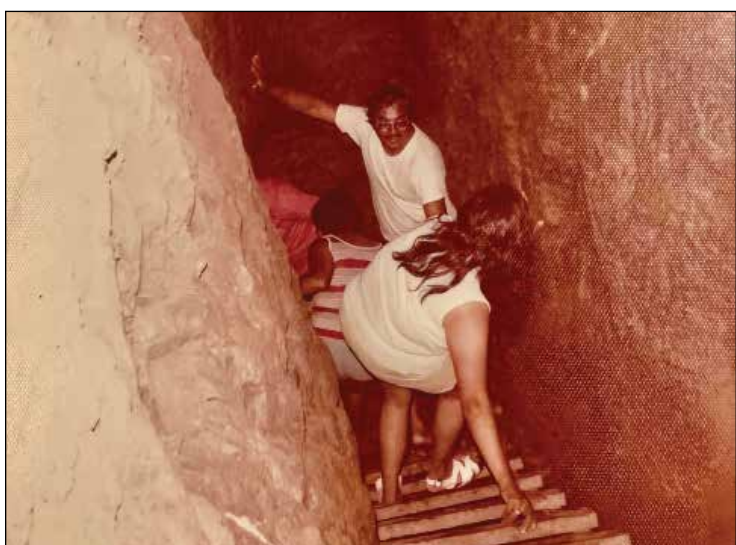




This collage includes photos from the 1970s and 1980s during the Choctaw cultural revitalization movement. Dancers include the Okla Humma Chahta Hiltha and the Broken Bow American Indian Youth Council.

For more information on this movement, check out the "Dancing to reconnect" story on page 14 of the October 2010 issue of the Biskinik, which can be found in the Biskinik Archives at <https://www.choctawnation.com/biskinik-archives/>.



Remembering the Choctaw cultural revitalization movement

By Shelia Kirven

A cultural revitalization movement led by Choctaw tribal members is responsible for bringing lost Choctaw traditions back to Oklahoma.

It began in the 1970s with Presbyterian youth and their families visiting Mississippi to study Chahta dance, stickball, beading and other traditions. The group returned to their roots to explore the deep culture of the past, bringing back traditions practiced generations ago by their ancestors.

Reverend Gene Wilson

Presbyterian minister Rev. Gene Wilson retired in 2005 but has wonderful memories of taking Choctaw youth and their families on yearly trips to the Mississippi Choctaw Fair, a week-long celebration of Choctaw culture.

He obtained a Presbyterian Faith and Identity grant and administered a needs assessment to determine the congregations' needs. The overwhelming response was to learn more about Choctaw culture.

Wilson traveled to Mississippi on the first trip with two other staff members, John Bohanon and Levi Samuel, to organize trips for the youth.

According to Wilson, when they opened the trips up to others, they had tremendous responses from the young people and their families. Wilson remembers talking to a lady about early Choctaws and their rituals.

According to Wilson, the woman said, "We don't talk about that; we don't talk about that at all."

Wilson said the traditions were kept by older people but weren't shared with younger generations.

"The church did caution about dancing, and that carried even to the point of Choctaw dances," said Wilson.

By the second and third years, the group took a van and a school bus to fit everyone who wanted to go.

The Presbyterian grant partially funded the excursions, but the local churches raised money for the trips. According to Wilson, the Mississippi Choctaws always helped with arrangements.

"They were open and enabled us to participate," said Wilson.

Upon returning from the trips, they intended to do activities among themselves. However, they began getting invitations from within the communities to share their knowledge.

"The Choctaws themselves, I think, were renewed and began to form a new source of identity of who they always had been, and I think that's how the

older people and the church people received the young people who did the dances, to begin to receive them as an expression of visual, but also internalized identity of who we are as a people," Wilson said.

One thing that was brought back from the trips was making traditional clothing.

Wilson remembers Helen Walton of Walmart coming to Idabel and enabling the Idabel Walmart to stock the clothing, needles, threads, ribbons and even hats they needed to make traditional clothing.

The group used the clothing for presentations, but some even wore it outside the functions. Eventually, tribal leadership started wearing shirts that reflected the culture.

The group also began participating in stickball events and taking week-long trips to Dwight Mission in Sequoyah County, Oklahoma, to play against Cherokee Nation players. They were even invited to Canada to sleep in a teepee and participate in tribal dancing.

Other groups formed as the youth grew up, and they carried out the traditions they had learned years before. Some participated in dance groups and became powwow dancers, traditional clothing makers and artists.

For Wilson, the most important thing resulting from the trips was internalizing their own identity.

"It's not an individual identity. It's the group Choctaw identity," said Wilson.

It makes him proud to have been part of the revival of bringing Choctaw culture back, but he gives credit to the youth.

"The little ones should deserve all the credit," Wilson said.

The Billy Family

Teri Billy and Charles Battiest were college students who became interns under the leadership of Gene Wilson, their minister with Choctaw Presbyterian Larger Parish.

With a focus on youth ministry and activities for the youth, they began going on the Mississippi trips in the second year.

"The L.A. riots had just occurred a few years before, and the stand-off at Wounded Knee created a heightened awareness of cultural identity and cultural awareness," said Teri. "Re-learning our culture was in the midst of the social and cultural change that was occurring."

Teri's husband, Curtis Billy, often reflects on his and Teri's youth.

"Presbyterians were more into the

social and educational aspect of ministry as well. So, we benefited from just growing up in that system," said Curtis.

At the time, many churches in the area wanted to focus on just the gospel and not social activities.

"The Presbyterians were different and more liberal in that sense. So that's the kind we grew up in," Curtis said. "We knew we were Choctaws; we have a language, we did church activities, but they realized when they got around others like Plains Indians, we didn't have any dances or those types of things that are part of us, that we haven't revitalized in a while since statehood."

During that time, civil rights movements were happening, as well as the occupation of the American Indian Movement. College campuses were demanding more accountability and non-traditional education.

"That was kind of the mood, and it just spilled over into our Native world," said Curtis. "The benefits that came out of that, there were several grants available by corporations and companies, and educational colleges started providing scholarships beyond what the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) was providing for Indian Ed."

According to Teri, when Native high school students graduated, they were told they were not college material and were encouraged to go to trade schools. The BIA started giving large grants to Native American students under pressure and protest, which is how many in that age group had the opportunity to go to college.

At the time of the cultural revival, Curtis was a senior in college and knew about data analysis and needs assessments when the trips to Mississippi were being planned.

"That prompted the needs assessment, and the kids wanted to gain more of their Choctaw identity, including culture, heritage dance, stickball, these things that we didn't do anymore," Curtis said.

According to Curtis, in Mississippi, they were beginning their revitalization with the Choctaw Fair. The Choctaws there still had remnants of those who did the cultural activities, but they were scattered.

"So that's where Gene and his staff concentrated on planning with that tribe to explain what we were about and trying to revitalize our program and relearn things that had been lost," said Curtis.

The Mississippi Choctaws scheduled dignitaries to meet with them and had top dance people teach them.

"We spoke the same language," Curtis

said. "They told us our dance instructions in Choctaw because they didn't know how to explain it in English."

Teri took notes, listened and interpreted, as she had been taught to read and write in Choctaw as a young child.

Curtis took photographs and made recordings of oral histories for the youth to study.

"We learned the dances, at least 10 or 12, but we weren't good at any of them. It takes practice to become proficient at it, but we at least knew dance steps and what the meaning on the surface was," said Curtis. "To me, I was looking at the cultural implications within the dance process, so I captured all that."

The Billy family went on the Mississippi trips for about ten years, taking their children as they came along.

According to Teri, Rev. Wilson started an organized dance group of adults and children. The group would perform at places like the Owa Chito Festival in McCurtain County.

Eventually, Curtis took a position in Miami, Oklahoma, with the Indian Arts and Crafts Program.

He was then hired at Broken Bow Schools in 1974-75 as a community liaison counselor/education counselor. Curtis formed the American Indian Youth Council at Broken Bow School.

Teri believes the school had the first, and possibly only, existing Arts and Crafts class one could receive credit for, which Curtis began (pottery, basketry, jewelry making, etc.)

Curtis worked for Broken Bow schools for 30 years, using much of what he learned in Mississippi to guide his career.

Curtis said, "We are still in the stage after 50 years of this, still teaching people and learning. Not everybody has gotten it yet. It's optional, we're not making anybody, but we want to make it available."

For Curtis, the new Choctaw Cultural Center is an excellent vehicle for maintaining knowledge and displaying the culture.

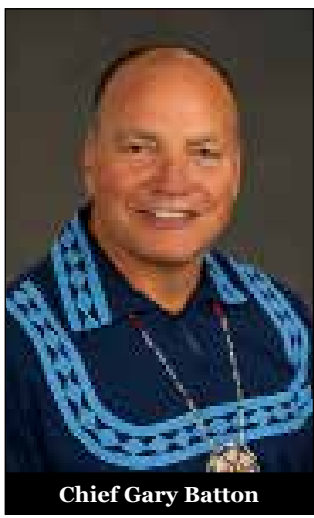
"It doesn't mean it's where our culture is, it's where you can see highlights of it, and it's permanent," said Curtis.

According to Curtis, it makes him feel good when he sees the celebration of our culture all over our reservation now. Curtis also credits Chief David Gardner (1975-1978) for wanting the groups to teach others what they had learned.

During his term in office, Gardner encouraged the cultural revival and wanted staff to wear Native dress and visit the homeland.

Continued on page 11

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

Choctaw language must be preserved, protected

Halito!

Preserving and protecting the Choctaw language for future generations is one of the most important initiatives that we, as the Choctaw Nation, can take on.

The Choctaw language has been passed down to us from our ancestors, and it is our duty, as the Choctaw Nation, to pass it along to the next generation. Language defines who we are and what is important to our history, faith, family, and culture. Our ancestors deemed historical events, people, and everyday objects essential enough to create a word to express their importance.

It is up to us to carry these oral and written

histories to the next generation so that our Choctaw history is never forgotten and has a place in the future of the Nation. I challenge every person who is reading this sentence to learn the Choctaw language so that we preserve our history and sovereignty as a Nation. The Choctaw Nation has identified approximately 300 people who are alive that can speak and teach Choctaw to the next generation. We are thankful these remaining Choctaw First Language speakers are willing and ready to pass this knowledge along to you.

We have an exceptional Choctaw Language Department that is available to teach the language to a new generation. We have learning tools available on our website that will enable you to learn Choctaw at your own pace on the road to becoming fluent. Ask your Choctaw elders for assistance and get energized about making our language a priority. It is up to us, as the Choctaw Nation, to preserve and protect our language – there is nothing more important than our sovereignty, history, and way of life.

Yakohe and God bless!

Ayers opens new art exhibit at Choctaw Cultural Center

DURANT, Okla. (April 11, 2023) –From April 11 to October 14, 2023, Keeping Our Heritage: Choctaw People, Life, and Animal Kinship, an exhibit of District Nine elder and registered Choctaw artist Carole Ayers' work, will be on display. Her watercolor paintings illustrate various aspects of Choctaw heritage and celebrate our culture in its diverse forms.

Ayers met with exhibit visitors, including Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and Councilmember James Dry, at a meet-and-greet event on the exhibit's opening day.

The Choctaw Cultural Center is dedicated to exploring, preserving, and showcasing the culture and history of the Choctaw people. The exhibits are immersive and told from the Choctaw perspective – honoring the physical and spiritual journey of the Choctaw people, the "Chahta Nowvt Aya."

Located in Durant, Oklahoma, the Choctaw Cultural Center includes over 100,000 square feet of rich, living exhibitions, a vast Living Village, classrooms, a theater, café and retail that combined, bring the Chahta spirit of faith, family and culture to life.

You can check out the Keeping Our Heritage: Choctaw People, Life, and Animal Kinship exhibit and much more by visiting the Choctaw Cultural Center.

The Choctaw Cultural Center is open Tuesday – Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can find out more about the Choctaw Cultural Center and stay up-to-date on upcoming events by visiting <https://choctaw-culturalcenter.com/>.



Choctaw Nation Photos

Above: Chief Gary Batton, District 9 Councilmember James Dry and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. attended the opening of tribal elder Carole Ayers' new art exhibit at the Choctaw Cultural Center on April 11.

Below: Visitors take part in a meet-and-greet with Ayers during the April 11 event.



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Employee Chaplin Olin Williams delivers a message during the Easter Celebration on April 8. You can find Olin's past and future columns in the Leadership Speaks section of the online version of the Biskinik. Visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/news/biskinik/> for more.

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



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day is May 5

Currently, in the United States, there are nearly 23,000 people reported missing from tribal lands. Of those, approximately 700 are reported missing from Oklahoma, according to data from the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Let that sink in for a moment. Someone's daughter, son, husband, wife, brother or sister vanishes without a trace.

It is a daily occurrence with a frequency on tribal lands that is startling, to say the least. Due to the vast area that tribal lands cover, response to missing persons reports can be challenging for law enforcement. For example, federal prosecutors have primary criminal jurisdiction for 70 million acres of tribal lands spanning 200 Native American country territories.

Tackling the epidemic of missing and murdered Native women and girls is an imperative issue that demands mutual respect and collaboration in working together with tribal nations. According to the FBI, approximately 75% of the crimes investigated on tribal lands involve homicide, rape, violent assaults, or child abuse.

On May 5, 2021, through efforts from various Native advocates, tribal leaders, and government officials, President Biden signed the proclamation that May 5 is "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day." The proclamation is designed to bring awareness to the plight of missing and murdered indigenous victims and shed light on the investigation and apprehension of criminals. It is also a day of hope that missing people may return to their families and continue with their lives.

At 8 a.m. on May 13, 2023, advocates hoping to bring awareness to the missing and murdered while also showing support for impacted families will gather at the Choctaw Community Center in Antlers, Oklahoma, to walk in honor of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIW/MMIWG) movement. Last year's event saw a total of 198 runners in the 5K event and 146 participants in the 1-mile walk who took part in the MMIW Awareness Walk and Community Event. More than 500 people attended the 2022 MMIW Awareness Walk and Community Event. We hope you and your family will join us for this year's event on May 13.

Other events occurring in the Choctaw Nation that will acknowledge MMIW includes the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Event on May 5, from 12 p.m. through 2 p.m. at the HQ amphitheater.

This event is hosted by MMIW Chahta (a non-profit 501c3 organization) to raise awareness of the National MMIW Day, which is observed on May 5.

