost his mother to cancer while he was a student at Jones Academy. Corbin displayed phenomenal courage by asking to return to Jones Academy to finish his studies. Corbin has registered to attend classes at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. He also has a desire to serve his country in the armed forces.



Gandara graduates from UNT

Angelica Gandara graduated on May 12, 2023, from the University of North Texas (Denton) with her bachelor's degree in business management, with a focus in human resources & marketing and a minor in psychology. Angelica is the daughter of Belinda and Christian Holder of Irving, Texas. Angelica is the oldest of nine children and is an exceptional role model to her eight younger siblings - Kayden, Belle, Jocelyn, Marilyn, Emma, Jesse, Chelsea and Lauryl. Other close family members that are incredibly proud of Angelica's outstanding academic accomplishments are cousins Meagan and David Estrada and family and aunt Paula Ruiz and family of Durant, Oklahoma, her uncle Johnny Torres and family, also of Irving, Texas, as well as countless other family and friends. Angelica is pictured proudly wearing her Choctaw Nation stole and cord with her UNT cap and gown!

CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

QUILT SHOW APPLICATION

Friday, September 1, 2023
Drop off entries 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Tribal Membership Building
Tvshka Homma Council Grounds

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CALL 580.642.8011

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

WAKAYA PROGRAM

ARE YOU READY TO RISE UP FOR YOUR HEALTH!

If you are a Choctaw Tribal Member between 14 and 19 years old and live in the Choctaw Nation reservation, you are eligible to join Wakaya! What does Wakaya include?

Who can join:

- Choctaw Tribal member
- Ages 14-19 years
- Live in Choctaw Nation

Weekly monthly group classes on Choctaw cultural arts, leadership, storytelling, environmental restoration, and traditional health practices.

- Fun cultural outdoor activities
- 2 overnight outdoor camps with other teens (Culture Camp & Trail of Tears Camp)
- Lead a community service project & more...

What do you receive!

- Health & leadership skills
- Fitness tracker
- Athletic shoes
- Up to \$345 in Amazon/Walmart gift cards

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
WAKAYARISINGUP.ORG
833.265.4289

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

2023 **CHOCTAW NATION LABOR DAY 5K**

SEPTEMBER 2, 2023
7:00 AM

Registrations **only** available online at <https://chocta.ws/ld-5k>

No on-site registrations will be taken.

The first 400 to complete the run will receive a commemorative t-shirt.

WE'LL SEE YOU AT TVSHKA HOMMA!

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Outreach at the Beach

It's more than just swimming at Outreach at the Beach. Games of beach volleyball, important program information, food and fellowship were offered at the 2023 Outreach at the Beach held on June 7 at Sardis Lake in Clayton, Oklahoma.



(Left to Right) Haydn Daniels of Idabel and Zachary Hargrove of Wilburton enjoy the water slide.



Drax Huddleson and Kyler Wright wait in line at Outreach at the Beach 2023.

Photos by Christian Toews



Colton Watson has some fun in the sun at Sardis Lake.



Azlyn Avila-Willis shows off his sand construction skills.



Brandy Vasquez helps keep people hydrated at Outreach at the Beach.



(Left to Right) Aiyonna, Donna and Lyelee Sisk get ready to go swimming at Sardis Lake.



(Left to Right) Khloe and Audrey Gonzalez enjoy lunch under the shade trees.



Jennifer Davidson helps hand out bags at Outreach at the Beach 2023.



People from all over the Choctaw Nation attended Outreach at the Beach to enjoy the festivities.

Memorial Day



From left are Thomas Williston, Councilman for District 1 of the Choctaw Tribal Council and Council Speaker; Robert Karr, Councilman for District 11 of the Choctaw Tribal Council and Honor Guard member Clare Harvey.

Photos by Charlie Clark



Choctaw Royalty perform The Lord's Prayer in sign language.



The Choctaw Honor Guard leads a procession to the Choctaw Cemetery.



Several Choctaw council members were on hand to honor veterans and their sacrifices during Memorial Day services at the Choctaw Capitol Grounds at Tvshka Homma.

NEW DAILY PROGRAMMING OFFERINGS FOR THE SUMMER!

MAY 8, 2023-SEPTEMBER 2, 2023

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE VISIT: [BIT.LY/CCC-LEARNING](https://bit.ly/ccc-learning)

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM | 833-708-9582

GRAZING LEASE AUCTION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023 1:00 PM
CHOCTAW HQ BIG ROOM 1 & 4

PLACE YOUR BID ONLINE NOW!
ONLINE BIDDING CLOSES ON AUGUST 7, 2023, AT 11:59 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT **MELANIE MCCANN**
580.642.8988
MMCCANN@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Scan to place your bid now.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

NEW EXHIBIT

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The Trail of Tears: Why we remember

The Choctaw people were forcibly removed from their homeland 193 years ago. From 500-mile bike rides to memorial walks, descendants of the people who made that fateful journey remember the strength and sacrifices of their ancestors in their own way.

