

## Five inducted into 2025 Chickasaw Hall of Fame



Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby, left, and Lt. Governor Chris Anoatubby, right, with 2025 Chickasaw Hall of Fame Inductees and their families. From left: Gina Brown, Lisa John, LaDonna Brown, Susan Woods, Molly Hansen, Brooke Hansen, Michael Hansen, Tobi Merritt Edwards Young, Michael Keith Crossley and Rena Bell Duncan.

ADA, Okla. – Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby inducted five Chickasaws into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame April 17. Inductees include a distinguished war hero, a trailblazing civic leader, a driven athletic coach and mentor, a steadfast tribal advocate and a groundbreaking attorney.

The 2025 inductees, Wilson James Brown and Jessie Elizabeth Randolph Moore, honored posthumously; Michael Keith Crossley; Rena Bell Duncan; and Tobi Merritt Edwards Young were honored in ceremonies at the Ataloa Theatre on the East Central University (ECU) campus.

“Each year, during the Chicka-

saw Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, we celebrate the lives, accomplishments and legacies of remarkable Chickasaw citizens,” Governor Anoatubby said.

“Chickasaw Hall of Fame inductees are inspirations through their hard work, dedication and acts of service. Tonight, we honor five exceptional Chickasaws who

represent a range of achievements in public and military service, education and athletics, law, and contributions to the Chickasaw Nation and the Chickasaw people.

“Their accomplishments and stories offer a glimpse into the immeasurable impact Chickasaws have had throughout history. Our inductees’ stories add to the remarkable and ongoing stories of the great Chickasaw Nation,” Governor Anoatubby said.

### Wilson James Brown (1920-1994)

Wilson Brown was a U.S. Army and Air Force Reserve veteran who served during World War II. He was born June 30, 1920, to Andy and Clara Allen Brown in Jesse, Oklahoma. He attended Jones Academy in Hartsborne before enlisting in the U.S. Army Jan. 15, 1942.

Brown served for 20 years in the U.S. Army and 10 years in the Air Force Reserve. He was present at D-Day plus two and entered Europe from Omaha Beach June 8, 1944. In December of that year, he fought in the Ardennes region of Belgium throughout the Battle of the Bulge, a major turning point in the war. He was respon-

sible for spotting German forces. Brown found himself at the helm of a tank during this conflict and operated it in defense of himself and his men until he was injured. His heroic actions throughout his service earned him many accolades, including the American Campaign Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

He married the late Pauline Carpenter March 5, 1954, and they had four children – Milton, LaDonna, Gina and Lisa. Brown was a fluent Chickasaw speaker and was active in tribal affairs. He represented Pontotoc County on the steering committee for the Constitution of the Chickasaw Nation during the 1970s and 1980s. Brown was the first chairperson of the Chickasaw Community Council. He was also active with Yellow Springs Methodist Church and led native hymns.

In 1973, Brown received his General Educational Development degree and later attended Oklahoma Christian University and Seminole Junior College. He was employed by Tinker Air Force Base for more than 20 years before retiring. He passed away

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## Inter-Tribal Council passes resolutions supporting Oklahoma forestry department, IHS leader

The Inter-Tribal Council (ITC) of the Five Civilized Tribes passed a resolution to advance the name and support of Rear Adm. Travis Watts for Director of the Indian Health Service at its quarterly meeting April 11 at WinStar World Casino and Resort.

“The Indian Health Service provides public health, preventative, curative, and community health care to more than 2.6 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in hospitals, clinics, and other health settings throughout Indian Country,” the resolution reads. Watts worked in the early 1990s as a clinical pharmacist for IHS, which began his career with the organization.

A member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Watts has earned numerous awards for his service to Indian Health Service, including the USPHS Outstanding and Distinguished Service Medals, the USPHS Allen J. Brands - Clinical Pharmacist of the Year Award and multiple IHS Director's Awards.

The resolution said, “...under his tenure as Area Director, the Oklahoma City Area maintains



Tribal leaders include, from left: Muscogee Nation Principal Chief David Hill, Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr., Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Chief Gary Batton and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Chief Lewis Johnson.

among the lowest vacancy rates in the Indian Health Service, has reduced unobligated fund balances, provides high quality health services, and fosters exceptional partnerships with the Tribes of the Area...”

Watts has regularly attended

ITC meetings as Director of the Oklahoma City Area IHS.

The resolution says the ITC believes Watts “is a dedicated Indian leader and has exceptional experience and ability to deliver quality healthcare to Indian Country.”

The ITC passed seven resolu-

tions at its quarterly meeting, including:

·Resolution 25-01 – A resolution opposing the elimination of the Oklahoma Forestry Services and affirming tribal support for collaborative wildfire response and land stewardship.

·Resolution 25-02 – A resolution urging Auburn University to remedy the deplorable duty of care conditions in which Auburn stores ancestors, and further to respect Native traditional kinship systems.

·Resolution 25-03 – A resolution supporting the continuation of the HUD 184 program.

·Resolution 25-04 – A resolution in support of the extension of advanced premium tax credits.

·Resolution 25-05 – A resolution to advance the name and support of RADM Travis Watts for director of the Indian Health Service.

·Resolution 25-06 – A resolution supporting the passage of the North American Grasslands Conservation Act.

·Resolution 25-07 – A resolution urging the federal government of the United States not to terminate the lease of the Southeast Regional Archeological Center (SEAC) in Tallahassee, Florida.

The next ITC meeting will be hosted by the Muscogee Nation July 9-11 at River Spirit Hotel & Casino, Tulsa.

## Kaya Johnson top artist in 2025 Butterfly Art competition



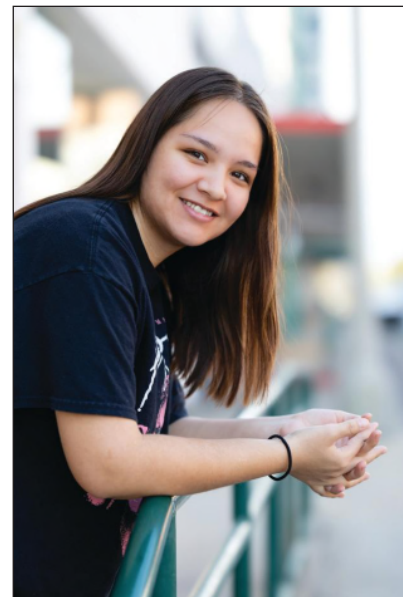
Kaya Johnson's winning entry features vivid shades of orange and pink and includes Chickasaw inspired elements. It is the featured artwork of the 2025 Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference.

Kaya Johnson has been creating art since she was old enough to hold a pencil.

The 18-year-old Chickasaw artist was recently named the winner of the Chickasaw Nation Butterfly Art Contest. Her winning entry features vivid shades of orange and pink and includes

Chickasaw inspired elements. The original creation is the featured artwork of the 2025 Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference.

While planning for her butterfly art submission, Johnson researched Chickasaw regalia, symbols and traditional clothing.



Artist Kaya Johnson, 18, was recently named the winner of the Chickasaw Nation Butterfly Art Contest.

“I took bits and pieces here and there and put them all on the butterfly,” Johnson said.

“Each wing features a wispy feather fastened by a large, pink flower with a yellow center, reminiscent of a dream catcher. Pink represents femininity,” she said.

Johnson is a 2024 valedictorian graduate from Achille (Oklaho-

ma) High School.

She is a third-year student at Kiamichi Technology Center, Durant, Oklahoma, and is set to graduate in the spring semester of 2025 with several certifications in graphic design.

Johnson is honored that her art was selected as this year's winner.

“It definitely feels good to be recognized for what I can do,” she said.

The Chickasaw Nation hosts the Butterfly Art Contest each year, where female Chickasaw citizens, ages 14 to 18, create unique butterfly art pieces for consideration to serve as the artwork for the annual Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference. This conference salutes the valuable contributions, talents and skills of Chickasaw women.

The winning butterfly design also represents the Chikasha Ihoov Empowerment Series, a quarterly event that highlights the accomplishments and perspectives of Chickasaw women.

Johnson's goals include attending Southeastern Oklahoma State

University this fall to pursue a degree in art education.

In her free time, Johnson likes to draw and paint, which she has been doing since she was young. She credits her elementary school art teacher, Judy Stephens, for inspiring her to embrace her inner artist at a young age.

“She really sparked that artist in me,” Johnson said.

Johnson's parents are Logan and Karin Johnson, of Achille, Oklahoma.

Johnson said she looks forward to attending the Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference.

The Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference is set May 29-30, 2025. Virtual and in-person attendance will be available for this year's conference. Visit Chickasaw.net/DynamicWomen for information about the conference and the Chikasha Ihoov Empowerment Series.

# Chickasaw's creation wins first at Red Earth



Melissa Freeman

A Choctaw wedding dress created by Chickasaw artist Melissa Freeman captured top honors recently at the prestigious 39th annual Red Earth Festival, featuring First American artists from across the nation.

The full-sized satin, lace and organza veil and train, along with a purse, necklace and pucker-toed moccasin accessories won first place in Red Earth's Clothing/Textiles and Weaving Division in March.

Three completely diverse types of fabric were utilized to create it. It is not the first time Freeman's work - titled "Chahta Ohoyo Wedding Dress" - has been judged best in the textile division of art shows.

It won first place at the 2023 Southeastern Art Show and Market, first place at the 2024 Artesian Arts Festival and Best of 3D category at the 2024 Hushtola Art Market.

It was created over a three-month period.

"I would put in 12-hour days making it," Freeman said. "I might take a day off. However, I would

get up in the morning, work 12 hours and then go back to bed," Freeman explained. "It was intensive work. The diamonds have to be placed and sewn by hand. The most meticulous part of the dress must be finished by hand.

"Once I start on a dress, it becomes a part of me. I feel it and dedicate myself to finishing it by working long hours," she noted. "You have a creation in your mind's eye, and you want to see it to fruition."

However, it is Freeman's second place winning exhibit at Red Earth that is closest to her heart.

Titled "Onnahinli Okhlika," the all-black floral brocade, Choctaw diamond dress is completed with teardrop shaped beads on the apron and has a fabric with crosses that are hand placed behind the diamonds.

Freeman designed and made the dress to honor her late father, Nathan Nelson, who passed in November 2024. Brocade is often referred to as "embossed cloth" and has a rich history dating back to elaborate Chinese garments.

"I wrote a description of the dresses and why I created them so patrons would know what they represented," the Oklahoma City native said. "I am still quite emotional about it. Onnahinli Okhlika was made to honor him."

Diamonds are present on both works of art in tribute to the Choctaw Nation. The diamond-back rattlesnake is considered sacred by the tribe. The viper protected crops and harvested grains from rodents and small animals, according to Freeman.

The dressmaker explained Choctaw dresses have ruffles and a diamond pattern on them that are long on the garment, so the rattlesnake understands it is

honored by tribal members.

Freeman is a Chickasaw citizen and enjoys Chickasaw and Choctaw heritage. She makes Chickasaw and Choctaw dresses for many citizens of both tribes. She also makes Chickasaw and Choctaw shirts for men of both tribes.

Freeman said her father was Choctaw, while her mother, Catherine Wade, is Chickasaw and Choctaw. It was her mother who inspired her to sew and create as a child. Her mother is also a fluent speaker of Choctaw.

"Mom was terribly busy with work, home and kids, but she found a little time for her hobbies of sewing and crocheting. In retirement, she made it a priority for the grandkids to learn their language. I benefited from that as well because there was no time for us to learn growing up," Freeman said.

As a stay-at-home mom, Freeman did not throw herself into the textile craft full time until 2018.

"I crafted a dress for my daughter when she was 3 years old when I attended a Choctaw dress-making class. It was mostly hand-sewn. I would make little outfits for action figures and Barbies as my husband is a toy collector. I decided to work on dresses and learned by asking dressmakers, observing and trial and error. When my kids had graduated from high school and began college, I decided to start entering art shows."

She and her husband, Guy, have two children. Daughter, Madeleine, 25, graduated from Yale University and now works for the Choctaw Nation as a language specialist. Her son, Aeneas, 24, is attending Oklahoma City University School of Law.



"Chahta Ohoyo Wedding Dress" took first place at Red Earth Festival for Chickasaw citizen Melissa Freeman. The all-white dress is made of three different materials and took more than three months to complete.



"Onnahinli Okhlika," (Dark Morning) took second place at Red Earth. It honors Freeman's father, Nathan Nelson, who passed away in November 2024.

CONTRIBUTED BY Gene Lehmann, Media Relations

## Impa'chi Meals provided for children at no cost during summer break

With spring and summer break around the corner, the Chickasaw Nation Impa'chi program is here to bridge the hunger gap. The program provides nutritious meals at no cost to children ages 1-18 even when school is not in session during seasonal breaks.

Meals are offered every week at no cost, year-round. Any child can receive a meal by visiting a participating location at the designated time. There is no limit to the number of days a child can attend Impa'chi meal events each week.

For a full list of mealtimes and locations, visit ChickasawNationHealth.net/MealsForKids.

For more information, contact nutrition services at (580) 272-2526.

## Artesian Arts Festival Rescheduled to June 7

The Artesian Arts Festival has been rescheduled June 7, 2025.

An outdoor event, the annual Artesian Arts Festival is a day-long celebration of First American art and culture.

Hosted by the Chickasaw Nation, the Artesian Arts Festival welcomed more than 14,400 art patrons to downtown Sulphur last year.

For more information and up-

dates, visit ArtesianArtsFestival.com or Chickasaw Nation social media pages on Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram.

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Lunch provided by the Chickasaw Warrior Society

To register, visit [Chickasaw.net/VetConf](http://Chickasaw.net/VetConf) or call (580) 272-2550.

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All editorials and letters will become the property of the Chickasaw Times. Editorials must be signed by the author and include the author's address.

Deadline for submission is the 15th of each month prior to publication. Submissions can be mailed, faxed, hand-delivered or emailed.

# The Chickasaw Nation expands services to keep citizens safe in weather emergencies

The spring season is in full swing, and with it comes unpredictable weather. It is essential for many around the country to take proactive steps to prepare for severe weather. In the Chickasaw Nation, and around the region, we understand that weather can change in an instant and can range from thunderstorms to tornadoes and even flash floods, sometimes within a day.

The key to overcoming these challenges lies in preparation and community support. At the Chickasaw Nation, we are fortunate to have a strong emergency management team and first responders in place that work tirelessly to support Chickasaws and our communities during weather events. We also offer a range of services and resources designed to help prepare for and respond to severe weather.

To help keep Chickasaws safe and minimize home damage year-round during several types of weather, we recently expanded the previous storm shelter program and renamed it the Homeowner Preparedness Grant, and increased grant funding. This program is available to Chickasaw homeowners around the country and offers funding for natural disaster preparedness equipment and items, such as storm shutters, generators, sandbags and pier wrapping.



GOV. BILL ANOATUBBY

This month, many Chickasaws will be realizing their educational goals as they graduate from high school, college, career technology center, trade school and other programs. We congratulate all of the Chickasaw gradu-

We also encourage all Chickasaws to update their address with the Chickasaw Nation by adding your current information online at Chickasaw.net/AddressChange. This will ensure citizens and families receive important news and resources, and help the tribe respond and assist with weather events, if needed.

If Chickasaws are impacted by weather, natural disasters or crises, the Chickasaw Nation Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund is available to assist with relief and recovery efforts.

ates across the country for their dedication and perseverance to reach this milestone. We recognize the hard work it takes to reach this goal and commend each graduate for their success. We look forward to everything you will achieve in the future.

For those continuing their education, a variety of resources are offered to assist in your education journey. Higher education grants, scholarships and incentives are available to Chickasaw college students each semester and the student support program offers general financial assistance to overcome any barriers related to postsecondary opportunities.

The Chickasaw Nation Career and Technical Education (CTE) Assistance Program offers assistance to Chickasaws attending a state or nationally accredited career technology center, trade school or private licensed training facility.

These resources and more are available to ensure Chickasaw students have the necessary resources, tools and support to succeed in any educational environment as they work to achieve educational success.

This is a great time of year and there is much to celebrate and appreciate. We hope you and your friends and family have a safe and enjoyable spring!

# Nike N7 Youth Movement Field Day boosts sports, community and cultural enrichment at OSU



Nannola Wallace plays stickball with friends at the 10th annual Nike N7 Youth Movement Field Day at Oklahoma State University.

The sound of children playing and coaches cheering rang out from Gallagher-Iba Arena April 2, 2025, during the 10th annual Nike N7 Youth Movement Field Day at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

The event brought together First American youth from across the state for a day of sports, culture and community.

Hosted by the Chickasaw Nation and the OSU Center for Sovereign Nations in collaboration with the OSU Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and Nike's N7 program, the event encouraged physical wellness and

cultural engagement through a variety of activities for students from third to eighth grade.

Collegiate athletes coached and supported students as they participated in basketball, kickball, football and traditional stickball.

"My favorites are the basketball station and the stickball station," Chickasaw seventh grader Nannola Wallace said.

The event provided a platform for youth to connect with peers from different schools and tribal nations while engaging in team-building sports promoting physical wellness.

"It's been fun having them

help us get better at everything," Chickasaw fifth grader Kaden Gore said about the OSU student athletes helping field day attendees participating in games.

The field day also offered First American youth interested in a future sports career the chance to engage with college athletes and ask questions about the OSU sports program.

"This is probably one of our most influential events, especially with our middle school to junior high kids," Trevan Jimboy, director of youth activities for the Chickasaw Nation, said. "Getting to meet college athletes, getting to meet a lot of Native American athletes, I think allows our youth to feel that the next level of sports is attainable."

Students not necessarily interested in pursuing sports outside of primary school also benefit from the event. Many experiencing a university environment for the first time. Nike N7 Youth Movement Field Day allows children to envision future educational opportunities.

"You get to meet a lot of athletes that speak well about college," Jimboy said. "I think that helps on the broader scope of things."

The event also featured guest speaker Lana Duke, a Chickasaw

citizen. Duke established the N7 Youth Movement Field Day at OSU her freshman year of college as a student athlete in 2014.

"I had this vision of stations in Gallagher-Iba and who to involve in the community," Duke said. "I reached out to our tribal nations, the Chickasaw Nation, Eagle Adventure and the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee."

Duke, a former OSU women's soccer player, wanted to model the field day after OSU's N7 event hosted in 2013.

"The first year was a lot of grunt work," Duke said. "Then from there, it grew to where it is now."

More than 400 First American

youth registered for the 2025 OSU N7 Youth Field Day. A powwow organized by OSU's SAAC, as well as an autograph session with OSU student-athletes added to the day's highlights.

As part of Nike's N7 initiative, which supports Indigenous communities through cultural and physical wellness programs, the event reinforced the importance of movement, health and community connections.

Through partnerships like this, First American youth are provided with opportunities to explore their interests, develop leadership skills and build a foundation for future success.

CONTRIBUTED BY Dalee Weston, Media Relations



Kaden Gore runs to home base while playing kickball with other First American students.

# Chickasaw Historical Society Conference June 23-24

The annual Chickasaw Historical Society Conference, Ittafama Ithana, takes place June 23-24 at West Bay Casino and Resort in Kingston, Oklahoma. This conference encourages cultural involvement and historical awareness to preserve, promote and protect Chickasaw history and culture.

This year, the conference theme is "Sharing our Chickasaw Treas-

ures."

Registration will open soon for the conference at no cost for Chickasaw Historical Society members and starting at \$35 for nonmembers. Registration includes a one-year membership and access to the biannual "Journal of Chickasaw History."

The conference evening reception and opening presentation

take place June 23 from 5-7 p.m. and the conference will take place June 24 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The event will also be available virtually via Zoom webinar.

To become a member of the Chickasaw Historical Society, visit Chickasaw.net/CHS. For more information, please email CHS@Chickasaw.net or call (580) 436-7282.

# Chickasaw Nation Summer EBT now accepting applications

Children receiving free or reduced-cost school meals may be eligible for the Chickasaw Nation Summer EBT program.

Qualifying families receive funds on a preloaded EBT card, which allows for the purchase of healthy food during the summer months. This program is open to anyone who meets eligibility cri-

teria, regardless of tribal affiliation.