Make plans to join your colleagues to learn more about this important topic. Speakers from families affected and the Choctaw Nation Family Violence team will deliver information and a powerful message at this year's CNO MMIW event that will be held at the HQ Amphitheater. For more information, please contact Karris Hodge at khodge@choctawnation.com.

Also, as a part of National MMIW Day, individuals are encouraged to wear red to acknowledge and honor the thousands of indigenous women and girls who go missing each year.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma offers several services to those affected by domestic violence and abuse.

The Tribal Victim Assistance Program provides comprehensive services to Native American victims of crime, including emergency food, clothing, shelter, safety plans, goal planning, courtroom advocacy (support), and other emergency services to restore the victims' sense of dignity and self-esteem.

Tribal Victim Services guides victims of crime and their families with counseling and group therapy. This program consists of a Victim Advocate and a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) who provide comprehensive, culturally competent, direct services to victims of crime and their families.

Project EMPOWER assists victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking by helping them stabilize housing, childcare and other day-to-day support so they can focus on reclaiming their lives.

For more information about the CNO programs mentioned above, call 877-285-6893.

Family Violence Prevention provides quality specialized services and resources that promote family strength and stability and enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence, family violence or dating violence and their dependents.

Choctaw Children and Family Services are ready to help anyone experiencing domestic violence. If you or someone you know is a victim of family violence or you're living in fear of violence, call 800-522-6170.

Other useful contacts include:

- Oklahoma Safeline – 800-522-7233 (SAFE)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline – 800-799-7233 (SAFE)
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network Hotline – 800-656-4673 (HOPE)
- Communication Services for the Deaf – 800-252-1017 (TTY) / 866-845-7445 (Voice)
- Okla Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.) – 405-524-0770
- StrongHearts Helpline – 844-762-8483 (1-844-7NATIVE)

Even though progress is a step in the right direction for activists and families, there is still much left to do to address this issue correctly.

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center offers resources and ways to get involved in the MMIW movement and information on other Indigenous Women's Issues. Visit www.niwrc.org for more information.

Yakohe in advance for taking part in the 2023 MMIW Awareness Walk and Community Event on May 13 at the Community Center in Antlers!

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

NIJ National Institute of Justice

STRENGTHEN SCIENCE. ADVANCE JUSTICE.

Cases Created in NamUs
January 2023

555 Missing Cases from 42 States and Territories

Top 10 States	Cases
California	90
Oklahoma	46
Texas	44
Arkansas	41
Tennessee	35
North Carolina	31
Connecticut	31
New York	28
Florida	24
Arizona	18

106 Unidentified Cases from 19 States and Territories

Top 10 States	Cases
California	25
Illinois	13
Georgia	13
Texas	9
New York	8
Arizona	7
Virginia	7
Florida	4
Maine	4
Michigan	3

338 Unclaimed Cases from 17 States and Territories

Top 10 States	Cases
New York	119
Colorado	75
Texas	32
California	17
Tennessee	15
Connecticut	12
Washington	10
New Jersey	10
Nevada	9
Massachusetts	9

NamUs is a national online repository and resource center for locating and identifying missing persons and unidentified decedents, as well as helping medical examiners and coroners locate next of kin for unclaimed person cases. NamUs is funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and managed through a contract by RTI International

For more information, please visit www.NamUs.nij.ojp.gov

Gabriella Nakai is a Champion for Change

By Christian Chaney

Gabriella Nakai was selected as a 2023 Champion for Change by the Center for Native American Youth (CNAV).

According to the CNAV, one must reflect the cultures, diversity and resiliency of Natives in the United States to be a Champion for Change. In this role, the candidate must advocate for protecting sacred sites, tribal sovereignty, increased civic engagement, Native youth programming support and Indigenous food sovereignty.

Nakai, a Phoenix, Arizona resident, is one of five selected to represent CNAV.

She has accomplished so much at her young age and is passionate about her culture, environmentalism, and tribal sovereignty.

She is a junior in high school, looking for colleges and thinking about career paths while also being a powerful wellness advocate for Native Americans. Nakai spent time at the White House Tribal Youth Forum, where she was selected as a moderator for the USDA.

During her time working with the USDA, she observed Native chefs planting Native crops and learned valuable information to spark her wellness projects.

She took the information she learned from the USDA about food commodities, native crops, and what people could do to help the environment and started a garden in Phoenix.

Nakai discovered some crops were producing well and began considering ways this could benefit her culture. Arizona faces water scarcity issues, so she started planting drought-tolerant plants, like corn and potatoes, and she found a connection to her Choctaw culture.

“As people, we really have to focus on being



Photo Provided

Gabriella Nakai was recently chosen as a 2023 Champion for Change by the Center for Native American Youth.

drought reliant, especially during the time of the Dust Bowl,” said Nakai.

She began saving the seeds when they produced well to shuck them so the plants could grow in other seasons. She even saved seeds to send back to her family members who live on the Choctaw reservation.

Nakai says she plans to continue advocating for Native communities and is looking forward to continuing her work throughout her college career.

“Our Choctaw culture is what keeps us resilient, and saving our future requires us to remember our past,” Nakai said. “Choctaw Nation has made all of these opportunities and resources accessible to us all.”

Biskinik article connects tribal members and results in film documentary project

By Shelia Kirven

A chance meeting with a Biskinik reader became a journey to Alaska to tell the story of the Tlingit Warriors for Choctaw filmmaker Taylor Washington.

Washington, a director, cinematographer and co-founder of Pan Up Productions, a full-service creative content production company, got to know Joel Spring (professor emeritus from New York’s City University and author of over 80 publications) after Spring read about Washington’s filmmaking successes in the January 2022 issue of the Biskinik.

The two became quick friends, living only about 30 minutes apart in New York.

Spring connected Washington to his friend George Bennett Sr. whom he had known from his time in Sitka, Alaska.

In 1961, Spring taught junior high in Sitka, being hired to work with the local Tlingit Native Alaskan population. While there, he got to know George Bennett Sr., who now leads the veterans’ group among Native Alaskans. Bennett, a renowned woodworker and elder of the Tlingit tribe, was drafted into the Vietnam War in 1966 and became known as one of the Tlingit Warriors.

Washington self-funded a 10-day trip in October to gather interviews and footage to seek funding to return next year to acquire additional interviews, visit more rural communities and for editing costs.

“Modern Tlingit Warriors,” tells the story of how the Tlingit veterans used their cultural values to help overcome physical and mental trauma from the war and how they are using those same tools against current battles around land rights and loss of language. Tribal members will share their stories during the documentary, many for the first time.

According to Bennett, members of the Alaska Tlingit tribe were forced to commit acts during the Vietnam War not within their cultural beliefs and teachings.

He talked about the effects the veterans suffered in the documentary trailer.



Photo Provided

“Modern Tlingit Warriors,” tells the story of how the Tlingit veterans used their cultural values to help overcome physical and mental trauma from the war and how they are using those same tools against current battles around land rights and loss of language.

“We Tlingit warriors went to war. Unthinkable things happened to us. Suddenly we were sent back home,” said Bennett. “The bad dreams began. Our actions were unrecognizable. We could no longer recognize the way we moved through life.”

Washington said of the Tlingit project, “It was all because of the Biskinik,” said Washington.

Washington is grateful for his new relationship with Spring and his wife.

“I feel like I have gotten New York grandparents,” Washington said.

Washington also recently premiered his co-directed short film comedy, ‘Call Me Mommy’, at the SXSW Film & TV Festival, one of the country’s biggest film festivals. In Austin, Texas, each year, the festival premieres the best in cinema, television and virtual reality.

‘Call Me Mommy’ tells the story of an out-of-work actor named Annie who responds to a personal ad looking for someone highly skilled in improvisation. Inga, a very tightly wound pregnant woman, hopes to “optimize” her approach to motherhood by hiring Annie to roleplay as her daughter-to-be.

Washington said it was his dream to have the short film represented at SXSW, and he hopes to turn it into a feature film.

When thinking about his recent projects, Washington said, “It was a great year last year, working on so many things that are very meaningful, and it’s exciting to see where they go this year.”

You can follow @taylorewashingon on Instagram or his website, www.taylor-washington.com.

Tampa Choctaw Community Meeting



Shreveport Choctaw Community Meeting



San Antonio Choctaw Community Meeting



OKC Choctaw Community Meeting



Kansas City Choctaw Community Meeting



WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By Matt Gamble

One of my favorite sounds in the woods is the gobble of a tom turkey. As a hunter, it can send chills down your spine and goosebumps across your skin. As a conservationist, it’s the sound of decades of hard work and one of the most successful stories in modern wildlife conservation. Wild turkeys were nearly wiped out in Oklahoma in the late 1800s and early 1900s due to market hunting and over-exploitation.

Today’s populations are a result of restocking efforts initiated by the state in the late 1940s and continuing for several decades. Huntible populations now exist in all counties within the Choctaw Nation Reservation. Most of the wild turkeys with the Reservation are the Eastern subspecies, but on the western edge, you will find Eastern/Rio Grande subspecies hybrids.

This is where I wish I could say that our work here is done and turkeys will thrive here forever, but that is simply not the case. Wildlife conservation is not simply a one and done task. Turkey populations run boom and bust cycles. Weather, habitat, hunting pressure, predation, and various other factors all affect these cycles. Unfortunately, over the last decade, the boom years

have been far less frequent than the bust years as far as turkey reproduction goes. Biologists and researchers are not sure why this is the case. Various research projects are taking place across the state and country, looking at the causes of this decline. The Choctaw Nation Wildlife Department is concerned about declines in the turkey population and will be working with various agencies to make sure that the echo of a spring gobble will be heard for generations to come.

One of the things we are asked most often by those concerned about the population declines is, “what can I do?”. Our best advice is to do what you can. If you own or lease property, implement management practices that will benefit turkey habitat. If you think predators are an issue on your property, trap or hunt them with the most appropriate legal methods. Get involved with local conservation groups and be willing to donate time and resources to these research initiatives.

Working together is the best way to achieve these results. If you have questions about turkeys in your area, reach out to us at wildlife@choctawnation.com

Take a kid hunting or fishing and make memories that will last a lifetime!

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

Please help us honor those no longer with us and remember their sacrifices that made us free. This year’s event will include a 21-gun salute and placing of the wreath. Family and friends are welcome to attend.

“THOSE WHO HAVE LONG ENJOYED SUCH PRIVILEGES AS WE ENJOY FORGET IN TIME THAT MEN HAVE DIED TO WIN THEM.”
-FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

MAY 26, 2023 | 10:00 AM
TVSHKA HOMMA CAPITOL GROUNDS

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Jennifer Woods

District 6

Halito! Chim Achukma from District 6. We are excited about our beautiful spring days and warmer weather. Just like the flowers and trees blooming, District 6 also shows signs of life and growth.

We were excited to attend the Latimer County Premium Livestock sale, which was a big success this year, and we were able to support our area children. We also attended OYE in Oklahoma City on March 17 and would like to say congratulations to all the students for all their accomplishments. Three of the five students who were selected to participate in the Night of Stars Gilt Sale were Choctaw tribal members. They were Madison Walker, Gracie Noggle and Riley Sumpter, all of Red Oak. We are so proud of these amazing students.

After all of the holidays were finally past, the seniors went back to their first Friday of the month Indian Taco Sale. They also held a St. Patrick's Day dance in March. It was a lot of fun for all who attended. We would like to thank the YAB kids for their help with the dance and look forward to having them back to help with other senior events. This week, the seniors helped with a JOM field trip for the students at Panola School and served Indian Tacos.

The students were also able to tour the Wellness Center, where the staff instructed the student in the proper way to use the equipment in the center and the purpose of each item. They also spoke to them about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The students presented an original handcrafted "Eyes of God" to the center along with a certificate of appreciation to the District 6 seniors for their support of the local program.

We are very happy to announce that Chrystal Terrazas with WIC is back with us. She will be here every Wednesday, and she hopes to be here one other day during the week after she gets more clients.

We held our quarterly check presentation in March through the Economic Development Funds department of the Choctaw Nation. The City of Wilburton was awarded \$14,600, and Latimer County was awarded \$18,500. The donations are given for whatever need is present as a way to work together as good community partners.

Our Small Business Development program has been busy working with entrepreneurs for District 6. At this time, there are 92 in business, 49 that have not yet started in their business, with a total of 231 employees. On April 24, we will be holding another ribbon cutting for Moonflower Nursery in Red Oak with Chahtapreneur Dru Kauk. We encourage anyone interested in starting their own business or needing help in their existing business to contact the Small Business Department for valuable resources available to you.

Our Job For The Day Program is also busy putting people to work. The program continued to work all through COVID, and as soon as the hiring freeze was lifted, they met with clients in the parking lot to complete paperwork. They also had several clients that worked in extended positions to assist with COVID screening at the clinic. Since last April, Job For The Day Program Manager Kim Hill has hired 57 people for District 6.

During April's council meeting, District 6 tribal member Wayne Scott was recognized as the First Speaker and Dale Morris was recognized as the Veteran of the Month. It's always an honor to recognize those who go above and beyond in serving.

The building of the ten new LEAP homes in Red Oak began on April 15. If you have not yet applied, please get your applications in. We are also still taking applications for the twenty new Affordable Rental homes in Wilburton that are presently being built. Don't prejudice your credit when thinking of applying for these programs. Get your application in as soon as possible.

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. District 6 is supporting by wearing blue on Fridays for abuse awareness, and our driveway is lined with pinwheels representing children in Foster Care. Our goal in District 6 is to have zero child abuse. Child abuse is NOT the Choctaw way. It takes all of us to stop child abuse.

We were able to participate in the Read Across America program and had the Cat in the Hat and Thing 1 and Thing 2 visits in the Wilburton Head Start, Jones Academy and the Talihina Day Dare. It was an exciting day, and the children loved their visit. The Easter bunny also made a visit to the Head Start and Day Care. A great big Yakoke to staff Lori Pugh, Beth Cantrell, and Ethan Scott for dressing up and entertaining the children.

This past Tuesday, we were able to participate in a check presentation for the City of Red Oak for a two-million-dollar grant to replace an aging water infrastructure system. Kenneth Corn, Rural Development Director Oklahoma US Department of Agriculture and Under Secretary for Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small were present, as well as Councilmen Jess Henry and Ron Perry. Red Oak High School student Titus Montgomery made the introductions. Princesses Riley Isabell and Hata Ramsey performed the Lord's Prayer and Mayor Leslie Robertson accepted the plaque. Great things are happening in Red Oak.

