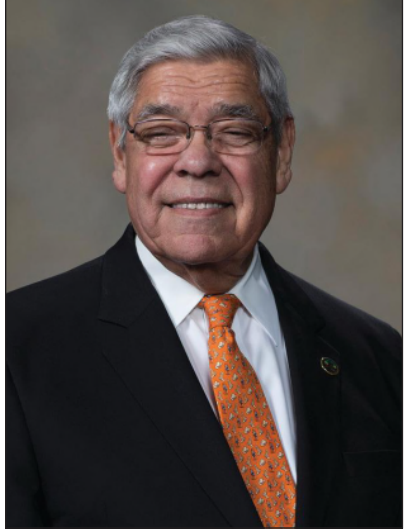




Chickasaw ambassador Neal McCaleb dies at 89



NEAL MCCALED

EDMOND, Okla. - Neal McCaleb, Chickasaw Nation Ambassador At-Large to the United States, who served as Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs and was a powerful advocate of First American tribal sovereignty and economic opportunities, died Jan. 7. He was 89.

McCaleb was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 1999, Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2014 and the Oklahoma State University College of Engineering, Ar-

chitecture and Technology Hall of Fame in 2019.

"We are deeply saddened by the passing of Chickasaw citizen and longtime public servant Neal McCaleb," Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby said. "Neal dedicated his life to serving others. As U.S. Assistant Secretary of Interior Affairs, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation, an Oklahoma State Representative and serving multiple roles in the Chickasaw Nation, most recently as ambassador at-large, Neal's legacy of service has impacted countless lives across the United States. As a husband, father, friend, advisor and public servant, Neal's absence will be felt, and that is because his presence was such a blessing to all of us who were privileged enough to know him."

He was appointed Chickasaw Nation Ambassador At-Large in 2013 by Governor Anoatubby following the death of longtime ambassador Charles Blackwell.

McCaleb served Governor Anoatubby and the Chickasaw peo-

SEE **MCCALED**, PAGE 5



Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations intervene in federal lawsuits to protect public safety and enforce jurisdictional laws

U.S. Department of Justice filed December lawsuit against two Oklahoma District Attorneys for prosecuting defendants outside of criminal jurisdiction

OKLAHOMA (January 22, 2025) — Today, the Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations moved to intervene in support of U.S. Department of Justice lawsuits against two Oklahoma district attorneys - Matt Ballard and Carol Iski - who have continually violated federal law by seeking to prosecute tribal defendants whose cases must be tried in federal or tribal courts.

"Since the U.S. Supreme Court's confirmation of our reservation, the Cherokee Nation has prioritized our justice system, investing \$74 million alone last year, and working with federal, state

and local law enforcement to protect victims and prosecute crimes in which we filed over 25,000 cases," Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. said. "It is incredibly dangerous that these district attorneys have instead chosen to ignore the law and longstanding legal precedents by seeking to prosecute criminal cases over which they do not have jurisdiction. This is not only an attack on tribal sovereignty, but a threat to the public safety of all Oklahomans. These officials are knowingly creating legal confusion for law enforcement and hurting the integrity of

the cases involved - preventing proper prosecution, risking the entire case being thrown out, and forcing victims and their families into convoluted and confusing legal scenarios. I am outraged that these officials are putting political attacks against tribes before their responsibilities to Oklahomans and to law enforcement, and I am proud that the Cherokee Nation has moved to intervene in the federal suits to resolve this matter."

"Our action today is in support of the rule of law. We work with

SEE **FEDERAL LAWSUIT**, PAGE 4

New Special Assistant District Attorney William Kirkpatrick to serve as liaison between tribe and county

Pontotoc County DA Erik Johnson signs MOU with Chickasaw Nation



DEBRA GEE
CHICKASAW NATION CHIEF COUNSEL



ERIK JOHNSON
PONTOTOC COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



WILLIAM KIRKPATRICK
PONTOTOC COUNTY SPECIAL ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

ADA, Okla. - Pontotoc County District Attorney (DA) Erik Johnson and the Chickasaw Nation are blazing trails for intergovernmental cooperation with a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help prioritize and ensure proper jurisdiction for prosecuting charges that come before them.

Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby said the mutually-beneficial agreement is a proactive step to protect the safety and security of the community.

"This groundbreaking memorandum of understanding with the Pontotoc County District At-

torney establishes an important partnership that will enhance communication among county, tribal and federal law enforcement, and is another step in the Chickasaw Nation's commitment to working together to provide public safety in our communities," Governor Anoatubby said. "We thank Erik Johnson and his staff for partnering with us for the safety of all area residents."

Johnson said communication between his office and the tribe's prosecutors has always been

SEE **PONTOTOC COUNTY MOU**, PAGE 4



First baby of 2025

Henry Hire, Chickasaw, was born at 4:09 a.m., January 1, 2025, at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center, Ada, Oklahoma. He is the son of Rachel and Jacob Hire. He weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces and measured 20.5 inches at birth.

Free Tax Filing Services Available

Qualifying income-eligible individuals and families can receive free tax filing services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) in 2025.

The VITA filing period for 2024 income taxes is now open.

To receive this free tax preparation assistance, please submit the online application found at Chickasaw.net/VITA and upload all required documentation, including:

- Government-issued photo ID
- Social Security cards for the filer and all dependents
- All W-2s, 1099s and any documents pertaining to your tax

- Voided check for direct deposit of any potential refund
- Copy of last year's tax return (for new VITA clients)

A qualified VITA team member will prepare the return and review it with you in person, by phone or Zoom meeting.

VITA offices are at 1630 E. Beverly St. in Ada. Availability is limited for in-person meetings Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Schedule F and rental income are not eligible for VITA assistance.

For additional information and to check eligibility before applying, please call (580) 272-5798.

Chickasaws graduate with honors



East Central University recognizes Chickasaw graduates during an honors program ceremony. Pictured, from left: Matthew Stephens, Casey Mayo, Jocelyn Cole, Madalyn Scribner and Audrey Wade. Not pictured: Clio Heath, Hope Sussman, Matthew Tice, Cheyennea Duke, Mikaela Kent, Elijah Sherfield and Aspen Williams.

ADA, Okla. - Twelve Chickasaw students graduated from East Central University with honors for the fall 2024 academic school year.

Each student was presented with a Chickasaw honor stole during the honors graduation ceremony.

The college's honors program took time to acknowledge First Americans, both past and present, who have called the Ada area home.

"As we come together today, we first want to acknowledge and

honor the original inhabitants of these lands," The honors graduation program said. "ECU exists because of the foresight and generosity of community leaders like Chickasaw citizen Daniel Hays."

According to ECU Hays donated 16 acres of land on which ECU is located. The future Dan Hays STEM Center, named in his honor, has recently been announced. The facility will house ECU's School of Nursing upon its completion.

Each year, hundreds of Chickasaw students are presented with

a stole from the Chickasha Holitoplichi Graduation Stole Program.

Eligibility is limited to one award per student per degree program.

"It feels great to be honored by the Chickasaw Nation. It is a privilege to represent the Chickasaw Nation in my small way. This is the culmination of many years of work. It took a long time for me to finish my degree. It feels great," Chickasaw student Matthew Stephens said.

Forged in Fire

Chickasaw poet honored for work that reflects Indigenous and firefighting roots



IBE LIEBENBERG

Ibe Liebenberg channels his experiences as a first responder and First American into lines of poetry, and he has been recognized as an emerging writer by a national literary competition.

Liebenberg, of Paradise, California, won the 2024 Sowell Emerging Writers Prize for his first book of poetry "Birds at Night."

The Sowell Emerging Writers Prize is an annual competition that accepts submissions of poetry, nonfiction and fiction. The award is sponsored by Terrain.org, the Sowell Family Collection at Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Press.

Along with a cash award, Liebenberg's "Birds at Night" will be published by Texas Tech University Press in early 2025.

Liebenberg, a Chickasaw citizen, works as a seasonal firefighter for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). He is also an instructor in the English department at Chico State University, Chico, California.

He said his first experience with a poetry contest came in the fifth grade with a mandatory school poetry competition.

"Everyone had to enter it, and of course this was in the '80s when it was not very popular to be a male and a poet," he chuckled.

"They announced the winner over the loudspeaker, and it was me. I was just like, 'What?' I felt like I didn't put that much effort into it," Liebenberg said.

Years passed without a poetic thought, until he resumed his pursuit for higher education in his mid-30s. While taking courses to complete an associate degree in fire science, he enrolled in an advanced English class which turned out to be a literature course.

"They covered not only fiction,

but also we read some poetry. What really got me was the World War I and World War II poetry. Here they were writing about very traumatic experiences."

Many of the poems had biographies stating the poem was found on the soldier's body, Liebenberg explained, and it captured his attention.

"It was the last thing they wrote. In academia, they always talk about the 'so what' factor and that's profound. It is not like what people think poetry is, writing about love and flowers or whatever."

As he continued to serve as a firefighter, it occurred to Liebenberg that, much like the soldiers who penned battlefield poems, he was also witnessing traumatic, life-changing events almost every day.

"I would make notes and (think) there is no way I could write about this stuff. It is just too traumatic."

The more literature courses he took, the more he understood how the poets would write around things, the traumas did not have to be the focal point of the work, he explained.

"It didn't have to be so in your face."

Using this technique, poetry became a creative outlet for him. As American poet Robert Frost penned, "Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words."

Liebenberg would pour the trauma and distress he witnessed on the job onto the page.

"It was extremely hard to do, and I wasn't very successful at it. I felt like my first poems were very shock and awe."

With a lot of practice, Liebenberg learned to nuance his words and make the poem more about the details and less about the overt trauma.