To learn more or apply, visit ChickasawNationHealth.net/SummerEBT or call the Chickasaw Nation SEBTC, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at (580) 272-1178 or (844) 256-3467.

# Register for the Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference

Registration is open for the annual Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference. This event will take place May 29-30 at the WinStar World Casino and Resort Convention Center, 777 Casino Ave., Thackerville, OK.

The conference recognizes the strength and leadership of Chickasaw women and salutes their

valuable contributions, talents and skills.

The theme for this year's event is "Honoring Our Past, Shaping Our Future." The two-day conference will feature presentations, panel discussions and the announcement of the 2025 Chickasaw Nation Dynamic Woman of the Year. This award pays tribute to a Chickasaw woman who has

inspired, given hope or opened new possibilities or opportunities for others through her example.

Registration is required to attend. Visit Chickasaw.net/DynamicWomen to reserve your spot. The conference will also be available to watch online. For more information, please contact (580) 272-9326 or CreativeArts@Chickasaw.net.

# Tribal Health zoom session will focus on programs and services

Tribal health services are offering online sessions to educate Chickasaw citizens about programs and services available.

Classes will discuss a variety of health topics and services that citizens can utilize to improve their overall health and wellness.

Online sessions will be 6:30-8 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. The next class will be June 10.

Tribal health services assist citizens with their health care

needs by navigating programs, determining eligibility and finding proper health care providers and services. Assistance is available to help citizens with medical expenses when all other resources have been exhausted. The program can help with unmet medical services, dental services and durable medical equipment.

To learn more or to register for the upcoming class, visit Chickasaw.net/TribalHealth.

# Landscaping packages now available from Chickasaw Farms

Landscaping packages are now available for Chickasaw homeowners through the end of October. First-time applicants will receive an assortment of three trees, six shrubs, three ornamental grasses, 12 flowers and up to 10,000 square feet of Bermuda sod from Chickasaw Farms. Every other year, homeowners can reapply for a supplemental package of

one tree, two shrubs, two ornamental grasses and six flowers.

To apply, submit a complete application and required documents to ChickasawFarms@Chickasaw.net.

For eligibility requirements and additional information, contact Chickasaw Farms at (580) 369-4202 or visit Chickasaw.net/ChickasawFarms.

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# Tom Cole affirms commitment to government efficiency while preserving federal trust obligations to tribes



U.S. REP. TOM COLE

U.S. Rep. Tom Cole wants to put a stop to wasteful government spending.

"I think there is an awful lot of bloat and waste in the federal government. I think it needs to be shaken up, and I'm glad we're doing that," he said. "The federal government is hemorrhaging money. We're running \$2 trillion deficits. We cannot continue to do that. We have a lot of hard decisions to make, and I think President Trump has started to make them."

At the same time, he recognizes the importance of ensuring needed funding makes it into the right hands.

"You've got to make sure you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater," Cole said.

Cole was instrumental in helping to keep the National Weather Center in Norman, the Indian Health Service in Oklahoma City and the Social Security Administration in Lawton open as recent

budget cuts by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) were announced.

"We went to DOGE, and they agreed to keep those facilities operational, because we educated them," he said. "We're still involved in that process. We'll always be pretty aggressive about protecting things that are important to Oklahoma while still recognizing that some things need to get shut down. You have to make tough business decisions."

A Chickasaw citizen, Cole said the Chickasaw Nation makes tough business decisions, as well.

"Not everything works, and not everything needs to be added to," Cole said. "That's very hard for the federal government."

## Tribes a benefit to United States and Oklahoma

Asked how he believes tribes can work with the federal government in pursuit of government efficiency and transparency, Cole said, "Closely."

"I think our tribe is a model of transparency and efficiency, and has elevated the lives of its citizens," he said.

He said the Chickasaw Nation has taken a diverse approach to its investments, branching out of gaming into many other sectors. With these investments, Cole said the tribe has reinvested into its own people in the areas of health care, education, housing, senior care and more.

"I just think it's an amazing

model, and the federal government ought to look at it pretty closely," he said.

Due to the tribe's stewardship of its resources, Cole said the tribe has become "a very robust economic force," and he's proud that it hasn't remained dependent on the federal government.

"Credit to (Chickasaw Nation) Governor (Bill) Anoatubby, his leadership, and the team he's assembled over many, many years," he said. "I don't know of anybody who's better at assembling talented people, letting them do their jobs and giving them what they need to be successful. He's an extraordinary leader."

The Chickasaw Nation employs more than 14,500 people, and Cole said the vast majority of those employees are in the district he represents. He said that's roughly the equivalent of the employee count at Tinker Air Force Base, which is the largest single-site employer in Oklahoma.

"I think Oklahoma is very lucky that it has a tribal presence," Cole said.

The state is home to 39 federally recognized First American tribes.

"These are all 39 corporate headquarters that aren't moving to Houston or Dallas, and they aren't exporting jobs to China."

## Trust responsibility

The government-to-government relationships that tribes have formed with the United States are legally protected, Cole said.

"People need to recognize that we have treaty obligations as a federal government and a trust responsibility," he said. "In exchange, quite often, for massive transfers of lands, certain obligations were undertaken and have generally been fulfilled, as well they should be."

He said tribal citizenship is not a racial designation but a political one, and the federal government's obligations to these tribes do not fall under "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion."

As a matter of well-established federal law, a person's status as "Indian" derives from their membership or citizenship in a federally recognized Indian tribe. While that person may or may not racially identify as Indian or First American, that is irrelevant to the fundamental criteria of membership or citizenship in a recognized tribal nation.

"This isn't a question of doing a favor for Indians because they're Indians. This is a government-to-government relationship - compacts, treaties, understandings that are hundreds of years old," Cole said.

Each tribe has its own, individual relationship with the federal government.

"Tribal sovereignty is a real thing, and it's recognized in the Constitution of the United States. It's enshrined in legislation spanning almost 250 years," Cole said. "These are preexisting sovereign units. They're older than the United States of America. They've

been exercising political authority longer than the United States of America in many cases."

## Goals for legislative session and optimism for the country

In addition to getting rid of government waste, Cole said his legislative attention this session is devoted to his district, which houses important facilities such as Tinker Air Force Base, Fort Sill, the National Weather Center and the Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research Center. His priorities include tribal issues, as well as defense and biomedical research, particularly in the areas of cancer and Alzheimer's.

Ultimately, he is an optimist about the future of the country, in spite of the uncertainty that comes with change.

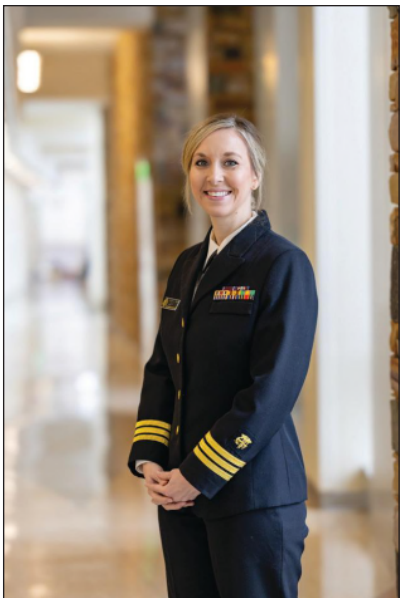
"I think the country profoundly needs change. Change always means some upheaval," he said. "Don't get too carried away one way or the other. The United States is a pretty special place, and it works pretty well. It's a pretty young country, but it's the oldest democracy in the world and the oldest Republic in the world."

Americans are often good at criticizing ourselves, which allows us to fix problems, but he said we shouldn't lose sight of the bigger reality.

"We have a lot to be grateful for as Americans," Cole said.

CONTRIBUTED BY Justin Lofton, Media Relations

# Strength in motion: Chickasaw woman advances First American Health and Wellness Conference



Chickasaw citizen Kayla Dewitt kicked off the 2025 Chikasha Ihoo Empowerment Series March 25, at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, Sulphur, Oklahoma.

Cmdr. Kayla Dewitt has made it her mission to bring culturally competent health and wellness care to First American communities, ensuring unique health needs are addressed with respect, understanding and cutting-edge therapeutic techniques.

"As Native people, we understand our bodies, our traditions and our ways of healing in a way that no outside system ever fully will," Dewitt, a Chickasaw citizen, said. "That's why it's so important that we take the lead in our own health care."

Dewitt kicked off the first of many Chikasha Ihoo (Chickasaw Women) Empowerment Series for the year March 25 at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, Sulphur, Oklahoma. Her topic, "Empowering Health and Community: A Chicka-

saw Journey in Service and Leadership," focused on the importance of Indigenous-led health care for First American communities and her journey advocating for tribal citizens' health and wellness.

Dewitt is continuing a proud family legacy of service to First Americans. As manager and lead physical therapist at the Chickasaw Nation Empowered Living Clinic, Dewitt is on the front lines of transforming health care for First American youth.

She earned her Bachelor of Science in health studies from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in 2010 and Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in 2012. After graduation, she became the first physical therapist at the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, where she developed its inaugural physi-

cal therapy department from the ground up.

In 2021, she joined Empowered Living as lead physical therapist, contributing to the Chickasaw Nation's first and only tribal pediatric obesity clinic.

Dewitt's journey into physical therapy and wellness is deeply rooted in her passion for helping others. She has not only excelled academically but also dedicated her career to reshaping how physical therapy is viewed and accessed within Indian Country.

"Too often, our communities face unnecessary obstacles to good health," Dewitt said. "I want to break down those barriers and make sure every Native person gets the care they deserve."

Recognizing the disparities in health care that First Americans often face, she has worked tirelessly to provide holistic, individualized care that aligns with traditional values and contemporary medical advancements.

Throughout her career, Dewitt has been a strong advocate for incorporating Indigenous knowledge into modern health care practices. She said she understands healing is not just physical but also emotional, mental and spiritual.

"Healing isn't just about treating an injury," Dewitt said. "It's about restoring balance. Our ancestors knew this, and I carry that knowledge into my work every day."

Her approach to therapy integrates movement, strength-building and rehabilitation with a deep

respect for traditional healing methods.

"Science and tradition don't have to compete," Dewitt said. "They work together."

Her understanding of the gentle balance between cultural traditions and modern medicine makes her a trailblazer in the field of First American health care.

Beyond her professional contributions, Dewitt serves as a mentor and role model for young Indigenous individuals aspiring to enter health care professions.

"If I can help just one young Native person believe they belong in this field, then I've done my job," Dewitt said. "But I want to help many."

By sharing her experiences and knowledge, she said she hopes to inspire the next generation of First American students to pursue careers in health and wellness, ultimately strengthening the foundation of Indigenous-led health care while also increasing First American representation in the American health system.

"Remember that those who came before you paved the way for the opportunities you now have," Dewitt said. "Whether through family, community leaders or role models, their sacrifices have given you the chance to make a difference. By giving back, you're honoring their legacy and continuing their work to make the world a better place for future generations."

CONTRIBUTED BY Dalee Weston, Media Relations

## Chickasaw Nation Tribal Library May Book of the Month



Featured titles are available each month at the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Library. This month, we invite readers to journey to the stars with "Mission to Space" by Chickasaw author and astronaut John Herrington.

Herrington shares his passion for space travel and his Chicka-

saw heritage as he gives children a glimpse into his astronaut training at NASA and his mission to the International Space Station. Learn what it takes to train for space flight, see the tasks he completed and join him on his spacewalk 220 miles above the Earth.

Tribal library cardholders can

check out "Mission to Space" from the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Library located at 1003 Chamber Loop in Ada.

Find cardholder eligibility and library amenity information by calling (580) 310-6447 or visiting Chickasaw.net/Library.

## 2025 Campus Tour applications open for Chickasaw students

Do not miss out on the 2025 Campus Tour Series! Chickasaw students will visit up to five area college campuses, with tour guides available to discuss degree programs and scholarship and financial aid opportunities. Students attending three out of the five tours will be entered in a drawing to win a free laptop.

**Applications are open for the following campus tours:**

June 5 - University of Oklahoma

June 12 - Oklahoma City Community College

June 18 - Eastern Oklahoma State College

July 11 - University of Arkansas

Aug. 1 - Oklahoma Baptist University

Lunch will be provided, and transportation is available from Ada and Ardmore.

Chickasaw citizens grades 7-12 are eligible to apply and are welcome to bring one parent or guardian.

Apply online at Chickasaw.net/CampusTours.

# Boutique begins new chapter one year after devastating tornado



Chickasaw business owner Madeline Jack Little and her mother Julie Jack at 3rd and Broadway, which reopened in a new location almost a year after the original building was razed by a tornado.



The remains of 3rd & Broadway after the April 27, 2024 tornado in Sulphur, Oklahoma. The building also had a mural by Chickasaw artist Brent Greenwood painted on an external wall, which was lost.

Almost one year after a tornado destroyed a quaint downtown boutique, rebuilding is complete and the doors have reopened, signaling a new chapter in the Chickasaw-owned business.

The original building that housed 3rd & Broadway, a business co-owned by Chickasaw citizen Madeline Jack Little and her Choctaw mother Julie Jack, was leveled by an EF3 tornado April 27, 2024. The nighttime storm tore through historic downtown Sulphur, damaging or destroying more than 60 businesses.

In the days following the storm, friends, family and customers voluntarily arrived at the familiar building with the turquoise door to help with cleanup, Little said.

"We had merchandise just strewn out on the sides of the building," she said. "Some stayed with us for hours just helping us go through our stuff." Entering the building was too dangerous and was not an option, she added.

Once the dust had settled and the shock of losing the store subsided, rebuilding plans began to gel.

As fate would have it, a few years earlier Little's sister, Joanna Jack John, had invested in a historic downtown Sulphur building at the corner of West 2nd and Muskogee. Despite the widespread damage surrounding the building, it sustained relatively minor damage such as broken windows, water damage and a damaged roof, but it was still standing.

The plans for a reimagined retail boutique began to take shape, and a major restoration of the building began, led by John's vision and the skill of local contractor Brandon Box.

"Joanna did months of planning and renovations prior to us even having a piece of inventory in here," Little said.

In the meantime, fixtures,

clothes hangers, mannequins and other retail necessities were ordered.

Once the building was complete, Little, her husband, Patrick, and her mother went to work adding details such as painting and hanging mirrors to get the store ready.

The result was a beautifully restored airy retail space that preserves the historic charm of the building and features glamorous touches. Sentimental tributes decorate the interior space such as her grandmother's antique furniture and a round white table. The table was donated by the owner of The Table at the Mix Mercantile, a downtown eatery which was destroyed in the tornado.

A photo of the original building hangs behind the counter and the back door is painted the familiar turquoise.

The store reopened March 17, 2024, and enjoyed a gleeful first week of business.

"Everyone just walked in, and they stood at the door, and they just go, 'Oh my gosh,' like exalted joy," Little said.

The reimagined boutique's new space did not change the fundamentals of the business.

"We still want it to be the same. We offer the same merchandise to our customers, the same affordable pricing. We really wanted to evoke the same feeling for our customers, even though we're in a new place," she said.

Maintaining those feelings of acceptance, belonging and friendship for the customer are paramount, Little explained.

"So many customers come in and they want to have a hug or talk to my mom, or just walk out feeling better about themselves. So that is our main thing, making sure they walk out feeling good about themselves. It is a safe, enjoyable, happy place for women to come, and they don't have to buy

a thing."

Opening day, a few customers were waiting outside the door before the store opened. The reunion continued throughout the day and into the next week.

"These people, our friends, we haven't seen them in almost a year, but we all caught up. It was like a party. Women were just beaming from ear to ear. The enthusiasm was off the charts. It really is like a true womanhood in here for the community."

The outpouring of encouragement spilled over to cyberspace.

"It was overwhelming the support and enthusiasm on social media. Between my mom and I, we have read every comment on every post."

The emotions impacted her mother during the first week of business, Little said.

"She was so strong and positive during the storm and months after. Then finally it got to where she realized just how much of an impact 3rd & Broadway had on her and on others."

3rd & Broadway was established 13 years ago by Julie Jack, Kary Warren and Angie Wolf.

As a teen, Little worked summers behind the counter through the Chickasaw Summer Youth program (now Toksali SMART).

Wolf stepped away in 2020 and Little became a legal partner of the business.

Before the store was relaunched, Warren retired.

"Kary was so vital to the business. She retired, and I really tried to step in and fill her shoes with the accounting and inventory side of things and adding a new point-of-sale system."

A computer sales system replaced the handwritten receipts.

Little also hopes to launch a store website within the calendar year.

She is a busy woman. She and her husband just relocated to

Sulphur from Norman and are renovating her late father's home, hoping to have it complete before their baby boy arrives in June.

## Chickasaw heritage

Little said she receives her Chickasaw heritage through her late father, Clay Jack.

Growing up in Sulphur, she was active in many Chickasaw Nation camps, such as golf, softball and Camp Survivor.

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Little earned a bachelor's degree in health and exercise science and completed an internship with Unconquered Life. She worked for the program for about a year after graduation.

The journey of losing the store and the process of rebuilding has given Little some perspective.

"I've just come to accept no matter how terrible something feels, everything happens for a reason. Even though it could be a personal defeat or personal sadness, months or years down the

road you realize it happened for a reason. Maybe 3rd & Broadway was supposed to have a rebirth, renewal or a revamp."

Though they could have chosen to walk away from the business, Little said the boutique was too special not to bring back.

From the new storefront, Little has a front row seat to the rebuilding of downtown Sulphur.

"Even though it's painful, you just kind of have to accept it and rebuild and renew, so we have to look at it just as an opportunity."

3rd & Broadway is located at 119 W. Muskogee. Store hours are 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The phone number remains the same, (580) 622-3396.

CONTRIBUTED BY Dana Lance, Media Relations



Madeline Jack Little, right, and Julie Jack hold a photo of the destroyed original building which housed their business, 3rd & Broadway, as they stand in front of the turquoise door of the new boutique's location in Sulphur, Oklahoma.



MADELINE JACK LITTLE

## Higher education financial assistance applications open now for Summer 2025

It is never too late in the school year to invest in your education. Several financial assistance opportunities are available to Chickasaw students this summer through the Chickasaw Nation Higher Education Scholarships and Grants Program.

Whether you are a full-time student aiming for a bachelor's degree, a part-time graduate stu-

dent or a doctoral candidate pursuing cutting-edge research, our scholarships and grants can assist every academic journey.

This program is offered to all Chickasaw citizens with additional eligibility requirements varying by award.

The application deadline for the summer semester is July 1. Visit [Chickasaw.net/HigherEd](http://Chickasaw.net/HigherEd) to apply.

## Apply for the Packed Promise Program

The Chickasaw Nation Department of Health Packed Promise nutrition program is accepting applications.

Packed Promise is a home delivery food service aimed at increasing food access, food security and diet quality for Chickasaw children ages 4-18 in pre-K through 12th grades. Those who receive free or reduced-priced school meals may be eligible.

Every month, participants in the program will receive an allowance of \$60 per child to purchase nutritious and wholesome foods through Amazon Business. Food selection will vary by seasonality and availability.

As a bonus, a \$15 Electronic

Benefit Transfer (EBT) card is mailed for each child in the household to buy fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables at WIC-participating grocery stores or at Chickasaw Nation farmers markets. The EBT card is reloaded every month the child is participating. Participants may use the MyEBT app to locate stores and items.

Participants can access the Amazon Business and MyEBT apps on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

For more information, call (844) 230-3785 or visit [PackedPromise.com](http://PackedPromise.com) and [ChickasawNationHealth.net/PackedPromise](http://ChickasawNationHealth.net/PackedPromise).



### CHICKASAW NATION CULTURE AND HUMANITIES



Subscribe to watch in-depth videos that share our story with the world. New language videos featuring native speakers will premiere each month.

*Spring – an exciting time of Okana opening and visiting with fellow Chickasaw citizens*

Spring has arrived and summer is right around the corner. This is the time of year when multiple events start happening in the Chickasaw Nation. We celebrated the opening of the fantastic Okana Resort & Indoor Waterpark in Oklahoma City. Okana is absolutely a magical place and is a must-see destination spot for Oklahoma. We were proud to attend the Exhibit C Gallery Grand Re-opening- a gorgeous new 10,000 SF building featuring the outstanding works of Chickasaws and First Americans from all over the country.