A few of our staff were able to attend the Eastern Oklahoma State College Sapphire Ball and dressed in traditional ribbon skirts. Choctaw Nation Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and Choctaw Tribal Member Kelbi Kennedy, the first FEMA National Tribal Affairs Advocate, were being awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award. It was an honor to be there to watch them receive their awards and represent the Choctaw Nation.

Progress is continuing on our new Community Center. Watch for updates on our move-in and grand opening. We will also be hosting a Cultural Day the second week of May. The date will be announced soon. If you have any questions regarding programs or need assistance in applying, be sure to call or come by the center. We are always available to help. It's always an honor to serve our tribal members.

Yakoke!

YOUTH FIELD TRIP
ARLINGTON RENEGADES VS. THE HOUSTON ROUGHNECKS
APRIL 23 | 2:00 PM
Choctaw Stadium | 1000 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX 76011


40 STUDENTS (5TH - 8TH GRADE) WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND.

Kids can either ride the bus from Tribal Headquarters in Durant or their parents can drop them at the stadium. A late lunch will be provided.

XFL **ARLINGTON RENEGADES**

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER VISIT CHOCTAWNATION.COM/EVENTS

Choctaw Nation Youth Events & Activities



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
- Live within the Choctaw boundaries
- Be enrolled at a program-approved, college, training institute or career tech as a full-time student
- Be a high school graduate or have completed a GED course

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **866.933.2260**

Choctaw Nation Vocational Development CHOCTAWNATION.COM



Top Left: Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and Choctaw tribal member Kelbi Kennedy were recently awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award at Eastern Oklahoma State College. District 6 staff members wore ribbon skirts for the occasion. **Top Right:** The city of Red Oak was recently awarded a two-million-dollar grant to replace an aging water infrastructure system. Kenneth Corn, Rural Development Director Oklahoma US Department of Agriculture and Under Secretary for Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small, and Councilmen Jess Henry and Ron Perry were present.



Photos Provided

JOM students from Panola Public School recently visited the Wilburton Community Center and Wellness Center. They helped serve Indian tacos and received instruction from Wellness Center staff on how to use the facility's equipment.

Holt is April Veteran of the Month

Charles Holt, born in Talihina, Oklahoma, was raised in Idabel. He graduated high school in Tahlequah in 1968.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army Feb. 12, 1970, and attended boot camp at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina.

He was a clerk typist while in the Army, holding that position while in Vietnam. SP4 Holt maintained soldiers' records to include promotion status and other services records as required. He was in Vietnam from July 14, 1970, to July 13, 1971.

SPF Holt was awarded the National Defense service medal, Army commendation, Vietnam service medal, VCM with 60 device and BMS.

Upon return from Vietnam, SP4 Holt was stationed at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. and was released about four months early. After discharge, Holt was employed with Weyerhaeuser in Wright City, Oklahoma, and Holly Creek Fryers now known as Tyson for around 12 years. He returned to Weyerhaeuser in 1984 and retired after 25 years.

Holt's hobbies include running and puzzles.

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



Choctaw Nation Photo

Charles Holt is pictured with District 7 Tribal Councilmember, Joey Tom.



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Holt had a good day on April 8, as he also won the grand prize for the Elder Egg Hunt.

Tonihka is the April First Language Speaker of the Month



Choctaw Nation Photo

Solomon Tonihka of District 7 was recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Council as the First Language Speaker of the Month during the April 8 Tribal Council meeting. Tonihka of Wright City, Oklahoma, had his family in attendance to be a part of the special day.

CONNECTING KIDS TO COVERAGE



For more information scan the QR code.

580-916-9140
EXT 83731 OR 83830

CELL: 580-380-2102
OR 580-380-7481



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

EVENTS

OCTA Wild Onion Dinner and Indian Taco Sale

Please join the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance (OCTA) for our Wild Onion Dinner and Indian Taco Sale on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Our location will be at the American Legion Post 73/VFW Post 9969 at 5000 SE 24th St, Del City, OK 73115.

Indian tacos will be \$10 each and wild onion dinners will be \$12 each: complimentary water and tea. Individual desserts will be sold at \$1 each.

See OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Facebook for further details.



**CHOCTAW VETERAN
ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

Are You a Choctaw Veteran?

Let us help guide you to the benefits and services that you have earned.



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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

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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Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director
Kellie Matherly, Content Development Director
Kendra Wall, Content Development Manager
Chris Jennings, News Reporter
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P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
580-924-8280 • 800-522-6170
www.ChoctawNation.com
email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

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
SPONSORED
SUMMER CAMP**



Camper Responsible for Registration Fee/Canteen: \$10.00

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For Info. and to Register**

Website

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Email: jerry@bbbcamp.org



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Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

May 2	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
May 3	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
May 5	Crowder	By Appointment
May 9	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
May 10	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
May 12	Atoka	8:30 p.m. - 12 p.m.
May 12	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
May 16	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
May 17	Stigler	By Appointment
May 17	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
May 23	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
May 24	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
May 26	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
May 26	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Call 580-326-8304 for an Appointment

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

May 7, 2023

- CALL TO ORDER
 - OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
 - ROLL CALL
 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - Regular Session March 11, 2023
 - WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - Veteran of the Month, District #6 – Dale Morris
 - First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #6 – Wayne Scott, Sr.
 - Veteran of the Month, District #7 – Charles Holt
 - First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #7 – Solomon Tonihka
 - PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - a) Jeffrey Liston – Individual Speaker – Sculpture
 - REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 - NEW BUSINESS
 - Approve Application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the FY2024 Family Violence Prevention Grant
 - Approve Application to Request Funds for a Cost-of-Living Adjustment and Quality Funds for FY2023 for Choctaw Nation Head Start Program
 - Council Bill Amending the Choctaw Nation Criminal Procedure Code
 - Council Bill Amending the Choctaw Nation Criminal Code
 - Approve an Amendment to an Existing Revolving Credit Facility between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and BOKF, NA, and other Lenders, and to Approve Related Matters
 - Approve the Disposal of Capital Assets – Equipment
 - Approve the Disposal of Capital Assets – Vehicles
 - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Dr. Jason Hill to Serve on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Council on Graduate Medical Education
 - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Ethan Schuth to Serve as a Member of the U.S. Department of the Interior Advisory Council for Climate Adaptation Science
 - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Mark Smith to Serve as a Member of the United States Environmental Protection Agency National Drinking Water Advisory Council
 - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Bobby Yandell as the Alternate to Chief Gary Batton for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee
 - Approve the Donation of Property Located in Choctaw County, Oklahoma
 - Approve Funding for an Equity Investment in a Hotel/Resort Property Located in Texas
 - Approve the Settlement Agreement between the Nation and Enable Midstream Partners, L.P.
 - OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 - OLD BUSINESS
 - ADJOURNMENT
 - CLOSING PRAYER
- All council bills passed unanimously.

NOTES

Suicide needs to be reduced among Native American Adolescents. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among Native Americans ages 10-24. Suicide has a long-lasting affect on the families, friends and community of individuals taken by suicide. They are left wondering how they missed signs and what they could have done differently.

Nearly 70 billion is spent yearly in the U.S. to cover medical costs of people who are affected by suicide. According to the CDC Native Americans have the highest rate of suicide in America.

I am navigator in behavioral health for Native Americans and my husband is a police officer. We see the impact everyday that mental health and suicide has on families and the community. I am asking that we take action by implementing more mental health evaluations in our school systems.

We need to educate our students, families and teachers on the warning signs of suicide. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide please call 988.

– LaTasha Hofmann



**HONOR GUARD
— POSITIONS AVAILABLE —**

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VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

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:

Smithville Community Center
May 12, 2023
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.



**Chahta Anumpa Aikkhvna
May Language Lesson**

Spring – Toffvpi

Himakno toffvpi ona.	Spring is here now.
Himakno nittak vt libeshvt isht ia.	The days are starting to get warm now.
Hvshi tomi lawa e pisa.	We see lots of sunshine.
Kanimikma mahli okpu-lo yvt anya.	Sometimes there is a tornado.
A hattak vt wanuta kashoffa chj.	My husband will clean the yard.
Hashuk vt vmo abvnna chj.	The lawn will need to be mowed.
Aboha e kashoffa chj	We will clean house.
Amafo ato nvni hoklit ia bvna.	My grandfather wants to go fishing.
Himittowa vhleha yvt okhvta ilhkoli bvna.	The young people want to go to the lake.
Sioshitek micha sioshi ato towa washoha chj.	My son and daughter will play ball.
Vmoshi yvt osapushi chito ikbi tuk.	My uncle made a big garden.
Na waya lawa hokchi tuk.	He planted a lot of vegetables.
Anato, na kanchi pisvt nowa la chj.	As for me, I'm going to check out the yard sales.
Obbiya/oppia pilakma, kocha ahoponi ma wak nipi il albana chj.	In the evening we will grill steaks outside.

www.choctawschool.com

Fickert among top 15 women in multifamily

In recognition of International Women's Day, Grace Hill, a real estate technology company, celebrated the dedication, determination and accomplishments of women, both past and present, and utilize their impressive legacies in building a brighter future for all women.

Kristi Fickert, a Choctaw tribal member, was among the 15 women recognized by Grace Hill.

Fickert is the vice president of enterprise growth at Realync, a real-time touring platform enabling live and recorded video tours for the multifamily and real estate industries.

Each woman was asked questions, including what their proudest moment in multifamily has been.

Fickert answered, "I helped design, write, launch, and lead a company-wide mentorship program (across 150 properties) that created a powerful improvement in associate skill development and bench strength. It also produced significantly more unique opportunities for sustained career growth and direct paths for promotion, particularly for onsite professionals. The program still exists today. Many of the associates who have completed the program are now leading their own corporate-level teams and influencing our industry in very impactful ways. To know I played a part in paving the way for others to experience success has been incredibly rewarding."

Young Choctaw author publishes first book

B.K. Heitt, a 10-year-old member of the Choctaw Nation, published her first book titled "The Homestead Pets" this March.

B.K. began writing at the age of four. Since then, she has never stopped.

B.K. has written hundreds of thousands of words and countless stories.

Her parents often joke (though not really, because it is the truth) that she has written more words on paper than them!

Whether it is stories about her favorite stuffed bear, Cubby, her real-life pets, Bear, Sunny, Midnight, and Ruby, or whatever else tickles her fancy, one thing is for sure – there will be no end to the stories she creates! Stay tuned for more.

Her book is available on Amazon in both Kindle and print formats.

Jamison achieves top ACT score

Jude Jamison, child of Eric and Allison Jamison and a Junior at Indian Hill High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36.

About one-quarter of 1% of students who take the ACT earn a top score. In the U.S. high school graduating class of 2022, only 3,376 out of 1.34 million students who took the ACT earned a top composite score of 36.

The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science; each scored on a scale of 1–36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The score for ACT's optional writing test is reported separately and is not included within the ACT composite score.

"Earning a top score on the ACT is a remarkable achievement," said ACT CEO Janet Godwin. "A student's exceptional score of 36 will provide any college or university with ample evidence of their readiness for the academic rigors that lie ahead."

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement exam that measures what students have learned in school. Students who earn a 36 composite score have likely mastered all of the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in first-year college courses in the core subject areas. ACT scores are accepted by major four-year colleges and universities across the U.S.



Sheehan graduates from Purdue Global

Victoria Lynn Sheehan graduated from Purdue Global University in Anheim, California.

She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services on February 25, 2023.

Sheehan is pictured with her mother, Della Estep and partner, Brandon Rosencrantz.



Landon Gene Webb

Aspen and Madison Webb proudly announce the birth of their first child, Landon Gene.

Landon was born on March 8, 2023, weighing 7 lbs 11.3 oz and was 20 1/2 inches long. Landon was welcomed by his parents, paternal grandparents, Heath and TaRonda Webb, maternal great-grandmother, Sherry Tedder and maternal great-great-grandfather, George M. Human.

With the birth of Landon, there are five living generations in this family.



Cass turns 13

Derick Cass turned 13 on September 1, 2022. He lives in Jurupa Valley, California. Derick is the son of Rebekah and Drew Cass.

He is the grandson of Jodell and Dale Cass of Riverside, California and Sandy and Rick Rowe of Campo, California.

He is in the 7th grade at United Christian Academy.



Sellers graduates from Joint Services Explosive Ordinance Disposal Course

Cade Folsom Lamar Sellers graduated from the Joint Services Explosive Ordinance Disposal course in March 2023.

Cade entered the US Air Force in March 2022. After completing basic training, he transferred to Shepard AFB, Texas, for the selection course. His successful completion of the selection course sent him to Eglin AFB, Florida, for the nine-month program. The Navy-led EOD course is considered the fifth most difficult course in all armed forces coming in directly behind special operations training. Cade is the son of Stephanie Snow Sellers and Daryl Sellers, grandson of Ann Folsom Bornoff (deceased) and great-nephew to Oleta Pilgrim and Nowassia Denny.



Major named DOC Employee of the Year

Kevin Major, of McAlester, Oklahoma, was recently named the Oklahoma Department of Corrections 2022 Employee of the Year.

Major was presented his award during the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Employee Awards and Recognition Banquet of February 24, 2023, in Oklahoma City.

He began his duties as a corrections officer at the DOC in 2003 and is currently the DOC Chief Instructor in Oklahoma City.

Major and his wife Eboni have four children and one grandchild.

He is the son of Keith and Gayla Major, the grandson of the late Kenneth and Norma Jean Major, and the late George and Nell Christian.



Allison Selected as a Top Twenty Teacher

The people of Oklahoma Oil & Natural Gas have recognized Ponca City High School math teacher Caleb Allison as one of the Top Twenty Teachers of 2022-2023.

Allison was selected out of more than 500 nominations for his exceptional effort in engaging students in math. He was awarded \$5,000, and Ponca City Public Schools will receive \$4,500 for science and math supplies. Allison was formally recognized with an on-the-court check presentation at an University of Oklahoma basketball game on March 4.

"The people of Oklahoma Oil and Natural Gas are passionate about recognizing teachers for their efforts in creating the next generation of leaders," said Oklahoma Energy Resources Board Executive Director Mindy Stitt. "It is a joy to recognize some of our state's exemplary educators."

The OERB is funded by the more than 2,500 producers and thousands of royalty owners across Oklahoma through a voluntary one-tenth of 1 percent assessment on oil and natural gas production. The mission is centered around a simple idea: empowering unlimited opportunity for all Oklahomans. We are committed to the well-being and prosperity of all.



James wins at FFA Jackpot

Jocelyn James of Latta Oklahoma FFA placed second in the 8,9,10 General Agriculture division of the Tecumseh FFA Speech Jackpot. Her speech is about water resources and what the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations are doing to protect them.