His writing skill is the result of talent and many hours of practice in the pursuit of higher education.

A few years after he completed his associate degree in fire science, Liebenberg earned a bachelor's degree in literature and a master's degree in creative writing poetry from Chico State.

Wanting to enhance his poetic education, he applied and was accepted to the Master of Fine Arts program at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), Santa Fe, New Mexico.

At the university, "Everything was poetry," he said. "You ate, slept, breathed and read everything that was poetry. It was exactly the experience that I was looking for."

Liebenberg went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts in poetry and fiction from IAIA, completing his coursework about a year ago. He was able to meet his educational goals with the help of the Chickasaw Nation, he said.

"I can't give enough credit to Chickasaw Nation Higher Education grants and scholarships for helping financially. There was no way I could have afforded going to that school."

He also was awarded a Full Circle Scholar scholarship from the American Indian College Fund for each of the three years he attended IAIA.

He said the decision to apply to IAIA was easy because his Chickasaw heritage made it his only choice. The university is home to many First American tribal citizens all of whom have different experiences and cultures. "It was just a breath of fresh air because they just let you be a writer and they are very understanding," Liebenberg said.

Soon after graduating from IAIA, he won the "Tribal College Journal" student creative writing contest in both fiction, for "Breakfast, 0800 Hours," and in poetry for "Gar Fish Dance."

Liebenberg's work has also been published in "POETRY", The Threepenny Review and elsewhere, but "Birds at Night" is his first collection to be published.

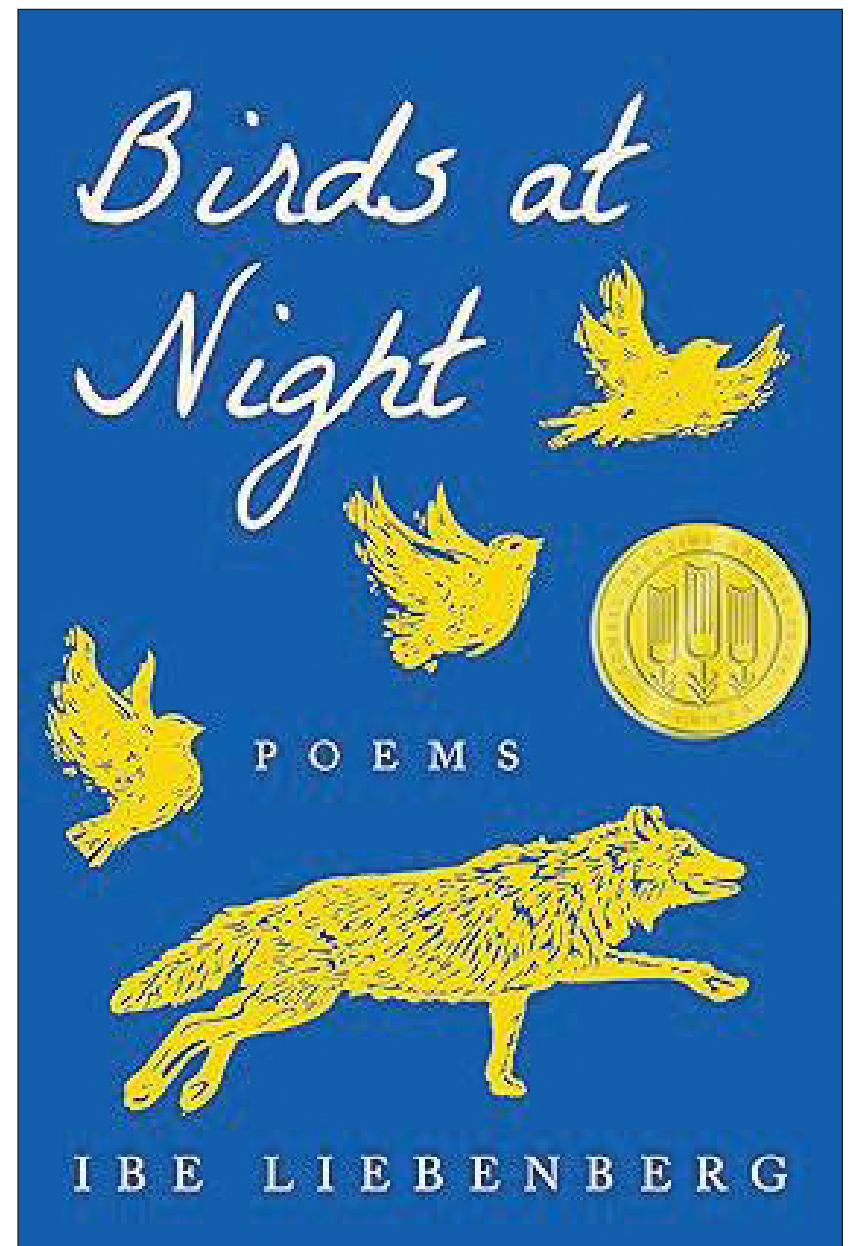
The powerful poems in "Birds at Night" explore themes of loss, trauma, PTSD, recovery, indigeneity and family.

"These brief, intense poems amplify the sensations and silences of interior moments of crisis and catharsis," according to Texas Tech University Press.

"A haunting meditation on what keeps us up at night, Liebenberg invites the reader to contend with their own responses to exigent circumstances.

Drawing on the resiliency of the natural world in the face of changing climate, birds, wolves and fire populate the stanzas. Migration and adaptation are the poetic subjects, but they are also the embodied language of each taut line."

Liebenberg said he also draws from his Chickasaw heritage for



"Birds at Night" by Chickasaw poet Ibe Liebenberg will be published by Texas Tech University Press in March.

inspiration, which can be traced on his maternal side of the family.

"My great-grandfather was Floyd Walden and his daughter was my grandmother, Joanne Lewis."

Walden attended Chilocco Indian Agriculture School in northern Oklahoma, and Liebenberg treasures and safeguards beaded works of art his grandfather created.

Although he was not reared learning Chickasaw culture and language, the California native understood his Chickasaw heritage while he was growing up and he was proud of it.

As an adult, he intertwines his First American heritage in his work.

His favorite poem in the "Birds at Night" collection is "Wolf OR 93."

"We haven't had wolves in California for almost 100 years, but then they started making these

packs up in Oregon and slowly but surely one or two would come down into California. It was just wild because you would read about these accounts, (the wolves) are looking for a mate but there is nothing down here."

"Wolf OR 93" highlights the sense of connection with the natural world and being sensitive and empathetic to it, he explained.

The most difficult process of submitting his works for competition was combining the range of poems into a cohesive package, he said.

"It finally came together but it was hard organizing it into a manuscript."

"Birds at Night" is available for preorder at TtuPress.org and Amazon.com, and will be available March 2025.

For more information, visit IbeLiebenberg.com.wordpress.com.

CONTRIBUTED BY Dana Lance, Media Relations

Center promotes responsible stewardship

An unassuming building on the north side of Ada, Oklahoma, continues to protect the environment and provide goods to the public. In its 15 years of service, the Chickasaw Nation ReUse Center has helped keep more than 2,281,000 pounds of household items out of landfills.

"The main purpose of the ReUse Center is to promote sustainability by giving gently used household items and clothing a second life," Chickasaw Nation Environmental Manager Kelsey Norton said. "By offering these items for no cost, the center directly supports individuals and families, while helping the environment."

The ReUse Center opened its doors Jan. 5, 2010. It serves everyone within the Ada community, both Chickasaws and their neighbors. Since opening, an estimated 160,000 people have taken an assortment of household items from the center. This has led to more than 17,000 pounds of materials diverted from local waste

each month.

"Keeping these materials out of landfills is crucial for reducing waste, conserving resources and protecting the environment," Norton said. "Every item we save from the landfill contributes to a cleaner, healthier planet for future generations."

During scheduled hours, community members are welcome to peruse and select items to take home at no charge.

"The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing gratitude for the ReUse Center's impact," Norton said.

Located at 2205 N. Broadway, Ada, Oklahoma, the ReUse Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, with special days occurring on the first and third Monday of every month for Chickasaw citizens.

Individuals, businesses, and civic and community groups can drop off used, clean building materials, office equipment, electronics, housewares and furni-

ture weekdays from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

For those donating household items, the ReUse Center is always in need of men's and children's clothing, as well as children's toys. In the summer, the center needs shorts in all sizes, as well as T-shirts. Winter needs include jackets of all sizes and blankets.

Accepted items also include clothing of all sizes, shoes, fashion items, kitchenware, small appliances, strollers and baby items.

Items such as food, used cosmetics, mattresses, large appliances, tube televisions, combustible or hazardous materials and computers, among other items, will not be accepted. For a complete list of items accepted, visit Chickasaw.net/Services/Chickasaw-Nation-ReUse-Center.

The ReUse Center is closed all federal holidays.

For more information, contact the Chickasaw Nation ReUse Center at (580) 272-5451 or visit Chickasaw.net/Services/Chickasaw-Nation-ReUse-Center.

CONTRIBUTED BY KC Cole, Media Relations



The Chickasaw Nation ReUse Center has been open to the public for 15 years. In that time, the center has reclaimed more than 2 million pounds of items from area landfills and has served an estimated 160,000 people.

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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.

Building partnerships for the common good

Throughout the history of the Chickasaw Nation, working together for the common good of the community has been essential to the Chickasaw people. Today, collaboration and partnership play integral parts in our efforts to grow safe and strong communities for our citizens, employees and others residing within our treaty territory. We regularly work with likeminded agencies, organizations and businesses that share our vision of progress for the communities in which we live and work.