The Choctaw were the first of the southeastern tribes to experience Removal.

The Trail of Tears for the Choctaw people began years before the first steps of physical removal.

Coordinated efforts of the U.S. government to claim Choctaw tribal lands east of the Mississippi River started as early as 1801. From 1801 to 1820, Choctaws ceded 25,000 square miles of homelands to the U.S. government.

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek negotiations in 1830 were full of deceit and coercion. Choctaw leaders were told their remaining homelands would be taken from them whether they signed the treaty or not.

Choctaw leaders were warned that if the treaty was not signed, the United States would seize Choctaw lands, the U.S. military would destroy any resistance and the Choctaw people would be moved west by force.

According to the United States government, Choctaws would be destroyed.

With no options left, the Choctaw leaders were forced to sign the treaty to secure any lands at all.

The Choctaw Nation was forced to give up the remaining one million acres of the homeland and move to Oklahoma.

"We go forth sorrowful, knowing that wrong has been done. Will you extend to us your sympathizing regards until all traces of disagreeable oppositions are obliterated, and we again shall have confidence in the professions of our white brethren."

– Chief George Harkins

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek became the largest land cession treaty signed to date by the U.S. government and was the first removal treaty put into effect under the Indian Removal Act.

On May 28, 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act.

This law relocated Indian nations westward to unsettled lands in what are now the states of Kansas and Oklahoma. Among those forced to move were the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and Chickasaw tribes, still known today as the Five Civilized Tribes.

Choctaws were organized into three districts in their homeland. When it came to the Removal, most Choctaws moved with local leaders who decided which district leader to follow, resulting in numerous waves of Removal.

For Choctaws, the Trail of Tears would last for more than 70 years, with groups being removed from the Choctaw homeland to Indian Territory up until 1903. The biggest group made the journey in 1830-1834. Some Choctaws remained behind in their homeland, opting to live under discriminatory Mississippi law.

The U.S. government had agreed to provide plenty of food for the journey, transportation by wagon or steamboat and food for up to one year after settlement in the new lands.

Poor communication and coordination of Removal efforts by the U.S. government combined with cost-cutting, delays, severe winter weather and disease made the journey immeasurably different from what was promised.

Approximately 15,000 Choctaws made the trip between 1831 and 1833. One-quarter to one-third perished from disease, starvation, exposure and murder. They called it a "Trail of Tears and Death," a name that would later be used for the Removal of other southeastern tribes.

The appalling conditions, broken promises by the U.S. government and the loss of leaders, elders and children demoralized the Choctaw people.



The 2023 Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Cycling Team after completing the 500-mile ride from Mississippi to Oklahoma. (Left to right) William Nachand, Tina James, Colton James, Arianna Myers, Dr. Lena (Nicki) Eagle Road, Teresa Eagle Road, Billy Eagle Road III, Steve Clark, Scott Lambert, Beckah Boykin and Jana Boykin.

The last wave of the Choctaw Trail of Tears occurred in 1902 and 1903. Some of these individuals were brought to Ardmore, Oklahoma, by Euro-American speculators who intended to sell them into slavery. Many died from mistreatment. Today, the surviving descendants of this Removal have "Mississippi Choctaw" on their CDIBs.

During and after the Trail of Tears, survivors faced food shortages and disease.

Nevertheless, by 1834 Choctaws were working hard to create order and life in Indian Territory.

Choctaws built communities and farmsteads, adopted a constitution and reestablished tribal government. They built churches, schools and even a new capitol.

Between 1834 and 1860, the Choctaw Nation was the largest economic power in Indian Territory, with thriving cotton farms and cattle ranches.

Using the U.S. government's meager treaty annuity to set up infrastructure helped the new Nation prosper.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was founded by people who were forcibly removed from their homelands in the southeast.

Times of political turmoil and strained government relations were part of the Choctaw journey. The Trail of Tears, however, was a defining moment for the Choctaw people.

Thankfully, this was not the end of the story for these newly relocated people.

The Choctaw Nation has overcome many difficulties and challenges to grow into a thriving, self-governed economy it is today.

Each year a group from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma remembers those faced with forced removal by riding bicycles along the route of the Trail of Tears.

The cycling team comprises Choctaw men and women who want to honor their heritage. These cyclists come from all over the country to ride this route.

In 2023, the cycling team road the 500-mile journey in seven days.

The cyclists ride the Trail of Tears route and feel the terrain their ancestors were forced to walk. They stop and learn about the history of the Trail of Tears and see places of significance along the way.

Teresa Eagle Road has helped organize this ride for many years and says the history is significant to the journey.

"It is a very important tool to learn how and where it started between the government and our tribe. The location where the treaties were signed, the location of cemeteries where our people died along the way, military roads, Village Creek National Park, and the sunken trails from the north to the south side," she said.

According to EagleRoad, she has been personally impacted by riding this ride many times.