McCurtians celebrate 50 years

James and Rita McCurtain of Yukon, Oklahoma, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 2.

The couple was married in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, on April 2, 1973.

Both are graduates of the University of Oklahoma and are retired educators from the Oklahoma City area.

They enjoy time with family and grandchildren. The couple plans a trip to two Hawaiian islands to celebrate this milestone.

James is the grandson of original Choctaw enrollee Silas Greene McCurtain.

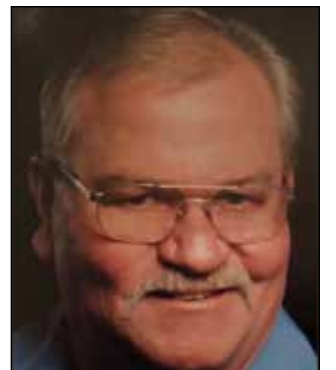


Choate turns 80

Dennis Choate recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

He graduated from Seneca and Sequoyah Indian Schools.

Choate is now enjoying his retirement from his long career in barbering.



Powell graduates from Augusta

Jessica Powell graduated from Augusta University in Georgia with a Master of Health Science in occupational therapy on May 11.

Her GPA was 3.88. Jessica is the daughter of Sherry Powell-Becklund and Garner Powell and the granddaughter of Dennis Choate.



COLLEGE FYI INVITES YOU TO CAMP CHAHTA

The camp is designed to orient first-year students to college life and create a close-knit community of Choctaw students.

Logos for Carl Albert State College, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and Eastern Oklahoma State University.

For more information on the 2023 Camp Chahta scan the QR code or visit choctawnation.com/services/college-fyi/

Choctaw Nation College Freshman Year Initiative

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At Choctaw Nation, we constantly try to improve our services and look for better ways to serve you, our Tribal Member.

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Please allow time for changes to be effective. You will continue to receive your items during this process. Subscribers must be 18+ years of age, or the only member in the household.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH!

Choctaw Nation's Behavioral Health services offer resources and a listening ear.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CNHSA'S MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES, VISIT CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH-OR CALL 918-567-7000

If you or a loved one is in emotional distress or thinking about harming yourself, call or text the 988 Suicide Prevention Helpline

Scan the QR code to learn more

Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health Services

Paying tribute to Judge Bob Rabon

DURANT, Okla. (March 5, 2023) – Choctaw Nation pays tribute to Judge Bob Rabon, who passed away on March 5, 2023.

He graduated from Rattan High School in 1957 and received his Bachelor's degree in education from Southeastern State College in 1963. Judge Rabon went on to the University of Oklahoma School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctor's Degree in 1968.

Judge Rabon was known as a "lawyer's lawyer" throughout Oklahoma. He was extremely active in the Oklahoma Bar Association, where he served on the Board of Governors from 1987-1989, was Vice President of the O.B.A., 1990 and served as President in 1993. He was a member of The Oklahoma Bar Foundation from 1992-1993, where he received the Distinguished Service Award. Judge Rabon served on the O.B.A.'s Committee on Bench and Bar from 1971-1974. He also served as a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association's Commission on Administration of Justice from 1975-1982. He served on the O.B.A.'s Committee

on Specialization and Certification in 1996, Long-Range Planning Committee from 1992-1993 and the Bar Association's Farm Crisis Committee from 1992-1996. In 1997, he was admitted as a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers, which distinguishes and recognizes the best trial lawyers in both the United States and Canada.

Judge Rabon served the Choctaw Nation for 47 years as General Counsel before serving most recently as Appellate Judge for the Nation's District Court.

Judge Rabon was instrumental in developing Choctaw Nation's court system and was the sole negotiator between the Tribe and the State for the Model Gaming Compact, which enabled Choctaw Nation to conduct Class 3 gaming.

Judge Rabon had the distinct honor and privilege of arguing two cases before the United States Supreme Court. In 1989, he represented both tribes in a case styled "The Chickasaw Nation and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma V The United States



of America." In 1995, he represented the Chickasaws in a case styled "Oklahoma Tax Commission V Chickasaw Nation."

He was also instrumental in negotiating the settlement between both tribes and the United States for the loss of several million acres of timber around the turn of the century. Aside from the 87 million dollar damages the Tribes received, the settlement also required then-President Barack Obama to appear at a tribal gathering in Durant.

For more information on Judge Rabon, visit www.praterlampton.com/obituary/Bob-Rabon.

Eskew turns 70

The family of Richard Eskew would love to wish him a very happy 70th birthday.

"May you have the best day and we love you very much."

- Lori and your family



Wrenley Gene Tawni Dunlap

Miss Wrenley Gene Tawni Dunlap was born to Hunter Baxter and Austin Dunlap.

She was born on March 2 at 12:29 p.m. in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Wrenley weighed 6 lbs 13 oz and was 19 3/4" long.



Phillips places in top three

Noah Phillips, 16, of Glenpool, recently won third place in the Oklahoma Professional Bowlers Association Youth Scholarship Classic.

He received awards plus scholarship funds for college. Congratulations, Noah!



Chief Batton and Asst. Chief Austin attend Barfoot renaming ceremony in Virginia

BLACKSTONE, Va. (March 30, 2023) – Choctaw Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. attended a redesignation ceremony at the newly-named Fort Barfoot in Nottoway County, Virginia on Friday, March 24.

Chief joined several dignitaries in attendance to rename the former Fort Pickett to the newly renamed Fort Barfoot in honor of Second Lieutenant Van T. Barfoot, a Choctaw descendant. Barfoot's family has ties to the Choctaw Nation from Mississippi.

"It was such an honor to be a part of the naming of Camp Barfoot," Chief Batton said. "It is quite appropriate that an American hero and a Tushka (warrior) such as Second Lt. Van T. Barfoot who served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam be honored for the first military base to be named after a Native American. He truly represented the Chahta spirit as he received the Medal

of Honor, three Purple Hearts, Silver Star and Bronze Star for his heroic acts of valor."

The renaming ceremony including comments from several Virginia elected officials, military officials and members of Barfoot's family. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was represented with the Choctaw flag on the stage of the ceremony as well as tribal dances in honor of Second Lt. Barfoot.

This is first of nine redesignation ceremonies to rename Army National Guard installations originally named for Confederate generals. This distinction is important to Native Americans as this marks the first Army facility to be named after a Native American, according to military staff at the ceremony. Second Lt. Barfoot was a Medal of Honor recipient for his actions in World War II during a battle near Carano, Italy.

"He knew that people looked at him, having been



Choctaw Nation Photo

Choctaw Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. met with members of the military, Virginia lawmakers and the family of Second Lt. Van T. Barfoot at the renaming of the U.S. Army training installation in Virginia on March 24, 2023.

a Medal of Honor recipient, as being a war hero," his son Tom Barfoot said in a 2012 TV interview following his dad's death at age 92. "But he never saw himself as being a hero. Dad's legacy, to me, was family. He was all about his God, his family, and his country, in that order."

You can view the entire renaming ceremony below or on YouTube.

Following Second Lt. Barfoot's death in 2012,

then-Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell issued the following statement: "Second Lt. Barfoot's extraordinary heroism, demonstration of magnificent valor, and aggressive determination in the face of pointblank fire are a perpetual inspiration to his fellow soldiers."

For more information on Second Lt. Barfoot's heroism, visit the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's website.

Panama JOM help Poteau seniors



Panama JOM visited the Poteau Choctaw seniors during their lunch, where they helped serve meals on March 22.

CNO elder attends Washington State town hall meeting

Pictured from left to right, are Jeff Wilson, Washington State Senator; Tom Davis, Tribal Elder of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Retired from USDOJ and United States Military Veteran (USMC); Rose Cooper Davis, Tribal Elder of the Squaxin Island Tribe of Washington State and Minister of the Mud Bay Indian Shaker Church; and Jim Walsh, Washington State Representative, all of which were in attendance of the Washington State Town Hall Meeting in Aberdeen, Washington on March 25, 2023.

Numerous citizens of the Grays Harbor County community were also in attendance.

Some topics discussed were controversial legislative issues, community health and wellbeing matters, the homeless health safety and welfare issues (such as food, clothing and shelter, mental and physical health) and EBT food assistance Programs and persons seeking to access benefits and relocation to the United States of America for a better quality of life from other countries.



Southeastern is a proud tradition for the Dry family

DURANT, Okla. (April 11, 2023) – For 114 years, family traditions have been important at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Just ask the James Dry family.

This spring, when Karson Dry walks across the stage to receive his degree, he will be the fourth-generation family member to graduate from Southeastern.

It all started in the fall of 1939 – 30 years after SE was founded – when twin brothers Ernest and Aaron Dry, fresh out of Goodland Indian Orphanage in Hugo, entered Southeastern State College on tennis scholarships. In addition, the brothers, who were originally from Yanush, Oklahoma, received financial aid from their mother Emily's sale of a cow.

After a stint in the Army, 26-year-old Ernest "Pappy" (nicknamed because of his "advanced age") returned to Southeastern in 1946 playing and (volunteer) coaching tennis. He graduated the following year under first-year tennis coach

Clarence Dyer, who would go on to great success. Ernest enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an educator, serving as teacher-coach-principal-superintendent at a number of schools, including Madill and Wagoner.

The family legacy at SE continued with Ernest's wife – Lucretia Loretta Adams Dry – who earned a master's in counseling from Southeastern in 1968; Ernest and Lucretia's son, James Hugh Dry, a 1974 and 1976 graduate who went on to a successful career as a tennis coach at Hugo and Pauls Valley; and James' son, James Shannon Dry, who graduated in '93 with a degree in occupational safety and health and who now serves on the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Council (District 9). He has been associated with the Nation in various capacities for more than 30 years.

Which brings us to Karson – Councilman Dry's son, James H. Dry's grandson, and the great-grandson of Ernest and Lucretia Dry. He's graduating in 2023 with a degree in Health and Human Performance and will be pursuing a career as a chiropractor.

"Number one, my family drove home the importance of getting my education," said Karson, who played basketball at Murray State College before transferring to SE. "But all along, Southeastern has been home to me."

While all three of the Drys acknowledged their interest in athletics, whether it be tennis, basketball, or football, they are quick to credit Ernest Dry for emphasizing the value of academics.

"I think we all appreciate my (late) grandfa-



Photo Courtesy of Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Continuing the Southeastern legacy for the Dry family are Karson Dry, James Hugh Dry and James Shannon Dry.

ther," Councilman Dry said. "Because of him, there was an expectation for us to go to college. He instilled that in all of us."

Indeed, all seven of Ernest's children earned college degrees. (The Drys' best estimate is that 17-20 family members have attended/graduated Southeastern over the years).

"I became a teacher because of him," said his son James. "He twisted my arm to go to college. I liked sports, but I'm glad he stressed education."

Both son and grandson said they were influenced greatly at Southeastern by Dr. Don Parham (late athletic director and baseball coach) and Dr. Don Ferguson, (late physical education professor), both of whom placed an emphasis on academics as well as athletics.

And Councilman Dry also gives a nod to current SE athletic director Keith Baxter, a former head football and tennis coach.

"I really didn't know

what I wanted to do until Keith Baxter showed up at Pauls Valley the summer after my senior year and offered me a (tennis) scholarship (to SE)," he said.

Councilman Dry has many fond memories of his days at Southeastern in the 1990s, including the spirit of attending basketball games in the old Bloomer Sullivan Gymnasium.

"We used to pack the Pit at basketball games," he recalled. "When we played ECU, you had to get there early to get a seat in the old gym."

The Drys – Kason, James H. and the Councilman – all expressed great pride in their family history.

"Being Native American is important to us," Councilman Dry said. "We are very proud Choctaws and proud of our history. We learned from my grandfather to always work hard, but also to always do the right thing. That's a lot to live up to."



Photo Provided

Ernest Dry (pictured) and his twin brother Aaron entered Southeastern as freshmen in 1939.

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Whalen Gene Hutson

Whalen Gene Hutson, 55, passed away March 7, 2023. Whalen was born July 19, 1967, in Fort Smith, Ark., to T.M. and Ruth Ann (Clay) Hutson.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Whalen is survived by his son Bradley Hutson and spouse Sheryl; grandchildren Faelynne and Wyatt Hutson; his true love Tammy Tyson-Gravitt; bonus children Shaelan and Krissy Gravitt, and Casey and Kadan Boling; bonus grandchildren Callen and Cooper Gravitt; siblings Patricia and Butch Dawson, Slick Hutson, Connie Wyrick, and Crockett and Gladice Hutson.

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

Betty Orr

Betty Orr, 86, passed away March 12, 2023.

Betty was born July 29, 1936, in Bokchito, Okla., to Morris Aubrey "Jake" and Bertha (Cox) Smith.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Aubrey; and sister Verba.

Betty is survived by her husband Harrol Orr; sons Ken Stiles and spouse Debbie, and Perry Sties; daughter Sandi Chesser and spouse Don, and adopted daughter Kandi Bennett; grandchildren Krisha, Jason, Lindsey, Mandi, Mendi, Laci, Kaci, Amber, and Ashley; 15 great-grandchildren; and brother Donny Smith.

For the full obituary, please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

Randall Watson

Randall Watson, 78, passed away March 31, 2023.

Randall was born July 17, 1944, in Battiest, Okla., to Creson and Vivian Maytubbi Watson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Rita Watson; son Lucian Watson; brothers Sonny and Troy Noah; sisters Patricia Rodriguez and Sherry Santillano; and granddaughter Mahali Watson.

Randall is survived by sons Gary Watson and Shawn Watson; daughters Dana Gobellan, Winema Watson, and Sarah Watson-Kowena and spouse Joe; brothers Hank, George, Amon, and Chris Watson; sisters Hannah Bryan, Louise Noah, Vicky Noah, Andrea Yellowfish, Pamela Gutierrez, and Christina Loretto; grandchildren Emaline Watson, Jeremiah Watson, Aniya Kowena, Alayna Kowena, and Lucian Kowena; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

Willie M. Seaton

Willie M. Seaton, 78, passed away March 11, 2023.

Willie was born May 26, 1944, in Rush Springs, Okla., to James Aubrey and Wilma Dora (Woods) Loveless.

She was preceded in death by her husband Charles E. Seaton Sr.; her parents; brothers James Loveless and Albert Loveless Sr.; and sister Frances Trusty.