**DR. KAREN GOODNIGHT**

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

A heartfelt thank you to all the people who made both incredible events possible. Their hard work has truly paid off. If you haven't had a chance to visit either of these amazing places, please make plans to visit soon.

Lately, we have traveled far and wide to visit our Chickasaw people and to proudly represent our Tribe. We've been to Kansas City to attend the Kansas City Chickasaw Community Connection meeting and met some of our fellow Chickasaw friends and their families-it was such a fun day. We loved attending the Three Sisters Celebration in Sulphur, Oklahoma. It was a beautiful day of visiting with others, watching the dances, shopping with the vendors, eating the delicious wild onions, and the Three Sisters stew.

Lastly, a massive congratulations goes out to our Chickasaw Nation Department of Health for receiving the prestigious 2024 Malcolm Baldrige Award for Performance Excellence. It was such an honor to attend this ceremony and to support Dr. Charles Grim and the entire department on receiving this incredible achievement. We attended the Inter-Tribal Council meeting at Winstar World Casino and then traveled to Austin, Texas to spend the day at their annual picnic. It was such a special time and we can't wait to attend again next year. It is always a pleasure to serve as your Legislator in the Pontotoc district.

Please contact me anytime at [Karen.Goodnight@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Karen.Goodnight@Chickasaw.net), or call (580) 235-2654.

**PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING NOTICE**

The Chickasaw Nation Legislative Finance Committee will hold a public hearing regarding the Consolidated Tribal Budget for 2026 on June 20, 2025, at the Chickasaw Legislature building, 801 North Mississippi, Ada, Oklahoma, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Copies of the proposed budget are available for review at the Legislative Office in Ada.

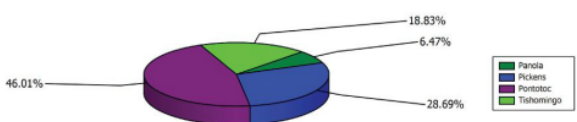
Any Chickasaw citizen may address the Finance Committee at the hearings; provided, the citizen may speak only if he has notified Committee Chair Charles Marris in writing of his desire to speak and provide an agenda within 5 days of the meeting. A citizen may speak for up to 10 minutes. Chickasaw citizens may also present written comments, recommendations, information or questions at those meetings, provided, those written comments are presented to the Committee Chair Charles Marris prior to the hearing's commencement.

The meeting shall be held in accordance with Title 10, Seciton10-201 and following of the Chickasaw Nation Code. The Chickasaw Nation Code can be located at [www.chickasaw.net](http://www.chickasaw.net).

**Count of Voters by District**

Panola	2,941	Pontotoc	20,907
Pickens	13,036	Tishomingo	8,555
		<b>Total</b>	<b>45,439</b>

Count of Voters by District



*Efforts continue to gather stories honoring Chickasaw churches*

What a wonderful experience it was to hear the stories from Martha DeWitt and her daughter Laura Buss, about Seeley Chapel. Just last month, Pastor Walter Mullican and I had the pleasure to interview Ruby Horse, Martha's sister, about her memories of growing up at Seeley. The stories shared by Ruby and Martha are beautifully interwoven and rich with history.

Martha was born in 1944 and shared how she always felt a deep connection at Seeley Chapel. It was her church home. Though she moved away in 1961 after getting married, she returned in 1990. As a child, she never remembered missing church-regardless of the weather. Rain or shine, they traveled by wagon, and she recalls no storm ever stopping them.

Laura fondly remembers attending Seeley with her grandparents and cherishing her time with them. Though she didn't grow up in the area, she joined in 1990 as a young adult and learned to sing Choctaw hymns.

Vacation Bible School was a highlight for Laura-the church was part of a circuit with Yellow Springs and Pennington, and every 5th Sunday, congregations gathered together in celebration.

Many families moved away for work. Pastor Don Jacob, who currently serves the area, carries the spirit of the traditional circuit-riding preachers of the past.

Pastor Jacob is like his late wife's grandfather (Simon Billy) who was a circuit preacher for the Presbyterian Church. Don and Diane Jacob have spent a lifetime serving the Lord.

We are excited to share more of these inspiring stories in our upcoming book about the Chickasaw legacy of faith. Pastor Mullican and I are on our own kind of circuit-collecting even more memories, and we're deeply grateful for each interview. Every conversation leaves us richer than before.

It is an honor to serve as your Pontotoc district legislator. Please reach out to me anytime at (580) 399-7083 or [Lisaj.Billy@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Lisaj.Billy@Chickasaw.net) You can also follow me on Facebook @lisajbilly, Chickasaw tribal legislator, or Instagram @lisajbilly



Martha DeWitt, Laura Buss and Pastor Walter Mullican at Seeley Chapel.

*Chickasaw Community Councils and Connection Groups help citizens stay in touch*

Chickasaw Community Councils and Connection Groups help citizens to stay in touch with others and up to date on the programs of the Tribe. The Oklahoma City Council recently had Ms. Jennifer Bryant, Director of Horticulture, as their guest speaker. She shared information on why it is helpful to provide a variety of plants in your gardening area to provide nectar and enhance with pollination. Each attendee was given a "garden to go" box containing young starters of tomato, sage, basil, milkweed and lance leaf coreopsis. The "Garden to Go Box" is a great way to provide individual gardens. Jennifer has been with the Nation for 10 years. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her son, Osi, bird watching, hiking and traveling. She admits she is a nature lover!



**BETH ALEXANDER**

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

Kym Hazlett is another active long-standing member of the Oklahoma City Group. She, along with her daughter, Michaela Parrott and grandchildren Samuel and Ellie, shared her finished fringed shawl. For those of you who reside around the Oklahoma City area know that these council meetings are happening monthly. Food and friendship are included!

I had the chance to attend the quarterly meeting in Houston. Great to visit with those Texans! Mr. Kyle Key gave a presentation on the Chickasaw Nation Enhanced Tribal Card. This card has advanced security features and can be used for domestic air travel and entering the USA at land and sea ports of entry from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda, as well as access to federal buildings. To learn more and make an appointment contact Mr. Key (580) 436-2603.

While there I had a chance to meet Ms. Lillian Louise Hadlock of Porter, Texas. Through attending the meetings, she and Ms. Bobbie Bishop discovered they were neighbors! They now carpool to these affairs! This is an answer to prayer for Lillian since she is 102 years old this year!

Who knows? I might see you at the next council/connect meeting!

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; Romans 10:12

Blessings,  
Beth



**2024-2025 Tribal Legislature**

Following is a list of the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Legislators including their address and phone numbers. If you have any questions or need any information, please contact the legislator in your area.

**Pontotoc District**

- Seat #**
- Toby Perkins  
6305 CR 1570  
Ada, OK 74820  
(580) 399-2606  
[Toby.Perkins@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Toby.Perkins@Chickasaw.net)
  - Nancy Elliott  
620 Ann  
Ada, OK 74820-4410  
(580) 399-4374  
[Nancy.Elliott@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Nancy.Elliott@Chickasaw.net)
  - Lisa Impson  
P.O. Box 2669  
Ada, OK 74821-2269  
(580) 235-3185  
[Lisa.Impson@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Lisa.Impson@Chickasaw.net)
  - Karen Goodnight  
P.O. Box 759  
Washington, OK 73093-0759  
(580) 235-2654  
[Karen.Goodnight@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Karen.Goodnight@Chickasaw.net)
  - Lisa J. Billy  
P.O. Box 1412  
Purcell, OK 73080-1412  
(580) 399-7083  
[LisaJ.Billy@Chickasaw.net](mailto:LisaJ.Billy@Chickasaw.net)

**Pickens District**

- Seat #**
- David Woerz  
P.O. Box 669  
Ardmore, OK 73402-0669  
(580) 235-3240  
[David.Woerz@Chickasaw.net](mailto:David.Woerz@Chickasaw.net)
  - Connie Barker  
P.O. Box 2269  
Ada, OK 74821-2669  
(580) 272-4175  
[Connie.Barker@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Connie.Barker@Chickasaw.net)
  - Charles Marris  
P.O. Box 2669  
Ada, OK 74821-2669  
(580) 272-7366  
[Charles.Marris@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Charles.Marris@Chickasaw.net)
  - Shana Tate Darter  
P.O. Box 2669  
Ada, OK 74821-2669  
(580) 235-1438  
[Shana.Darter@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Shana.Darter@Chickasaw.net)

**Tishomingo District**

- Seat #**
- Scott Wood  
101 West Main Street  
Tishomingo, OK 73450  
(580) 221-1430  
[Scott.Wood@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Scott.Wood@Chickasaw.net)
  - Derrick Priddy  
501 E. Wyandotte Ave  
Sulphur, OK 73086-6016  
(580) 618-0647  
[Derrickpriddy05@gmail.com](mailto:Derrickpriddy05@gmail.com)
  - Dusk Monetathchi  
P.O. 2669  
Ada, OK 74821  
(580) 618-1740  
[Dusk.Monetathchi@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Dusk.Monetathchi@Chickasaw.net)

**Panola District**

- Seat #**
- Beth Alexander  
P.O. Box 1264  
Colbert, OK 74733-1264  
(580) 272-7850  
[Beth.Alexander@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Beth.Alexander@Chickasaw.net)

# Chickasaw Nation tribal election filing period June 2-4

The Chickasaw Nation Election Commission announces the filing period opens June 2 and continues through June 4, 2025 for the 2025 General Elections.

Candidates must contact the election secretary's office at (580) 310-6411 to schedule an appointment or to obtain additional information. The election secretary's office is located in the government services building, 2015 Lonnie Abbott Industrial Boulevard, Ada, Oklahoma.

Candidates may file between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Seats up for election include four legislative seats and one seat on the Supreme Court.

Legislative seats to be filled are Seat 5 of Pontotoc District; Seat 3 of Pickens District; Seat 1 of Panola District; and Seat 2 of Tishomingo District.

Seat 1 of the Chickasaw Nation Supreme Court is also up for election this year.

Legislative candidates must be registered Chickasaw voters at least 25 years of age, residents of the Chickasaw Nation for at least one year and of their respective district for at least six months immediately preceding the election. Legislators must remain residents of their elected district during the tenure of their office. Term of office is three years. Filing fees are \$1,000.

A Supreme Court candidate must be a registered voter of the Chickasaw Nation at least 30 years of age. Justices must be residents of the Chickasaw Nation during their three-year term of office. Filing fees are \$1,000.

Candidates must bring verification of physical and mailing address, such as a utility bill, homestead exemption, automobile registration, driver's license or passport which displays candidate's physical address and filing fee. Upon filing, candidates

must complete a financial disclosure statement. Statements are also due at the end of every month during the candidate's active campaign period. Candidates will receive an electoral packet containing election rules and regulations, the Constitution of the Chickasaw Nation, financial disclosure forms, biography form for the Chickasaw Times and a watcher form.

Candidates must not have been convicted of a felony. Background checks are conducted on all candidates. Primary election is July 29 and runoff election is Aug. 26, if applicable.

For further assistance, please contact Jerri Martin, Chickasaw Nation Election Secretary, toll free at (888) 661-0137.

**THE CHICKASAW NATION TRIBAL ELECTION 2025 PRIMARY ELECTION SCHEDULE**  
**June 2-4**

Candidate filing period (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the election secretary's office)

**June 6**  
Challenge to candidacy ends at 5 p.m.

**June 9**  
Drawing for position on the ballot (1:30 p.m. at the election secretary's office)

Candidates may pick up printouts or flash drive.

**June 9:**  
Last day to submit photo and biography to Chickasaw Times (by 4 p.m.)

Press release distributed for candidates.

**July 1**  
Ballots mailed to voters who reside out of the contiguous 48 states.

**July 8**  
Voter registration closes (Noon).

**July 11**

After noon, candidates may pick up updated printouts or flash drive.

**July 15**  
Ballots mailed to ALL qualified voters.

**July 24**  
Last day to appoint a watcher.

**July 29**  
2025 Primary Election (last day to return ballots; no later than 10:30 a.m.)

Ballot tabulation begins at 11 a.m.

Unofficial results posted immediately.

Press release distributed to public.

**July 29**  
Voter registration reopens, if no runoff election.

**Aug. 1**  
Recount period ends.

**Oct. 1**  
Oath of Office ceremony (11 a.m.)

## Bedré Fine Chocolate celebrates 25 sweet years of growth with "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" screening at McSwain Theatre

Bedré Fine Chocolate, a gourmet Oklahoma-based company specializing in handcrafted chocolate creations, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. As the only First American-owned chocolate company in the United States, Bedré will mark this milestone with a special screening of the original 1971 film "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" at the McSwain Theatre in Ada June 12 at 2 and 7 p.m.

Attendees of this celebration will be treated to complimentary samples of Bedré Fine Chocolate within the elegant ambiance of the McSwain Theatre. This gesture serves as a nod to Bedré's deep-rooted history and its origins in the Ada region, offering a unique opportunity for local residents to connect with the brand's heritage.

Since its establishment, Bedré Fine Chocolate has cultivated a reputation as a purveyor of exceptional, handcrafted chocolates. The Chickasaw Nation purchased the company in 2000. The company's ethos centers on the meticulous selection of premium ingredients and the seamless integration of innovative techniques with time-honored traditions, including subtle nods to the rich culinary heritage of the Chickasaw Nation.

Bedré's journey began in the late 1980s outside Ada, on the former Homer Elementary School property. Following steady success, the Chickasaw Nation moved to purchase the company in 2000 as part of an initiative to diversify their business interests and promote tourism under the leadership and economic vision

of Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby.

Bedré Fine Chocolate embarked on a significant expansion in 2003, relocating to a more extensive 17,800-square-foot facility in Pauls Valley. This period of growth continued, culminating in the establishment of a state-of-the-art 34,600-square-foot production facility in Davis a decade later, underscoring the company's escalating success and commitment to meeting increasing demand for its delectable offerings.

In recent years, Bedré Fine Chocolate has strategically broadened its product portfolio beyond its core chocolate lines. This expansion includes the establishment of a corporate gifting department, a partnership with Route 66-themed fountain drink destination POPS, as well as

a selection of premium chocolate-flavored coffee beans.

In 2015, Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby selected Kay Colbert, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma in arts & sciences as General Manager. Colbert also has a culinary education from Johnson & Wales University in Miami, Florida.

Under Colbert's leadership, Bedré Fine Chocolate received the Mark Costello Entrepreneurial Excellence in Oklahoma Award in 2016. Furthermore, the company has continued to diversify its product range, now offering an array of additional culinary delights including specialty sauces, gourmet coffees, melting chocolate ideal for confectionery creations and popular chocolate-covered gummi bears, further solidifying its position in the

broader specialty food market.

"Since my first employment with Bedré prior to the Chickasaw Nation buying the chocolate factory, a love always existed for this art of making fine chocolate as it originally started," Colbert shared. "When the Chickasaw Nation bought Bedré, that art of chocolate creation continued in a big way. I've believed in its power. Just one taste can spark a genuine affection. Our driving ambition is to continue to grow the company in our home state and beyond, because our passion for making people happy through chocolate will be forever present."

## HOF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on Jan. 17, 1994. The Chickasaw Foundation launched the Wilson J. Brown Memorial Scholarship for college-age Chickasaw students in 2009. This honors Brown, his dedication to education and his contributions to the U.S. military and the Chickasaw Nation.

### Jessie Elizabeth Randolph Moore (1871-1956)

Jessie Moore was the first woman elected to clerk for the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Criminal Court of Appeals. She was born in Panola County, Chickasaw Nation, now present-day Bryan County, to William Colville Randolph and Sarah Ann Tyson Randolph. She attended school at the Randolph ranch in present-day Maysville, Oklahoma, St. Francis Xavier Academy in Denison, Texas and Kidd-Key College in Sherman, Texas.

Moore was a teacher at the Pierce Institute in 1884. She married U.S. Marshal Elisha Mac Moore in 1889, and they had four children - Thomas R. Moore, Eula Catherine Moore, Sarah Moore and Carrie Imogene Moore Rockwood. Following her husband's death, Moore returned to Oklahoma. In 1914, she became deputy clerk of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Criminal Court of Appeals. From 1924-1925, she served as assistant state commissioner of charities and corrections. Moore was elected Oklahoma Supreme Court Clerk in 1926. She was the second woman in Oklahoma history elected to a state office.

In 1927, Moore was the ex officio secretary of the bar commission. She managed complaints against lawyers, oversaw disbarments and supervised the admission of attorneys to practice law in Oklahoma. She served as a democratic presidential elector in 1940 and 1944 and was instrumental in the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Moore served as director of the Bureau of Maternity and Infancy of the state health department and leader

of the first Women's Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in Oklahoma County. Her FERA policies were a blueprint for other emergency relief organizations. She was also a charter member of the Whitehead Presbyterian Church, president of the Alternate Saturday Club and active in the Eastern Star.

She was a member of the Chickasaw Tribal Council under Governor Douglas H. Johnston and Governor Floyd E. Maytubby. For 37 years, she served on the board of directors for the Oklahoma Historical Society and was treasurer for 35 years. Moore was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame by the Oklahoma Memorial Association in 1937.

### Michael Keith Crossley 1961-

Mike Crossley is a record-breaking baseball and softball coach with more than 1,898 career wins. He is the son of Lee and Nina (Frazier) Crossley. He is a former baseball player for Del City High School, where he graduated as an all-state athlete in 1979. Crossley went on to play for Rose State College and Oklahoma City University.

After graduating from college, Crossley began his more than 40-year career as an educator and coach for the Newcastle baseball and softball teams. His accomplishments include three Oklahoma 4A fast-pitch softball state championships and 36 trips to the state tournament. He was inducted into the Oklahoma High School Fast-Pitch Softball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2006 and Oklahoma Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2021. Crossley became the state record holder in September 2024 for the most wins in Oklahoma high school fast-pitch softball. He surpassed the previous 1,140-career win record.

In 1988, Crossley was named head coach of the Newcastle baseball and fast-pitch softball teams. In 1989, he won the Oklahoma Baseball Coaches Association Rookie Coach of the Year and The Oklahoman's Little All-City Base-

ball Coach of the Year. In 2000, Crossley was awarded Newcastle Middle School Teacher of the Year. He is a four-time Daily Oklahoman Fast-pitch Coach of the Year. Crossley was honored with Oklahoma Fast-Pitch Coaches Association Coach of the Year in 2006, 2014 and 2019. He received the Michele Smith Outstanding Coach of the Year Award presented by the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame twice.

Crossley retired from teaching and coaching boys' baseball but continues to coach the Newcastle fast-pitch softball team. He and his wife, Vickie, have three sons - Michael, Jordan and Kyle, daughter-in-law Ashley and granddaughters, Kailee and Avere.

### 'Rena Bell Duncan 1948 -

'Rena Bell Duncan served as a Chickasaw Nation legislator for the Panola District for 15 years. Born in Spokane, Washington, she is the daughter of Chickasaw Hall of Fame member Sally Grinslade Bell and Lt. Col. Ben Bell. Her grandfather, Albert Milton Grinslade Jr., was an original enrollee. She moved to Oklahoma at the age of 16, after living in many states as the child of a military parent. From a young age, her mother taught her of their family and how they impacted Chickasaw history. She began accompanying her mother to meetings of the Chickasaw/Choctaw alliance in the early 1980s.

Duncan was first elected to the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Legislature in 1983. She chaired several committees and was instrumental in the formation of the cultural and historic preservation committee. She was also the first woman legislative secretary and chaired the reapportionment, legislative rules and procedures, education, election procedures, health and economic development committees. She served as co-chair of the cultural preservation committee for the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes. Duncan was also appointed by Governor Bill Anoatubby as the Chickasaw alternate tribal

representative to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). She was chosen to serve as NCAI Muscogee Area Vice President by all of the tribes. She was honored alongside five other Chickasaw Nation legislators at a women's tribal leaders reception sponsored by the Women of the Oklahoma Senate in 1992.

She served as Chickasaw Nation Director of Cultural Resources and as tribal historic preservation officer. She was instrumental in identifying a site for the repatriation of ancestral artifacts and remains on the Natchez Trace Parkway. Duncan continues to advocate for the protection of sacred and significant tribal sites in Oklahoma and the historic Chickasaw Homeland.