"Broken treaties and our way of life is how our ancestors showed us the path of our success. Our ancestors have endured



The Trail of Tears Cycling Team takes a moment to reflect on their 500-mile journey from Mississippi to Oklahoma.

unthinkable challenges, but their resilience has overcome the loss of family along the way, and they have built a foundation for the next generation. I personally am happy to have learned that faith, family, endurance, and strength tied us together as one," said Eagle Road.

Another way that the Choctaw Nation remembers the Trail of Tears is by hosting an annual memorial walk at the capitol grounds in Tuskahoma, Oklahoma.

The event includes a ceremony, cultural demonstrations, Live Village and vendor booths.

Participants are invited to walk around the capitol grounds while remembering the difficulties faced by those forced to make a much longer journey in the Removals.

In 2023, around 600 people participated in the Trail of Tears walk.

Although Removal transpired long ago, the memory of the sacrifices the Choctaw people were forced to make will never be forgotten, thanks to their descendants.

For more information on the Trail of Tears, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/> choctawnation.com or the Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant, Oklahoma.



Riders, escorted by Tribal Police and led by Steve Clark, make their way toward Durant.



Participants take a "walk to remember" during the 2023 Trail of Tears Memorial Walk on May 20 at Tvshka Homma.



The Trail of Tears Cycling Team finishes their ride at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters.



Members of the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board pose for a picture with Tribal Council at the 2023 Trail of Tears Memorial Walk at Tvshka Homma. YAB members are a new crop of tribal members working to keep the memory of their ancestors alive.



APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Apply at choctawnation.com/chahtaachvffa

Choctaw Nation STAR Program

OUTPATIENT SURVEY
WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

We need your feedback! To improve the quality of service to our patients, we will send surveys to your email address after a visit to our outpatient clinics. The survey is short and completely anonymous. Only the collection of results will be given to the clinic team. If you would like to speak to someone about your experience, you can note that on the survey.

To make sure we have your correct email address, please update it by calling the registration staff at your clinic, when visiting at your next appointment, or using the myCNHSA app. (download the app from Google Play or Apple Store)

Yakoke!

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Extreme heat expected this summer

By Chris Jennings

The official start of summer is June 21 this year. However, many across the U.S. began experiencing summer-like temps earlier than normal. The National Weather Service (NWS) issued a risk of hazardous temperature statement from June 20-22. The report said near record-breaking temperatures and high heat index values could be possible over eastern Texas and Louisiana.

According to The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). From January to May, temperatures were above average across much of the eastern U.S. and parts of the Northwest.

Florida ranked warmest on record, while Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland each recorded their second warmest January through May. Another 22 states had a top-10 warmest year-to-date period.

Hot summers are nothing new if you live in Oklahoma or the surrounding areas. This summer, NOAA and citizen scientists will map the hottest parts of Oklahoma City and 17 other communities in 14 states nationwide as part of the NOAA Urban Heat Island (UHI) mapping campaign.

In a press release about the UHI campaign, NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad said, "Gathering this type of environmental intelligence helps communities measure their hottest places to develop strategies to reduce the dangerous effects of heat. Community by community, we're working to create a Climate-Ready Nation that is resilient in a changing world."

The UHI mapping campaign addresses extreme heat, the number one weather-related cause of death in the U.S. for the last three decades. Urban heat islands, areas with few trees and more pavement that absorbs heat, can be up to 20 degrees hotter than nearby neighborhoods with more trees,

grass and less black asphalt.

While the Choctaw Nation reservation is predominantly rural, many of its tribal members live in the metropolitan areas where these heat islands exist.

The difference in temperature in these areas can lead to inequities. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), some communities in the United States, particularly those that are low-income and with higher populations of people of color, have neighborhoods with higher temperatures when compared to nearby neighborhoods in the same city.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 700 people die from extreme heat yearly in the United States. These deaths occur in both urban and rural areas like the Choctaw Nation.