Willie is survived by son Charles E. Seaton Jr. and spouse Elizabeth; grandchildren Alisha Robinson and spouse Jonathan, Brody Crow and spouse Savannah, Ryan Seaton, Branson Seaton, and Jarrod Seaton; great-grandchildren Carsyn Seaton, Haisley Seaton, Lane Crow, and Landon Crow; brother Sammy Loveless and spouse Pam; sister Phyllis Nichols; nieces Donna Fowler and spouse Ronnie, and Kay Triplet and spouse Craig; along with numerous other nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Callaway Smith Cobb Funeral Home](#).

Billie Ruth Leflore

Billie Ruth Leflore, 1 year and 20 days old, passed away Dec. 3, 2022.

Billie Ruth was born Nov. 13, 2021, in Talihina, Okla., to Dakota Lowell Leflore and Jenny Ann (Barnett) Leflore.

She was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents Marcella Leflore and Lowell Pointer; and great-grandparents Billy and Ruth Moore, Jerry and Jeannette Barnett, and Thomas Hudson.

Billie Ruth is survived by her parents; brothers and sisters Jeremy, Jadea, Logan, Jordan, Jayla, Jameson, and J'Anna; maternal grandparents Ronald Perkins and Cheryl Hudson; great-grandparents Paul and Sharon Huelman, and Maudie Stubblefield; aunts and uncles Teresa and Miguel Hernandez, Thomas Barnett, Shannon Leflore, and Josh and Genie Leflore; along with numerous cousins and other family.

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

Bradley Don "Badger" Lowe

Bradley Don "Badger" Lowe, 34, passed away April 10, 2023.

Brad was born Sept. 16, 1988, in Poteau, Okla., to Donny and Michelle (Baker) Lowe.

He was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents Elum and Ramona Baker; paternal grandparents Luther and Dorothy Lowe; aunt and uncles Brenda and Terry Hunter, Terry Baker, Ricky Baker, Aryon Elum Baker Jr., and Marlin Baker.

Brad is survived by his parents; children Journey Lowe and Rocker Lowe; siblings Brandon Baker and spouse Mimi, Donnie Baker and spouse Tiffany, Ashlee Baker, Travis Lowe, and Cheyenne Doby and spouse Harold; the lover of his life and mother of his children Amber Carter; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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

Joseph Lee Barlow

Joseph Lee Barlow, 26, passed away March 20, 2023.

Joseph was born Nov. 4, 1996, in Tulsa, Okla., to Jerry Barlow Jr. and Cindy Barkley.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents Patsy and Anthony Sparks, Alice Fielder, and Sheila Barkley; and very special aunt "Nana" Debra Curtsinger.

Joseph is survived by his spouse Chaise Iskey; son Hudson Barlow; parents Cindy and Shannon Barkley, Jerry Barlow Jr., and Brenda Schoggins; sisters and spouses Rachel and Daniel Morrison, and Jessica and Billy Martin; brothers Austin Hood and Tyler Hood; nephews and niece Mason Stephens, Brycelyn Morrison, Levi Morrison, Connor Barlow, and Augustus Martin; maternal grandparents Clay and Kathy Norman; paternal grandparents Jerry Sr. and Ellen Barlow, John Alan Barkley, and Willene Barkley; along with numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

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

Marland Tonubbee

Marland Tonubbee, 88, passed away March 25, 2023.

Marland was born Dec. 13, 1934, in Boswell, Okla., to Murphy and Lillian Myrtle (Harrington) Tonubbee.

He was preceded in death by his wife Patty (Goin) Tonubbee; his parents; brothers Samuel Tonubbee, Jesse Tonubbee, and Francis Tonubbee; sisters Gleades Goodwin and Laura Lee Foster; and stepson Kenneth Goin.

Marland is survived by stepchildren David Goin, Shellie and Steve Osten; grandchildren Sharee Osten, Jessica Osten, Heather Goin, and Emilie Goin; brother Wayne Tonubbee; numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other extended family.

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

Michelle Lee Crownover

Michelle Lee Crownover, 47, passed away March 14, 2023.

Michelle was preceded in death by her son Damon M. Chambless.

She is survived by her daughter Katelyn E. Crownover; granddaughter Kinsley R. Rodriguez; her parents Mary and Robert Crownover; sister Cassandra D. Yates; and nephews Jacob, Nathan, and Shawn Yates.

For the full obituary, please visit [Compassionate Creations and Memorials](#).

Daisy Beatrice Larmour Taylor

Daisy Beatrice (Ervin) Larmour Taylor, 98, passed away March 12, 2023.

Daisy was born in Hartshorne, Okla., to Columbus William and Lillie Mae (Tucker) Ervin.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister "Lillie" Willie; brothers Dallas, Alvin (Hawk), C.W. (Cal); first husband Donald Winn Larmour; second husband Robert W. Taylor; and son William Larmour.

Daisy is survived by her daughter-in-law Janice Larmour; grandchildren Amy (Matt) Geurino, Jodi (Curt) Russell, and Donny Larmour Jr.; great-grandchildren Elizabeth, Thomas, Xander and Jaxon; along with several nieces and nephews.

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

Jared Bradley Hunt

Jared Bradley Hunt, 43, passed away March 22, 2023.

Jared was born Oct. 22, 1979, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to James and Linda Hunt.

He was preceded in death by his father; paternal grandparents Phil and June, and maternal grandparents Don and Marry.

Jared is survived by his wife Stacy; daughter Olivia; his mother; brother Jason; his uncle Chuck; mother-in-law Dana; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Alternatives Cremation and Funeral Homes](#).

Jason R. Williams

Jason R. Williams, 42, passed away Feb. 25, 2023.

Jason was born Feb. 10, 1981, in Denison, Tex., to Jim and Berdie Williams.

He is survived by his partner Scott Fitzgerald; brother Carson Williams (Ericka); sister Jill Williams (Jayce Cogburn); parents Jim and Berdie Williams; and nieces Everly and Elliot.

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

James Michael Fulton

James Michael "Mickey" Fulton, 79, passed away March 8, 2023.

Mickey was born July 19, 1943, in Willows, Calif., to James and Venita Elwyn (Davis) Fulton.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters Barbara Jean (Fulton) LaDoucer and Judith Ann (Fulton) Pittsenbarger.

Mickey is survived by his wife Claudette Fulton; children Deja Rae (Fulton) McCarthy and Michael Eugene Fulton; sister Nancy Lee (Fulton) Pittsenbarger; grandchildren Xavier, Tyanna, and Brittany McCarthy; great-grandchildren Luna and Nova McCarthy; and many nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [F.D. Sweet and Son Funeral Home](#).

Gertrude Holland

Gertrude "Marie" Holland, 57, passed away March 30, 2023.

Marie was born March 20, 1966, in Dallas, TX., to Charles "Chuck" Pilkinton and Mary Holland.

She was preceded in death by her daughter Angel; her father; stepfather Jon; brother Robert; sisters Michelle and Heather; grandparents Ruth, Gertrude, and Oliver; nephew Michael; niece Alli; uncles Frankie and Ronnie; aunts Edith, Betty, Charlotte, Marilyn, and Georgia.

Marie is survived by daughters Mema and Shannon; sons Daniel, Jacob, and Joseph; grandchildren Caleb, Sofia, Mikhya, and Morgan; her mother; stepfather Guy; sisters Denise, Guynuth, and Laura; and other extended family and many caring friends.

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

Betty Sue Vavonese

Betty Sue (Harlin) Vavonese, 87, passed away April 12, 2023.

Betty was born Feb. 13, 1936, in Soper, Okla., to Bud A. Harlin and Amanda (James) Harlin.

She was preceded in death by parents; husband Gaetano "Don" Vavonese; and grandsons Donnie Wayne Vinson Jr. and Neco Ward.

Betty is survived by her daughters Acquanesha Dav-enport, Carmelita Summers, Patty Patton, and Tammy Walters; sons Robert Harlin, Phillip Harlin, and Clovis Ward; brother John E. Harlin Sawyer; 23 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren; and a host of other friends, family, and loved ones.

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

Boyce Ray Fobb

Boyce Ray Fobb, 78, passed away April 11, 2023.

Boyce was born Dec. 20, 1944, in Dunbar, Okla., to John Calvin Fobb and Ora Violet (Reece) Fobb.

He was preceded in death by his wife Loma Clouse; his parents; brothers David Fobb and Orville Westbrook; sister Martina Fobb; and son James Robert Fobb.

Boyce is survived by daughter Bonita Jacobs and fiance Eric Peters; stepdaughter Kathy Butler; stepson Norman Robinson; grandchildren Shannah Fobb, Antwine Fobb, Amanda Robinson, Tosha Knotts, Joshua Knotts, Christina Robinson, Cheri and Nick Leinweber, Cassandra Rodden, and Brady and Alexis Carter; great-grandchildren Hayden Scott Brae'lynn Williams, Armas Williams, Aidan Abushehada, Jason Rodden, Izaac Rodden, and Zayden Carter; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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

Willia Mae Carter

Willia Mae (Downey) Carter, 66, passed away April 14, 2023.

Willia was born Oct. 3, 1956, in Duncan, Okla., to Vance "Hamp" Wayne Downey and Cora Jean (Redwine) Downey.

She was preceded in death by her father; grandparents George and Anna May (Lester) Redwine and Hector and Willie Mae (Bloodworth) Downey.

Willia is survived by her husband Lee; daughter Melisa Ponder; sons Joseph Jennings and Paul Carter and spouse Crystal; her mother; sister Vickie Mitchell; grandchildren Vance Moore, Joseph Jennings, Vanna Carter, and Zoe Jones; numerous nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

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

Barbara Payne

Barbara Payne, 82, passed away March 28, 2023.

Barbara was born Feb. 12, 1941, in Bennington, Okla., to Edmond and Minnie (Thomas) Loring.

She was preceded in death by her husband Archie "Junior"; her parents; brother Elias Loring; and grandson Steve Crawford Jr.

Barbara is survived by her daughters Laveda (Steve) Crawford and Renita "Susie" (Tommy) Mayfield; grandchildren Keisha Howerton, Christian (Jessica) Crawford, Kuchasha Mayfield, Sunny Wilson, and Nikea (Jimmy) Johnston; eight great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Moore-Rose 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

ITI FABVSSA

Architectural History of the Choctaw Nation Capitol Buildings, 1834-1883

Long before the arrival of European people, our Choctaw ancestors had an advanced knowledge of architecture.

From hurricane-resistant traditional homes to monumental earthwork mounds as high as seven floors, our Choctaw ancestors have shown themselves to be an advanced society of architects.

Even after removal to what is the Choctaw Nation today, Choctaw people continued this tradition of building functional and architecturally beautiful places for the community to gather.

This month Iti Fabvssa looks at the architectural history of our capitol buildings from 1834 to 1883.

Nvnih Waiya (1834 - 1839)

Decades before removal, Choctaw people traveled on winter hunts to what is now today's eastern Oklahoma. Choctaw families hunted and camped on this land before we were forced to move here. After the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830, Choctaw leaders traveled to this region to identify locations where Choctaw people could resettle their communities and choose a location that would be the next seat for the Choctaw government.



Public Council House at Nvnih Waiya n.d. (1189, Czarina Conlan Collection, OHS). Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. Nvnih Waiya. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=NU002>.



Choctaw Council House "at Nvnih Waiya" near Tvshkahoma, Indian Territory, n.d., Oklahoma Historical Society. <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadoc231077>

It was later named Nvnih Waiya, after our Mother Mound in Mississippi. Located today between the Kiamichi River and Lake Nanih Waiya, the site is 1.5 miles west of present-day Tvshkahoma, Pushmataha County.

In 1834, Choctaw leaders met at Nvnih Waiya and reestablished our tribal government by adopting the second Constitution of the Choctaw Nation. Using funds set aside from our removal, the first council house was built close by in 1838 and was formally named Nvnih Waiya during the initial General Council meeting in the autumn of that year.

It was a tall, one-room building of logs notched together at the corners and rested on stacked stone piers. The gable roof was sheathed in wood shingles, and a large masonry chimney was located at

the rear. Photographic evidence shows at least two very large windows, a set of double doors in the front, and a side door. The structure was approximately 36 feet x 50 feet and much larger than most log homes in the area. The walls were approximately 20 feet high and required great effort and skill to hew, notch, hoist, and assemble the enormous logs to that height. The gable roof peak was approximately 30 feet high, and the large interior space and high ceilings would have felt grand and important.

The Nvnih Waiya building represented a rebuilding of a sovereign Choctaw government after removal and created national permanence, stability and dignity in the new land. Any money used to build this structure came directly from funds set aside for resettlement from the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.

In 1843, the General Council amended the constitution to establish a two-house legislature, much like U.S. Congress today. The Choctaw Senate occupied Nvnih Waiya, and the Choctaw House of Representatives building was constructed nearby. Both buildings were used through 1849. Neither building remains at the Nvnih Waiya site today.

Doaksville, Skullyville, Mayhew, Boggy Depot (1850-1863)

Intermittently between 1850-1858, the seat of the Choctaw government gathered at Doaksville because it had grown to be the largest community in Choctaw Nation and was adjacent to Fort Towson (1824-1854). Leaders also met in Skullyville in 1857, Mayhew in 1859 and Boggy Depot for various meetings between 1858 and 1861. At this time, we do not know which buildings were utilized by the Choctaw government when they met for official business. It is possible they met at a district courthouse, the Skullyville agency, stage houses and churches.

Pre-Civil War buildings in Oklahoma would have been constructed of hewn logs, stone, milled wood, and brick. A few may have been designed in an architectural style, but most would have been practical, of local materials, and in a modest size. For the safety of Choctaw leaders during the Civil War, Doaksville was used as the regular meeting place between 1860-1863. From 1863 to 1883, leaders met at the town of Chahta Tamaha in the Armstrong Academy for Boys.

Armstrong Academy (1863-1883)

Armstrong Academy was established in 1845. By 1863, the Armstrong Academy's first log building (1845-46) had been replaced with a two-story brick structure constructed from 1858-59. The academy was built in a mix of Georgian and Adamesque Colonial styles, the most recent and popular styles of their time.

The building featured a later brick addition in a simplified Italianate style, visible on the southwest or left side. It was likely constructed between 1875 and 1880. The buildings faced southeast, with two-story sleeping quarters and open porches at the rear.

The projecting, two-story front porch was typical of the Georgian style, as were the double-width brick walls laid in an English-bond pattern that switched back and forth between rows of brick ends and sides.

The building's Adamesque style features were its tall, narrow building proportions, slightly arched window openings with multiple glass panes, rounded arches on the open porch entrance, and the round carved medallion visible in the gable peak. The southwest addition's Italianate features include rounded tops on its long, narrow windows, a very tall one-story porch with a decorative rail above, and decorative brick chimneys.