Duncan married Stephen Ray Duncan on Aug. 27, 1966, in Achille, Oklahoma. They have three sons, Stephen B., Robert E. and John L., 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

### Tobi Merritt Edwards Young 1976 -

Tobi Young is an attorney, an advocate for civic engagement and the first enrolled member of a First American tribe to serve as a law clerk for the U.S. Supreme Court. She is from Midwest City, Oklahoma. She graduated from The George Washington University with a Bachelor of Arts before earning a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2003.

Young has more than 25 years of experience in law and government. She began her career as the youngest press secretary on Capitol Hill, working for Oklahoma Rep. J.C. Watts Jr. She has served in each branch of the federal government, including in the White House, U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2008, President George W. Bush named Young to be associate counsel to the president after she served as a deputy associate counsel in the White House Council's office. Young also served as general counsel of the George

W. Bush Presidential Center. She served as a trial attorney and counsel in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Young was selected as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and the United Nations Civil and Human Rights convenings in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2018, she was appointed as U.S. Supreme Court clerk for the 2018-2019 term by Justice Neil Gorsuch.

Young is now in the technology industry and serves as the chair of the nominating and governance committee on the Halliburton Board of Directors. She is the co-chair of the Women's Democracy Network for the International Republican Institute. Young is a board member for the Chamber of Commerce, U.S.-India Business Council and U.S. Chamber Litigation Center.

In 2022, Young was honored with the Chickasaw Nation Dynamic Woman of the Year Award for her significant contributions to the Chickasaw Nation. She and her husband, Evan, a Texas Supreme Court Justice, live in Austin with their daughter, Romilly.

### About the Chickasaw Hall of Fame

Since 1987, the Chickasaw Hall of Fame has honored Chickasaw citizens, past and present, who have made a profound impact on the Chickasaw Nation, Chickasaw people and the greater community. Since that time, Chickasaws from a variety of fields and professions have been inducted for their significant achievements and contributions.

The Aaholiitobli' Honor Garden at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma, commemorates each member of the Chickasaw Hall of Fame. Their influence leaves a lasting mark on the rich legacy of the Chickasaw people.

Induction into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame is the highest honor bestowed upon citizens of the Chickasaw Nation.

To learn more about the 2025 Chickasaw Hall of Fame inductees and view the ceremony, visit [HOF.Chickasaw.net](http://HOF.Chickasaw.net).

## Births



OCTOBER JADE PIPINS

October Jade Pipins was born Dec. 10, 2024. She weighed 5 lbs., 5 oz.

She is the daughter of Mercedes Pipins and granddaughter of Rose Pipins. She is the great-granddaughter of Angels and the late Joe Pipins.

She is the great-great-granddaughter of Jane Liddell Pipins and the great-great-great-granddaughter of the late Minnie Keel Liddell, a Chickasaw Original Enrollee.



BENJAMIN RILEY ORR

Brandon and Desirae Orr are proud to announce the birth of their son, Benjamin Riley Orr. He was born 8:54 a.m., Sept. 19, 2024 in Ada, Oklahoma. He weighed 9 lbs., 13 oz. and measured 22 inches at birth.

He is the grandson of Mike & Sherry Orr of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Andrea & Ron Cordell of Tulsa, Oklahoma and Rusty & Kim Riley of Midwest City, Oklahoma. Already so loved and cherished.

## Golf club hosts first 2025 tournament



Taking first place during the first 2025 Chickasaw Seniors Golf Club tournament were, left to right, Beaman Wisdom, Johnny Wallace and Preston Underwood. Teammate Danny Marris was not available for the photo. The golf club has several tournaments planned this year. Falconhead Golf Resort hosted the club's first tournament March 20.

Chickasaw golfers Beaman Wisdom, Johnny Wallace, Preston Underwood and Danny Marris were first place finishers in the 2025 opening tournament hosted by the Chickasaw Seniors Golf Club (CSGC).

Second place went to Chickasaws Jack Jordan, Tim Baird, Jim Davis and Jim Green. The tourney was conducted March 20 at Falconhead Golf Resort near Marietta, Oklahoma. Jim Williams, Jim Parks and Sonya Glover won "closest to the pin" competition.

A total of 34 golfers participated. The golf club hosts Chickasaw senior golfers aged 60 and above, including some non-Chickasaw spouses.

"We were pleased with the turnout for our first event of 2025 and were very pleased with Falconhead Golf Resort and staff for their assistance," said Greg Veitch, CSGC committee member.

To find out more about the club and how to become involved, contact CSGC board members for information. CSGC members include Veitch, (405) 609-9550; George Taylor, (405) 639-9755; David Keel, (405) 219-2334; Jan Baird, (405) 258-8007 and Sonny Larman, (405) 664-8906.

CONTRIBUTED BY Gene Lehmann, Media Relations

## Rebates available for Chickasaw Nation license plates

Chickasaw citizens can receive a rebate after purchasing a Chickasaw Nation license plate at state-licensed tag agencies throughout Oklahoma.

Citizens provide their citizenship card at the time of purchase. The name on the card must match the name on the registered vehicle's title.

After the purchase is complete, a rebate will be issued for a percentage of the license plate fees and taxes. Citizens can receive

this rebate via direct deposit or a mailed check. This is a continual benefit that is applied at every registration renewal or payment of excise tax.

To find a local tag agency, visit the Oklahoma Tax Commission website.

For more information about the motor vehicle tag program and how to register for a rebate, call (580) 272-5798 or visit Chickasaw.net/LicensePlate.

Health tip with Dr. Judy Goforth Parker  
Goal Setting for Graduates

Dr. Judy Goforth Parker

High school graduation is a meaningful milestone – an excellent time to reflect on accomplishments and start thinking about your future. Setting goals is an essential part of that process, helping you to create a clear path forward as you plan for the years to come.

You might be asking the following questions:

- Is college the right choice for me?

- Should I consider a trade school, or go straight into the workforce?

- Where do I see myself in five years?

Learning how to set goals is a skill that will help you answer these big questions. This skill supports growth and can be carried throughout adulthood.

Setting goals is key to achieving the outcomes you want. For instance, if you are planning to move out of your parents' home, it is important to consider everything you will need to accomplish this goal. There was a story of a young man who did just that – he planned ahead, budgeting for rent and basic living expenses, but overlooked one crucial detail: food. As a result, he ended up eating ramen noodles daily.

Setting goals plays a key role in creating a strong work ethic. In high school, teachers gave you assignments with deadlines to follow. After graduation, that structure disappears. Continue the structure and motivation by giving yourself assignments with set specific, attainable goals.

Realistic goals can lead to future success. Goal setting is a

skill that can be learned and strengthened over time. There are many different resources on goal setting. Even using a planner that has a section for goal setting can be a great asset for future success. Without goals, it is easy to drift like water following the path of least resistance. You have the power to shape your own outcome by leading a life with a plan and a purpose.

The office of health policy realized that students are not being introduced to health policy as a career choice; therefore, our office created a college course offered during the summer through East Central University. The course is titled, Chickasaw History: Intersection of Health and Policy. You could set a goal to take this class during the summer of 2025 and explore a career pathway that many stumble upon by accident. Health policy is a field that silently shapes our health and improves the lives of our citizens daily. Health policy refers to the decisions, plans and actions taken to achieve specific health care goals within a society, aiming to improve health outcomes and ensure access to quality care. The course is an online course that allows students to deepen their education while exploring public health policy and the history of the Chickasaw Nation's policy development. The course includes opportunities to collaborate with other students interested in health policy while learning from experts located in different areas. It is a great opportunity to widen your education and background for future careers.

If you are interested in learning more information on the course, contact Dr. Judy Goforth Parker at Judy.Parker@Chickasaw.net.

## ECU Nursing and Education scholarship applications now open through Chickasaw Nation

In partnership with East Central University, the Chickasaw Nation is offering financial assistance to Chickasaw students in the ECU education or nursing programs. Through the Abeka Apisachi Nursing Scholarship and Holisso Pisachi Education Scholarship, students will receive the full cost of tuition and fees, as well as on-campus housing and residential support.

Selected students will work part time with the Chickasaw Nation in the education or nursing field, earning valuable experience and making connections. Addi-

tionally, students must maintain bronze-level participation in the Chickasaw Nation Recruitment and Retention Program on ECU's campus.

To be eligible, Chickasaw students must be ECU education majors or be accepted into ECU's nursing program before applying.

A limited number of scholarships are available. The application deadline for fall 2025 scholarships is July 31. For more information or to apply, visit Chickasaw.net/HigherEd or call (580) 421-7711.

NEWS FROM THE  
CHICKASAW PRINCESS

CHEYENNE ARKANSAS

While being princess, I have attended many classes though the Chickasaw Nation that have helped me become more confident and gain more knowledge in my role; I have attended other events that I will hold close to me as well. I had the opportunity to attend a couple of stomp dances and dance with everyone in the circle. I was glad to see many faces that I knew outside of my role of being princess. I was honored to be present at the swearing in ceremony for Dustin Rowe as new Chief Justice of Oklahoma. I loved being there for that moment, as I knew Judge Rowe and his family previously since he grew up and lived in the same small town of Tishomingo as I have, so it was amazing to see someone from the same town as me, receive a huge title.

I am very proud to say that I am Chickasaw and honored to have the opportunity to represent the Chickasaw Nation at many events as the Chickasaw Princess.

## Join the Hapononka' Story Sharing Circle

Whether stories are traditional, personal or from one's imagination, the Hapononka' Story Sharing Circle invites everyone to come and build meaningful social connections through the traditional art of storytelling.

These monthly meetups are open to the public at no cost from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Chokma'si Gal-

lery, 201 N. Broadway, Ada, Oklahoma.

## Event dates include:

- May 17
- June 28
- July 26

For more information, call (580) 272-5520 or email Storytelling@Chickasaw.net.

## Summer enrollment open for Chickasaw Youth Clubs

The Chickasaw Youth Clubs (CYC) in Sulphur, Tishomingo and Ardmore are currently accepting applications for the summer program. Parents can enroll children ages 4-13 who are Chickasaw citizens or children of Chickasaw Nation employees.

These clubs provide afford-

able, safe places where children can build confidence, explore new interests and make lasting memories.

Children will experience a full day of age-appropriate activities to encourage self-esteem and leadership, including cultural arts and crafts, health and fitness

activities, field trips and community service projects. Nutritious meals and snacks will be served.

To apply for the summer program at any of the Chickasaw Youth Clubs or learn more about the program, please visit Chickasaw.net/CYC or call (580) 310-6620.

## Farmers' Market Summer program benefits good through Oct. 31

The Chickasaw Nation Senior Farmers' Market program provides benefits from June 1 through the end of October for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers markets and produce stands.

Chickasaw citizens age 55 and older, Chickasaw citizens who are considered 100% disabled and all

Chickasaw Warrior Society members may be eligible for this program.

In addition, a benefit is also available to all First American seniors age 55 and older, and non-First American seniors who are 60 and older and reside in a First American household.

If you have received the Senior

Winter Fruit and Vegetable program you are also eligible for the Summer Senior Farmers' Market program. For more information on eligibility or to apply, call (580) 436-7255 or visit ChickasawNationHealth.net/FarmersMarket. A toll-free number is also available at (855) 572-3433.

## Child Support Services offers comprehensive services for First American children

Ensuring the health, stability and future of First American children is a pillar of the Chickasaw Nation's values. By helping First American children receive crucial child support payments, the Chickasaw Nation Child Support Services program helps to protect their well-being. In fiscal year 2024, the program collected more than \$2.4 million in payments.

Other services include:

- Establishing paternity for mi-

nor children through genetic testing and legal processes

- Establishing a child support order once paternity is determined

- Enforcing existing child support orders

- Managing cases

- Locating parents

Additionally, the program can assist individuals experiencing employment barriers by providing educational or training sup-

port and can place referrals for substance use concerns.

These services are available for eligible parents and legal guardians to support the health and wellness of every First American child in need. No appointment is necessary to speak with a child support team member.

For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/ChildSupport or call (580) 436-3419.

# Chickasaw Nation Productions' 'Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher' and highly acclaimed 'Te Ata' to air on Peacock streaming service



Chickasaw Nation Productions' feature films "Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" and "Te Ata" are now available on the streaming platform Peacock.

Inspired by the life of historic Chickasaw rancher Montford Johnson, "Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" portrays the great hardships and tragedy Johnson and those close to him overcame to establish a vast ranching empire along the famous cattle highway of the American West, the Chisholm Trail.

A pioneer in Oklahoma's agriculture and community development, Johnson played a vital role in establishing cities and industries while dedicating his life to improving the lives of First Americans and supporting others in need.

Released in 2021, "Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" earned an audience score of 75% on Rotten Tomatoes' "Popcornmeter."

Available to stream on other platforms since its release, Collider.com included "Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" in its January 2025 article "The 8 Most Underrated Westerns on Netflix Right Now."

"Westerns have become a medium for exploring camaraderie, the confining structures of manhood and the real legacy of cowboys of all colors throughout American history," author Tauri Miller writes.

"Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" is a gritty, yet inspirational film about an ambitious Chickasaw who refuses to let his people's territory be claimed by

the encroaching military men and westward expansionists. Taking on the role of the famous Indigenous entrepreneur is Martin Sensmeier, who has a commanding presence throughout as he takes on anyone who would dare try to get in the way of his business," Miller writes.

Sensmeier ("The Magnificent Seven" and "1883") is part of the Tlingit and Koyukon/Athabaskan tribe of Alaska.

Tatanka Means ("Killers of the Flower Moon") plays Rising Wolf. He represents the Oglala Lakota, Omaha and Navajo tribes. Other cast members include Dermot Mulroney, Tommy Flanagan, Grace Montie, James Landry Hébert, Denim Richards, Mackenzie Astin, Caleb Martin, Danny Tracey, Cat Merritt, Richard Whitman, Zack Morris, Randy Mendez-Kestler, Bella Muncy and Callan Wilson.

"Montford: The Chickasaw Rancher" was directed by Nathan Frankowski and produced by Paul Sirmons.

Most of the film was shot in Oklahoma.

It is the third feature film produced by the Chickasaw Nation, joining "Te Ata" and "Pearl" in its effort to tell the story of the Chickasaw people.

"Te Ata" is based on the inspiring, true story of Mary Thompson Fisher, a woman who traversed cultural barriers to become one of the greatest First American performers of all time. Born in Indian Territory in 1895 and raised on the songs and stories of her Chickasaw culture, Te Ata's jour-

ney to find her true calling led her through isolation, discovery, love and a stage career that culminated in performances for a United States president, European royalty and audiences across the world. Yet, of all the stories she shared, none is more inspiring than her own.

Released in 2016, "Te Ata" earned a 95% "Popcornmeter" from Rotten Tomatoes audience members and several critics gave the movie high marks.

New York Times movie critic Teo Bugbee commended the film's star, Q'orianka Kilcher, along with the person she portrays, Chickasaw actress and storyteller "Te Ata" Thompson Fisher.

"The movie's driving force is its mythic performance scenes, which are choreographed, sung and acted with clear, balletic conviction by the film's star, Q'orianka Kilcher," Bugbee wrote.

She went on to say, "Te Ata became an advocate, through her own artistic excellence, for the inherent dignity the federal government denied American Indians — fittingly, her stage name means 'bearer of the morning.'"

"Te Ata" features an all-star cast including Kilcher ("The New World" and "Yellowstone"), Graham Greene ("Dances with Wolves"), Gil Birmingham ("Yellowstone"), Brigid Brannagh ("Army Wives"), Mackenzie Astin ("Wyatt Earp") and Oklahoma native Cindy Pickett ("Ferris Bueller's Day Off").

Te Ata remained active in storytelling and acting. So critically

important was her life and career, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1957. Thirty years later, she would be named Oklahoma's first "Treasure." She was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 1990 and posthumously inducted into the National Native American Hall of Fame in 2024.

Te Ata died just shy of her 100th birthday in 1995.

"Te Ata" was directed by Nathan Frankowski and produced by Paul Sirmons.

Filming took place in Oklahoma.

## Chickasaw Nation Productions

Chickasaw Nation Productions was established in 2009 as a result of Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby's vision to utilize film production to preserve the stories of the Chickasaw people.

The goal of Chickasaw Nation Productions is to educate audiences by producing feature films and documentaries with accurate, positive portrayals of Chickasaw people, history and culture.

Each film illustrates how Chickasaw culture played an important role in the lives of the individuals and events portrayed in the films, and how those individuals and events influenced the world around them.

For more information about Chickasaw Nation Productions, visit ChickasawFilms.com.

CONTRIBUTED BY Dana Lance, Media Relations

## Parents encouraged to talk to health care providers about measles

**MEASLES**  
It's more than just a rash.

Measles is extremely contagious and can be dangerous for babies and young children.

**MEASLES SYMPTOMS USUALLY INCLUDE:**

- HIGH FEVER** May spike to more than 104 F.
- COUGH**
- RUNNY NOSE**
- RASH** Develops 3-5 days on the head, mouth and chest after symptoms begin.
- RED, WATERY EYES**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov)

Chickasaw Nation Department of Health encourages vaccination to prevent measles and other serious illnesses. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

The Chickasaw Nation Department of Health is closely monitoring the increase of measles in Oklahoma and surrounding states. Health officials encourage immunization to prevent infection and spread of the virus.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said an individual can get the virus just by being in the same room for up to two hours after an infected person is present. If one person has the virus, up to 9 out of 10 people nearby can become infected if they are not protected.

Chickasaw Nation pediatric health providers encourage parents to ensure their children are up to date on their immunizations.

"Measles is an extremely contagious virus and can cause serious health problems in young children," said Chief of Pediatrics Dr. Tangra Broge. "The best protection against measles is with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. We strongly urge parents to ensure their children are protected, especially before traveling to social gatherings or summer vacation destinations."

The MMR vaccine is given in two doses, with the first dose recommended for children 12-

15 months of age and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. The CDC recommends the vaccine for older children, adolescents and adults if they do not have evidence of previous immunizations.

Parents and caregivers should be watching for symptoms such as a high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes, which can appear 7-14 days after being exposed to the virus. The CDC said common complications can also include ear infections, diarrhea and a rash that might be seen in the mouth and on the face, neck, arms and legs. Measles can also have a serious effect on pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health established an online case summary for the public to monitor the increase in cases as well as identify public locations where there is a risk of exposure.

Anyone who is having symptoms or is concerned they may have interacted with someone who has measles should contact their health care provider. For information about pediatric services or to schedule an appointment, please call the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center at (580) 421-4550, Ardmore Health Clinic at (580) 222-2950, Purcell Health Clinic at (405) 527-4700 or Tishomingo Health Clinic at (580) 387-2722.

## Chickasaw Nation Head Start and preschool enrollment open

Preschool and Head Start programs build the foundation for early childhood education in all areas of development and wellness, supporting your child's learning through physical, emotional, social, cognitive and cultural activities.

Enrollment for the Ada preschool is open to Chickasaw citizens. Enrollment for the Head Start centers in Ardmore, Tishomingo and Sulphur is open to all children ages 3-4. Children must be 3 years old by Sept. 1 to enroll.

To apply and view enrollment requirements, visit Chickasaw.net/HeadStart or call (580) 421-7711.

## Chickasaw Honor Club applications open for spring semester

The Chickasaw Honor Club recognizes the spirit of excellence, hard work and academic achievement of Chickasaw students throughout the school year. Students who received good grades, perfect attendance or outstanding achievements inside or outside the classroom are eligible to apply for these incentives and awards.

Grades must reflect the spring 2025 semester. Applications must be submitted within 30 days of the last day of the semester and before the July 1 deadline. New applications must be submitted for each semester.

Honor club is open to Chickasaw students in grades 2-12.

Visit Chickasaw.net/HonorClub for additional requirements or to apply.



## Art retreat offered to Chickasaw teens

Chickasaw teens joined a weeklong art retreat from March 16-20 at the Chickasaw Retreat and Conference Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Workshop choices included weaving, ceramics, digital media, metalsmithing and technical theatre. Pictured above: traditional weaving projects created by Mekai Greenwood.