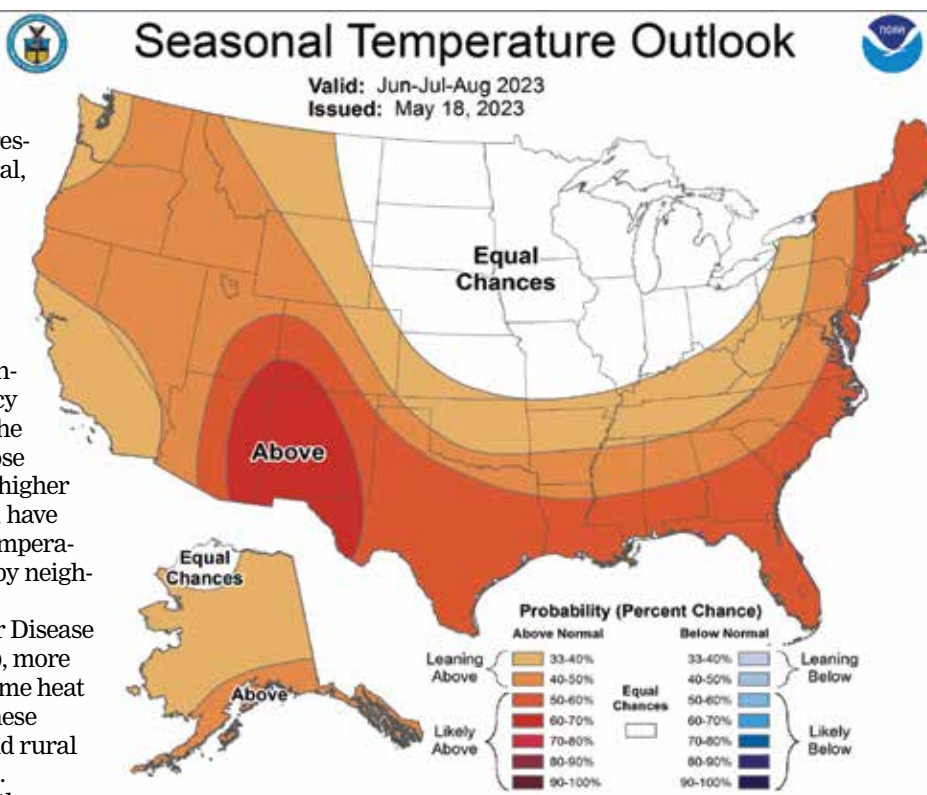
Anyone can be at risk from the health effects of heat, but some are more vulnerable, including pregnant women, people with heart or lung conditions, young children, elders, athletes, and people who frequently work outdoors.

People with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are also more susceptible to extreme heat. Damage to blood vessels and nerves often accompanying diabetes can affect your sweat glands, so your body can't cool as effectively.

A diabetic elder with high blood pressure is at an even higher risk. Common high blood pressure medicines, like diuretics, can also cause dehydration.

The CDC offers the following tips to stay safe during periods of high heat.

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible.
- Do not rely on a fan as your main cooling source when it's really hot outside.
- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- If your doctor limits the amount of fluids you drink or has you on water pills, ask them how much you should drink during hot weather.
- Don't use the stove or oven to cook—it will make you and your house hotter.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Do not engage in very strenuous activities and get plenty of rest.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.



NOAA predicts that many U.S. States will most likely experience a hotter than average summer. The seasonal temperature outlook from NOAA shows large portions of Oklahoma and North Texas to be leaning above average normal temperatures and large portions of Texas and New Mexico to be likely above normal temperatures.

If you frequently work outdoors or are an athlete getting your workout in after work or school, there are some things to watch for to help identify heat-related illnesses (HRI). The three main types of HRI are heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. They can occur when individuals are exposed to extreme heat.

The CDC says signs of overexposure to excessive heat conditions can begin with heat cramps. If you experience heavy sweating with muscle cramps during intense exercise, you should stop and move to a cool place, drink water or a sports drink and wait for the cramps to go away.

Signs of heat exhaustion are heavy sweating, cold, pale, clammy skin, fast, weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, tiredness or weakness, dizziness, headache and fainting. If you or someone around you are experiencing these symptoms, you should move to a cool place, loosen your clothes and put a cool, wet cloth on the body.

Signs of heat stroke are a body temperature that's 103°F or higher, hot, red, dry, or damp skin, fast, strong pulse, headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and losing consciousness or passing out. If you see someone with these symptoms, call 911 immediately, as heat stroke is a medical emergency. After that, move the person to a cooler place and help lower their temperature with a cool cloth.

The average temperature across the U.S. for July 2022 was 2.8 degrees higher than normal, making it the third hottest July in 128 years.

Temperatures for July aren't known yet, but knowing more about heat safety can help keep you and your family safe during extreme heat events.

Hearty Chicken Salad

- 1 can (12 ounce) chicken, drained
- ½ cup onion, diced OR 1 tablespoon onion powder
- ½ cup apple, diced
- ¼ cup celery, diced (optional)
- ¼ cup grapes, sliced into small pieces (optional)
- ¼ cup pecans OR walnuts, chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise (optional)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper (optional)

Preparation

1. Combine chicken, onion, apples, celery, grapes, nuts, mayonnaise, and black pepper.
2. Serve with lettuce leaves to make lettuce wraps or on whole grain bread or crackers.

NOTE: You can use the same recipe for tuna salad, just take out the fruit and add 1-2 diced boiled eggs.



HEPATITIS C PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.CDC.GOV/KNOWMOREHEPATITIS



Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

July 5	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 7	Atoka	8:30 p.m. - 12 p.m.
July 7	Coalgate	12:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
July 11	Stigler	By Appointment
July 12	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 14	Crowder	By Appointment
July 18	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 19	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 20	Wiburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 21	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
July 21	Coalgate	12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
July 25	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 26	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 28	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Call 580-642-6007 for an Appointment

Food Distribution Headlines



By Chase Ward

Did you know that the Food Distribution Program has food demonstrations in all five locations each month? In April, we were privileged to have Desiree from the Growing Hope Program out to our Markets in Broken Bow and Antlers to assist us with our food demos.