These partnerships have been vital to the success and impact of many of our programs, services and community service efforts. Grant partnerships with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have assisted our work to integrate mental health services into all levels of our health care system.

Over the past decade, we have dedicated significant resources to eliminating the stigma of mental health issues and providing more access to mental health support services in our communities. Partnerships with various nonprofits and other entities throughout the Chickasaw Nation and beyond have also helped to provide access to important mental health services to make a lasting impact on Oklahomans of all ages.

Furthermore, collaborations on infrastructure improve-



GOV. BILL ANOATUBBY

ments and water planning partnerships with local, state and federal agencies, as well as civic organizations, have been crucial to the ecological stewardship and economic growth of communities throughout south-central Oklahoma.

Partnerships on such projects serve to enhance water sustainability efforts in many of our rural communities. These projects boost the local economy and contribute to the overall vitality of these communities.

Additionally, partnerships with local school districts, as well as state colleges and universities, offer immense opportunities for positive educational outcomes for Chickasaw and other students. Partnerships to support capital projects and various educational programs at East Central University, University of Oklahoma, Okla-

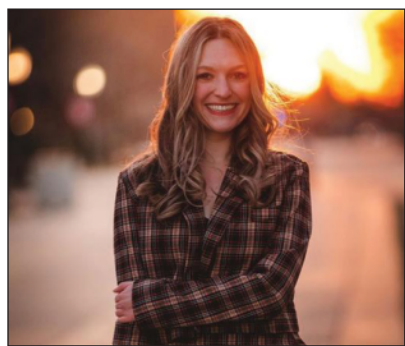
homa State University, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma City Community College and more promote the success of these institutions and the students they serve.

Over the years, compacts have been fundamental tools to preserve Chickasaw self-governance and sovereignty in areas where our geographic boundaries and jurisdictions may overlap with the State of Oklahoma. Compacts, including tobacco and vehicle license tags, like the many before them, are examples of exercising our sovereignty through sound intergovernmental agreements that allow us to work productively with the state for the benefit of tribal and non-tribal residents.

History has taught us that cooperation benefits and impacts those we serve far more than we could by acting alone. We will continue to work with our partners for the betterment of the Chickasaw people, Chickasaw Nation employees and our entire state, because we know what can be accomplished when we work together.

We have a long and important history of collaboration and working together to ensure our collectively bright future, and we will continue in this important and beneficial endeavor.

Graduate student completes third internship through Chickasaw Internship Program



ELAINA EDDLEMON

Teachers agree that one of the best methods of learning is through doing. College students will tell you practical application of skills looks great on resumés. Combining both, the Chickasaw Nation provides students like Elaina Eddlemon an opportunity to intern at some of the best organizations in the country.

A graduate student at the University of Oklahoma (OU), Eddlemon has participated in the internship program three different summers throughout her academic career. Two were during her undergraduate studies, while the third has taken place during her graduate studies.

Writing has always been a major part of Eddlemon's academics. According to Eddlemon, she was a good student in high school. She preferred writing and literature classes to science and math. This is reflected in her decision to intern at the Chickasaw Nation's Chickasaw Press, located in Ada, Oklahoma.

"After I graduated high school, I knew I wanted to go to OU," Eddlemon said. "In 2023 I graduated with a degree in professional writing. I decided to continue my education, I didn't stray from OU."

Eddlemon is currently in a master's program specializing in adult and higher education, with an emphasis in student affairs.

"We basically study how (adult) students learn best and operate in educational settings, how universities develop over time and

how the university is structured to help them," Eddlemon said.

Graduating in May, Eddlemon sees herself working in the writing field concentrating on higher education. Eddlemon's most recent internship, found with the help of the Chickasaw Nation, will help this goal become a reality. Through contacts within the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program, Eddlemon was able to land an internship with Pittsburg State University (Pitt State), Pittsburg, Kansas.

An advisor in her graduate program at the University of Oklahoma recommended she get an internship at another university to both expand her resumé and compare how education was handled differently between the two schools. Unlike her undergraduate internships, the internship at Pitt State was done remotely.

"I contacted the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program once more, applying on a whim. I specified to them I was now studying higher education," she said. "I assumed it was going to be through a department in the Chickasaw (Nation), or at East Central University. To my surprise they partnered me with Pitt State."

While the college made housing arrangements available for her, Eddlemon chose to stay close to OU since she was able to work remotely.

Eddlemon's internship was at Pitt State's Center for Reading. The Chickasaw Nation chose to partner her with Pitt State based on her background and major of higher education. Coincidentally, one of the directors at the facility was a Chickasaw citizen and offered the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program a place for Chickasaw students to intern outside of the Chickasaw Nation.

"Pitt State is one of the non-Chickasaw places we could intern at," Eddlemon said. "I worked specifically with a summer camp called Secret Code Camp. That

was a six-week program offered during the summer for children ages 6 to 12. While the camp is typically in person, they also make it available to out-of-state children and to those who live out of the country remotely."

Eddlemon's duties at Pitt State included assessing the reading skills of students who were remotely attending the school, editing a reading intervention manual and numerous administrative responsibilities within the center.

According to Eddlemon, the onboarding process for the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program is not difficult. Eddlemon was impressed by the organization of the program. Dates, times and expectations are thoroughly explained to interns. Topics such as professional standards, dress codes, contact information and Chickasaw cultural aspects were discussed. These included continuing language activities that took place every other week during the internship and discussions of the Chickasaw Nation's core values.

"I interned at the Chickasaw Press for two summers. Not only did they work around my class schedule, but I was provided housing and was paid for my work."

During her internship at the Chickasaw Press, Eddlemon learned many skills that will help her professional career. Eddlemon wrote essays and helped edit articles for the Chickasaw Nation's Chokma Chickasaw Magazine. This magazine is Chickasaw Press' semiannual publication used to connect people to each other and illuminate what it means to be Chickasaw.

"I was able to interview a couple of people while writing for the magazine," Eddlemon said. "I received real, practical experience. I saw what it was like working for a magazine. I also got to look at and edit one of the Chickasaw Press' (book) publications. I was

also able to read a manuscript and give my opinions to the editors."

Each of her internships was 10 weeks. They took place during the summer and didn't interfere with her normal college class schedule.

"My first two internships were 2021 and 2022, both during covid-19," Eddlemon said. "I was one of the only interns working in an office at the time. I wanted that in-person experience".

She said her internships have been a great learning experience.

Eddlemon believes there are a few qualities interns should have to be successful, including being excited for the opportunity.

"Being open minded is a huge asset," Eddlemon said. "You may not get your ideal placement, or you may be unsure what your role will be, but being open minded and willing to learn will mean you will have a good experience."

Eddlemon receives her Chickasaw heritage from her father, Brian. Eddlemon grew up in Seminole, Oklahoma.

She is proud she belongs to a tribe that values higher education.

"My culture and heritage mean a lot. I like knowing my connection to the state of Oklahoma," Eddlemon said. "It's cool passing buildings and locations knowing that I am part of them, even if in an offbeat way."

About the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program

The Chickasaw Nation Internship Program trains Chickasaw college students to become community leaders. The program introduces students to real work environments while in college. The experience provides six to 10 weeks of on-the-job training that propels students to land their initial jobs.

The internship program works in partnership with government

and business leaders across the country to provide exclusive educational opportunities to Chickasaw students. The program provides motivated college students between the ages of 18-25 with a firsthand view of what it takes to be highly effective ambassadors and real-world problem solvers.

The internship program is conducted at different times throughout the year. The Chickasaw Nation determines internship locations. Cultural enhancement employees work with students and employers to determine internship timelines and specifics.

Students who participate in the Chickasaw Nation Internship Program also participate in numerous career development trainings and partake in language activities, cultural presentations, historic site visits and more.

Internships are provided within the Chickasaw Nation and at external organizations throughout Oklahoma and other states. Placement is based on the student's major and/or minor field of study. Interns receive bi-weekly compensation and travel expenses may be covered for eligible participants living outside the job location area.

In 2009, the Chickasaw Nation built six internship housing units to accommodate those who live outside of the Chickasaw Nation.

Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a paid internship may be able to participate for valuable professional experience without compensation.

To qualify for the program, an applicant must be a Chickasaw citizen, complete an internship application and submit all documentation to the Chickasaw Nation internship program coordinator.

For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/internship or call (580) 272-9326.

CONTRIBUTED BY KC Cole, Media Relations

Sick child care program helps Chickasaw child recover



Chickasaw Koa Walker at the Chickasaw Nation Sick Child Care Center smiles while holding a basket full of his favorite toy dinosaurs provided by staff.

ADA, Okla. – Finding child care arrangements for sick children is a challenge many working parents face. Most day cares have rules requiring the exclusion of sick children mandated by state regulatory policies. To confront this challenge, the Chickasaw Nation Sick Child Care Center

opened its doors in 2008.

Licensed nurses and specialists care for students who have contracted mild illnesses or sustained minor injuries to help them rest and recuperate.

"It's helpful to have a program where they're still learning and being engaged, even when they are hurt or sick," Madison Brown said.

A Chickasaw citizen with a full-time career, Brown said she was thankful for the sick child care program when her 3-year-old son, Koa, fractured his collarbone playing outside.

"I was the only parent at the time with his dad working away," Brown said. "Me having to care for him by myself, and I had just had a newborn. It was difficult."

Brown said she was relieved when Koa was accepted into the facility so she could continue to work knowing her son was in a safe environment.

"I had just come back from maternity leave, so I didn't have any more time to take off," Brown

said. "Not having to miss work and knowing he was in good care – that just made me feel good."