## Embrace Tradition: Chickasaw Cultural Center make and take classes

The Chickasaw Cultural Center hosts monthly classes that offer hands-on learning for traditional Chickasaw practices.

This month, explore how to use a loom by pony beading a bracelet May 31 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Continue your learning with a pinch pot workshop June 3 from 3-4 p.m.

Classes are open to the public and limited to 20 participants at no cost. All supplies are provided.

To reserve your spot or to learn about more upcoming classes, please call (580) 622-7140 or email Kaley.Reed@Chickasaw.net.

**CHICKASAW FOUNDATION**

**2025-2026 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

**DUE BY JUNE 2**

**MAJORS INCLUDE**

- Business
- Education
- Health Care
- Much more

**FOR MORE INFO**

☎ (580) 421-9030  
🌐 chickasawfoundation.org

## Alexandria Mischkot



Alexandria Mischkot, of Denison, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Denison High School. She is the daughter of Stephen Mischkot and Tabitha Tate. She is the granddaughter of Bobby and Kewinna Tate and Bill and Brenda Mischkot. She is the great-granddaughter of Lucille Row and Joyce Sikes.

Alexandria has had a wonderful experience throughout her school years. She was a member of the debate team, plays guitar and loves music. She played softball over the last several years, starting with t-ball in kindergarten while attending Waples Day School.

Alexandria plans to attend Grayson College in the fall of 2025 and onto Texas A&M to complete her degree in forensic pathology.

## Anthony Michael Vasselli-Lowndes



Anthony Michael Vasselli - Lowndes, of Topeka, Kansas is a 2025 graduate of Topeka High School. He is the son of Linzie Gigger and the grandson of Janice Bozeman.

Anthony was an outstanding varsity four-year athlete. He was active in football, wrestling and track and field. He made starting varsity in football by his sophomore year and maintained his position through his senior year. He wrestled all four years making

the varsity team for two of those years. He ran track and field for two years also making the varsity team. Anthony is a well rounded athlete that hopes to continue to play football in college if he receives any offers within the next year.

He plans to begin work and start his adult life in hopes to study photography, pursue his interest in music production and influence the youth in his community.

## Audrianna White



Audrianna White, of Lone Grove, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Lone Grove High School. She is the daughter of Shelby Ellis. She is the granddaughter of Jennifer Wright (Shields).

Audrianna is a flutist with the Lone Grove High School band. She has qualified and placed in SEOBDA and SCOBDA throughout her high school career. Audri auditioned for OMEA Honor Band and finished 20th chair flute out of all other schools in Oklahoma. She is a member of the Ardmore Community Band and a member of the Lone Grove Academic Team. She is finishing internship roles with Lone Grove High School and giving flute lesson to incoming high school students.

Audri plans to attend college in the fall, to pursue music education and music performance.

She has shown dedication and amazing work ethic throughout her high school career. Her

family is honored to support her future dreams and are excited to see where life takes her! Congratulations on this big accomplishment! We love you so much, Mom and Sophia!

## Baylor Wayne Scruggs

Baylor Wayne Scruggs, of Moore, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Moore High School. He is the son of Ashleigh and Jeff Scruggs. He is the grandson of Dana and Rod Holliday and Vickie and Ronnie Scruggs and the great-grandson of Charlotte Newton.

Baylor has played football since the age of six. He was active in agriculture the last four years of high school and a member of the youth at First Baptist Moore.

Baylor will be joining the U.S. Marines after graduation.



## Caden Hoyte Burris



Caden Hoyte Burris, of Konawa, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Konawa High School. He is the son of Brett and Tiffany Nail and the late Steven Burris. He is the grandson of Tawana Gray, of Earlsboro, Oklahoma, Randel Briggs, of Oklahoma City, Calvin Burris, of Ada, Oklahoma, Cindy Burris of Konawa, Kathy and Charles Nail, of Sasakwa, Oklahoma. Caden is the great-grandson of Hoyte Mayfield, of Konawa and the late Frances Mayfield, Eula Clark, Callen and Leona Burris, Paul and Mary Briggs, Ivone and Charles Nail.

Caden has attended Konawa Public School for 13 years. He will be the fourth generation on his dad's side to graduate from Konawa. During his senior year he is a member of Future Farmers of America, the National Honors Society, a member of TNT (Tiger News Talk), and is serves as secretary of his senior class. He will be graduating with a 3.8 grade point average (GPA). He is also an active member of the Army Reserves.

He will attend AIT this summer for job training as a military police officer. Upon completion he will attend East Central University in the fall. He plans to major in criminal justice and hopes to pursue a career in law enforcement.

## Braylon Guerrero

Braylon Guerrero, of Moore, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Moore High School. He is the son of Stevie and Noah Guerrero and the grandson of Judy Clapp and Jackie Brooks. Noah is the great-grandson of Jack and Peggy Clapp.

Braylon has attended Moore Norman Technology Center for the Electrical Trade program for two years and plans to pursue his Journeyman Electrical license after graduation.



## Christabella Malone



Christabella Malone, of Cibolo, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Byron P. Steele II. She is the daughter of Chris and Melanie Malone. She is the granddaughter of Walter and Georgia Malone and Raul Sr. and Maria Gutierrez.

Christabella was a member of the varsity swim team and ROTC, while being an AP Scholar, a member of the National Honor Society and being in the top 10% of her graduating class.

She plans to attend Texas A&M in College Station, Texas to study agricultural engineering to become a veterinarian.

## Faith McWethy



Faith McWethy, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Ada High School. She is the daughter of Courtney McWethy and Brandon McWethy.

Faith is a straight A student.

She plans to attend East Central University to pursue a business degree.

Her parents, Courtney and Brandon, are so proud of her and can't wait to see what her future brings her.

## Hudson Chase Smith

Hudson Chase Smith, of Trophy Club, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Byron Nelson High School. He is the son of Justin and Jessyca Smith and the grandson of John and Cathy Smith, and Linda and Peter Tierney, all of New Mexico.

Hudson is excited to graduate from Byron Nelson High School. During the past four years, he held several positions in the Environment Club and Young Men's Service League Inspire Chapter, serving over 130 hours in his community. Additionally, he worked as a lifeguard for the town and was awarded "Lifeguard of the Year" in 2022.

Hudson plans to attend Oregon State University and major in bioengineering, where he looks forward to designing medical devices.

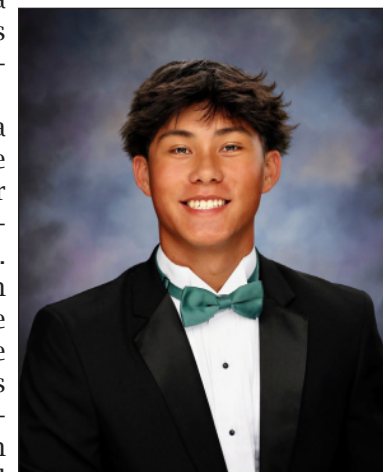


## Nolan James Johnson

Nolan James Johnson, of Moorpark, California is a 2025 graduate of Moorpark High School. He is the son of Dean and Judy Johnson and the grandson of James Harrison White.

Nolan was on the Principal's Honor Roll with a 3.5 grade point average (GPA). He was selected the 2022 Student of the Year and Student of the Year for the Ventura County School District in 2025. Nolan received a Health Science Certificate in 2023. He has been awarded the Varsity Letter Award in 2024, the Scholar Athlete in 2022 and 2024, the Athletic Award for baseball in 2022-2024, the Athletic Award for football in 2022 and Coaches Award for football in 2022. He received a Certificate of Recognition CIF Div 2 Regional Finalist on behalf of Moorpark High School Varsity Baseball Team in 2024. Nolan is also a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Nolan, a Chickasaw citizen, has committed to play baseball at Pierce College in Los Angeles in the Fall of 2025.



## Jake Erickson



Jake Erickson, of Kaysville, Utah is a 2025 graduate of Davis High School. He is the son of Jennifer and John Erickson and the grandson of Brad and Paula Ough and Kevin and Jeannie Erickson.

Jake competed on the Davis High School mountain bike team, advancing to state for four years. He currently plays varsity on the Davis High School lacrosse team. He completed two internships. The first with the Utah State Auditor's office and the second with Westates Construction. He also completed multiple concurrent enrollment courses at Weber State. He enjoys skiing, boating, pickleball, golf, working out, and entrepreneurship.

He plans to serve a two-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the fall. Upon completion he plans to obtain a four year degree in accounting.

## Kaleb Powell



Kaleb Powell, of Durant, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Durant High School. He is the son of Stephen and Edie Powell.

Kaleb is on the varsity tennis team. He qualified and participated at state in 2024. Kaleb was awarded the Champion of Character Award for tennis and awarded the Texoma Chevy A+ Athlete, both in September 2024. Kaleb is a member of The National Honor Society, Oklahoma Honor Society, and the Oklahoma Indian Honor Society.

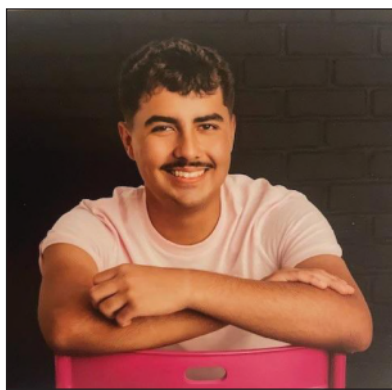
Kaleb plans are to attend the University of Oklahoma, Norman, in the fall and major in Engineering.

## Kye Salazar

Kye Salazar, of Madill, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Madill High School. He is the son of Jorge and Andrea Salazar. He is the grandson of Isaias and Juana Salazar and Brenda Krampe and Tommy Ferguson.

Kye has been a member of the high school band for five years, the jazz band for the past two years and has received several awards, including outstanding brass player and outstanding soloist.

Kye will attend East Central University this fall and has received a scholarship to play in the band.



## Levi Vogler

Levi Vogler, of Sulphur, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Sulphur High School. He is the son of Kalissa Tibbs and Thomas Vogler. Levi is the grandson of Jacqueline Somers and David and Kay Somers and Alton and Diana Vogler.

Levi's future plans are to learn a trade. He hopes to build his very own business from the ground up!



## Luke Collette



Luke Collette, of Truckee, California is a 2025 graduate of Sierra High School. He is the son of Rob and Debbie Collette and the grandson of Phillip and Mary Brown and Ann Brown.

Luke Collette is a graduating senior whose journey through high school has been marked by quiet strength, resilience, and a dry sense of humor that keeps everyone on their toes. Known for his loyalty to those he cares about and his ability to think deeply (often more than he lets on), Luke is someone who leads by example rather than attention.

A true gearhead at heart, Luke finds joy in the roar of engines and the smell of motor oil. He spends his free time working on cars, studying performance builds, and honing his skills in race car driving and drifting — where precision, control, and adrenaline all meet. His passion for mechanics isn't just a hobby; it's a glimpse of a future shaped by drive, discipline, and horsepower.

Beyond the garage, Luke gives back. He volunteers as a teacher's assistant, works with kids, and serves as a mentor — both formally and in everyday moments. Whether he's helping younger students find their confidence or showing up for someone who needs a steady presence, Luke makes a quiet impact that ripples out in big ways.

He's also an incredible big brother to his three siblings — patient, protective, and always up for a laugh or late-night talk. His family sees the best of who he is every day: steady, thoughtful, and full of heart.

As Luke heads into what's next, he takes with him not just knowledge and skill, but a deep sense of purpose and grit. The road ahead is his — and it's going to be fast, fearless, and unforgettable.

## Lila Faith Perryman



Lila Faith Perryman, of Farmers Branch, Texas is a 2025 graduate of The Covenant School of Dallas. She is the daughter of Tad and Cinnamon Perryman. She is the granddaughter of Richard and Janice Butterfield, of Choctaw, Oklahoma and Charlette Perryman, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Lila is graduating from The Covenant School of Dallas in May 2025 with a 4.0 GPA and with an impressive range of experiences across academics, athletics, work, and volunteerism.

Her curiosity was shown in her senior thesis, titled "Sweet Dreams are Made of This: Investigating the Purpose of Dreaming" as well as her acceptance into a National Geographic Student Travel program in 2024, exploring culture and climate science in Norway. Athletically, Lila contributed to her school's success as the cross country and track manager throughout high school, assisting the team to nine state championships. She also participated in junior varsity volleyball and track.

In her work and volunteer roles Lila has been involved in the Youth Lead Team at Northwest Bible Church, leading worship, mentoring students, and supporting mission trips and refugee centers. She also worked as a barista at Dutch Bros in 2023-2024. Actively engaged in extracurricular activities, Lila served as the President of the Hiking Club, performing in choir (section leader), and participating in theater productions such as Macbeth and Beauty and the Beast. She's also passionate about writing short stories, flash fiction and poetry.

Lila received many academic honors, including the Knight's Dedication Award in 2023, 2nd place in poetry and 3rd in short stories in the Chickasaw Anoli Writing Contests and the College Board National Indigenous recognition. She is a member of several honor societies, including the National English Honors Society, Mu Alpha Theta, Thespian Society and Junior Classical League, having earned regional and state titles in various competitions.

Lila plans to Oklahoma State University, Stillwater in the Fall of 2025!

## Marie Patricia Gentile

Marie Patricia Gentile, of Hudson, Ohio is a 2025 graduate of Western Reserve Academy. She is the daughter of Anne Halsell Gentile and Dan Gentile. She is the granddaughter of Bill and June Halsell and the late Patricia Halsell and Sam and Ruth Ann Gentile.

Marie graduates from high school ready to study visual communications design, looking to integrate her love of all things STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and art.

As one of the first female Eagle Scouts in her troop she mentors both boys and girls as they advance through the ranks, being a leader and coaching others to be leaders. She was selected and proudly serves the Scouting National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) organization. Through the years she was a guide, quartermaster and current a Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). Marie is a member of the Scouting Honors Society called Order of the Arrow. Her scouting adventures include Sea Base in the Virgin Islands, Philmont in New Mexico, and Swamp



Base in Louisiana.

She has been actively involved in sports: varsity softball (Captain), rugby (learning and falling in love with the game as a senior, wishing she had started earlier), and foil fencing. She received the Softball Coach's Award, recognizing her mentoring efforts of 15 new players who had never played softball before. In the school's Theater/Drama Department, she has been on the Tech Crew, as stage manager, assistant director, backstage crew, fly and spotlight operator, or props manager, for 18 productions.

For her academic achievements, the National College Board recognized Marie and awarded her the National Indigenous Recognition Program. She earned this academic honor because of her GPA and outstanding performance on the PSAT exam.

Giving back to the community has also been important to Marie as she served as a teaching assistant/peer tutor for Algebra 1 & 2 and Geometry. As part of scouting, school, and church she has volunteered over 350 hours.

Marie enjoys spending time with family and friends, especially visiting her grandfather's (Chief's) farm in New Mexico and cousins in Pennsylvania.

## Kalley Anthis

Kalley Anthis of Dibble, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Dibble High School. She is the daughter of Krysty Slack and Mike Anthis, and step-father Aaron Slack. She is the granddaughter of Tim and Kathy Morris, Monte Anthis, Mitch and Teddi Wright, and Larry and Denise Slack.

Kalley has attended Dibble Public Schools for 14 years. Throughout high school, Kalley has been involved in Dibble Honor Society, FCCLA, Student Council and Cheerleading. One of her favorite high school memories is winning the OSSAA Class 2A Game Day State Championship.

After graduation, Kalley plans to attend the University of Oklahoma, majoring in Medical Imaging and Radiation Science, and then she will work at the new Chickasaw Nation Hospital in Newcastle.



## Bo Shooter Deaton



Bo Shooter Deaton of Wapanucka, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Wapanucka High School. He is the son of Jason and Ginny Deaton, of Wapanucka, and the brother to Presley Deaton, of Wapanucka. His maternal grandparents are Martha and the late Wayne Staggs, of Wapanucka. His paternal grandparents are Doug and Beverly Deaton, of Ada, Oklahoma and Carl and Edna Thompson, of Fittstown, Oklahoma.

Bo participated as the Academic Team Captain for four years, Student Council President during his senior year, Class President for three years and attended Kiamichi Tech in Atoka, Oklahoma for two years. He received first place in earth/science at SOSU curriculum, Academic Team District Champion for three years, and Academic Team Regional Runner-Up for two years. Bo also plays guitar, drums, hunts and fishes, and is the third generation to build hunting knives.

Bo studied electrical technology at Kiamichi Tech in Atoka, Oklahoma. He will graduate in May as an electrical apprentice, as well as, have a Greenlee conduit bending certification and hopes to be an electrical contractor.

## Quinton Teal D. Buck



Quinton Teal D. Buck, of Edmond, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Edmond High School. He is the son of Richay Jobe, of Edmond, and Will Buck, of Holdenville, Oklahoma and the grandson of Diane Jobe and Connie Buck.

Quinton is a proud Edmond Memorial HS Bulldog and a concurrent vo-tech student at Francis Tuttle Technical School, Danforth Campus. During his years at Edmond, he was selected as a Francis Tuttle Ambassador, excelled in his Digital Media studies at Francis Tuttle and participated in Edmond Memorial's Native American Club. Recently, Quinton showcased his print and digital artwork at Ignite Night at Francis Tuttle. In his free time, he strives to improve his portfolio.

Quinton has been accepted into the Media Arts-Animation program at Wichita State University and will begin classes this fall. He is a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation.

## Rachel Brutsché

Rachel Brutsché, of Edmond, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Edmond Santa Fe High School. She is the daughter of Joe Brutsché.

Rachel is the class valedictorian and a member of the high school honor society. In her senior year, Rachel attended Francis Tuttle Vocational school and has received technical honor society commendations.

She enjoys singing and has been a member of the advanced choir in her high school career. For the last two years Rachel has been working with children as a teacher at an early childhood development center.

This summer she will be receiving her state credentials and licensure as an esthetician and plans to continue a career in this field.



## Steven Micah Wolfe

Steven Micah Wolfe, of Marietta, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Thackerville High School. He is the son of Shane and Sandi Wolfe, of Marietta and the grandson of David and Rhonda Wolfe, of Marietta and Steve and Evonne Gardner, of Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Micah is in the top 10 percent of his graduating class. He serves as president of the Thackerville Future Farmers of America Chapter and is a member of the Thackerville Wildcats football, baseball, and golf teams, THS Student Council, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the National Honor Society.

Micah is proud of his involvement as a leader in the student ministry at Marietta First Baptist Church, where he is a member of the Lead Team and serves as a speaker at midweek services. In his free time, Micah enjoys hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.



Micah plans to attend Murray State College and study to become a teacher and coach.

## Rush England



Rush England, of Davis, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Davis High School. He is the son of Justin and Amber England. He is the grandson of Brian and Carolyn England and the late Linda Peery Daniel and Danny Daniel.

Rush has attended Davis Public Schools since Pre K. He has been involved in agriculture mechanics all through high school and enjoys metal work and crafts. He keeps busy restoring his 1970 Chevy pick up and working at Turner Falls during the summer months.

Rush plans to attend East Central University in the fall.

## Amber Nie

Amber Nie, of Dover, Massachusetts is a 2025 graduate of Dover Sherborn High School. She is the daughter of Lindsay Nie (Chickasaw) and Davie Nie. She is the granddaughter of Linda Galbraith (Chickasaw), Dorian Dolph, Rusi Chen and Qiangde Nie.

Amber has distinguished herself as a leader, a storyteller, and an aspiring environmental scientist. She is the editor of her school's yearbook, where she works to capture and reflect the collective memory of her classmates. She also started her school's volleyball club, creating a space for students of all skill levels to come together, stay active, and build community.

Driven by a passion for connecting people, Amber created The Late Nie Show, a student-led talk show that airs on her town's local cable channel and YouTube. She designed and built the set herself using donated materials and crafts each episode to feature students, teachers, and community members in thoughtful, often humorous interviews. The show has become a cherished local platform for celebrating voices across generations and experiences.

Amber founded the Filmmaking Club at her school and was a 2024 OSTEAM Fellow through the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, where she conducted hands-on research alongside leading scientists studying the impact of ocean systems on the climate. Last fall, she hosted a public film screening and discussion for Indigenous Peoples' Day, using film as a tool to spark meaningful conversations about environmental change and Native identity.