We prepared a spaghetti sauce with pureed Choctaw sweet Potato Squash to give the sauce added flavor and nutritional value. It turned out delicious and we are looking forward to working with The Growing Hope Program more.

The Growing Hope program shares seeds and informational resources with tribal members to aid them in producing healthy, sustainable cultural food. Find out more information about the Growing Hope Program or the Food Distribution on the Choctaw nation website. You can also find the Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Program on Facebook.

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

MARKET HOURS

Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.

July 2023

All markets open weekdays, July 3-26

Closed: July 4, 27, 28 and 31

Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

ANTLERS 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443
Food demo July 11

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
Food demo July 20

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
Food demo July 19

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716
Food demo July 18

POTEAU 106 B St., 918-649-0431
Food demo July 13

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS

LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
Antlers 580-298-3161	Every Tuesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
Atoka 580-889-5825	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tuesday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Monday - Friday (except 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
Durant 580-920-2100 ext 83852	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Heavener 918-974-1820	Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Hugo 580-326-9707	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Idabel 580-286-2600 ext 4113	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
McAlester 918-423-6335	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Poteau 918-647-4585	Mon, Wed & Friday Tuesday & Thursday	8am - 4:30pm 8:30am - 5pm
Smithville 580-244-3289	2nd Thursday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
Spiro 918-962-3832	Thursday & Friday (3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays of the month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
Stigler 918-967-4211	Monday - Tuesday (the first two Wednesdays)	8:30am - 4:00pm
Talihina 918-567-7000 ext 6792	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Wiburton 580-642-7588	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
Mobile Van 580-380-5679	Dates & times vary due to weather & travel (Service in Boswell, Coalgate and Clayton)	

Choctaw Nation Health Services

HEALTH FAIRS IN 2023

Learn about health services offered by Choctaw Nation.



Scan the QR code, or visit chocta.ws/health-fair for dates and locations throughout the year.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

CNNSA.COM



LEAD AWARENESS CURRICULUM

Join us for lead awareness curriculum sessions to learn about lead, its impacts, and actions to protect communities from childhood lead exposure.

DATE & LOCATIONS

- July 10 | Durant Community Center
 - Understanding Lead at 10am
 - Train-the-Trainer at 1pm
- July 11 | McAlester Community Center
 - Understanding Lead at 10am
 - Train-the-Trainer at 1pm

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.EPA.GOV/LEAD/COMMUNITY-LEAD-AWARENESS-SESSIONS

Choctaw Nation Environmental Protection Service

Project Pelichi hosts seventh annual STEAM Camp

By Christian Chaney

Choctaw Nation’s Project Pelichi WILL, Warriors in Learning and Leadership, hosted their seventh annual STEAM camp from June 7-16.

The camp offered a variety of STEAM activities for students, including workshops, college trips and tours, cultural enrichment and more.

There are two sections for the camp, Junior High, grades 5-8, and High School, grades 9-12.

The camp is open to all students, though it has been predominately Native students who participate.

STEAM camp is different from other Choctaw Nation camps, as they take rubriced applications, counselor and teacher recommendations, grades, and letters of support to qualify for the camp.

Joy Tribbey, Program Manager and Director for Choctaw Nation runs three federal programs for Jones Academy. She says this camp is “the cream of the crop for Native students.”

The STEAM camp has formed a plethora of partnerships, some of which include NASA, Auburn University, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Tulsa, Northeastern State University, and Oklahoma State University.

According to Tribbey, they always try to help students connect with these universities and the tribe.

“One good thing about this camp is we help them tie in connections. If they are looking for scholarships or something, we are always a resource for them. We connect

them to other departments in the tribe,” said Tribbey.

Each camp kicked off day one with team-building activities, such as STEAM challenges, games, and activities focused on getting to know each other.

Junior camp, which is three days long, commenced with students traveling to Kiamichi Tech in McAlester, where they participated in forensic science, criminal justice and basic nursing health sciences seminars and activities. They ended the day with a slime war and cookout.

On the final day of the camp, Choctaw Nation’s Cultural Center staff presented and conducted activities for art day.

This particular section of the camp started after a vast majority of students in recent years said in their exit interviews that they were interested in learning more about their culture.

High School campers began their week by visiting OSU-IT and participating in culinary arts and animation design, ending the day with fun intermural activities.

On day two, Shelbie Vaught with Valliant Schools presented the NASA curriculum.

Each student received an Artemis rocket to launch and take home. Students ended their day in Jones Academy’s esports lab, competing and participating in graphic design activities.

On day three of the camp, students and staff members traveled to the University of Oklahoma, where Native Nations hosted them.

Students toured the campus,

National Weather Center and the Tom Love Innovation Hub.

On Wednesday night, Lunar Sooners, OU’s Astronomy Club, took the students stargazing.

The camp concluded with Choctaw Nation’s Cultural Center staff presenting and conducting activities for art day.

Former camper, Cordell Palmer, spent five years attending the camp and has now returned for his second year as a staff member.