The Chickasaw Nation Sick Child Care Center allows children to be cared for by trained professionals who have the capacity to give the child the appropriate time and attention necessary for their circumstance. Parents using the program can continue to work knowing their child is in good hands. This helps to ensure area businesses and the Chickasaw Nation have enough personnel to continue operations.

Brown said the care provided by the staff is tailored specifically to the needs of the child assigned to them, both in recovery processes and making sure each child is engaged. Knowing Koa loved dinosaurs, staff incorporated dinosaurs into his daily activities.

"They hid all these different dinosaur toys outside and let him go find them," Brown said.

On another occasion, staff surprised Koa with dessert and a toy

dinosaur after his nap.

"They got him a little pudding dessert and a dinosaur with a spoon in its hand, so it looked like the dinosaur had gotten it for him," Brown said. "It was so cute. They just went above and beyond."

The 4,283-square-foot facility houses six classrooms, each brightly colored and child-focused to foster comfort and creativity for attending children.

After a month of recuperation with the sick child care program, Brown said Koa made a full recovery.

"You would have never thought he fractured anything," Brown said. "He's back to his spunky self."

Brown said she would recommend the sick child care center to any parents in the community with mildly sick or injured children.

"Becca Wise, Brenda Johnson, Denise Baker, Amanda Claxton, Janota Ronald, Jaime Sutton, Christina Barden and Tiffanie Ya-

hola – they are the best group of women I've ever met," Brown said. "They made me and my child feel so loved and supported while he was there, and I couldn't have asked for anything better."

Eligibility

A health assessment will be conducted to see if a child can be cared for at the Chickasaw Nation Sick Child Care Center. Children 3 months to 12 years of age may attend. Children are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information regarding the application process, call (580) 559-0752.

CONTRIBUTED BY Dalee Weston, Media Relations

Chickasaw student accepted to MIT



Luke Byrd, left, and James Byrd, right, met with Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby at the 2023 Chickasaw Annual Meeting and Festival. Luke is a current sophomore attending Harvard, and James will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this autumn.

WENATCHEE, Wash. – A dream of attending the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) turned into reality for Chickasaw citizen James Eric Byrd.

It is one of several honors Byrd has received in recent weeks as he worked toward high school graduation, traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, for festivities involving the formal awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize and prepared for the rigors of the MIT curriculum he will face this autumn.

"I have wanted to attend MIT since I was in kindergarten," he said. "It is one of the most important universities in the world, and I am honored it accepted me."

MIT is so exclusive only 4% of students who apply for admission are accepted.

Founded in 1861 as a private land grant university, the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based school is respected worldwide for its exceptional educational opportunities and student suc-

cess. More than 100 MIT affiliates have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Hundreds of other students have been honored for their work in modern technology and science.

It is one of only three private land grant universities in America. The other two are Cornell and Tuskegee.

Byrd will study physics hoping to pursue research in the area of quantum information science.

"It involves quantum computing, and that is where I hope to excel," he said. Byrd's explanation about the mechanics and mathematics of this discipline makes one's head spin.

It is complicated, intricate, exacting and interesting. Understanding it is not easy, but Byrd said this area of physics is prone to errors, and correcting those errors is critical so that data is consistently reliable.

"Finding the error, sorting it out and writing computer code to correct the error in real time is

the goal," he explained. "My goal is to reduce those mistakes mathematically. You have to figure out a unique way of coding."

"Math is very logical, and there is always an answer to problems using math. In addition to that, math is really cool," he posited.

Byrd will graduate June 20 with both a high school diploma and an associate degree in science from Wenatchee Valley College (WVC). While MIT will not accept all the hours earned at WVC, Byrd said the college was pivotal in preparing him for MIT.

"WVC has a very rigorous course structure, and the professors are amazing at teaching all levels of students. Being exposed to a college environment will help me when I attend MIT. At MIT, there will be a lot of math and science classes in my major. It will be difficult, but I have always been curious and love to learn. I am excited about the future," he added.

In order to be accepted, Byrd authored several essays for admission, and one of those essays sought an explanation about what Byrd does "to have fun." The essay illustrates MIT's dedication to supporting students both academically and personally, he said.

"I love to play piano. I have taken formal piano lessons on and off since I was young. In the last five years, I have consistently grown, and my teacher, Mrs. Lisa Sauer, has helped me to develop as a National Guild-level pianist. I recently earned a black belt in karate from 11 years of training at the Wenatchee School of Karate. I like to draw, and I have been involved in theater since I was 8 years old," he said.

In his Washington community, the entire school system is involved in the biennial Wenatchee School District all-district musical. Elementary to middle school to high school students participate. In his first theatrical debut, at the age of 6, Byrd played baby

"Shrek" in "Shrek the Musical," and he has continued to love acting in the community.

In November 2024, Byrd had a major role in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." His role was Grandpa Joe. The lead role of Willie Wonka was performed by another Chickasaw citizen, Kade Devereaux. Besides acting in this production, Byrd performed two mostly solo musical numbers, "Charlie, You and I," and "I Got a Golden Ticket."

"Those productions are so much fun," he said. "We gave eight performances of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.' Of all of the musicals I have been involved in – four total – this one was my favorite. The outpouring of support by the community was outstanding."

As if he was not already busy, the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) selected Byrd to take part in the weeklong Nobel Laureate celebration in Sweden during December 2024.

"We toured the Nobel Museum, attended lectures by Nobel laureates, explored Stockholm and were invited to visit the U.S. Embassy," he said.

Byrd said the most interesting part of the trip was "Nobel Dialogue" which featured internationally renowned experts who explored health as the principal topic. "Mental health and the economics of health were addressed as well as the public perception of what health is and how it is delivered," he said. "It was quite interesting, and I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations."

Byrd met Dr. David Baker, a computational biologist from the University of Washington, who was awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his work in computational protein design. According to Byrd, Baker succeeded in building entirely new kinds of proteins. He shares the prize with Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper (of DeepMind). They used

an artificial intelligence model to solve a 50-year-old problem: predicting proteins' complex structures.

After the Nobel laureate lectures, Byrd spent late nights in Europe studying for two final exams he had to take the day after he returned from overseas. "I was pretty exhausted," he said with a laugh. However, he reports he did well on the exams despite jet lag.

For the remainder of his high school career, he plans on studying, playing piano and taking some time for himself while planning the move to Massachusetts.

This summer, Byrd will continue activities with Children of the American Revolution, an organization of which he is a member and will tour important historical sites. His brother, Luke, participates in the same organization and spent time touring sites before attending Harvard a year ago.

Both brothers' universities are in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and James said he and his brother will be only two train stops away from each other. So he will be close to family when starting classes at MIT.

Their parents, J. Chad and Carrie Byrd, have watched both children move from Washington state to Massachusetts to attend college. While the distance is not ideal, both brothers have praised their parents for encouraging them and supporting the decision to move across America to pursue their dreams.

"They are very supportive, and we both love them," James said.

He also explained many of his classmates plan to attend universities far from Wenatchee to receive specialized education in specific fields of endeavor. He is certain after earning his bachelor's degree at MIT that graduate work and doctoral dissertation will continue.

CONTRIBUTED BY Gene Lehmann, Media Relations

PONTOTOC COUNTY MOU CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

good, but this MOU will help to facilitate better communication and coordination.

"We don't have a McGirt issue that is going to be all-consuming," Johnson said, referring to a July 9, 2020, U.S. Supreme Court decision that affirmed that multiple tribes in Oklahoma, including the Chickasaw Nation, have reservations and exercise criminal jurisdiction over them. "We've always been able to address any issue professionally and quickly."

Johnson is also the DA for Hughes and Seminole counties, although these do not fall within Chickasaw Nation treaty territory.

In addition to the partnership with the Chickasaw Nation, Johnson's office has a partnership at the federal level with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, who is currently Christopher J. Wilson.

Other than municipal matters, these three offices are responsible for prosecution of all felony and misdemeanor crimes that occur within their jurisdictions.

Chickasaw Nation Chief Counsel Debra Gee said the MOU allows for better communication among these prosecuting offices in which jurisdiction may sometimes overlap.

"It is important to communicate with each other and find out if a charge is something (Johnson's) office is prosecuting or something the (U.S. Attorney) is prosecuting," Gee said.

She said this MOU creates a designated point of contact between the Pontotoc County DA's office and the Chickasaw Nation.

"We have a great working relationship," Gee said. "This just establishes clear lines of communication between our offices."

She said there are a number of crimes that may fall within both offices' jurisdictions, and this MOU helps each office work together to find the way to best proceed in these cases and identify resources that can be provided from each office.

New special assistant district attorney

The MOU calls for hiring a prosecutor, and longtime Ada resident William Kirkpatrick has been in training for this new role since early November.

Originally from California, Kirkpatrick is a former All-State football player at Ada High School who initially attended East Central University on a football scholarship, where he double majored in legal studies and political science. He said the uniqueness of this position and its focus on helping children interested him.

"I feel I'm able to be molded into how this position is envisioned," Kirkpatrick said.

He and his wife, Shelbie, were married in 2017 and have three children, Breck, 6; Codie, 2; and Werth, a newborn. Shelbie and their children are Chickasaw.

This prosecutor will serve as a liaison with the Chickasaw Nation, among other duties.

"This is the first position like this in the state, and it's just a visible representation of the dialogue, the chemistry and the belief that both the Chickasaw Nation and my district have that we all live, work and raise families in the same communities and want them to be safe," Johnson said.

The MOU lays out certain responsibilities for the new special assistant district attorney in three areas. These areas include deprived and delinquency cases filed in Pontotoc County that involve the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA); misdemeanor domestic violence cases and related misdemeanor drug cases; as well as involvement in any agreements, MOUs or cross deputation agreements.