A dedicated dancer for 16 years, Amber has trained in ballet, lyrical, jazz, and hip hop. Dance has been a constant source of discipline, expression and joy throughout her life.

This fall, Amber will attend Brown University, where she plans to study Environmental Science and Film & Media. She hopes to one day serve as a scientific advisor for film and television, using her dual passions to help the public understand complex climate issues and inspire collective action.



## Ayden Elcyzyn



Ayden Elcyzyn, of Newcastle, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Newcastle High School. He is the son of Gerald Elcyzyn, Jr. and Tiffany Elcyzyn. He is the grandson of Gerald Elcyzyn, Sr. and Melana Elcyzyn and Danny and Debbie Love and the late Oretta (Parnacher) Shaw.

Ayden will graduate with honors and go on to play football for NEO A&M where he will begin working on his prerequisites in Engineering with a concentration in Atmospheric Science. His hope is to transfer to a Division 1 University in two years where he can finish his degree and possibly continue his collegiate football career.

Ayden enjoys spending time with his crazy family, his friends and vacationing anywhere where there is adventure! The mountains, the beach, the lake—all of them! He also enjoys gaming and hanging with his little brother, Maverick.

One piece of advice he would give to other high school students is this, "The comeback is always greater than the setback. Give it to God and allow the resilience of the circumstances to take shape."

## Caden Sippy Hart

Caden Sippy Hart, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Byng High School. He is the son of Levi Hart and Angela Geiser. He is the grandson of Gerald and Rita Hart, of Byng. Caden is the great-grandson of Steve and Kathy Ross, of Minnesota, and the late Karen Scroggins, of Ada.

Caden is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and descendant of Choctaw and Jicarilla Apache Nation, he enjoys spending time with many family and cultural gatherings. He is a soft spoken and kindhearted student and speaks highly of his teacher, Ms. Ashlee Douglas who provided individual attention and opportunities to enhance his learning. Caden completed Chickasaw language classes and participated in the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. He excelled in Special Olympics and earned several medals.

Caden plans following graduation is to be independent and explore future career goals. His family is very proud of his academic achievements and thankful for Byng Public Schools and the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services for the ongoing support.



## Campbell De Sosa



Campbell De Sosa, of Pompano Beach, Florida is a 2025 graduate of Pompano Beach High School. She is the daughter of Chandra De Sosa and Jon De Sosa. She is the granddaughter of Jerald Nickell and Lynda Nickell and is the great-granddaughter of Mary Nickell and Tommy Nickell.

Campbell, a passionate performer and dedicated leader, currently serves as the president of her high school's drama club. With a deep love for the arts and a talent for storytelling, she has had the honor of organizing productions, directing shows and performing in lead roles.

Campbell will be continuing her passions at the University of Central Florida, where she plans to major in theatre as well as Media Production & Management, combining her creativity with a drive to bring her productions to life both on stage and behind the scenes.

## Ian Ritterhouse

Ian Ritterhouse, is a 2025 graduate of Epic Charter School and Kiamichi Technology Center. He is the son of Lacy Nunley-Ritterhouse and Jeremy Ritterhouse.

His plans are to pursue a career in information technology.

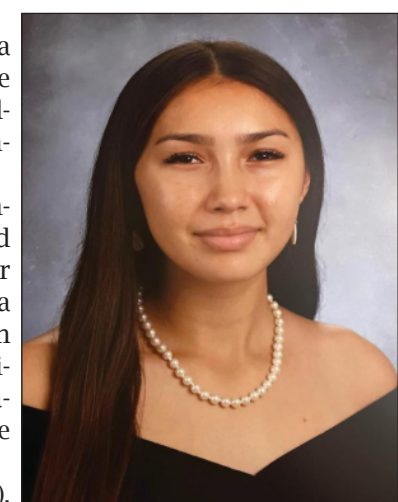


## Gabrielle Svda (Apple) Nucosee

Gabrielle Svda (Apple) Nucosee, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Ada High School. She is the daughter of David and Couita Nucosee and the granddaughter of late Henry and late Bernice Ripley Johnson.

Gabrielle has been a member of the National Honor Society, Business Professionals of America and was the 2024 Homecoming Queen. She is a former Bak Bak stickball player and plays on the Chickasha IHOO team. She participated in the Native American Quiz Bowl, Chickasaw Dance Troupe, Native American Indian Club, Oklahoma Council Indian Education, Oklahoma Federation of Indian Women and the Acuma Modeling agency.

Gabrielle will attend East Central University (ECU), Ada to major in communications. She has received the ECU Academic Achievement Scholarship and the ECU Academic Scholar Scholarship.



## Davion James Wilson



Davion James Wilson, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Ada High School. He is the son of David and Sarah Wilson and the grandson of Tim and Neva Harjochee and Lisa Vaught Robinson and the late David Wilson.

Davion has been a member of the Ada Band for three years, color guard for one year and Choir/Jazz Choir for three years. He has been a member of student council for four years, drama club for three years, and the Ada HS Internship Program for two years. Davion has been in the performing arts for six years and competitive drama for three years.

Davion has been awarded the 2024-2025 Homecoming King and Prince. He has won State Sweepstakes in 2024 5A Choir and 5A Band. He was a part of the 2024 One-Act Play 5A State Champion in competitive drama.

Davion was a 2024 5A State Runner-Up in Speech and Debate with a program oral interpretation on MMIW, Boarding Schools and the Indian Removal. He was invited by the College of the Muscogee Nation to perform his POI during their MMIW event in May 2024. He performed at Disney World in April 2024 and qualified in April 2025 for 5A Regionals and State Speech and Debate competition for Monologue, POI and Poetry on MMIW. Davion medaled numerous times in competitive drama competitions at schools across Oklahoma and is the 2025 5A State Speech and Debate Champion with Poetry for his piece on MMIW.

He has been in productions of "Beauty & the Beast," "The Addams Family", and "A Christmas Carol" with a leading role of "Fezziwig." His spring productions are "Wizard of Oz," "Legally Blonde, Jr." "Finding Nemo, Jr" and he won the "Kelli O'Hara" award for Outstanding Ensemble in 2023.

Davion was named All Around Junior Boy, and JOM Student of the Year in 2024. He served as an Oklahoma Senate page for Senator McCortney in May 2024.

He attends the Chickasaw Arts Academy focusing on performing arts and began acting with a role as "Jake" in "A Christmas Journey", a Chickasaw production. He was awarded second place in the 2019 Youth Red Earth contest for his stomp dance belt and he has been a member of the Chickasaw Children's Choir for four years.

His passion leads him to pursue a teaching degree in performing arts, where he found his people and wants to share that with other kids who need a sense of belonging and fitting in.

## Toby James Hollis



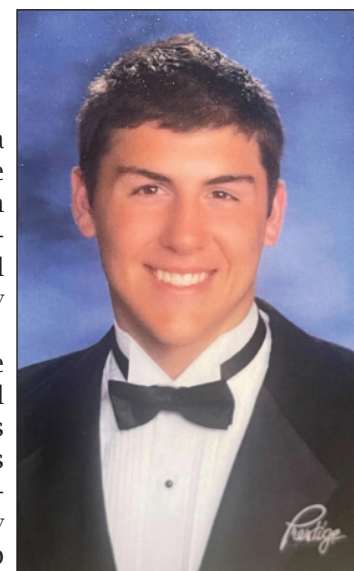
Toby James Hollis, of Van Alstyne, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Van Alstyne High School. He is the son of Emily and Ben Harrahill and the grandson of Lorinda Green. He is the great-grandson of Roston and Shirley Green, of Calera, Oklahoma, and the great-great-grandson of the original enrollees, Roman and Lucille Green.

Toby has been actively involved in various school activities, including theater set construction, seventh and eighth grade football and culinary class, which provided food for several dinner theaters.

In his sophomore year, Toby received the Van Alstyne History Award, and in his junior year, he was awarded the Physics Award.

Outside of school, Toby enjoys fishing, which he engages in daily when he is not working or attending classes. He is currently employed at Golden Chick Restaurant.

## Zachary N. Dresch



Zachary N. Dresch, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania is a 2025 graduate of Lancaster Catholic High School. He is the son of Jill Dresch (Ashworth) and the grandson of Skip and Teri Ashworth (Price). Zachary is the great-grandson of Richard and Mildred Price (Jackson) and the great-great-grandson of original enrollee Lindsay Jackson (Smith).

Zach has proven himself to be an exceptional athlete and leader during his middle school and high school years. He serves as the senior class president and is involved in both the Lead Organization and Civitas Christian services. He belongs to various clubs including Spanish, environmental, garden and the Varsity Club. Zach also attends Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church in Ephrata, PA.

Zach has played a variety of sports, but his real passion is playing football and wrestling.

This year, he set two new school records with 179 single season tackles and 460 career tackles. This achievement places him fifth in the state and ranks him 55th in the nation for single season tackles. Zachary's wrestling career is equally as impressive. He is currently ranked 10th in the nation in the 189 weight class. He ended his amazing wrestling career as a state qualifier competing at The Giant Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Zach is a funny, loving and caring brother and son.

He will be attending and playing football at Cheshire Prep Academy in Connecticut next year.

## Kiarah LaChelle McGee

Kiarah LaChelle McGee, of Ardmore, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Dickson High School. She is the daughter of Micala and LaCresha Smith and Kevin McGee. She is the granddaughter of Connie and Cecil McCarroll and the late Sidney Hamby.

Kiarah participated in basketball, track and field and softball. Kiarah was a member of the National Honor Society and National Society of High School Scholars. She was in the SOTC two-year nursing assisting and medical assisting programs.

Kiarah will attend East Central University for the basic of nursing and will attend Oklahoma State University for the bachelor of science of nursing program. She is wanting to specialize in labor and delivery for the NICU.



## Noah R.J. Montgomery



Noah R.J. Montgomery, of Ponca City, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Ponca City High School. He is the son of Mikel and Mindy Montgomery.

Noah is active in his church youth group at St. Mary's Church in Ponca City and is an active member of the Knights of Columbus through St. Mary's Church. Noah has volunteered at the youth group concession stands at the soccer field. He is on the E-Sports team at Ponca City High School.

Noah has grown up in Cub Scouts and his future plans involve going to school to become a veterinarian. Noah volunteered at the Ponca City Humane Society where he helped take care of animals and New Emergency Resource Agency which helps combat food scarcity in North Central Oklahoma. Noah has had a part-time job in the past and when he can, he plays Dungeons and Dragons with a local group. Noah has always had a heart for animals and has asked his parents to adopt animals of all kinds. Noah currently has 2 leopard geckos, a cat, five dogs and up until recently, he also had a hedgehog.

## Tinley Maelyn Dempsey



Tinley Maelyn Dempsey, of Stratford, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Stratford High School. She is the daughter of Randy and Brittany Choate and Branum and Elizabeth Dempsey.

Tinley played fast and slow pitch softball for the last four years for Stratford High School. She is active in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and participates in the youth group at Allen Freewill Baptist Church. Tinley has attended Mid-America Technology Center and obtained a certified nursing certificate and a phlebotomy certificate.

Tinley's future plans are to further her education in nursing and plans to attend Murray State College, Tishomingo, Oklahoma to obtain a registered nursing degree.

## Nathin-Skott Brouwer



Nathin-Skott Brouwer, of Atwater, California is a 2025 graduate of Atwater High School. He is the son of Jon-Erik Brouwer (Chickasaw-at-large member) and Denise Brouwer and the grandson of Stanley Brouwer (Chickasaw-at-large member) and Victoria Brouwer, Debi Barnett and Dennis Barnett.

Nathin has maintained on the A and B Honor Roll throughout his high school career, having AP courses in math, science, history and English. He is an ASB member and has repeatedly received awards for perfect attendance, participation/involvement and Academic Excellence. He has also been on the Atwater Baseball team all four years and received the coach's award junior year. He has been certified in HubSpot Social Media, Microsoft Word and Powerpoint, Content Marketing and Ag Align Floral Design.

Nathin plans on attending CSU Fullerton College with a major in Business and Economics.

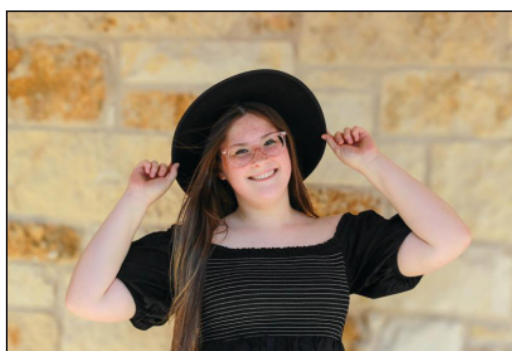
We couldn't be more proud of him and wish him nothing but the best for his future.

## Alyssa Reed

Alyssa Reed, of Texarkana, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Texas High School. She is the daughter of Matt and Shalena Reed and the granddaughter of Steven and Tina Troxler, and Joy and the late Ken Reed.

Alyssa has trained in various styles of dance for fifteen years. She is a four-year member of the Texas High Steppers where she has been awarded Best New Girl, Most Outstanding Performer, Most Outstanding Junior and most recently a solo finalist at contest and invited to dance in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. She is a member of the National Honor Society, American Sign Language Honor Society serving as president, Rosebuds Junior Garden Club, Dyslexia Ambassadors, Justice League, Mu Alpha Theta, FFA, and Horticulture Club. She was recently given the Award of Excellence from the entire foreign language department at her high school.

Alyssa will graduate Summa Cum Laude and in the top 7% of her class. She plans on attending Texas State University where she plans on double majoring in Dance and Animal Science with a Pre-Vet concentration.



## Michial Harvey Poteet III

Michial Harvey Poteet III, of Agra, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Ripley High School. He is the son of Michial Poteet, Jr. and Jenea Poteet.

Michial graduates valedictorian of his 2025 class. He played basketball all four years of high school and one year of golf. He is also a State Farmer in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and is in the top five finalist for Star Farmer for Oklahoma. He also graduates from Meridian Technology Center in the electrical program.

He plans to attend OSUIT with an instrumentation and automation major.



## Aubrey Colbert

Aubrey Colbert, of Lexington, Kentucky is a 2025 graduate of Lafayette High School. She is the daughter of Jeremy and Karen Colbert and the granddaughter of Larry Colbert, Patti Gill and Ruth Foster.

Aubrey is completing the Pre-Engineering program. This fall, she will attend the University of Kentucky where she has been accepted to both the Lewis Honors College and the School of Design earning the Provost Scholarship. Aubrey will be pursuing a degree in architecture.

Throughout high school, Aubrey has distinguished herself both academically and creatively. She is a two-time state 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner in Architectural Design through the Technology Student Association, leading a team in developing extensive design projects. As a participant in the ACE Mentorship Program she earned the prestigious ACE Achievement Award, reflecting her passion for architecture and design.

Aubrey is a dedicated student leader, serving as a member of Lafayette's Student Council and co-president of the French National Honor Society. She is also president of the Lafayette High School Orchestra Social Committee, where she has been a committed violinist for four years. She played with the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra and participated in numerous music events, including KMEA Solo and Ensemble.

Her academic honors include the Chickasaw Honor Club Award (2014-current), Lafayette High School Academic Recognition Awards (2022-current), and an EOS Citizenship Recognition. She holds certifications in Autodesk Inventor, Revit and Adobe Photoshop and earned college credit in Engineering Design through the End of Program Assessment.

Aubrey's blend of leadership, academic excellence, artistic talent and technical skill positions her for great success in the field of architecture.

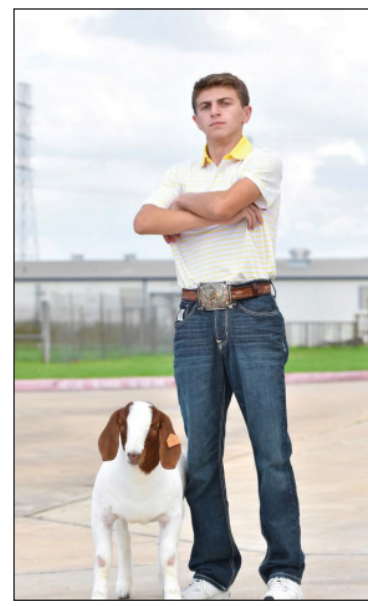


## Elvis McRee

Elvis McRee, of Deer Park, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Deer Park High School. He is the son of Josh and Chrissy McRee and the grandson of Jerry and Mallisa McRee.

Elvis is an outstanding showman in the livestock areas of showing goats and lambs. He has won multiple awards showcasing his skills for his Future Farmers of America (FFA) program for the past four years. He has won over 100 belt buckles for Grand Champion Goats, Lambs, and Sr. Showmanship.

Elvis will be attending San Jacinto College in the Fall in the HVAC technical program.



## Kaelyn Miller

Kaelyn Miller is a 2025 graduate of the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, Sulphur. She is the daughter of Latisha Wolfe.

Kaelyn graduates' high school with a 3.43 grade point average (GPA) and she participated in volleyball, basketball and cheerleading. Kaelyn placed 3rd in the 2024 Great Plains school for the Deaf volleyball tournament. She placed 2nd and received the all-tournament medal in 2025 in Division 2 basketball and placed 3rd for the Great Plain Deaf basketball tournament in 2025.

She was a member of Junior National Association of the Deaf and FCCLA for three years.

After graduation, she plans to attend East Central University to pursue a career as an ultrasound technician.

She is proud to be Chickasaw. We are proud of you!



## Cheyenne Rose Waller

Cheyenne Rose Waller, of Norman, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Norman North High School. She is the daughter of Celia Underwood, of Mill Creek, Oklahoma and the granddaughter of Tammy Underwood Davis and the late Richard Davis. She is great-granddaughter of Lillian Underwood, of Mill Creek and the niece of Cassidy Davis.

Cheyenne participated in the Norman North High School choir and recently went to New York City for choir.



## Adler J. Straub



Adler J. Straub, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Latta High School. He is the son of Ian and Stephanie Straub and the grandson of Chris and Diana Straub and John and Debra Lambert. Adler is the brother to Ashton, Rhyind and Haydn Straub.

Adler is a member of the National Honor Society and Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter. He is graduating from Pontotoc Technology Center in Ada, where he took one year of environmental biotechnology and one year of welding. He is a member of National Technical Honor Society and has a Gold National Career Readiness Certification, OSHA 10 for Construction and Oklahoma Welder Certification, and 6G Combo Welding Certification.

Adler has been to multiple math academic competitions while in high school and FFA speech competitions. He learned welding during his sophomore year in FFA and during his junior year realized he has a talent for welding and switched his career to welding his senior year.

Adler plans on a career in welding and hopes to own his own business one day. Adler also volunteers in a bible education work and devoting time to helping people study the bible. He loves fishing, hunting and just being outdoors. He likes playing sports and watching football, basketball, especially OU football and OKC Thunder basketball. He enjoys music, playing his guitar and has a great sense of humor. He is a kind, generous person who cares for others and is always ready to help people. His parents are proud of the man that he has become.

## Kimber Danielle Gentis



Kimber Danielle Gentis, of Madill, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Madill High School. She is the daughter of Ronald Gentis and Amanda Gentis. She is the granddaughter of Richard and the late Marie Gentis and Gwen and the late David Wilson Damon Ishmael. Kimber has six brothers, Kendall, Gerrod, Keelan, Tanner, Christian and Noah Gentis and one sister, Jordan White.

During high school, Kimber played softball and on the wrestling team. She volunteered her time all four years for Hope for Marshall County. She currently works at the Dollar General Market while attending school.

Kimber will be enrolling in the nursing program at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

## Lucas Roy Dirk Bot

Lucas Roy Dirk Bot, of Eastvale, California is a 2025 graduate of Eleanor Roosevelt High School. He is the son of Katie and Jacco Bot and the grandson of Kenneth and Dianna Godfrey.

Lucas has been an avid member of his high school band, serving all four years in the band, orchestra, and one year in jazz ensemble. His musical instrument of choice is the tuba or sousaphone. In band he participated in parades, field competitions and concert presentations. Lucas was honored with selection for the All-Southern California Band in 2024, the All-California Band in 2025, and the Riverside Community College Honors Band in 2025. Besides a busy schedule of extra-curricular, Lucas has earned honors and will graduate from his school's rigorous STEM Science and Engineering career path. He takes the most difficult classes. As a senior this year, he took three Advanced Placement classes in English, pre-Calculus and Environmental Science. To top off these many achievements, Lucas is also bilingual and biliterate in the Dutch language.