“The best part about camp was the exposure, going to universities every single summer, learning from different professions,” Palmer said. “We did everything from drones to personality tests, engineering and coding. The exposure helped me narrow down what I wanted to do one day.”

Palmer was nominated by Choctaw Nation leadership through the STEAM camp for the AISES, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Sequoyah award and won, making him a lifelong member of AISES.

According to Palmer, he is motivated to return to the camp each year as a staff member because of everything the camp did for him.

“I want to return everything they did for me and be here for these students and help the next generation figure out what they want to do one day and foster their love for the sciences and engineering,” said Palmer.

Currently, Palmer is studying political science at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and plans to attend law school and work for Choctaw Nation’s Legal Department.



Photo Provided

Above: Campers test out their Artemis rockets during the 2023 STEAM Camp. Below: Project Pelichi campers listen attentively to a lesson during STEAM Camp.



Photo by Christian Chaney

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

On July 15, 2015, the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (HACNO) was the only tribal nation selected by the President of the United States and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to participate as one of 28 ConnectHome Pilot communities. The goal of the ConnectHome Program was to “bridge the digital divide” that existed within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s service area. This program was created to offer (HACNO) tenants residing in Affordable Rental units, Independent Elder and 202 PRAC elder units access to the internet and training services. The objective is to give them the ability to better their lives by taking schooling online, applying for jobs, and exploring all the Internet offers. This is all to achieve self-sufficiency through utilizing this essential free resource.

The ConnectHome team has developed an educational program using the following:

- Internet Safety and Security – Group Training
- Basic Digital Literacy – One-on-One Training
- Choctaw Nation Home site – Social Services and applications for additional services
- Facebook – Reconnecting Families
- ABC Mouse (for children)
- KANO (computer kits)
- EveryoneOn – Washington, DC (partner)
- MyCNHSA – My Choctaw Nation Health Authority-Pharmacy Refill/ Appointment Scheduling
- Choctaw Nation YAB (Youth Advisory Board)

The ConnectHome Program started with a goal of 35% connectivity in the first year, with 379 total units. HACNO now has 1165 units that the ConnectHome program is working with. ConnectHome currently has 1076 units connected to the Internet. That is 92% connectivity with new sites currently under construction. The program currently has 852 children connected to the Internet. Out of 1165 units, 901 are connected with fiber. That is 77% connectivity to fiber.

Choctaw Nation Stay Connected

CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Housing Authority f t i y s

CNO honored with HR Innovation Award

DURANT, Okla. (June 7, 2023) – The Choctaw Nation Human Resources department has been named the winner of the HRDUS 2023 Innovative HR Team award. HRDUS is a highly respected online journal for Human Resources Directors in the United States. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was also recognized by the publication last year as one of the six Best Places to Work.

HRDUS’s second annual Innovative HR Teams 2023 report recognizes organizations which break boundaries to move the HR profession forward by taking progressive approaches to recruitment, introducing new technology, or rolling out ground-breaking reward and recognition strategies.

Noted in the report, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is using software and technology to create a seamless experience throughout the associate life cycle.

This includes a Total Rewards Department which administers innovative programs such as a personalized concierge service connecting associates to all their medical needs and Bluetooth-enabled devices to monitor conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion software is also used to improve job postings and remove unintentional biases from job descriptions.

Choctaw Nation also focuses on attracting and developing top talent, connecting employees to on-demand information, and crafting total rewards packages which prioritize employees’ wellbeing.

“The big piece for us has been making sure that we connect people with meaningful work, meaningful relationships, and a visualized career path based on individualized career paths,” HR executive officer Gary Burrus, said.

“Our Human Resources Department takes great pride in providing extraordinary service to our current and prospective associates,” Chief Gary Batton says. “We are honored that HRDUS has selected us for this award. It is additional confirmation the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is truly one of the best places to work.”




Photo by Christian Toews

WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By John Worthington

Summer has arrived, and the longer days provide opportunities to be outdoors and work on improving wildlife habitats on our lands. Implementing methods to increase food and cover benefits all wildlife species but can have a significant impact on upland birds. Maintaining a diverse range of habitats that meet the needs of upland birds throughout the summer season is key to ensuring a healthy population later in the year.

Upland birds require nesting, brooding, and protective cover during the summer months to successfully hatch and raise young. The nesting cover consists of native grasses 6–8 inches in height, such as little bluestem or broomsedge bluestem, to provide adequate concealment from predators. After hatching, brooding cover consisting of bare ground with annual and perennial forbs such as broomweed, ragweed, and croton is necessary to allow young birds to travel and find food. A protective cover is used for loafing and escaping predators. Woody plants such as sumac, blackberry, buckbrush, and sand plum provide dense overhead screening but are open at ground level to allow birds to move freely. The protective cover is also essential in regulating temperature and providing shade on hot summer days. Additionally, the diversity of cover types produces a range of food sources needed by birds throughout the season. Adult birds rely upon seeds, insects, leaves, and fruits as primary food sources. Young birds requiring a higher energy and protein food source rely specifically on insects. The fresh green growth found in brooding cover attracts insects such as grasshoppers and caterpillars that are abundant and can be easily captured.