Johnson said the new prosecutor's position is officially an employee of the state of Oklahoma, and the MOU allows the position to be paid for by the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council with funds the Chickasaw Nation pro-

vides to the council. The MOU calls for a quarterly reporting of cases being prosecuted.

The position focuses primarily on cases involving children, which is an important issue to all involved.

"Helping children in our community isn't a tribal or nontribal issue," Johnson said. "They're just children."

Many community organizations are taking proactive steps regarding issues affecting children, Johnson said. These include the expansion of CARE Cottage Child Advocacy Center, as well as the Chickasaw Nation's Healing to Wellness Court and Truancy Court, which the tribe also worked together on with Johnson's office.

"Any time when you're managing a situation in crisis mode, you don't make the best decisions or the best plans. You're just reacting" Johnson said. "This position is more forward looking."

Working together for the benefit of all constituents

In addition to coordination of information and resources, the Chickasaw Nation and Pontotoc County DA's office have hosted DA trainings together. The Chickasaw Nation currently has more than 80 cross deputation agreements with other criminal justice agencies.

"Conversations, MOUs and agreements like this between agencies just speak volumes to the community about how we're in this together," Gee said. "Our priorities are the same from a criminal justice perspective."

Johnson said this new MOU shows that these offices are constantly looking for ways to be more efficient and coordinated with their respective resources for the safety and benefit of all Pontotoc County residents.

"Iron sharpens iron," Johnson said. "You can always do a better job."

FEDERAL LAWSUIT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

our law enforcement partners across jurisdictional lines every day to ensure Oklahomans are kept safe, and we will continue to do so," said Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby. "We have long called for effective intergovernmental partnership in this area, and we will continue to do so. In the meantime, we will also act to support the rules that govern our law enforcement systems, as not doing so risks the public's safety."

"The Choctaw Nation fully supports the longstanding principle that the state has no jurisdiction over crimes committed by Indian people in Indian Country," Batton said. "The Department of Justice is doing the right thing by defending the U.S. Constitution and the principle of tribal sovereignty," said Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Chief Gary Batton. "Our Tribe has worked diligently to maintain public safety and build cooperative relationships with local, state and

federal authorities," Batton said. "We oppose the attempts by two district attorneys to weaken our sovereignty, the U.S. constitution and the important partnerships we have established."

Federal law establishes that, without express congressional authorization, state prosecutors have no legal authority to exercise jurisdiction over Indians for acts alleged to have occurred in Indian country. The disregard for that established rule by the defendants in these federal lawsuits has interfered with federal and tribal law enforcement efforts and compromised the public's safety. On December 23, 2024, the Department of Justice filed suits in the U.S. District Courts for the Northern District of Oklahoma (against Ballard) and the Eastern District of Oklahoma (against Iski) and moved for injunctions to prevent the defendants from further unlawful assertions of criminal jurisdiction over Indians in Indian country.

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Local counties marked by Chickasaw Nation history, economic development

Businesspeople know three factors outweigh virtually all others in determining whether an entrepreneurial enterprise will succeed. Glibly stated, they are location, location, location.

Even in the earliest days before and after the forced Removal from the historic Homeland, Chickasaw people were well-known as successful businesspeople and entrepreneurs.

In 1837, the Chickasaw Nation purchased an interest in land and resources from the Choctaw Nation for \$530,000. Following this purchase, the tribe was removed to what became the Chickasaw District within the Choctaw Nation. In 1855, Chickasaw leaders signed the Treaty with the U.S., Choctaw and Chickasaw, which formally established each tribal nation's separate territories.

Today, Interstate 35 runs north and south through the Chickasaw Nation reservation like a metaphorical backbone up Love and Carter counties with Marshall County to its eastern edge and Jefferson County at its western-most boundary.

I-35's vehicular traffic out of Texas from the south and Oklahoma City from the north creates a constant and eager market for Chickasaw businesses along its length.

Ease of transportation and ways to achieve it have historically been important in this por-

tion of Chickasaw tribal lands. In modern times U.S. Highway 81 in the westernmost portion of Jefferson County mirrors the much earlier Chisholm Trail which runs north and south through the western portion of Chickasaw Country.

In the 1800s, Chisholm Trail traffic consisted of the four-hoofed variety (i.e., cattle herded along its length by cattlemen to Abilene, Kansas, where they cashed in their bovine inventory soon to be delivered to markets in the east via railroad).

In the late 1800s, the Union Pacific Railroad laid track along a north-south route, roughly parallel to the old Chisholm Trail, making for faster transport of cattle to the Kansas market.

U.S. Highway 70 forms a major east-west thoroughfare from Ardmore in Carter County to Waurika in Jefferson County and beyond.

Love County

Love County is home to WinStar World Casino and Resort, the county's largest employer, providing more than 2,200 jobs for Chickasaw citizens. It is a key destination for many visitors traveling I-35.

Love County claims as its namesake Overton "Sobe" Love who left his Mississippi home during Removal to Indian Territory, present-day Oklahoma. His many accomplishments includ-

ed serving as a Pickens District judge and as a representative to Congress.

Tim Colbert served as Murray, Johnston, Marshall and Love counties' associate district judge. He also served 12 terms on the Chickasaw Tribal Legislature.

Marshall County

Madill is Marshall County's county seat. Marshall County's most notable feature in the modern era is Lake Texoma, created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with construction of the Denison Dam in 1944. In doing so, a large portion of Marshall County land was inundated with water. The trade-off was a burgeoning and prosperous tourist trade.

In 2023, the Chickasaw Nation began work on the West Bay Casino and Resort on the shores of Lake Texoma, adding millions in economic impact to the area.

At first, ranching and agriculture were primary means of Marshall County economic activity. That changed when oil and gas were discovered at the outset of the 20th century. Today, recreation and tourism opportunities afforded by Lake Texoma are primary economic drivers.

Towana Spivey, former director of the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark and Museum in Lawton, Oklahoma, who also conducted archaeological investigations, was born in Madill. He is an author who served as a historical productions consultant for movies "Windtalkers" and "Dances with Wolves."

Lila Dean McManus was also born in Madill. McManus served as secretary of the Chickasaw Tribal Legislature and was voting representative on the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes among other important Chickasaw servant-leadership positions.

Jefferson County

Approximately two-thirds of Jefferson County is in the Chicka-

saw Nation. Waurika is its county seat.

Jefferson County was named after Thomas Jefferson, chief author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and America's third president. It, along with parts of Carter and Love counties and all of Marshall County (as well as portions of Grady, Garvin, Johnston, McClain, Murray, Pontotoc and Stephens counties) form the Chickasaw Nation's Pickens Legislative District. Their citizens are represented by four of the total 13 Chickasaw legislators.

It is interesting to note Jefferson County's town of Ringling gets its name from John Ringling of the famous Ringling Brothers Circus who is credited with founding it.

Ryan, Oklahoma, in Jefferson County, traces its name to Stephen W. Ryan who married a Chickasaw. Ryan acquired land upon which Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway constructed a station in 1892.

Carter County

Carter County's namesake is traced back to the Carter family, whose most celebrated member was Chickasaw and Cherokee Charles David Carter. Carter served as a member of Congress for two decades (1907 to 1927).

Carter also served for two years on the Oklahoma State Highway Commission. Still earlier, he served as Chickasaw Nation auditor of public accounts, superintendent of Chickasaw Nation schools and was appointed by President William McKinley the mining trustee of Indian Territory.

The city of Ardmore serves as Carter County's seat of government.

Chickasaw Hall of Fame member Helen "Te Ata" Gale Cole was a 1939 Ardmore High School graduate. Cole served nine years in the Oklahoma State Senate and six years in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and was mayor of Moore, Oklahoma. She is also

the niece of Mary Frances "Te Ata" Thompson Fisher, famed Chickasaw storyteller.

Her son, Tom Cole, represents Oklahoma's 4th Congressional District and is the current chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee.

Bloomfield Academy, a boarding school for young Chickasaw females, was moved to Ardmore after fire destroyed its original structure just south of Achille in Marshall County. One of its most famous superintendents was Douglas H. Johnston, Governor of the Chickasaw Nation from 1898-1900, 1900-1902, 1904-1906 and again from 1906 until his death in 1939. His tenure at the school began in 1884 and ended in 1897.

Ron Parker, a 2020 Chickasaw Hall of Fame inductee, was born in Ardmore. Parker's storied career found him serving as a judge, a legislator and civil servant during his 26 years with the Chickasaw Nation.

Juanita J. Keel Tate, born the 10th of 12 children in Ardmore, was a 2008 inductee into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame. Tate was the great-great-grandchild of Cyrus Harris, first Governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

Clayburn Straughn, a direct descendant of Chickasaw Governor William Guy (1866-1888), was inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 1989. Straughn was a natural artist and a self-taught sculptor and artist. He was raised in Wilson in Carter County, just west of Ardmore.

Tessie Lushanya Mobley's (raised in Ardmore) musical talent made her a 1940s and 1950s world-famous operatic soprano who earned her place in the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2009.

That year also found Ardmore-born Daniel Worcester earning his place in the Chickasaw Hall of Fame. He is an accomplished bladesmith, employing his skills in functional art in metal.

CONTRIBUTED BY Lone' Beasley, Media Relations

Spring scholarship application open for Chickasaw citizens, deadline February 15

Apply to fund your future through the Chickasaw Nation Higher Education Scholarships and Grants Program. Whether you are a full-time student aiming for an associate or bachelor's degree, a part-time graduate student or a doctoral candidate pursuing cutting-edge research, Chickasaw Nation scholarships and grants can assist every aca-

demical journey.

This program is available to all Chickasaw citizens, with grant assistance also available to Chickasaw Nation employees. Additional eligibility requirements vary by award.