Lucas plans to earn an engineering degree from the University of California with a grant from the State of California for federally recognized Indian tribes.



## Peyton "Beans" Factor



Peyton "Beans" Factor, of Ada, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Sequoyah High School, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Sara and Jimpsey Factor. She is the granddaughter of Don and the late Deloris Jefferson, of Coalgate, Oklahoma, the late Greg and Sandy Willie, of Wright City, Barbara West, of Bristow, Oklahoma and the late Newman and late Susannah Factor.

Beans initially attended Ada High School where she was named junior class president, involved in the National Honor Society, Forensics Club, Pehlichik Iki, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, varsity cheer, cross country and led the Lady Cougar Golf Team to their first team state champion title in school history while also

being both individual and team state runner-up her Freshman year. During her second semester of her junior year, Beans transferred to Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, a tribal boarding school owned and operated by the Cherokee Nation.

During her time with Sequoyah, she was named to Oklahoma Girls State, participated in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), cross country and made history by leading her new golf team to their first state Champion title and by being the first student in school history to receive a Division I golf scholarship. She is a Congaree Global Golf Initiative member, finalist for the Tulsa All-World Female Golfer of the Year, VYPE Three Rivers Oklahoma Magazine Female Golfer spotlight recipient and has signed a NIL deal with Rip It Tees out of San Antonio.

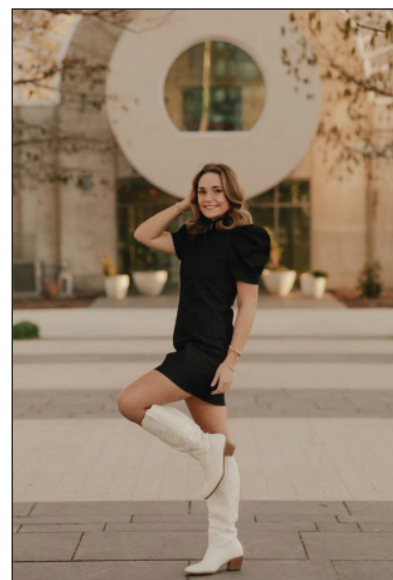
Beans has signed with Manhattan University in Riverdale, New York where she will continue to make history by being part of the University's inaugural Women's golf team. In addition to the athletic scholarship, she has also accepted her spot as part of the James Patterson Honors Program. Beans plans to major in Finance and hopes to either continue playing golf professionally or work on Wall Street.

## Megan Rayann Haley

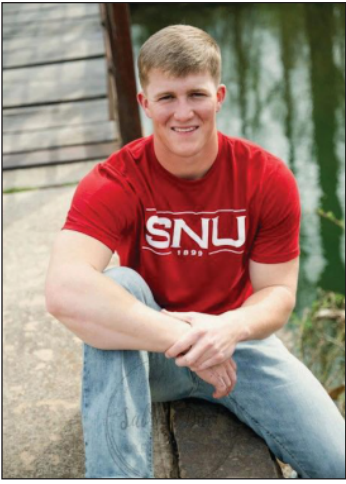
Megan Rayann Haley, of Wynnewood, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Wynnewood High School. She is the daughter of David and Renee Haley and the granddaughter of Jim Nelson and Loy Haley.

Megan is a member of the National Honor Society. Megan has been a cheerleader her entire high school career. She works at Arbuckle Xtreme Athletics as a cheer instructor.

Megan will be attending Oklahoma State University in the fall to pursue a degree in business administration with a minor in marketing.



## Luke Linville



Luke Linville, of Sulphur, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Sulphur High School. He is the son of Chance and Kimberly Linville. He is the grandson of Ken and Stephanie Smith and Dan and Kealise Linville.

Luke recently received a full scholarship to Southern Nazarene University in academics and athletics. He will be attending SNU in the fall where he will play both football and baseball. Luke plans on majoring in kinesiology and hopes to be a coach after graduating college.

## Abigail TeAta Vossler



Abigail TeAta Vossler, of Tishomingo, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Tishomingo High School. She is the daughter of Tim and Kandie Guynn and Phillip Vossler. She is the granddaughter of the late Lahoma Lowe, of Tishomingo, the late Raymond and Millie Palmer, of Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Abigail has been a four year member of the Pride of Little Dixie Band, four year member of color guard, and a senior year student council member. She is an active member of Chikasha Pehlichik Ikti. She has two jobs, she works at the Washboard and Ol' Reds.

Abigail will be attending college at East Central University as an elementary education major.

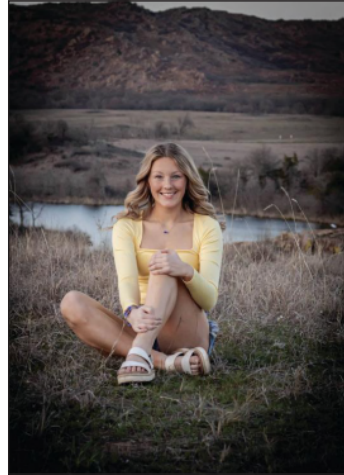
Abby is the best big sister, often stepping up to help with her three younger siblings. Abby, your family is very proud of you!

## Peyton Elizabeth Banister

Peyton Elizabeth Banister, of Newkirk, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Newkirk High School. She is the daughter of Sara and Clint Banister. She is the granddaughter of James and Kim Determan, Carol and Joe Richardson, and Sue Simmons.

Peyton will serve as one of the Valedictorians at Newkirk High School, graduating with a 4.03 grade point average (GPA). In her years at Newkirk High School, she has been a member of the Newkirk CoEd Cheerleading team for four years, winning three regional titles and three state titles. She also made the All-Region Cheer Team, scoring the highest in class 3A in her region. She was awarded the Most Valuable Cheerleader award by her coaches. She played varsity basketball all four years making the 89er All-Conference team her senior year. She was awarded Defensive Player of the Year by her coaches for three years in a row. She has been on the soccer team all four years, earning many awards including All-District, her sophomore year. She has been on the track team for three years, focusing mostly on pole vault. She was regional runner-up her junior year and has qualified for State the last two years in pole vault. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Gifted and Talented Program. In her spare time, she dedicates her time to coaching youth soccer. She has coached U6-U8 kids for the past three years.

Peyton plans to attend Dodge City Community College in the fall on a cheer scholarship. She plans to get her associate's degree and then go into radiology.



## Griffin Witty

Griffin Witty, of Highlands Ranch, Colorado is a 2025 graduate of Thunder Ridge High School. He is the son of Todd and Monica Witty and the grandson of Richard and Sandra Burkett and Lois Witty.

Griffin established and led an archery club for all four years of high school, helped with archery camps during the summer, and was involved with and led Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Griffin was on a leadership team for his church youth group and volunteered with first - third grades at church all four years. He participated in competitive archery throughout high school including national competitions for three years and making the US archery team for U18 fixed pin archers for two years, lettered in academics with over a 4.0 weighted grade point average (GPA), lettered in community service with well over 200 hours of service, was involved in the National Honor Society, Chickasaw Honor Club, Grizzly Connect (a club to connect new students) and Cinema Club. Griffin received a Welding Achievement Award and Student of the Month Award. He has also been showcased in a Chickasaw Times article and a Chickasaw Network (CNTV) feature highlighting his archery achievements.

Griffin will attend Texas A&M in the fall majoring in Engineering and also plans to shoot for the Texas A&M archery team.



## Nathaniel Hairgrove

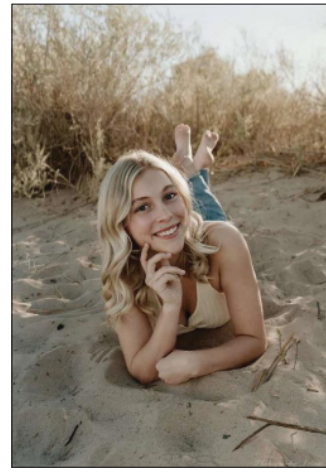


Nathaniel Hairgrove, of Jarrell, Texas is a 2025 graduate of Jarrell High School. He is the son of John and Shanna Hairgrove. He is the grandson of Shelby Little.

Nathan will be graduating in the top 10% of his class and is a member of the National Honor Society. He has been on the varsity track team all four years of high school, advancing to regional competition in individual and relay events. He also participated in band (award winning drum line) and basketball.

Nathan has been accepted into Texas A&M, Mays Business School. He is a student leader through student council, well respected by his peers, and loved immensely by his family.

## Sarah Love



Sarah Love, of Fort Mohave, Arizona is a 2025 graduate of the Mohave Accelerated Learning Center High School. She is the daughter of Ryan and Ann Love and the granddaughter of Ronald and Denise Love and Sandy Stickler.

Sarah plans to move to Tennessee to study Herbolgy.

## Lizzy Morton

Lizzy Morton, of Ardmore, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Lone Grove High School. She is the daughter of Brett and Erika Morton and the granddaughter of Richard and Charlotte Morton and Debbie Stanley.

Lizzy has been on the Superintendent's Honor Roll and National Honors Society for four years. She is ranked #1 in her class and carries a 4.0 grade point average (GPA). She played varsity basketball for two years and played varsity golf for four years making it to state all four years. She has been a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Family, Career and Community Leadership of America (FCCLA). She is also an active leader in her church youth ministry.

Lizzy plans to attend the University of Oklahoma majoring in Criminology, then plans to pursue Law School.



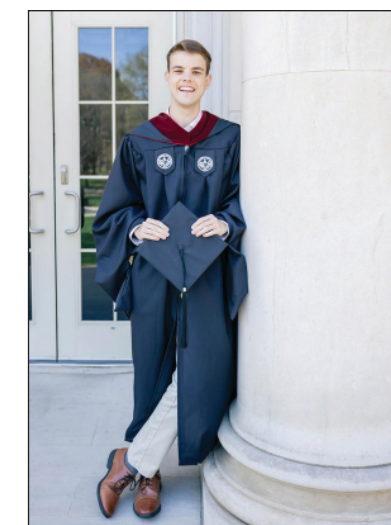
## Mason Daniel

Mason Daniel, of Elmore City, Oklahoma is a 2025 graduate of Elmore City High School. He is the son of Dustin and Beth Daniel. He is the grandson of Tim and Connie Richardson and the late Linda Peery Daniel and Danny Daniel.

Mason is a member of the Army Reserve for Construction Engineering and in Auto Technician Services at Mid-America Vo-Tech. He enjoys hanging with his friends/girlfriend and upgrading his pickup truck.



## David Alexander (Alex) Kelsey



David Alexander (Alex) Kelsey of Auburn, Alabama is a 2025 graduate from The University of Alabama. Alex is the son of Chris and Amy Kelsey of Auburn, and the grandson of Julia Kelsey of Arlington, Texas. He and his family proudly descend from the historic Colbert and Jennings families of the Chickasaw Nation.

David graduated with honors from The University of Alabama, earning both his Bachelor of Science in December 2024 and his Master of Science in May 2025, each in Hospitality Management.

During his time at the university, Alex served as President of the UA Hotels, Restaurants, and Conventions Association (HARACA) from August 2023 to the present, where he led student leaders in organizing professional development and networking events in collaboration with faculty and

hospitality industry leaders. He also served as vice president of Eta Sigma Delta, the international hospitality honor society, in Spring 2024.

David received academic honors of being on the President's List during Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. He was on the Dean's List during Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.

Beyond academics, Alex is active in his local church, values time with friends, and is eager to begin his professional journey in the hospitality industry, where he hopes to create meaningful and memorable experiences for others.

Alex shared, "I'm deeply thankful to the Chickasaw Nation for the generous support that made my education possible. I hope to one day give back in a way that meaningfully serves our people. Until then, I will do my best to represent the Chickasaw Nation with pride, integrity, and the same spirit of hospitality and generosity that has been shown to me."

## Miranda Kay Williams English

Miranda Kay Williams English, a proud Chickasaw Citizen, will be graduating from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in May with a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Intervention with an emphasis on Native Populations. Miranda graduated with honors from the social work program as a member of Alpha Delta Mu National Social Work Honor Society. She is the daughter of Lonnie and Beth Williams, of Wardville, Oklahoma. The granddaughter of the late Herbert and late Alice Williams Brown, of Olney, Oklahoma and the late Roy and Joyce Williams of Wardville. She is the great-granddaughter of original Chickasaw enrollee Eula Keel Williams.

Miranda is married to Jerry English and they have two children Logan and Cole.

She earned a bachelor's degree in social work from East Central University. She has worked in the capacity of a social worker for the last 26 years. Her career began as a Child Welfare Specialist with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, transferring after five years to a School Based Social Worker with Coalgate Public Schools.

After fourteen years, she began working for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as a Family Preservation Social Worker. Miranda has spent the last six years working for the Chickasaw Nation, first as a career counselor with Career Development Services and for the last two and half years the Education Department as the Family and Community Partnerships Manager for the Head Start and Preschool programs.





# Chickasaw Nation Body Adventure promotes healthy living at Latta Elementary



Based on the Chickasaw children's book, "Brave Little Anoli," Body Adventure is a culture-infused health education program using interactive lessons to encourage healthy choices.

The Chickasaw Nation Body Adventure landed in Latta Elementary this spring for the first time, and students participating have taken a liking to the program's fun spin on healthy eating and physical activity.

The program is an interactive, culturally infused health education program designed for fourth and fifth grade students living within Chickasaw Nation boundaries.

"It's probably our most exciting program right now if you

asked our staff," Adrienne Jacobs, Chickasaw Nation Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP ED) Nutrition program manager, said. "They're actually getting to do the lessons and see the results live."

Developed as part of the Impa' Kilimpi' (strong food) Nutrition Program, Body Adventure builds upon earlier initiatives like Eagle Adventure, aiming to reinforce healthy habits, physical activity and nutrition as children mature. "I like that I get to move around,

and it helps me get energy out," Cassius Willis, Chickasaw citizen and fourth grader enrolled at Latta Elementary, said.

The Body Adventure curriculum, created by the Chickasaw Nation Child Nutrition Division, was developed with "Brave Little Anoli" in mind, a children's book written by Chickasaw author Gabriel Cannon. The curriculum includes excerpts from "Brave Little Anoli," with each student receiving a complimentary copy of the book at the end of the semester.

"Brave Little Anoli" follows a young Chickasaw girl lost in the forest. With help from woodland friends and Ofi' Tohbi' (white dog), Anoli learns about Chickasaw language, culture and healthy living on her journey home.

Through "Brave Little Anoli," students learn about fruits and vegetables, hydration, physical activity and Chickasaw culture. The book serves as a foundation for each Body Adventure lesson plan, allowing educators to reinforce key health concepts while incorporating cultural storytelling and Chickasaw language.

"I think we're making food and nutrition activities fun," Jacobs said.

The curriculum includes four in-person lessons with students at their school during normal school hours, conducted twice a month from January to February. Each lesson lasts 30 to 40 minutes.

"We teach them MyPlate education, so all five food groups for

a balanced diet," Andrea Dowell, Youth Adventure coordinator for the Chickasaw Nation Department of Health, said.

Created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), MyPlate is a visual guide highlighting the five essential food groups – fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins and dairy. It provides practical recommendations for balanced eating based on the Dietary Guidelines of Americans.

"They always get some sort of educational material, a recipe card, a snack and an incentive related to the lesson," Dowell said, referring to take-home resources provided after each lesson.

Tyler Stephens, Chickasaw citizen and Latta Elementary fourth grader, said the lessons have really opened his eyes to the importance of a balanced diet.

"I'm going to eat my fruits and vegetables," Tyler said, referencing his plan to eat healthier moving forward.

Physical activity also plays a large role in Body Adventure curriculum. Students take to the outdoors with Body Adventure educators to garden, run relay races and play itti' kapochcha to'li' (stickball), a Chickasaw sports game promoting an active lifestyle.

Latta Elementary students will have the opportunity to tour the Body Adventure exhibit May 13-15 to better understand how healthy foods affect the human body.

The Body Adventure exhibit is a large, interactive display tak-

ing students through different organs of the human body. The 35-foot-wide, 40-foot-long display consists of multiple rooms representing body organs. Starting at the brain, students tour the mouth, stomach, small intestines, heart, lungs, bones, muscles and skin.

Each student will walk through the exhibit while watching videos narrated by Anoli from "Brave Little Anoli," learning about the body's functions and how nutrition and activity impact health.

"It's just a good visual for the kids to see how different parts of their bodies work and how eating nutritious foods and being physically active can help their organs and help them be a little bit healthier," Dowell said.

## Learn more

Creative approaches to nutrition education are provided to families and communities throughout the Chickasaw Nation by modeling and teaching positive lifestyle habits. Through a variety of methods and resources to accommodate all age groups, the Impa' Kilimpi' team regularly engages with the community through Eagle Adventure, Get Fresh!, community gardens, Body Adventure and Champion Nutrition.

For more information on Chickasaw Nation nutrition education, call (580) 272-5506 or email [Contact@GetFreshCooking.com](mailto:Contact@GetFreshCooking.com).

CONTRIBUTED BY Dalee Weston, Media Relations

## OBITUARIES

### Carol J. Davis



Carole J. Davis went to heaven February 23, 2025. Her life was celebrated February 28.

She was born on December 19, 1937, to Ed and Cecil Blankenship. She was the baby of the family having two older brothers, Charles and Don Blankenship. She attended school at McLish Schools, Fittstown, Oklahoma, graduating in 1955.

She met the love of her life John Davis and they married August 4, 1956. She loved being a homemaker and being involved in her children's school and church activities. Together they raised two children, a son Bill Davis and daughter Johnna and several four-legged kids! When they were able to get the kids out of the house, they really started living by traveling and seeing the sights.

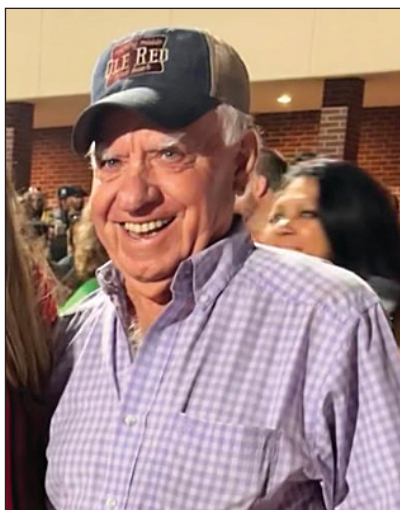
She was a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and proud of her heritage. She traveled with the tribe everywhere and enjoyed working the taco sales and at the gift shop at the Senior Center.

Her unwavering faith in God sustained her and the family during difficult times. If she was your friend, you had a friend for life.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ed and Cecile Blankenship; brother Don Blankenship; and son, Bill Davis.

She is survived by her daughter and husband, Johnna and Don Morrell; daughter-in-law Vicki Davis; brother Charles Blankenship; and lots of nieces, great-nieces, nephew, and great nephew!

### James "Jamie D" Kenneth Denson



James "Jamie D" Kenneth Denson was born March 12, 1941, to Josephine (James) and Glen Denson at Purdy, Oklahoma. He passed from this life April 3, 2025, at the age of 84 following a fast and strong battle with cancer.

He was a graduate of Lindsay High School. Upon graduation, he attended East Central University, earning a degree in mathematics. A short time later he was recruited by and went to work for the United States Aeronautical Space Center located at St. Louis, Missouri. HE was heavily involved with the Apollo lunar moon landings from 1969 to 1972. He was part of a specialized team with the responsibility to map lunar landing sites to ensure Apollo space craft had suitable lunar landscapes to land safely.

Shortly after beginning his career with the Aeronautical Space Center, he was drafted into the U.S. Army during the Vietnam era. He successfully completed basic training and was sent to Advanced Individual Training to learn his specific military occupation. Because he held a top-secret clearance with the Aeronautical Space Center, Army Command made the decision to assign him to the Army National Guard. This decision allowed him to return to the Aeronautical Space Center full-time to work on Apollo lunar missions. He was very proud to serve his country in both the Army National Guard and the United States Aeronautical Space Center.