The Choctaw Nation Council, Supreme Court, and legislative houses met in the main hall for 30 years. During the Civil War, the academy operated as a headquarters and a hospital.

In 1883, when the capital was moved to Tvshkahoma, the building returned to Academy use and operated until January of 1920, when it burned.

To learn more about the Armstrong Academy,



Armstrong Academy, c. 1860, <https://armstrongacademy.com/galleries/>



Armstrong Academy, Oklahoma Historical Society photo, c. 1880. <https://armstrongacademy.com/galleries/>

please use the QR code included in this article.

Sprinkled into this article are the architectural histories and brief descriptions of each of the Choctaw capitols.

This history is gathered and archived at the Historic Preservation Department for Choctaw Nation as part of our staff's mission.

Buildings that demonstrate the historical significance and look original to their construction may qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register began in 1966 and continues today, along with its sister, the National Historic Landmark program.

There are tens of thousands of buildings and archeological sites across the United States listed in the National Register. The National Historic Landmark program tallies approximately 2,500 properties.

In order for a property to be listed, the owner nominates it in a format similar to a high school term paper. The Historic Preservation Department staff assists with research ideas, edits, building descriptions, maps and photographs.

Ideally, the owner will present the nomination to the Professional Review Board for consideration. The Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C., makes the final listing decision.

The Historic Preservation Department is happy to report that the Capitol Museum was listed in 1970 and the archeological remains of Armstrong Academy in 1972. The National Register nominations were used in writing this article.

For additional information about the National Register, what properties may qualify, and the implications of listing, please contact the Choctaw Historic Preservation Department Architectural Historian Rolene Schliesman 580-642-2024, or Tribal Archeologist Kim Hinson 580-642-8619.

Follow along with this Iti Fabvssa series online at <https://www.choctawnation.com/biskinik/iti-fabvssa/>.

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Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Choctaw Nation's Home Finance Department is committed to helping find the right mortgage product for Choctaw tribal members. We understand that every borrower is different, and a variety of products are offered to meet individual requirements. We make the process of securing a mortgage loan simple and straightforward.

Choctaw tribal members living within the Choctaw Nation Reservation can apply for purchase, refinance, and construction loans. These loans are a fixed market interest rate for up to 30 years.

Down payment assistance loans are offered to Choctaw tribal members nationwide. Borrowers must apply with Choctaw Home Finance and be referred to a participating lender for any loans out of the state of Oklahoma.

Streamline home improvement loans are offered to Choctaw tribal members throughout Oklahoma. The streamline loan is up to \$15,000 and allows for home repairs and small home improvement projects. Appraisal and inspections may be required.

Credit repair loans are offered to Choctaw tribal members in the Choctaw Nation Reservation. This loan is up to \$10,000 and is subject to budget/credit counseling requirements.

Loan qualification is based on income and credit history. Let our knowledgeable staff assist you. Call us at 1-800-235-3087 or visit our website for more information <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/>.

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CHOCTAW TRAIL OF TEARS

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MAY 20, 2023

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Please join us as we remember our ancestors and their long walk from Mississippi to Indian Territory, later to become the state of Oklahoma. The Trail of Tears is a part of our tribal history that will not be forgotten.

CHAHTA HVPIA!

TVSHKA HOMMA CAPITOL GROUNDS
CEREMONY BEGINS AT 10:00 AM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Talking about mental health is key to healing

By Chris Jennings

Millions of families face the reality of living with a mental illness each year.

In 1949, May was designated Mental Health Awareness Month to bring more attention to this reality.

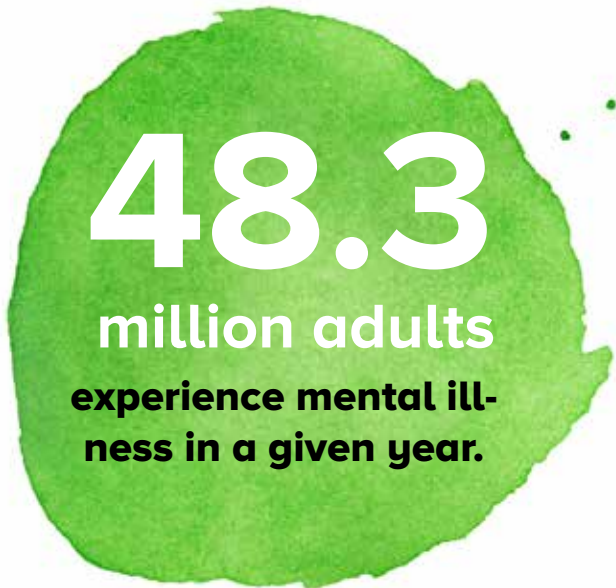
American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) face disproportional rates of mental health disorders, including suicide, violence and behavior-related morbidity and mortality.

Studies show AI/AN have higher rates of mental health problems.

These high rates result in AI/AN people reporting serious psychological distress, 2.5 times more than the general population over a month.

When it comes to who can be affected by mental health issues, the answer is everyone.

“Unfortunately, it can affect anyone and everyone. It really knows no bounds—there are risk factors for certain ones, but there is no way to predict who it will affect and, in turn, the families/loved ones it will also affect,” said Shauna Humphreys, director of Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health.



Mental health is an all-encompassing term that covers a lot of areas.

“When I think of mental health, I look at the whole body. Your physical health includes mental health and how you live your life at that moment,” said April Spears, a behavioral health case manager for the Choctaw Nation.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, Physical health problems significantly increase your risk of developing mental health problems, and vice versa.

Nearly one in three people with a long-term physical health condition also have a mental health problem, most often depression or anxiety.

One of the best ways to improve physical health is to get outside. Research shows that exercise releases endorphins, also known as feel-good chemicals, in the brain.

Even a short burst of 10 minutes of brisk walking can improve your mental alertness, energy and mood.

“There’s a direct connection to being outdoors and being physically active to improving overall well-being, decreasing depression, improving your mood and getting your metabolism going,” said Dr. Karina Walters, the incoming director of the Tribal Health Research Office at the National Institute of Health. “All of that really makes a huge difference. Even a 10-minute walk can have a positive impact on your mental health.”

Spending time in nature is linked to many positive mental health outcomes, including improved focus, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of developing mental health conditions and a sense of connection to yourself, community, and purpose.

The good news is you don’t have to go on a bike hike in a forest or run a marathon to get these benefits. It

can be simply walking in a park or sitting outside.

These steps are good for preventing some mental health issues. However, many people may not be aware or recognize they need help.

The Nation is on top of that, though.

Every time you go to a Choctaw Nation health clinic, you’re given a mental health screening as part of your intake.

“We do mental health screenings with every person at every visit. If they walk in for a doctor’s appointment, they will receive a screening on depression/mental health,” said Humphreys.

Based on these screenings, an integrated counselor may be brought in to speak with you.

“Anything that’s over a certain amount, the nurse notices, and then she can bring in one of our integrated counselors that we have in all of our clinics,” Spears said. “They can start that process of just asking how you’re doing, and it kind of just goes from there.”

There are also things you can do to keep an eye on the well-being of your friends and family members.

According to Spears, there are red flags you can watch for.

“It’s making sure there are no changes in their normal behaviors. That can be anything from not wanting to eat, not wanting to go to school or not participating in activities they normally want to participate in,” said Spears.

If you notice that something may not be right, it’s essential to let them know it’s okay to talk about it.

“Often reaching out for help is a sign of weakness, and we need to change that; it’s a sign of wisdom,” said Humphreys.

The stigma of talking about mental health is one of the biggest detriments to the healing process.

Walters wants people to understand that talking about these things is okay.

“This is okay to talk about. It’s not that this person’s weak; it’s that their plates are loaded, and they need some support... You don’t have to suffer in silence; this is something that we can talk about,” Walters said.

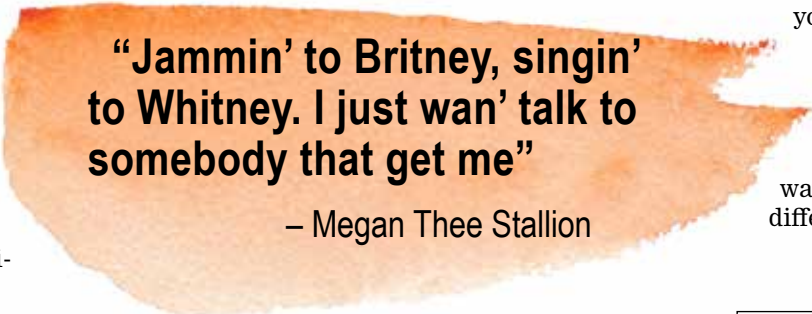
A possible sign that some of this stigma is being lifted is the number of celebrities that have come forward to talk about their mental health.

Ryan Reynolds has said he’s struggled with anxiety most of his life.

Meghan Markle has spoken about her suicidal ideation while she was pregnant.

Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson has talked about his struggles with depression.

Megan Thee Stallion also has a song where she raps about her anxiety and handling grief and trauma while being in the spotlight.



These conversations have helped to begin to destigmatize talking about mental health.

Spears says people often open up once they overcome this stigma and learn more about therapy.

“Stigma has always been a huge issue within behavioral health, but what we like to do is educate people. I think once they’re educated and understand therapy and how it works, they’re more open to it,” said Spears.

It’s not just adults with grown-up problems that face mental health issues; children also struggle with them. The Nation has ways of helping.

“We offer outpatient counseling for all ages, we have counselors certified in play therapy, we also have animal-assisted therapy, the Youth Center in Taliuhina is a safe place kids can go after school for that rural



community, and we have grants that offer prevention activities and information to youth,” Humphreys said.

Experts agree that being proactive in discussing mental health is vital as a parent.

You can expect your child to be stressed sometimes with homework, sports or just friends at school. It’s essential to encourage them to talk and to thank them for opening up when they do.

Walters says it’s important to pay attention to changes in children.

“The biggest thing is if you notice a change in behavior with young people, pay attention to that. Be patient, but you’ve got to reach out to your teenagers even though they may reject it at first,” Walters said. “It’s very important that they know you’re there for them and that you see them. And be open to maybe hearing things they’re afraid to share with you.”

You don’t have to have all the answers as a parent or family member. You can talk to counselors at any of the Choctaw Nation Clinics.

The Choctaw Nation Warrior Wellness program and the Operation Pop-Smoke app are available if you’re a veteran.

For more information on those programs, go to choctawnation.com/services/warrior-wellness/.

Individuals and family members facing mental or substance use disorders can call the National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available at 988 for those in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

The Crisis Text Line offers immediate help by texting NATIVE to 741-741.

No matter how you seek help for yourself or your friends or family members, it’s important to remember you have a community to rely on.

“One of the biggest protective factors for mental health is being connected and having a sense of belonging and community. Community can do that; family can do that; church can do that,” said Walters. “There are all kinds of ways that help people be connected that make a big difference in people’s well-being.”

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 | CHNSA.COM

DOWNLOAD THE MYCNHSA MOBILE APP NOW
ACCESS YOUR HEALTHCARE 24/7
The app is available to anyone who is a patient at any Choctaw Nation Health facility. Available now through the Apple App Store or Google Play.
Use your smartphone to scan the code and download the app.
Choctaw Nation Health Services

Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Contact Information

Atoka	(580) 889-1981
Broken Bow	(580) 584-2740
Durant	(580) 920-2100
Hugo	(580) 326-7561
Idabel	(580) 286-2600
McAlester	(918) 423-8440
Poteau	(918) 649-1100
Stigler	(918) 967-9200
Talihina	(918) 567-7000

You may also schedule an appointment via my.cnhsa.com.

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
Wilburton 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

Sun-Dried Tomato-Olive Hummus

- 2 15-ounce cans chickpeas, drained
- ½ cup plain low-fat yogurt
- ¼ cup freshly-squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ cup finely-chopped sun-dried tomatoes (not oil packed)
- ¼ cup sliced kalamata olives
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or Italian (flat) parsley
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts for garnish (optional)
- 1 teaspoon paprika (optional)

- Preparation**
- Combine chickpeas, yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, and cumin in a food processor or blender. Process until smooth. Consistency should be smooth but not runny.
 - Stir in tomatoes, olives and cilantro.
 - Refrigerate for 1 hour or longer to blend flavors.
 - To serve, top with pine nuts and/or paprika, if desired.



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.

May 2023
All markets open weekdays, May 1-26
Closed: May 29-31
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 May 4

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
Food demo May 11

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
Food demo May 18

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716
Food demo May 9

POTEAU 106 B St., 918-649-0431
Food demo May 16

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Texas-raised Choctaw thriving in Oklahoma thanks in large part to CNHSA services

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) has continued to significantly impact the health and well-being of tribal members and the surrounding community.

With 10 health clinics across the reservation, healthcare has become accessible to even more people.

From October 2021 to October 2022, CNHSA served 71,312 patients.

This number is expected to grow in coming years, according to Lisa G. Isaac, who oversees all patient care services for CNHSA.

"We are always striving to serve more tribal members and to improve our access. It's very apparent that the tribe feels as though the healthcare needs of our tribal members is very important because they continue to provide us with resources and serve a greater number of people," said Isaac. "If you look at the expansions that have taken place over the past few years, it's just been astronomical."

This emphasis on healthcare is vital for many people living within the reservation but also helps people across the country.

Many people travel from all over the United States to the CNHSA clinics. "We have people who come from all over; it's ever-increasing. We have had people who will drive their RV to healthcare centers in Oklahoma. They park their RV and get the care they need," Isaac said.

Mary Lee Williams is one example of these out-of-state visitors.

She grew up in San Angelo, Texas, without knowing her Choctaw heritage.

According to Williams, when her grandfather passed away, her grandmother started to share her family history.

Years after discovering her heritage, she found out about everything the Choctaw Nation had to offer.

"I started getting really interested in everything, but I never really pursued it. So later on in my thirties, I came to a festival in Oklahoma and I found out all about the Choctaws," explained Williams.

At that time, she and her husband, Darryl, owned a thriving family business in San Angelo that Mary Lee's parents started.

She then discovered the health care available through the Choctaw Nation and began scheduling appointments and traveling to Tahihina for her healthcare.

That was when a CNHSA doctor found that she had developed heart disease. To make her treatment more convenient, Williams and her husband decided to sell their business after 27 years and move back to Oklahoma, where Darryl had grown up.

Through the care of doctors in Tahihina, she was able to mitigate the effects of her heart disease and has continued to prevent further complications through the care at CNHSA.