The application deadline for the summer semester is Feb. 15. Visit Chickasaw.net/HigherEd to apply.

MCCALED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ple as an economic development consultant in several capacities, including businesses owned by Chickasaw Nation Industries. He served on the board of directors for Chickasaw Community Bank, located in Oklahoma City.

McCaleb was appointed to important roles by three U.S. Presidents - Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Bush tapped McCaleb to oversee Indian Affairs in mid-2001. McCaleb was charged with the administration and management of 56 million acres of land held in trust by the United States government for First Americans, tribes and Alaska Natives. McCaleb also used his post as assistant secretary to promote economic strength and opportunities for First Americans. He retired from the post in November 2002.

He served on Reagan's Commission on Indian Reservation Economies in the 1980s. Nixon appointed McCaleb to serve on the National Council on Indian Opportunities from 1972-1974.

Former Oklahoma Gov. Henry Bellmon appointed McCaleb Oklahoma's first secretary of transportation in 1987.

He also served former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating as director of both the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, in addition to being secretary of transportation. McCaleb spent decades improving roads, turnpikes and infrastructure throughout Oklahoma for much of his career.

During Bellmon's administration, McCaleb "launched an ambitious road-building program that included reconstruction of Interstate 35 and Broadway Extension and the relocation of Interstate 40 south of downtown," according to The Oklahoman. McCaleb oversaw construction of the

Cherokee Turnpike and the first sections of the Kilpatrick, Creek and Chickasaw turnpikes.

Under Keating, McCaleb constructed extensions of the Kilpatrick and H.E. Bailey turnpikes.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Tim Gatz and Turnpike Director Joe Echelle released a joint statement praising McCaleb's legacy, saying he left the state's highway network "forever changed for the better. Spanning three decades, he applied his extensive knowledge to shaping Oklahoma's highways, interstates and turnpikes, following the legacy of his father, Burt, who served as Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Chief Engineer," Gatz and Echelle noted.

He was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1974 and served as House Minority Leader from 1978-1983.

Born in Oklahoma City, June 30, 1935, to Burt and Zelma McCaleb, he was extremely proud of his Chickasaw heritage. He graduated from Putnam City High School in 1953 and received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1957 from Oklahoma A&M University, now Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.

Funeral services were conducted Jan. 16 at Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond.

McCaleb was preceded in death by his father and mother, Burt and Zelma McCaleb; siblings, Juanita Roper, John B. McCaleb and Marion McCaleb; as well as his son, Adam McCaleb.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Georgann; son, Kevin McCaleb; daughter and son-in-law, Kate and Bryan Turner; son and daughter-in-law, Caleb and Terri McCaleb; 16 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

As a parent, it can seem difficult to get your teens to open up and discuss their personal lives with you, especially when it comes to dating and relationships. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is a reminder to stay connected and discuss what healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships may look like with your teen. Talking about partnerships may feel uncomfortable, but these tips can help you start and maintain an honest conversation about dating.

Introduce the subject by talking about their friends and peers at school

- Talk about your own relationship
- Ask and encourage questions about dating
- Establish mutual trust
- Listen actively and maintain a judgment-free attitude
- Avoid lecturing

If your teen reveals they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, listen and accept what they say. Remind them that they deserve to be treated with respect. Violence or abuse is not their fault. Be prepared to support them mentally and emotionally and decide on next steps together. If you need to seek help, there are

resources available.

Chickasaw Nation Domestic Violence Services assists those who live in or are relocating within the Chickasaw Nation and are experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Teens can also call or text (844) 7NATIVE or visit StrongHeartsHelpline.org to chat with an advocate. Parents or guardians can learn more about the signs of teen dating violence at TeenDVMonth.org.

For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/DomesticViolence or call (580) 272-5580.



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

Positive relationships bring positive results

Chickasaw Our nation is strong, our tribe is strong, as we begin our journey through the current year, understanding that we have much work in place and much work to continue with. Our economic growth is strategic to our future, and our interaction with all governmental agencies at the federal level are critical. We must continue the valuable work that we are doing with the Centers for Disease Control, navigate through intertribal programs of funding with the Tribal Leader's Diabetes Committee, and convince our federal partners of the necessity to increase overall funding levels.

It is also critical that we maintain the positive relationships that we have already garnered and strengthen those relationships with valuable input. We are, as a tribe, exceptional in providing statistics that have a lower "standard of estimate" value than normal that proves reliability and reproducibility of data used to support our funding level requests. It is a pleasure to provide this type of support and challenge our federal partners to help us in improving the overall health of our respective tribes across America.

I again want to thank you for placing your trust in me to help accomplish this level of success for all tribes, especially the greater Chickasaw Nation. If you need any help or support in accessing any of our programs, please do not hesitate to contact me.

God Bless,
Connie Barker, Legislator
Seat 2, Pickens District
Connie.Barker@Chickasaw.net
(580) 272 4175

Matters of your heart for American Heart Month

February is known for Valentine's Day, but it is also a great time to discuss other matters of the heart during American Heart Month.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 246,000 people in Oklahoma have coronary heart disease. It is the most common form of heart disease, but it can often be prevented.

Our hearts stay healthier when we eat healthier, are more active, reduce stress, get enough sleep and avoid tobacco products.

The Chickasaw Nation offers programs and services designed to help participants make healthier choices, including nutritious cooking techniques and ways to incorporate more physical activity.

The Chickasaw Nation Get Fresh! Nutrition program provides a variety of recipes that are tasty and nutritious. Visit GetFreshCooking.com for dinner ideas, cooking tutorials and more.

The AYA app is a great way to stay active and connect with Chickasaw history and culture. Being active is not only great for your heart but also reduces stress and anxiety. Download the app on AyaWalk.com, Google Play or the Apple App Store.

Smoking harms nearly every organ in your body. The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW), My Life, My Quit and Tobacco Stops With Me have tobacco-free services and resources for adults and teens to help. Turn everything from lunchtime to bedtime into quitting time so you can breathe easier and live healthier.

For more information on how to stay heart healthy, visit Heart.org.

School-to-Work Program applications are open March 1-31

Nontraditional Chickasaw college and vocational students can apply for on-the-job training opportunities that correspond with their course of study. Eligible students will earn a stipend while receiving valuable instruction and work experience.

Chickasaw Nation School-to-Work Program applications are open March 1-31. To apply online or view eligibility requirements, including a list of approved colleges, universities and career technology centers, visit Chickasaw.net/SchooltoWork.

Confidential and free financial coaching available for Chickasaw citizens

A program available for Chickasaw citizens offers one-on-one free financial coaching with a First American certified credit counselor.

Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition, Inc. (ONAC) Executive Director Christy Finsel said the confidential sessions are conducted by teleconference (Zoom) or by phone and typically last an hour at a mutually beneficial time.

"We offer three types of free financial coaching to tribal citizens across the United States," Finsel said. "They include credit counseling, homebuyer education and financial management, which is to say, budgeting."

Sessions are with a First American certified credit counselor, homebuyer education provider or a financial educator.

She said tribal citizens interested in free financial coaching are welcome to complete a registration form that can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ONACCounselingRegistration>.

"Once the form has been submitted to ONAC, our financial coach will work with you to schedule a remote session by phone or teleconference," Finsel said.

"This confidential financial coaching is available to any American Indian or Alaskan Native in the United States regardless of where you reside," she said.

Contact Christy Finsel at (405) 720-0770 or email cfinsel@OkNativeAssets.org for additional information.

Chickasaw Connection luncheon gives chance to visit memory lane

Back in early December Legislators attended the Chickasaw Connection, Tempe, Arizona Christmas luncheon. While there I met Serena and Gary Holder of Mesa, Arizona. It was discovered we both had "Colbert" in our background and the fun began! They have two daughters, Heidi and Elizabeth, and three wonderful grandsons, Austin, Chandler and Michael. Serena was quick to mention that each of those boys were recipients of the Chickasaw Education Department and have been tremendously blessed with their assistance.

We went on to talk family and she shared that her grandfather, Charles Hobart Heald, had married Chickasaw maiden, Elizabeth Jane Guy. That was the beginning of their Chickasaw lineage. Serena's father, Charles Farlee Heald was born in 1916 and a descendant of the Heald family, of Healdton, Oklahoma. As a young man he was eager to be involved in the war efforts so with his parents consent he joined the U.S. Army Air Corp at the age of 16. Eventually he reached the status of sergeant and was stationed in Manila in the Philippines when World War II broke out (Manila was bombed the same time as Pearl Harbor). As an undercover assignment

he and four other men were responsible for transporting food and medical supplies to prisoners. In the process of their job their boat lost power, and they became adrift for 12 days. All five men were captured and turned over to the Japanese. For four years these men were shifted around to various camps and their last location was in Burma at the River Kwai Bridge area! (History buffs watch the movie or read up on this skirmish in history). The war ended, Americans bombed the bridge and took all prisoners by train to Calcutta, and they were liberated. The Red Cross notified their families. During their time in captivity these five men were the only Americans among the British and Australian prisoners. Up until this point the families were told they were missing in action (MIA).

Charles spent a year at Walter Reed Military Hospital recovering from his experiences. When ready, he returned to his parents who lived in the Kim, Colorado area. There he met his future wife, and Serena was the outcome! There are so many interesting facts about his story I just hit the highlights. Note: Charles received commendations while in service. A couple being the Oak Leaf Cluster Purple Heart and General Douglas MacArthur awarded him the Silver Star for heroism during action in the Sea of Japan.

After visiting with Serena and Gary I felt like I had been on a walk down memory lane! These places and some of these events were taught in my history classes while in high school! This would be classified as American History and we as Chickasaws have additional history! Our story continues...