After being honorably discharged from the Army National Guard, he left his career with the Aeronautical Space Center to begin a lifelong career as an en-

trepreneur. He was a very skilled carpet installer and had a thriving carpet business for decades. He was a successful real estate investor, a commercial metal buildings contractor, and established "Jamie D" brand beef jerky establishments throughout Oklahoma and Branson Missouri.

He enjoyed watching the Oklahoma City Thunder, all college basketball as well as University of

Oklahoma (OU) football. He also loved hunting, fishing and talking a little "Mickey Mouse" with his friends.

He was a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation and the Chickasaw Nation Warrior Society.

He was preceded in death by his father and mother; a brother, Glen Jr.; sisters Sharon and JoAnn; and son-in-law, Broderick Stearns.

He is survived by his daughters Keri Capraro, and husband Shannon, and Amie Stearns, both of Ardmore, Oklahoma; nephews Mike Ward, and wife Kerri, Edmond, Oklahoma, Mark Ward, Oklahoma City, Chris Ward, Dallas; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

# TRADE PARTNER Outreach

We are excited to connect with construction trade partners and vendors who can offer valuable construction-related services. This is a great chance to meet with Christman leadership and discuss upcoming project opportunities.

Friday, May 30, 2025

1:00-4:00 P.M.

Chickasaw Nation Community Center  
700 N. Mississippi Ave.  
Ada, Oklahoma

We look forward to seeing you there!



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## TiaJuana "TJ" Jo Harris



TiaJuana "TJ" Jo Harris, 98, a long time resident of Albuquerque, beloved sister, wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother, and a proud citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, passed away peacefully after a long and fulfilling life on March 17, 2025.

She entered this world October 19, 1926 at Rosedale, Oklahoma, born to Dewey "Cotton" Eddlemon and Una Lee Yoakum. Later, she moved to Purcell, Oklahoma, and graduated from Purcell High School.

She married the love of her life, Lou Harris, after meeting him on Naval Air Station Norman, where she worked and he was stationed, and together they enjoyed 67 years of married bliss and adventure. They started their family in Purcell, where Mr. Harris was the McClain County Attorney. They moved to New Mexico to continue their adventures, including building two mountain cabins for the enjoyment of the entire family. Trading in the solitude of the mountain cabins for the open road, they enjoyed RVing with their many friends from the Siglo de Oro RV Club.

She was preceded in death by her husband Lou; daughter and best friend, Stephanie Wildes; and siblings Jimmy Dwayne Eddlemon, Mary Ann Parr, Dewey Lee Eddlemon, and W.T. Eddlemon.

She is survived by her sons Scott (Sally) Harris and Stacy Harris; nine grandchildren; 15 (soon to be 16) great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; and six nieces and nephews.

She was known by all her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchild as "T," she loved rocking every baby in the family to sleep, took pride in pulling many of their first teeth, and was sure to bring chicken and dumplings when someone was sick. She was well known to both family and friends for her creativity, bold nature, delicious cooking, and sassy sense of humor.

She was the true matriarch of the family, modeling deep love, friendship, forgiveness, compassion, respect, joy, and a strong work ethic.

The family wishes to express sincere gratitude to the staff of Abode Hospice for their compassionate and professional care for her at the end of life.

## Linda Sue (Thomas) Morton



Linda Sue (Thomas) Morton, 75, of Blanchard, Oklahoma, passed away March 22, 2025 at her home.

The daughter of Nathaniel Thomas and LoEva (Roberts) Thomas she was born August 1, 1949 at Talihina, Oklahoma.

She grew up in Blanchard and was a 1967 graduate of Blanchard High School. She lived in Arlington, Texas for about forty years, before moving back to Blanchard in 2019. She worked as a reservationist for Southwest Airlines and retired after twenty years of service. While at Southwest she was very involved in the Union Worker's Association and served as the shop steward. She also spent a few years as the receptionist for the Chickasaw Nation at Chokka' Kilimpi'. She was a proud citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. She was a democrat in political matters and a huge Dallas Cowboys fan as well as an OU (University of Oklahoma) Sooners fan. She loved her little fur baby, Derby.

Her children and grandchildren adored her and she will be greatly missed by them all.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Al Morton; and brother, Sam Thomas.

She is survived by her daughter, Amy Ridenhour; son, Chad Ridenhour and wife, Brandi; grandchildren, Breana Ridenhour and Wesley Ridenhour; sisters, Naomi Cannon and Barbie Thomas; and several nieces, nephews and other loving family members and friends.

## Clay Russell Wallace



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our Chickasaw Elder, Clay Russell Wallace. He was a relative to Chickasaw Governor Thomas J. Parker. He was a husband, stepfather, brother, uncle and cousin. He passed away October 27, 2024 of a short illness in the beautiful state of Washington, which he loved. He was born December 1953 at Oklahoma City to Estelene R. Wallace and Edward R. Wallace.

With his father in the military his love of travel must have begun at this time. Moving from Oklahoma City to Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado and re-settling back in Oklahoma City in the early Sixties. He attended Oklahoma City public school before moving to Del City, Oklahoma in 1967. There he finished Junior High and High School at the Home of the Eagles. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma he began his dream job with his bachelor's degree in architecture, Clay left a permanent mark on the landscape of Norman and Oklahoma City with amazing housing and infrastructure projects. There he met Mary Collett Hill and after getting married, they moved to Seattle to start their new jour-

ney in life. They ran a consulting firm and architectural business. He moved into a project manager position with Seattle Puget Sound Energy. Having lost his first wife Collette to illness, he remarried after finding love again with Kathy A Rathvon and embarked on their journey of life together.

He continued with Wallace Design after retiring from PSE with honors.

They continued to travel the world which he dearly loved and was introduced to him while in college and after he was an escort for the architectural school. He had many loves, the love of life, knowledge and understanding, he was funny with a flair for dry humor. He enjoyed movies, concerts, car's (older) his Fiat X19, and his music (he did a Facebook review on records) with the Eagles and Moody Blues among his favorite and of course the University of Oklahoma (OU) football.

He is survived by his wife Kathy Rathvon; stepsons, Dan Parkhurst, Erick Dietz, Mathew and Jeanne Dietz; stepdaughter, Samantha Perdue; father, Edward Wallace and Kathy Wallace; brother, Eric and Candy Wallac; stepbrother, Michael Denny; sisters, Melanie and Randall Milota, Karma Moore; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Estelene Denny and stepfather Frank Denny; grandparents, Lilly and Homer Henderson, Dorothy and FG (Tex) Wallace; his first wife, Collette Wallace; sister, Becky Jacobs; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

A memorial service will be in the Spring of 2025 following his wishes scattering his ashes near his cabin on an Island in the Northwest Pacific Seattle area.

He was an amazing person, husband and friend you could have ever met or had. He was also very proud of his Chickasaw and Scottish Heritage. He will be greatly missed.

## Lois O. Ward



Lois O. Ward left this earthly life in the very early morning March 12, 2025, at her home with family at her side.

She was born Sept 7, 1932 to Cub O. Owens and Louella Wylie Owens at Roth, Oklahoma. She was the second of her eight siblings.

She is survived by her two daughters, Janet Case (Gerald), Susan Leone (Chris); and a daughter-in-law, Charlotte Ward; four grandchildren, Justin Ward, Caleb (Emily) Case, Jaclyn Russell and Angela Olssen; three great-grandchildren, Isabel Case, Leigha Case, and Dominique Morris; brothers, John (Betty) Owens, Chub (Sharon) Owens, Bobby Dale (Louise) Owens; sisters Joyce (Jim) Herrington and Betty White; and her forever companion in life, Tom Joe Bennett, whom she loved dearly along with many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, William Chester Ward; her son, William Michael Ward; parents; and two brothers, Junior and Billy Ray.

She was extremely proud of her Chickasaw heritage. She loved life, puzzles and birds, especially eagles and cardinals. Her favorite color being red. She had a very strong connection to God and nature along with thoroughly loving her beautiful backyard and gardening.

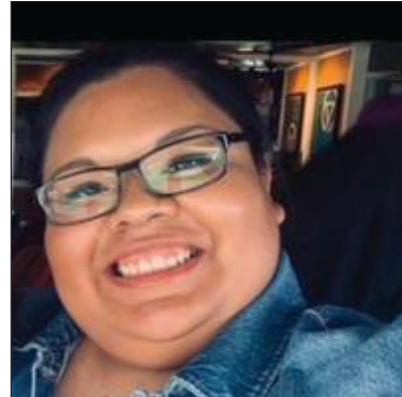
She was known to hop in her car and drive from Oklahoma to Florida without hesitation and had visited every state except for two. She was teased that her car would veer towards all garage

sales. She gave her children and loved ones the gift of knowing God's love. She had a beautiful relationship with Christ and was extremely wise.

We were so blessed to share this physical journey with her. She has left us joy and peace in knowing we will see her again.

The family wishes to thank and acknowledge ACG Hospice for all of their love and support provided to Lois and her family towards the end of her life.

## Leah Janelle Patterson



Leah Janelle Patterson was born November 25, 1987, at Talihina, Oklahoma to the late Ronald and Neva Bond. She passed away March 3, 2025 in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

Leah and John Patterson were married March 16, 2019, at Ada First Indian Baptist Church.

She was a 2006 graduate of Lata High School, Ada, Oklahoma. She was an A student throughout elementary and high school years. She attended Seminole State Junior College, Seminole, Oklahoma.

She was a member of Crosspointe Church where she and John participated in the Couples at the Point monthly event, and Christmas at Crosspointe as well as door greeters.

She accepted the Lord as her Savior at the age of 12. She surrendered to the Mission field at 14 years old at Indian Falls Creek. She went on her first mission trip at Espanola, New Mexico at 15 years old and Baja, Mexico at 18 years old.

She was a member at Ada First Indian Baptist Church for several years prior to attending Crosspointe. She wore many hats such as: doing the on-line church services, cooking for the Men's Breakfast once a month, serving as the program coordinator for all activities and events, a van driver and the youth director. She attended Indian Falls Creek, throughout her entire life and was recently the coordinator for the Special Events Program.

She worked for the Chickasaw Nation Youth Services as an administrative assistant. She worked for the Vanoss Public School System for 14 years serving as the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) coordinator, the computer lab technician for all grades, a bus driver, the media specialist and paraprofessional aide for first grade and other special events and activities for the school. She also worked for the Ada Area Youth Shelter for a few years.

She enjoyed watching and supporting the Vanoss Wolves basketball games and was their media specialist ("webmaster") for the games. She loved her JOM students and church youth group and always had them involved in various community activities such as serving at Abbas Table, working the trail of lights at Wintersmith Park, attending Christian contemporary concerts, attending Winter Jam, church lock-ins and many other activities. She was not only their teacher but she was a wonderful mentor to all her kids.

Her favorite movie was Home Alone and Disney movies. She had a knack for quoting all the animated Disney movies. She enjoyed playing UNO, playing Fortnite with her husband and brother ("Her gamer tag name was The-Fleahator or Card Collector") and cornhole with her cousins. She enjoyed listening to KLove, and even played it on her bus route for the kids to listen too. She enjoyed a wide range of foreign food as well as a home cooked meal. She

was a good cook.

She was creative and loved putting things together for special occasions. She loved taking road trips with family and friends. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her immediate family at all holidays and events. She even hosted the Thanksgiving festivities in her own home. She was big with her family and loved them all.

She was preceded in death by her father, Ronald Bond; and grandparents, Joe and Ruth Frazier and Lee Ray and Cuma Bond.

She is survived by her husband, John; her mother, Neva Bond; and her brother, Sheldon Bond, all of Ada; and several aunts, uncles and a host of cousins and relatives.

She left a beautiful legacy for all. She had a witty, loving, caring and humble spirit as she touched the lives of many people, especially the lives of children and youth, whether at church or at school. She had a "special place" in her heart for the kids although she had no children of her own. She took them under her wings and called them "my kids." There are numerous other things to mention about her but if she left an impression upon your heart, it was the love of Christ who lived within her.

## Isiah Harmon



Isiah Harmon passed away March 2, 2025, near Ada, Oklahoma. He was born April 12, 1990, at Ada to Guy David Harmon and Stephanie Carole Stick. He was a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation and worked as a floor attendant for them.

He loved the University of Oklahoma (OU) football, basketball, music of all kinds and going to concerts. He also enjoyed dancing and was a dancer for Cara's Kids for several years.

He is survived by his father, David Harmon and wife Kathie of Kingston, Oklahoma; mother, Stephanie Stick, of Gainesville, Texas; maternal grandparents, Bob and Lena Stick, of Ada; brother, Justin Cole Harmon, of Gainesville; step-sister, Tiffany Christmon, of Oklahoma City; aunt, Kathy Black and husband Derrell, of Chickasha; two nephews, Lincoln Cole Harmon and John Luke Gantt; his beloved dog, Tusk; and several cousins and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, John Robert Lee Harmon and paternal grandmother, Emma Jean Harmon.

**MARCH 2025 MINUTES**

**CHICKASAW TRIBAL LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION  
Legislative Building  
Ada, Oklahoma  
March 21, 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM #1 CALL MEETING TO ORDER**  
Chairperson Connie Barker called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM #2 ROLL CALL**

**Members present:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**Member absent:** Lisa Johnson-Billy

**Staff present:** Marilyn Coltz, Doretta Sellers, Harold Stick, Les Wesberry, Kayla Jo Wood

**Guests present:** Loné Beasley, Zack Garcia, Michael L. Wingo, Governor Anoatubby

**AGENDA ITEM #3 INVOCATION**

Invocation was given by Mr. Perkins.

**AGENDA ITEM #4 READING OF MINUTES - February 14, 2025**

A motion was made by Mrs. Alexander and seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the minutes of February 14, 2025.

**Members voting yes:** Beth Alexander, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

11 yes votes

Member abstaining: Shana Tate Darter

1 abstention

The motion to approve the minutes of February 14, 2025 carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #5 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business to discuss

**AGENDA ITEM #6 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**(A) LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT** by Committee Chair David Woerz

**Permanent Resolution Number 42-003, Amendment to Title 2 of the Chickasaw Nation Code (Chickasaw Nation Ethics Commission)**

This resolution amends the Chickasaw Nation Code by moving the Chickasaw Nation Ethics Committee from the Judicial Department to the Executive Department.

A motion was made by Mr. Woerz and seconded by Mr. Wood to approve PR42-003.

**Members voting yes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

12 yes votes

The motion to approve PR42-003 carried unanimously.

Mr. Woerz concluded his report.

**(B) HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT** by Committee Chair Nancy Elliott  
**General Resolution Number 42-017 Gubernatorial Appointment - Chickasaw Nation Election Commission** (Jeff Jennings)

This resolution approves Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Mr. Jeff Jennings to the Chickasaw Nation Election Commission to fill a term of office ending on December 31, 2025.

A motion was made by Ms. Elliott and seconded by Mr. Priddy to approve GR42-017.

**Members voting yes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

12 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-017 carried unanimously.

Ms. Elliott concluded her report.

**AGENDA ITEM #7 NEW BUSINESS (comments from citizens)**

Chairperson Barker announced that Mr. Wesberry would be leaving the Legislative Department. She thanked him for the five years of legal service he provided.

**AGENDA ITEM #8 ADJOURNMENT**

The Legislative Session adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Karen Goodnight, Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

Prepared by: Doretta Sellers, Recording Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Committee of the Whole Meeting**

**April 14, 2025**

**Present:** Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**Absent:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter Dusk Monetathchi

**Finance Committee**

**April 7, 2025**

**Present:** Charles Marris, Nancy Elliott, Lisa Johnson-Billy, David Woerz, Connie Barker

**Absent:** Scott Wood

**Finance Committee**

**April 14, 2025**

**Present:** Charles Marris, Nancy Elliott, Lisa Johnson-Billy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**Human Resources Committee**

**April 7, 2025**

**Present:** Nancy Elliott, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Beth Alexander, Lisa Impson, Derrick Priddy, Connie Barker

**Land Development Committee**

**April 7, 2025**

**Present:** Toby Perkins, Shana Tate Darter, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dustin Monetathchi, Connie Barker

**Legislative Committee**

**April 7, 2025**

**Present:** Beth Alexander, Connie Barker, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz

**Absent:** Scott Wood

**APRIL 2025 RESOLUTIONS**

**General Resolution Number 42-018**

**Authorization for Acquisition of Real Property in Ada, Pontotoc County, Oklahoma**

**Explanation:**

This Resolution authorizes and approves the Chickasaw Nation's request to acquire real property in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, specifically described as All of Lots 4, 5 and 6 in Block 14 Dan Hays Addition to the City of Ada, Oklahoma.

**Property Location:**

630 E 17th Street in the town of Ada, OK 74820

**Use:**

For the Chickasaw Nation's expansion of land base in Ada, Oklahoma

**Purpose:**

Self-determination

**Presented by:**

Land Development Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**General Resolution Number 42-019**

**Approval of Development Budget Revision Tishomingo Festival Restroom**

**Explanation:**

This resolution approves the revision to the Development Budget for two restroom facilities in the amount of \$6,333,000. This project will consist of two 4,200 square feet climate controlled restroom facilities.

The facilities will provide citizens with high quality and temperature regulated restroom options at the Capitol and surrounding area during the Chickasaw Nation Annual Meeting and Festival, as well as other Chickasaw Nation events throughout the year.

**Presented by:**

Finance Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**General Resolution Number 42-020**

**Gubernatorial Appointment to Board of Directors of the Chickasaw Historical Society**

**Ms. Jessica Imotichey**

**Explanation:**

This resolution confirms Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Ms. Jessica Imotichey to the Board of Directors of the Chickasaw Historical Society. Ms. Imotichey will fill an unexpired term of office ending on September 30, 2026.

**Presented by:**

Human Resources Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**General Resolution Number 42-021**

**Gubernatorial Appointment to Board of Directors of the Chickasaw Historical Society**

**Ms. Keri Paniagua**

**Explanation:**

This resolution approves Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Ms. Keri Paniagua to the Board of Directors of the Chickasaw Historical Society. Ms. Paniagua will fill a term of office ending on September 30, 2025.

**Presented by:**

Human Resources Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**General Resolution Number 42-022**

**Gubernatorial Appointment to the Chickasaw Nation Ethics Commission**

**Ms. Lynn Worcester**

**Explanation:**

This resolution confirms Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Ms. Lynn Worcester to the Chickasaw Nation Ethics Commission to fill a term commencing on October 1, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2028.

**Requested by:**

Bill Anoatubby, Governor

**Presented by:**

Human Resources Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**General Resolution Number 42-022**

**Gubernatorial Appointment to the Chickasaw Nation Ethics Commission**

**Ms. Lynn Worcester**

**Explanation:**

This resolution confirms Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Ms. Lynn Worcester to the Chickasaw Nation Ethics Commission to fill a term commencing on October 1, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2028.

**Requested by:**

Bill Anoatubby, Governor

**Presented by:**

Human Resources Committee, Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

**Yes votes:** Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker



**Category:** Breakfast

★★★★★

**Ingredients**

- ¾ cup egg mix\*
- ¾ cup water
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp low-fat bakery mix\*\*
- Cooking spray
- 1 cup diced mushrooms
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ¼ cup diced onion
- ¼ cup diced tomato
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella

\*¾ cup egg mix is about 5 whole eggs


\*\*Bakery mix is a premixed baking product that includes flour, baking powder and other ingredients.



**Directions**

In a small bowl, mix egg mix, water, garlic powder, mustard, black pepper and bakery mix until smooth. Spray a skillet with cooking spray and sprinkle chopped vegetables in the pan. Sauté vegetables for 1-2 minutes on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium, add egg mixture to the pan and scramble the eggs until done. Top with mozzarella cheese.

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*the Chickasaw Nation*

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June 3-4	Pinocchio	1940   G
June 10-11	Oliver & Company	1988   G
June 17-18	The Jungle Book	1967   G
June 24-25	Charlotte's Web	1973   G

SHOWTIMES: 10 A.M. and 2 P.M.



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Bill Anoatubby, Governor  
 The Chickasaw Nation

**CHICKASAW MARKET**

Tuesday-Friday  
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