Not long after moving back to Oklahoma and getting control of her heart problems, her husband developed chest pains, and she took him to the hospital in Tahihina.

After initial testing, he was scheduled for a procedure on his carotid artery and was recommended to see a specialist in Tulsa.

According to Williams, when the doctor in Tulsa was prepping her husband for surgery, he saw complete blockages in his heart and immediately rushed him into quadruple bypass surgery.

"The doctor said that he wasn't sure if

Darryl would make it through the night if he waited to do the procedure," said Williams.

Thankfully, the surgery was successful, but the recovery time took much longer than anticipated because of the severity of the damage.

That is when things became even more difficult for the Williams.

She said it took eight months for her husband to recover enough to be sent home.

This time was financially challenging for their family.

The Choctaw Nation stepped in to help them in their time of need.

"I don't know what we would have done. I thought, gee, family's not even this good. When you have a close-knit family, you think that it is always gonna work, but there's often a little conflict or something, but the Choctaw Nation was there to help us through everything, and if they couldn't help us, they would give us the resources that we needed," said Williams.

However, the cost of Williams staying in Tulsa with her recovering husband began to eat into the nest egg they had set aside for retirement after selling their business.

The rehabilitation from the heart surgery brought them back to Durant, and they decided to come out of retirement to rebuild some of their savings. One of the first places Williams looked for work was with the Choctaw Nation.

Her motivation was financially driven, but she said that the idea of working for the Nation that had helped her family so much was the main driver to look for work within the tribe.

Williams began working at the casino and then quickly transferred to her current position at the front desk of the Durant Community Center.

She was overjoyed to discover that she would be helping people in similar situations as her family had faced.

"When I came over here, I found out that I'm doing everything they did for me," said Williams. "Being here, I'm involved with all the programs. We have the forms for all the programs. I can't tell people what assistance they will get, but I can help them fill out the forms and help them contact who they need to contact and give them information on what may happen and may not happen."

Williams remembers how she felt when she received assistance, and she loves bringing people that same hope every day.

"I love this job. If I can make anyone feel as good as I felt when I was on the phone saying, 'I don't know what I'm gonna do.' They said, 'Well, we can do this for you.' It's just deja vu over and over," said Williams. "I love it because people will call me and tell me thank you later. I have lots and lots of thank you cards in my office, and I keep them, and they mean so much to me because it's so little, what I do, compared to what Choctaw did for us."

The Choctaw Nation's services continue to bring hope to desperate situations, whether providing healthcare, jobs, transportation or any other programs available.

These services benefit people on the reservation, the economy of Oklahoma, and those who live all over the United States.

"Here, I never tell people there isn't any hope because there is hope," said Williams.

For more information on available tribal services, please visit www.choctawnation.com/services.



Photos by Choctaw Nation

Mary Lee Williams is the front desk clerk at the Durant Choctaw Community Center. Williams was led to her position thanks to the help she received from CNHSA services.

Reclaiming traditions

Continued from page 1

The McKinney Family

Julia McKinney and her family went on some Mississippi trips, and her children were involved with the dance group Curtis Billy formed at Broken Bow High School.

"The story that I had read was that when they left Mississippi on the Trail of Tears, that they left Choctaw dancing and a lot of the culture," Julia said. "If it weren't for Gene doing that [the trips], the dances would have never come alive again."

Julia remembers the groups invited to dance at various schools and the Owa Chito Festival of McCurtain County in 1975.

She also remembers going on trips where they stayed at a church, slept on the floor and took their own food.

She recalls learning to cut dresses and shirts and watching stickball games and princess pageants. They all went to the Mother Mound. There was a cave no one else was entering, but Gene took the young people in it.

"They had a language department, and they were making films, but everything was in Choctaw, and I really enjoyed that too."

Julia is a fluent speaker of the Choctaw language.

According to Julia, after they returned from Mississippi, the group wrote a grant through the church to Helen Walton, owner of Walmart stores. She came to Oklahoma and watched the cutting out of the dresses.

A few years ago, Julia was honored by an artist who proudly credited Julia for teaching her how to cut out dresses.

Family members still participate in the dance troupe, and many have been honored in various ways for their teaching and participation.

"Every year, our kids have been part of it, and our grandkids are still dancing," Julia said.

Her children learned chanting from Jerry and Shirley Lowman, who learned it themselves in Mississippi throughout their years.

The McKinney family traveled with the dance group, and Julia made dresses and shirts for others, even for pageants.

Julia believes the original traditions were halted after the Trail of Tears. She said she asked her mother-in-law if she ever did the Choctaw dances. Her mother-in-law responded that her mother had spoken of



Photos by Shelia Kirven

Julia McKinney looks through a scrapbook of memories from the days of the cultural revitalization movement and trips to Mississippi.

dancing, but she wouldn't show her how.

Julia, an Oka Achkma Presbyterian Church member, has written out some of the histories she has researched and shared them with church members.

"We have been involved in church all of our lives," she said.

Julia's son, Karl, fondly remembers going on the Mississippi trips and learning how to play stickball.

"It was not a matter of getting hurt, but it was a matter of how bad you got hurt." Karl said, "The game has progressed to be less violent for the safety of the players."

Present Day

Today, Choctaws honor their ancestors' memories by remembering them through their customs and traditions.

Rev. Gene Wilson and his staff and family, the Billy family, the McKinney family, and all those who traveled to Mississippi, the Presbyterian Church, and Chief David Gardner are among the many who helped to bring Choctaw culture back to Oklahoma.

"Again, it's all about identity and that time to be identified as who you are and be proud of who you are, and for the students it increased their self-awareness and self-concept," said Curtis Billy. "In other words, it made us complete."



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Today, Choctaw culture is proudly passed on to new generations. Choctaws young and old are aware of their tribal history and traditions, thanks in large part to the efforts of those involved in the cultural revitalization movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

Mike Mings featured in new CNO series, 'Choctaw Proud'

DURANT, Okla. (April 10, 2023) - The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's new series of the Together, We're More campaign titled 'Choctaw Proud' features different tribal members each month. This month Choctaw Nation spotlights Pastor Mike Mings, a Tahihina native and Valliant community member.

Growing up in the Tahihina and Whitesboro areas of Oklahoma, Mings learned the importance of being a good neighbor from his father, who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for over 33 years. Mings saw his father help Choctaw families keep their land and send their children to college or trade school. Mings developed a strong sense of community and servant leadership through those experiences.

As a child, he spent most of his time working on his family's farm, helping care for the land and cattle, something he still does with his daughter. In addition to learning the value of hard work, he also learned the importance of taking care of things, "whether it was cattle, or life, or home or helping my parents," said Mings.

Spiritual faith was central in Mings' family when he was young. "My mom and dad took me to church nine months before I was born," he said, with a chuckle. "I'm very thankful for that heritage growing up."

A unique and humbling opportunity to work with people who have had challenges and difficulties different from his own left a lasting impression on Mings and shaped how he treats others.

As an adult, he spent 10 years working in a prison. "I think one of the lessons that God really taught me was how to be fair with people, treat everybody the same," he said. "Regardless of name, background, social status, ethnicity, it didn't matter to me. I wanted them to know that when they looked at me, they saw they were going to be treated fair. They were going to be treated with respect. They were going to be treated impartially, regardless of whatever crime they committed. That life lesson is one of the greatest I've ever learned."

Mings served as a counselor at the prison, working one-on-one with inmates when he "surrendered to preach" in 1996. He led Bible



Choctaw Nation Photo

Finding a purpose in life gives individuals a sense of direction. Pastor Mike Mings learned from his father that community service is a special calling.

classes at the prison and pastored at Green Hill Baptist Church, a Native American church in Tahihina before finding a permanent home at First Baptist Church in Valliant, Oklahoma, where he has been since 2001.

In addition to First Baptist Church of Valliant, Pastor Mings leads a congregation at The Watering Hole Cowboy Church in Garvin, Oklahoma. The cowboy church is unique in that it gives people who may not otherwise attend a traditional church service a way to worship and exercise their faith in a more informal, comfortable setting. In this case, a barn.

"One of the things that I find so fulfilling is just helping people find their way on this journey. Because everybody's on a journey," he said. "They ask me what wakes me up in the morning, what motivates me to do what I do, and it's just helping people. Day in, day out, there's not a day that goes by, including this very day, where you're not in the business of just being a blessing or helping someone any way you can."

Together, We're More features 18 tribal members from different careers, locations and walks of life, making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond. Each month the Choctaw Nation will release short stories of tribal members like Michaela and how they exemplify being 'Choctaw Proud.'

To watch Mings tell his story "More Than a Pastor" visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/bios/pastor/> or go to www.togetherwemore.com to learn more about how the Choctaw Nation is making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond.



LAWN SERVICES

APPLICATION NOW OPEN

- Must be between 18 and 64 years old with an ambulatory disability or 65 and older at the time the application is submitted
- Must meet income guidelines for the household
- Must be a tribal member residing in the Choctaw Nation's reservation boundaries
- Must be a homeowner or rental tenant (must be responsible for own lawn care)
- Other restrictions may apply



CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

Choctaws featured in Forbes article

By Christian Chaney

Forbes published an article in mid-March spotlighting Native Resident-Physicians titled “A Match Made Indigenous: Celebrating Incoming Native Resident-Physicians.”

To read the Forbes article, visit <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlopez-carmen/2023/03/19/a-match-made-indigenous-celebrating-10-incoming-native-resident-physicians/?sh=278666704a82>.

Featured in the article were two Choctaws, Matthew Frederickson and Ashley Durant. Both are Career Development clients and proudly model their Native culture.

Matthew Frederickson is completing medical school at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He matched with UC Davis-Sacramento Orthopedic Surgery in Sacramento, Calif., where he will spend the next six years.

“This is a very special landing spot for me because I was born in Sacramento while my parents were both medical students at UC Davis,” Frederickson said. “So, this feels very full circle. I’m excited to go back home and be near my family during a rigorous surgical training.”

Frederickson began working with Choctaw Nation’s Career Development program during medical school.

The program’s efforts made school more affordable and less stressful for Frederickson.

“I really appreciate their support, especially from BJ Albright, who helped me and other Choctaw students tremendously,” he said.

Ashley Durant, an Oklahoma native, is finishing her last semester at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine.

She matched with Northwestern University’s Emergency Medicine Residency.

Before deciding to attend medical school, Ashley was an ICU dietician.

She says meaningful access to equitable healthcare is her passion, ultimately leading her to choose Emergency Medicine as her specialty.

Durant utilized Choctaw Nation’s Career Development to help make her dream a reality.

“BJ Albright and the entire team in the career development program have been amazingly supportive during my medical school journey. First of all, medical school is so incredibly demanding of students that we are really unable to have jobs, even part-time, for the entire four years. There are also many expenses outside of tuition and textbooks that students are expected to purchase out of pocket, including online resources, exam preparation courses, question banks and board exams,” said Durant.

According to Durant, not only did the support from Career Development and Higher Education help her reduce the overall cost of student loans to pay for tuition, but she could also submit some extra expenses like board exams and even her medical license.

“I am moving across the country to begin my residency in a few months. Since I have not been able to earn an income in the last four years, having board exams and medical licenses paid for by the tribe gives me more money to put towards moving,” Durant said.

She plans to spend her career advocating nationally and with medical organizations to increase access to patients across all specialties and represent the Choctaw Nation as a healer and a teacher.

To learn more about Choctaw Nation’s Career Development program, please visit www.choctawnation.com/services/career-development/.



Photo Provided

Matthew Frederickson was recently matched with the residency program in Orthopedic Surgery at UC Davis-Sacramento.



Photo Provided

Ashley Durant was recently matched with the residency program in Emergency Medicine at Northwestern University.

Editor’s Note:

Also included in the Forbes article was Chris Rufus Sweeney. Sweeney, originally from Ada, Oklahoma, attended Brigham Young University for his undergraduate degree and participated in the Native American Research Internship at the University of Utah, culminating in a Science Magazine publication.

Later, as a medical student at the University of Wisconsin, Sweeney had the honor of serving with and being served by the Native American Center for Health Professions, helping to recruit and retain Indigenous students in health professions.

“Matching means I worked hard, yes, and it means that my family (including my Native family) worked extra hard to clear the ice and snow (metaphorically and, at times, literally) from my path so that I didn’t slip and fall,” said Sweeney in the Forbes article. “I am deeply grateful that I matched in Utah, where I will join a program that is uniquely driven to close mental health disparities in underrepresented minority populations.”



Photo Provided

Chris Rufus Sweeney was recently matched with his residency program in Psychiatry at the University of Utah.

Indigenous women-owned steakhouse bring fine dining to Fort Towson

By Christian Toews

Something new is happening at the historic train depot in Fort Towson, Oklahoma.

Cherokee visionary Cathie Carothers and Choctaw Chef Judy Fuhrhop have combined business savvy and cooking skills to bring fine dining to Choctaw County with the opening of the Fort Towson Depot Steakhouse.

Customers can experience high-end cuisine without driving to Dallas or Oklahoma City.

The Depot Steakhouse features cook-to-order steaks, creative appetizers, fine wines and homemade desserts in a white tablecloth setting.

Carothers was the inspiration behind the idea for the steakhouse.

She relocated to the area in 2013 and noticed the Fort Towson Depot building was empty.

Carothers dreamed of using that space to create a destination steakhouse to serve the local area and the increasing number of travelers headed to the expanding Hochatown, Oklahoma area.

“We are trying to rebuild the town. It’s very small; there aren’t many businesses here. We want it to become a destination location. This is one step in doing that,” said Carothers.

After extensive renovations, the depot has been completely reimagined from a train depot to an elegant dining area.

“I wanted a fine dining spot to eat,” Carothers explained. “The Raymond Gary Lake attracts people from all over who enjoy its quiet, scenic beauty. Ending an idyllic day with a relaxing meal makes the experience even more special.”

Carothers’ vision for the restaurant is apparent, from the color choices to the custom drink names. With crystal chandeliers, classically patterned wallpaper, and custom drapery, all designed and renovated by Carothers.

Fuhrhop grew up in Durant, Oklahoma, but her Choctaw County roots run deep. Her Choctaw grandfather is buried in

the historic Grant Cemetery. Fuhrhop and her husband wanted to come home to the Choctaw part of Oklahoma.

According to Fuhrhop, they were on a weekend drive when they found a picturesque home for sale on the shore of Lake Raymond Gary and knew they had found their place to call home.

“We fell in love with that view of the lake and put in an offer that same day,” Fuhrhop said.