As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects man. Proverbs 27:19

Blessings,
Beth Alexander



SERENA AND GARY HOLDER



General Douglas MacArthur awarding Charles Heald with the Silver Star for heroism.

Earn speech pathology certification with career technology program benefits

Chickasaw citizens can receive financial assistance to pay for certification programs and continuing education in their fields, including speech pathology, through the Chickasaw Nation Career Technology Program.

Students pursuing clinical experience as a speech and language pathology assistant (SLPA) must have an associate degree or equivalent academic coursework. Clinical training hours are required to obtain a certification from the Oklahoma Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (OBESPA) for licensure. Technology institutes like Oklahoma City Community College or Oklahoma State University located in Stillwater offer pre-professional speech-language pathology assistant certificates.

With grants for individual career technology programs, textbooks, supplies and exam and licensure assistance, the career technology program can help Chickasaw citizens start a new career. Eligibility is open to all Chickasaw citizens regardless of income or location. Both part-time and full-time Chickasaw students may be awarded funding.

Careers in nursing, welding, web development, aviation, biotechnology, HVAC, cosmetology and more are within reach. Visit Chickasaw.net/CareerTech to apply. For more information, email CareerTechnology@Chickasaw.net or call (580) 421-7711.

Winter Fruit and Vegetable Program available for Chickasaw Warrior Society members

The Chickasaw Nation Winter Fruit and Vegetable Program provides healthy fruits and vegetables to Chickasaw Warrior Society members during the winter months.

The Chickasaw Warrior Society is comprised of Chickasaw veterans and active military. This organization encourages community and personifies the Chickasaw warrior spirit, and the winter fruit and vegetable program is honored to serve its members.

Members of all ages are eligible to join the winter fruit and vegetable program.

In addition to Chickasaw warriors, Chickasaw seniors (ages 55 and older) and Chickasaw citizens with 100% disability are eligible to join the winter fruit and vegetable program. Participants will receive fresh, frozen and shelf-stable fruits and vegetables through March 2024.

For more information, visit ChickasawNationHealth.net/FarmersMarket or call (580) 436-7255. A toll-free number is also available at (855) 572-3433.

Elderly Energy Assistance Program

The Chickasaw Nation Elderly Energy Assistance Program provides one-time financial assistance to elders 60 years of age or older for winter heating or summer cooling. Utility services also covered may include gas, water, electricity, propane or deposits. This program is for elders who are not covered by other services and have no other way of obtaining resources.

Required application is available at any area office. For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/EEAP or call (405) 767-8971.

Firewood for elders

Eligible Chickasaw elders who use a fireplace or wood stove to heat their home, can receive one rick of wood per month (as needed) during winter months (November-March).

Applicants must be 60 years of age or older and reside within the Chickasaw Nation boundaries.

For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/Firewood or call (580) 795-9790.

Application period is open for Summer EBT

Parents with children receiving free or reduced-cost school meals are invited to apply for the Chickasaw Nation Summer EBT program. Qualifying families receive funds on an EBT card, which allows for the purchase of healthy food during the summer months.

This program is open to anyone who meets the criteria regardless of tribal affiliation.

To learn more or apply, visit Chickasaw.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.

Boggy Depot Disc Golf Clinic enrollment open

Mark your calendars! Boggy Depot Park hosts the 2025 Chickasaw Nation Disc Golf Clinic March 15. All ages are invited to enjoy this clinic from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

This high-flying clinic is available to all at no cost and introduces the basic rules, types of discs, throwing styles and other aspects of the game.

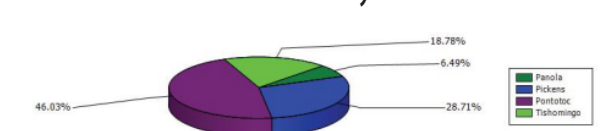
The disc golf course at Boggy Depot is considered one of the finest and top ranked in Oklahoma, winding around the lake, through the hiking trails and into the woods.

For more information about the disc golf clinic and to register, please call William Yochum at (580) 889-5625 or email William.Yochum@Chickasaw.net.

Count of Voters by District

Panola	2,942	Pontotoc	20,864
Pickens	13,012	Tishomingo	8,511
		<u>45,329</u>	

Count of Voters by District



Chickasaw Warrior Society turns 10



The Chickasaw Veterans Lodge is home to the Chickasaw Warrior Society, along with numerous other programs devoted to veterans. Members of the 2022 Chickasaw Honor Guard gather for a group photo at the Veterans Lodge. Pictured from left to right: Jimmy James, Ray Orphan, Rufus Eyachabbe Jr., James Newberry, Eddie Post oak, Thomas Faltysek, Jonah Puller, Paul Baken, Silas Welch, Keith Mowdy, Ted Underwood, Paul Wilson and Mary Baken.

For more than 200 years, Chickasaws have played a pivotal role in the U.S. armed forces. With First Americans serving at the highest rate of any ethnic group, the Chickasaw Nation is devoted to the needs of its former service members. One way the tribe honors these veterans is through the Chickasaw Warrior Society.

“The Chickasaw Nation honors its veterans that have served and those that are currently serving our country by continuing the tradition of the Chickasaw warrior spirit,” Chickasaw Nation Director of Veterans Services Ray Orphan said.

Sharing common bonds through service, the Chickasaw

Warrior Society fosters relationships with veterans and the tribe. The organization encourages service members by providing them with camaraderie, community and a place to personify the Chickasaw warrior spirit.

During the last decade, the Chickasaw Warrior Society has experienced tremendous growth. Active membership continues to grow, along with programs and services offered exclusively to veterans within the tribe.

With so many Chickasaw warriors, the Chickasaw Nation created the Chickasaw Veterans Lodge. Located on the Ada South Campus, the nearly 15,000-square-foot lodge is equipped with a

recreation room where veterans can relax or wait between medical appointments provided at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center. To promote camaraderie between veterans, the Chickasaw Nation hosts annual events at the lodge dedicated to honoring former service members’ commitment to the tribe and nation.

Numerous counselors are officed within the lodge to guide all veterans — including non-Chickasaw — in finding and applying for benefits available to them through the Chickasaw Nation, as well as state and federal governments.

“The Chickasaw Veterans Lodge has helped Chickasaw veterans

and other veterans by having a place they can visit and get the resources or assistance they might not have been aware of,” Orphan said. “Our veterans services staff can assist veterans with acquisition of veterans benefits or any other resources that the veteran may be seeking.”

The Chickasaw Veterans Lodge also houses additional programs and services dedicated to veterans, such as the Chickasaw Honor Guard, Chickasaw Veterans Jacket and the Veterans Tag Reimbursement programs.

The Chickasaw Honor Guard conducts military honors at funerals and memorial services. They also participate in parades, powwows and military-related ceremonies at tribal functions. Often acting as ambassadors of the Chickasaw Nation, the honor guard posts colors throughout the year at events. As a veteran himself, Orphan can often be found serving veterans in his off hours.

“It is an honor to perform military honors for a fellow veteran and their family,” Orphan said.

The Chickasaw Veterans Tag Reimbursement Program allows Chickasaw veterans to receive up to \$50 for reimbursement of the cost for a single U.S. car tag, including specialty tags. Along with the tag program, the lodge is home to the Veterans Jacket Program. For more than three decades, the Chickasaw Nation has offered a specially designed jacket exclusively to Chickasaw veterans.

Chickasaw Warrior Society members also receive parking decals for special parking privileges at Chickasaw Nation facilities and

select tribal businesses.

Warrior Society members invited to participate in annual events

Chickasaw veterans from across the United States gather in Thackerville, Oklahoma, for the annual Chickasaw Veterans Conference. The conference provides a place for Chickasaw warriors to come together and learn firsthand about programs and services available through the Chickasaw Nation.

Open to veterans, active-duty personnel, the National Guard and reserve service members, the Chickasaw Veterans Conference offers a day of keynote discussions, informative panels and special presentations tailored to fit veterans and military families.

The Chickasaw Nation also provides Chickasaw veterans over the age of 60 with a one-time trip to Washington, D.C. The five-day trip itinerary includes tours of major war monuments and Smithsonian museums, a visit to Arlington National Cemetery, and a tour of the United States Capitol, among other activities. Participants are selected at random through a lottery system.

“The Chickasaw Nation provides these services to its veterans in appreciation for their military service, honoring their sacrifices,” Orphan said.

For more information about the Chickasaw Warrior Society or veterans services, visit Chickasaw.net/Veterans or call (580) 272-2549.

CONTRIBUTED BY KC Cole, Media Relations

Chickasaw Institute of Technology



The Chickasaw Institute of Technology (CIT) participants with 2017 CIT graduate Shyloh Galvan Jan. 7.



Shyloh Galvan, a 2017 graduate of the Chickasaw Institute of Technology (CIT) electrical program, demonstrates electrical work to current CIT participants on Jan. 7.

Learn the risks, know the signs.

No symptoms? You may still be at risk.
Talk to your doctor about heart disease.

2025 DYNAMIC WOMEN OF THE CHICKASAW NATION CONFERENCE

MAY 29-30, 2025

WinStar Convention Center
777 Casino Ave.
Thackerville, Oklahoma

#DWCNC25

Registration is now open. For more information, visit Chickasaw.net/DynamicWomen or email CreativeArts@Chickasaw.net.