There is a variety of management options that can be implemented to produce or enhance food and cover types. Several popular and multipurpose methods include prescribed fire and disking. Prescribed fire stimulates regrowth of food producing plants, increases bare ground by removing plant litter, and controls invasive species such as eastern redcedar. The timing of prescribed fire for upland bird habitat should be conducted from January through March or September through October. Disking creates natural food plots by allowing the seeds present in the soil to germinate and produce fresh resources. The timing of disking and the following precipitation will determine the response of plant species and abundance. Additionally, disking around woody vegetation such as sand plum can stimulate thickets to increase in size and density.

For additional information on methods to improve habitats in your area, please reach out to us at wildlife@choctawnation.com. Enjoy the summer season and spend time in Oklahoma’s great outdoors!

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

LABOR DAY
CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

SIGN UP NOW TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!

Preregister your team for Labor Day at
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/LABOR-DAY

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!



Wilson Roberts, Storyteller

DURANT, Okla. – DURANT, Okla. – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s new series of the ‘Together, We’re More’ campaign titled ‘Choctaw Proud’ features 18 tribal members from different careers, locations and walks of life, making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond. This month Choctaw Nation spotlights tribal member and Southeastern Oklahoma native Wilson Roberts.

Born to Choctaw parents in Southeastern Oklahoma, Roberts learned to speak only Choctaw, but at the age of five, he was removed from his mother and sent to boarding school, where he was abused for speaking that same language.

“Going right into school, I didn’t know a word of English, and because of that, they really punished us for speaking our language, and without somebody explaining to us that we are not supposed to speak our language, we just continuously got punished for speaking our language until such time as I realized why I was getting spankings — not spankings, beatings, actually,” Roberts said.

Roberts and his fellow Native schoolmates endured other forms of abuse as well.

“Growing up at the school, I remember a lot of hardship. When we took showers, we used those bristle brushes that you scrub walls with. They tried to change our skin colors, I guess. We were brown when we went in, but when we came out, we were pink,” recalls Roberts.

At twelve years old, Roberts ran away from the boarding school after one particularly severe punishment. He managed to find work on a farm and avoid the social workers for an entire year.

When the social workers eventually caught up with Roberts, he was sent to another school where he was promised funds for clothing, shoes and supplies, but those dollars never arrived, and Roberts had to leave school again after his first year. He never returned.

“In my era, my age group, that’s what happened to our Choctaw people. A lot of those people that attended the boarding schools, they went through basically the same thing. I always say that because of that, we hesitate to speak our language in public because of what we went through. For many years, I had to look around, even though I was a grown person. It was something you always did at school. You look around before you speak your language, so that you don’t get beat on,” said Roberts.

Through all the bad, however, Roberts maintains that there were some good things to come out of his boarding school experience. “It made me stronger. It made me realize different things, different ways,” he said.

Finding work after leaving school was a challenge. Roberts was too young to be considered for labor, but he was a hard worker, so some farms allowed him to stay for work. He worked on farms from Paris to Lubbock, Texas, until he was old enough to join the military.

“After I got in the service, I realized I didn’t really have the academic education that I really needed,” said Wilson. An uncle living in New York suggested that Roberts get a dictionary to help him understand English better. His uncle also told him to read everything he could get his hands on to improve his language skills.

“Basically, I kind of educated myself while I was in the service,” he said.

In his second year, the military began requiring a high school education or high school equivalency in order to continue on. Roberts passed his GED exam on his first try.

In 1962, his military service commitment was up, and he went to work in the oil fields until a new relocation program piqued his interest. In 1964, he moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he worked in the second largest library in the world under the mentorship of librarians who helped Roberts continue his education.

In his own words, “Cleveland was not the place for me,” and he left in 1965. Eventually, he went to work for the Army & Air Force Exchange Service in Dallas, Texas.

In Dallas, Roberts volunteered for a Native American organization in the area, which gave him the opportunity to attend dances and ceremonies throughout North Texas and Oklahoma, but it was through his career with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service that he encountered many other cultures and ways of life across the globe.

Roberts began working with other Native Americans at Ft. Hood to share their tribal traditions with others throughout the area and even overseas.

“I got an assignment in Heidelberg, Germany, and because of the little things we had done in the Dallas and Ft. Worth area and Ft. Hood, like going dancing and stuff like that, when we went to Germany, we realized the military boys and military personnel, men and women, needed some kind of organization to look to for help,” said Roberts.

As a manager at the Heidelberg PX, he began to invite other Native Americans to spend time with their group, but fellow Natives weren’t the only ones interested in Indigenous culture. The German people wanted to learn more about Roberts and his friends, and before too long, the Native organization was traveling to Italy, England and other parts of Europe to



Choctaw Nation Photo

Tribal elder Wilson Roberts uses his Choctaw pride to stay physically and mentally fit by participating in dances and other cultural activities. Learn how he teaches others to find wellness through tradition and storytelling.

share Native American culture with others.