The Depot Steakhouse is not Fuhrhop’s first restaurant experience.

For three years, she ran a successful sandwich shop and catering business in Sabine Pass, Texas.

Fuhrhop then relocated to Fort Worth, where she ran a kitchen design and remodeling business.

She organized and coordinated the annual food show, Zestfest, in Dallas-Fort Worth for 11 years.

“I am Grandma trained, not culinary

school trained,” said Fuhrhop. “I grew up with my grandmother and learned to cook in her kitchen; then honed my skills under the tutelage of Mrs. Winona Boatner, who was an icon of home economics education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.”

The restaurant was initially supposed to open in 2020, but supply chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the plans.

Everything finally came together in late August of 2022, and Fort Towson Depot Steakhouse was able to begin service.

The steakhouse is open Friday night and Saturday night for menu service, plus Sunday for an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet.

The restaurant has rapidly grown in popularity. At customers’ request, the steakhouse will also be open on Thursday evenings, beginning April 2023.

There will be a ribbon cutting and open house on June 8, 2023. Carothers and Fuhrhop invite everyone to the ribbon cutting at 4 p.m., and open house at 5 p.m. Visit their Facebook page to learn more about Fort Towson Depot Steakhouse.



Photos by Christian Toews

Choctaw Chef Judy Fuhrhop (left) and Cherokee visionary Cathie Carothers (right) bring fine dining to Choctaw County with the opening of the Fort Towson Depot Steakhouse (above).



I AM CHOCTAW PROUD

SCAN CODE TO VIEW STORIES

TogetherWereMore.com

CAROLE AYERS EXHIBIT
APRIL 11 - OCTOBER 14

KEEPING OUR HERITAGE: CHOCTAW PEOPLE, LIFE, AND ANIMAL KINSHIP

This exhibit will display many of District Nine elder and Choctaw artist Carole Ayers’ watercolor paintings which highlight Choctaw heritage and celebrate our culture in its diverse forms.

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

Celebrating Easter with Choctaw Nation

By Kendra Germany-Wall

This year, the Choctaw Nation celebrated Easter with two fun-filled events.

On April 1, the Choctaw Cultural Center hosted its annual Easter Eggstravaganza.

This BYOB (Bring Your Own Basket) event included an egg hunt, photos with the celebratory chukfi (bunny), storytelling, Easter ornament making and much more.

In addition to the activities, visitors were able to explore the Choctaw Cultural Center and dine in Champuli Café.

Hundreds of visitors, young and old, attended Chief Batton's Easter Celebration on April 8 on the capitol grounds in Tvshka Homma.

The event was a day filled with fun in the sun, with events for everyone to enjoy.

The day kicked off with the April Tribal Council Meeting, held in the historic Choctaw Capitol Building. The meeting was held in the Capitol Building due to the current construction process of the new Council House.

The youth stickball tournament was held

throughout the day, with kids from across the Reservation showing off their skills on the field.

The Easter event itself began with speeches from Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and Chaplin Olin Williams, followed by lunch and a gospel music performance by the McNeills.

Once again this year, over 11,000 candy and prize-ticket-filled eggs were dropped from a helicopter onto the softball fields for young visitors to hunt.

Elders weren't excluded from the hunting festivities. Elders, ages 55 and up, could hunt eggs on the Capitol Lawn.

Visitors were also able to take photos with live Easter bunnies.

During the prize-egg drawing at the end of the event, one lucky individual from each age group was chosen to win the grand prize.

To stay up-to-date on all upcoming Choctaw Nation and Cultural Center events, follow them on all social media platforms. You can also visit <https://www.choctawnation.com> or <https://choctawculturalcenter.com/> for more information.





CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

FOOD VENDOR APPLICATION
NOW ONLINE

Sign up now to register as a food vendor at the 2023 Choctaw Labor Day Festival.

The deadline for applications is May 31, 2023.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CALL 580.642.6679
EMAIL TRIBALEVENTS@CHOCTAWNATION.COM



SCAN QR CODE TO APPLY

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CCC prints children’s magazine for members

DURANT, Okla. – The Choctaw Cultural Center Membership Program, which got underway at the beginning of the year, is now providing a new children’s magazine. The publication is aimed at ages 4-12 and filled with fun cultural and educational activities. For those who enroll in the annual Group (or Family) Membership called Chukka Achvffa, the new Villa im Anoli, or Tell the Child magazine, is now available.

Warm Season, Volume One of Villa im Anoli is the first of a bi-annual publication featuring eight pages of original artwork, pictures to be colored, a crossword puzzle, Choctaw language lessons, and more. Tribal and non-tribal members alike can find hours of enjoyment while learning about Choctaw heritage. The second volume, Cool Season will be released in the fall.

Memberships cover unlimited complimentary admission to the cultural center’s permanent exhibitions, the changing exhibition gallery, the Luksi Activity Center, the Living Village, Kowi Chito Theater, and many special workshops and classes that would otherwise have an added fee. In addition, members receive one complimentary soft drink at Champuli Café per visit; a \$25 gift card to Champuli Café; 20 percent discount at Hvshi Gift Shop on select items; a branded magnet; invitations to members-only events; advanced notice for classes; and entry into quarterly drawings. Now, the children’s bi-annual magazine will also come to Chukka Achvffa members.

Chukka Achvffa (Group/Family) membership is \$100 each year, which includes two adults and up to four children. For this and other membership level information (some as low as \$40) visit <https://chocta.ws/cc-membership> or call 833-708-9582. The Choctaw Cultural Center is located at 1919 Hina Hanta Way in Durant.

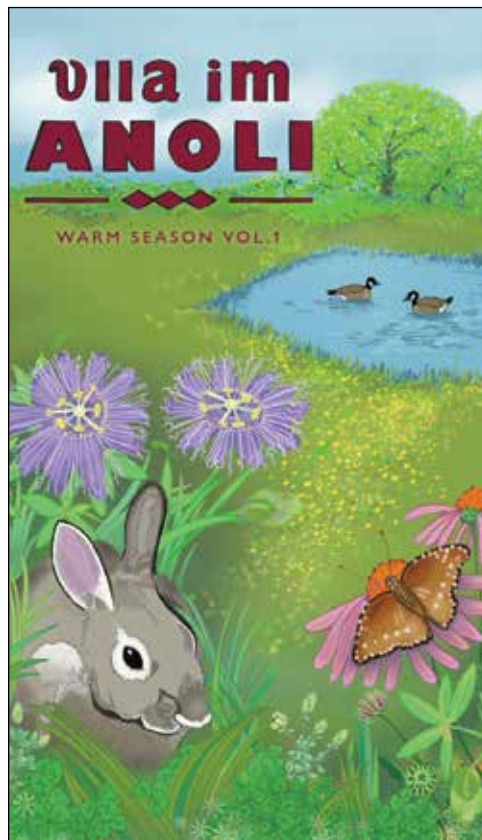


Photo Provided

Pictured is the cover of the new Choctaw Cultural Center children’s coloring book designed for new members.

About the Choctaw Cultural Center
The Choctaw Cultural Center is dedicated to exploring, preserving, and showcasing the culture and history of the Choctaw people. The exhibits are immersive and told from the Choctaw perspective – honoring the physical and spiritual journey of the Choctaw people, the “Chahta Nowvt Aya.” Located in Durant, Oklahoma, the Choctaw Cultural Center includes over 100,000 square feet of rich, living exhibitions, a vast Living Village, classrooms, a theater, café and retail that combined, bring the Chahta spirit of faith, family and culture to life! For more information, visit choctawculturalcenter.com.

Indian Affairs awards \$3 Million in Tribal tourism grants

Thirty tribes and organizations set to receive funding to support economic development.

WASHINGTON (March 16, 2023) – The Indian Affairs Office of Indian Economic Development announced today the awarding of more than \$3 million in Tribal Tourism Grant Program funding to 30 federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations. The grants, which range in value from \$30,000 to \$150,000, are funded for one-year. “Empowering Tribal Nations to build their economies through the Tribal Tourism Grant Program is part of Indian Affairs’ mission to support Tribal self-determination and sovereignty,” said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland. “Revitalizing Tribal economies is key to our goal of making lives better for people in Tribal communities as we work to undo the harms caused by policies of the past.”

The Tribal Tourism Grant Program supports Tribal economic development and fulfills the mission of the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience

Act, also known as the NATIVE Act, by providing funding for tribes to conduct feasibility studies to help them make informed decisions about potential tourism projects. The program also provides financial support for Tribes to develop business plans for already completed tourism feasibility studies or for Tribal tourism businesses that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Feasibility studies and business plans empower Tribes and Tribal Organizations to make informed decisions on potential tourism projects and businesses.

The Office of Indian Economic Development administers the Tribal Tourism Grant Program, which is a competitive discretionary program, through its Division of Economic Development. All awarded grantees can be viewed on the Tribal Tourism Grant Program web site. Questions about these awards may be addressed to Mr. Dennis Wilson, Division of Economic Development grant management specialist, at 505-917-3235 or at dennis.wilson@bia.gov.

For more information about Office of Indian Economic Development’s mission and programs, visit <https://www.indianaffairs.gov/as-ia/ied>.

CNO tribal member selected to lead NIH Tribal Health Research Office

By Chris Jennings

Dr. Karina L. Walters, Ph.D., M.S.W., has been selected as the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Tribal Health Research Office (THRO).

In a press release, the acting director of the NIH, Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D., said, “Dr. Walters’ wealth of experience and deep commitment to engaging tribal leadership in health research efforts makes her ideally suited for the position. Her commitment to community-based participatory research is evident in her demonstrated ability to sustain collaborations with diverse Native communities and conduct successful randomized clinical trials in tribal communities.”

In her new role, Walters will work directly with 27 different institutes and centers within NIH, such as the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Aging, among others. “With each of those institutes, my job is to build bridges and to ensure that they’re including American Indian/Alaska Native research (AI/AN),” Walters said.

Walters has had an opportunity to work directly with the Choctaw Nation in developing programs that benefit the health of tribal members. One program, Yappalli, is geared towards Native women and helping them become health leaders in their communities through exercise and community events such as re-walking the Trail of Tears.

Another program Walters has worked on with another Choctaw woman, Michelle Johnson Jennings, is Wakaya, a program geared more toward the younger generation. Walters describes Wakaya as “A physical activity program to

get Native high schoolers up and out and active. Off their screens and out in the community and out in nature to do cultural activities,” she said.

Walters is the founding director of the Indigenous Wellness Research Institute (IWRI), one of the first American Indian Alaska Native research institutes in the country primarily run by Native faculty and Native staff. Walters said the IWRI has had at least 11 training programs and has assisted over 410 American Indian and Alaskan Native scientists and trainees, from doctoral students to eighth graders.

Walters is excited to start her new role.

“I look to serve all Indian people and hope to be able to be at the forefront in developing science by and for our communities so that it could serve our public health and help us reduce our inequities and live healthfully,” said Walters.

Walters is a tenured full professor and the Katherine Hall Chambers Scholar at the University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work. She is also an adjunct professor in the Department of Global Health and the School of Public Health. Before her current positions, Walters served from 2012-2019 as Associate Dean for Research at the UW School of Social Work, overseeing and assisting faculty in generating \$20-30 million in grants annually.

She has over 28 years of AI/AN health research experience, encompassing foundational science, disease prevention, health promotion, and intervention research. She has conducted social epidemiological research on the environmental, historical, social, and cultural determinants of health and health equity in AI/AN communities and designed and empirically tested trib-



Photo Provided

Walters will work directly with 27 different institutes and centers within NIH, to build bridges and ensure that they are including AI/AN in their research.

ally derived chronic disease prevention interventions.

Much of her early social epidemiological research involved LGBT, Two Spirit, and urban AI/AN populations across the United States. Additionally, she has conducted tribal-based intervention research in substance use disorders, obesity prevention and physical activity promotion, diabetes and depression, and HIV prevention. She has served as an NIH principal investigator or co-investigator on 35 NIH awards from multiple NIH Institutes. She is the first American Indian fellow inducted into the American Academy of Social Welfare and Social Work (AAS-WSW).

As director of THRO, Walters will work to advance initiatives to ensure tribally informed biomedical and behavioral research, enhance NIH’s tribal consultation and tribal engagement efforts, and coordinate AI/AN research and research-related activities across NIH and with other federal entities.

Walters earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and an M.S.W. and a Ph.D. in social welfare, also from UCLA.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE’RE MORE ♦

May 2023

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Shining a light on mental health issues during Mental Health Month.



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Indigenous women bring fine dining to Fort Towson.

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.

Stay Connected to the Nation
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Tribe or Tribal Organization	City	State	
Haida Corporation	Hydaburg	Alaska	\$150,000
Hualapai Tribal Council	Peach Springs	Arizona	\$150,000
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Okmulgee	Oklahoma	\$149,423
Village of Kaktovik (AKA Barter Island)	Kaktovik	Alaska	\$149,270
Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation	Ramona	California	\$149,212
Penobscot Indian Nation	Indian Island	Maine	\$149,010
Blackfeet Tribe	Browning	Montana	\$125,388
Bay Mills Indian Community	Brimley	Michigan	\$125,000
Spirit Lake Tribe	Fort Totten	North Dakota	\$125,000
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	Durant	Oklahoma	\$125,000
The Chickasaw Nation	Ada	Oklahoma	\$124,122
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	Livingston	Texas	\$120,291
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center	Albuquerque	New Mexico	\$113,251
Crow Tribe of Indians	Crow Agency	Montana	\$112,771
Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness	Bangor	Maine	\$105,000
Leach Lake Reservation Business Committee, Inc.	Cass Lake	Minnesota	\$104,515
Burns Paiute Tribe	Burns	Oregon	\$102,300
Oneida Indian Nation	Oneida	New York	\$101,762
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation	Mayetta	Kansas	\$82,764
Northern Arapaho Tribe	Ethete	Wyoming	\$78,701
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Rosebud	South Dakota	\$75,190
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana	Eilton	Louisiana	\$72,672
Nansemond Indian Nation	Suffolk	Virginia	\$71,720
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	Hayward	Wisconsin	\$63,000
Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California	Oroville	California	\$55,066
Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Sitka	Alaska	\$54,708
Nez Perce Tribe	Lapwai	Idaho	\$49,408
Elk Valley Rancheria, California	Crescent City	California	\$48,600
Chippewa Cree Tribe	Box Elder	Montana	\$45,755
Native Village of Chenega	Anchorage	Alaska	\$30,916

CHOCTAW POWWOW

2023

NOVEMBER 3 - 5

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