“That’s how we began to get into dancing. We helped each other to acknowledge our own traditional ways and try to bring it out to each other and kind of get together to have a little celebration every time,” Roberts said. Nearly 100 people would attend these get-togethers every weekend, no matter where they held them.

When asked what he would say to someone who wanted to learn more about Native American culture, Roberts said, “I would tell the people to be respectful of every nation’s ways. Don’t be going out and trying to say, ‘This is the way to do it; this is how we do it at home.’ Just go with the flow and mainly be respectful and friendly. Make friends and just talk in general, you know.”

After 25 years with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, Roberts retired, but he continued traveling across the U.S., Canada and Europe through the Army’s Morale, Welfare and Recreational (MWR) program.

Roberts is proud to represent the Choctaw Nation and share the history and stories of the tribe with others.

“A lot of times, people ask me to do the invocation, and I do the invocation in the Choctaw language because that’s how I relate to these people as part of being Choctaw,” he said.

Because of Roberts’ travels and storytelling,

others are taking notice of things going on in the Choctaw Nation as well. The facilities, services and programs Choctaw tribal members have access to have set a good example for tribes across the U.S. that want to offer similar resources.

In addition, Stanford University wanted to recognize the loss of Native elders by honoring a person who works to pass on traditional knowledge and customs. Roberts was chosen among all the nominees to be the Honored Elder and traveled to California to accept the award in May.

Roberts certainly faced his fair share of challenges in his 80 plus years, so in parting, he had this bit of advice to offer anyone who is struggling:

“I always try to tell the people, regardless of what nation or regardless of where I’m at, when I get a chance to speak, is to learn to respect yourself. Whatever happens in your life, learn to respect yourself, and you will learn to respect all of God’s creations.”

Each month the Choctaw Nation will release short stories of tribal members like Roberts and how they exemplify being ‘Choctaw Proud.’

Visit togetherweremore.com to learn more about how the Choctaw Nation is making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond.

Oklahoma Legislature overrides Stitts veto of tribal regalia bill

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP, May 25, 2023) — The Oklahoma Legislature on Thursday overrode Gov. Kevin Stitt’s veto of a bill that would allow students to wear Native American regalia during high school and college graduations.

The state House and Senate easily cleared the two-thirds threshold needed to uphold the measure, which takes effect July 1 and had strong support from many Oklahoma-based tribes and Native American citizens.

It would allow any student at a public school, including colleges, universities and technology centers, to wear tribal regalia such as traditional garments, jewelry or other adornments during official graduation ceremonies. Weapons such as a bow and arrow, tomahawk or war hammer are specifically prohibited.

Stitt, a Cherokee Nation citizen who has feuded with many Oklahoma-based Native American tribes throughout his two terms in office, vetoed the bill earlier this month, saying at the time that the decision should be up to individual districts.

“In other words, if schools want to allow their students to wear tribal regalia at graduation, good on them,” Stitt wrote in his veto message. “But if schools prefer for their students to wear only traditional cap and gown, the Legislature shouldn’t stand in their way.”

Stitt also suggested the bill would allow other groups to “demand special favor to wear whatever they please at a formal ceremony.”

Lawmakers also overrode vetoes of several other measures, including one adding experts on Native American health to a wellness council and another allowing for the existence of the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority, the state’s Public Broadcasting Service affiliate.

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. thanked the Legislature on Thursday.

“I hope Governor Stitt hears the message that his blanket hostility to tribes is a dead end,” Hoskin said in a statement. “The



Photo Provided

Dakota Williams (Seminole/Choctaw) proudly wears his Choctaw tribal regalia for his kindergarten graduation.

majority of Oklahomans believe in respecting the rights of Native Americans and working together with the sovereign tribes who share this land.”

Kamryn Yanchick, a citizen of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, was denied the opportunity to wear a decorated cap with a beaded pattern when she graduated from her high school in 2018.

Being able to “unapologetically express yourself and take pride in your culture at a celebration without having to ask a non-Native person for permission to do so is really significant,” said Yanchick, who is now a Native American policy advocate.

A Native American former student sued Broken Arrow Public Schools and two employees earlier this month after she was forced to remove an eagle feather from her graduation cap prior to her high school commencement ceremony.

Article by Sean Murphy, Associated Press. Follow Sean Murphy on Twitter: @apseanmurphy.

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July 2023

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Biskinik Mission Statement:
To serve as the source of information for Choctaw Nation tribal members by delivering community news through a variety of communication channels.

UPDATE REQUIRED FOR THOSE WITH SOONERCARE COVERAGE

The Oklahoma Healthcare Authority is now requiring all SoonerCare recipients to update their information to continue coverage.

Contact a Patient Benefit Coordinator at your local Choctaw Nation Health Clinic to update your information and avoid termination or lapse in coverage.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

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