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
 - Nancy Elliott
620 Ann
Ada, OK 74820-4410
(580) 399-4374
Nancy.Elliott@Chickasaw.net
 - Lisa Impson
P.O. Box 2669
Ada, OK 74821-2269
(580) 235-3185
Lisa.Impson@Chickasaw.net
 - Karen Goodnight
P.O. Box 759
Washington, OK 73093-0759
(580) 235-2654
Karen.Goodnight@Chickasaw.net
 - Lisa J. Billy
P.O. Box 1412
Purcell, OK 73080-1412
(580) 399-7083
LisaJ.Billy@Chickasaw.net

Pickens District

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

Tishomingo District

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

Panola District

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

Births



SWAYZE BLAKE EASTERLING

We are overjoyed to announce the birth of our beautiful baby girl, Swayze Blake Easterling. Swayze was born December 12, 2024 at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center, Ada, Oklahoma. She weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz., and measured 19.5 inches at birth.

Swayze is the daughter of Blake Easterling and Savanna Boulton.

She is the granddaughter of the late Jory Easterling, Brandon and Krissy Powell and Carla Hudleston. She is the great-granddaughter of Eddie Easterling, Tricia Hinds, Elvis and Debbie Belcher and the great-great-granddaughter of Dawatha Easterling.

Our hearts are full, and our family is thrilled with the arrival of our little bundle of joy.

Hunter Glen graduates from Southeastern Oklahoma State University



HUNTER GLENN

Hunter Glenn graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) in December 2024. Hunter earned a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Information Systems with a minor in Business. While attending SOSU Hunter was a percussionist with the Southeastern Band, played on the esports team, and worked in the IT department on campus.

He was selected to participate in the Chickasaw School to Work Program. This program provided countless invaluable opportunities. Hunter was able to gain three-plus years of IT experience while maintaining a healthy school/work balance which promoted academic success.

Hunter plans to pursue a career with the Chickasaw Nation in the IT field.

Abby Ogas displays her painting "Mother and Child"



Abby Ogas, of Silver City, New Mexico, displays her painting 'Mother and Child'.

Katyn Denson graduates Summa Cum Laude



Katyn Lanelle Denson graduated from the University of Central Missouri Dec. 14, 2024. Katyn earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with honors of Summa Cum Laude and carried a 4.0 grade point average (GPA). Katyn is from Coalgate, Oklahoma.

Mary Crawford Wright graduates from West Texas A&M



MARY "SALINA" CRAWFORD WRIGHT

Mary "Salina" Crawford Wright earned a Master's Degree in Counseling from West Texas A&M. Salina graduated December 13, 2024 and carried a 4.0 grade point average (GPA).

This goal would not have been possible without the assistance of the Chickasaw Nation and support from her family.

Salina plans to work for the Chickasaw Nation in Ardmore.



WILLIAM RYSER

William Ryser graduates from the University of North Texas

William Ryser graduated from the University of North Texas with a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree with a focus in Information Technology. He graduated Magna Cum Laude carrying a 3.937 grade point average (GPA).

He great-great-grandson of original Dawes enrollee and Indian boarding school survivor, Benny Perry and a direct descendant of Cyrus Harris and Winchester Colbert.

Britton Bourland graduates from Washington State University



Britton Bourland, a proud Chickasaw citizen, recently earned his Master of Science Degree in Crop Science from Washington State University, highlighting his commitment to agricultural research and education."

Health tip with Dr. Judy Goforth Parker

National Burn Awareness Week falls in February



Dr. Judy Goforth Parker

life forever?

Injury from burns can happen in seconds and leave a lifetime impact but burn injury accidents can be prevented. Burn awareness is important because it can help prevent injuries, reduce the severity of burns that occur and protect vulnerable populations. Having the appropriate knowledge on burn safety and advocating for that safety can ultimately save lives and improve overall wellbeing. According to the American Burn Association (ABA), around 700,000 individuals suffer from burn-related injuries yearly that could have been avoided with the proper precautions (ABA). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 180,000 people die each year from burn injuries and females have a slightly higher rate of succumbing to burn injuries than men (WHO). Children are also a vulnerable population for burns as it has become the fifth most common cause of non-fatal injuries in America (WHO). Worldwide, children under the age of five make up 20% of injuries related to burns.

The American Burn Association is providing new ideas in 2025 to expand the engagement on the impact of burn prevention in an effort to prevent more injuries and save more lives. Burn awareness is crucial, as the injuries can range from minor to life-threatening. Burns are classified by their causes such as fire, a hot liquid or a chemical burn. The severity of the burns range from first-degree (burns affecting the outer skin), second-degree (burn damage to deeper layers) and third-degree (destroys all layers

of skin).

Residential fires are a leading cause for burn-related deaths in the United States. In 1989, Ronald Reagan established burn awareness. This year's burn awareness theme is "Burn Prevention Starts Where You Live". The focus of this is to learn how to prevent your home from fire and teach burn safety.

There are many practices we can put into place to prevent burns. Make sure the smoke detectors in your home are working properly, practice a safe and secure escape plan for your family and learn how to handle hot appliances appropriately. Children's pajamas should fit correctly and snug and are flame resistant. When using log burning fireplaces, ensure all safety precautions are made when children are present such as installing baby gates to prevent the little ones from coming too close to the flames. With fireplaces, ensure proper ventilation is occurring to prevent smoke inhalation. Avoid burning outdoors on windy days. If you are burning fires outside, make sure someone is with you and there are no burn bans in place. Do not leave candles burning. Many household fires have been started with a candle left unattended. When using space heaters, do not leave them unattended; they must be at least three feet away from you and flammable objects such as curtains, blankets and furnishing. Check electrical cords regularly for any fraying because this can spark a fire. Before preheating the oven, ensure there are no items inside of the oven. Keep fire extinguishers in your home and make sure they are not outdated.

The overall focus of burn awareness is to educate individuals and communities about the causes, prevention and treatment of burns. Ultimately, burn awareness helps to save lives, minimize suffering and empower people to create safer environments for their families.

Ayden Elcyzyn chosen to play in Native American All Star football game



AYDEN ELCYZYN

Chickasaw citizen and senior at Newcastle (OK) High School Ayden Elcyzyn, 17, was one of 60 applicants chosen to play and participate in the Native American All Star football game in Dallas, January 7, 2025. Ayden was the only citizen representing the Chickasaw Nation during the five day clinic coupled with a banquet and the All Star game finale.



Chickasaw runner helps team capture title

Chickasaw athlete Aurelia Ruffin poses with the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) National Championship trophy her team, the Pacific Coast Shockwaves, won in AAU cross country competition in North Carolina in December. Aurelia finished fifth individually. She competed against girls aged 9-10 and ran in the tournament's 3K with a time of 12:28. More than 150 athletes from across the country competed. Aurelia is the daughter of Ernest and Kwashae Ruffin of Eastvale, California.

NEWS FROM CHICKASAW PRINCESS



CHICKASAW PRINCESS CHEYANNE ARKANSAS

Chokma! Saholhchifoat Cheyanne Arkansas. I am twenty-three years old, my parents are Margie and Mike Arkansas, and I am from Tishomingo, Oklahoma. The most important thing I've learned so far while being Chickasaw Princess is showing up and being the example that I wish to see.

Just in the month of November, I had the opportunity to read stories to two early childhood schools. Seeing their little faces light up and hearing all their excited voices talking all at once made me feel super happy that I was able to make them happy.

I also had the opportunity to help and serve the elders with a Thanksgiving lunch. I was able to shake their hands and get to know them as we provided them their meal. I got to see and meet many more people while handing out Thanksgiving baskets to Chickasaw citizens. At several other events I have attended Governor Bill Anoatubby and Lt. Governor Chris Anoatubby have always greeted with a smile, "Hello!" and a firm handshake, making me feel welcomed.

As I have been doing all this, I have noticed how the Chickasaw Nation comes together to help each other make events like this possible for our people. I am very blessed to be Chickasaw Princess and grateful to be apart of it!

Devon Potter selected to participate in the Disney College Program



DEVON RAIN POTTER

Chickasaw citizen Devon Rain Potter will be "earning her ears" as a Disney World cast member. She has been selected to be a participant of the Disney College Program for the 2025 spring and summer semesters.

According to the Disney Career website, the Disney College Program is a competitive, paid internship program that offers college students a chance to work at Disney resorts and parks. The program offers roles in retail, hospitality, entertainment, and more. Per the College Traditions website, the Disney College Program acceptance rate is about 20%.

Devon's role will be in Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. She is excited to be able to participate and learn more about the hospitality industry.

For the past couple of years, Devon has attended Arizona State University online pursuing a bachelor's degree in biological sciences through an education benefit program for Starbucks employees - Starbucks College

Achievement Plan. This has allowed her to attend college at a low cost.

Devon is the daughter of Keri Morgan, granddaughter of Kathleen (Taylor) Morgan, great-granddaughter of Jewel and Robert "Boyd" Taylor and great-great-granddaughter Lula Taylor.

Devon encourages all Chickasaw citizens to seek out any and all education opportunities. It not only benefits the student but the Chickasaw Nation as well.

Virginia A. (Beaver) Allison



Virginia A. Beaver Allison, 89, formerly of Roseburg, Oregon died December 16, 2024.

She was born August 17, 1935 at Armstrong, Oklahoma to Leota Irene (Harlin) and Leroy Lindsey.

She grew up in Corona, California and attended Corona High School. She also used the name Virginia Fisher in school.

She was a beloved mother and grandmother.

She is survived by three children, Danny Ray Beaver, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Pamela Irene Kidwell, of Rancho Cucamonga, California and Harry Davidson (David) Beaver, Roseburg; four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; brothers, Ray and Roy Fisher; two nieces; and two nephews.

Mable Elaine Griffith



Mable Elaine Griffith, beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on November 14, 2024, at the age of 79 in Waco, Texas after a brief illness.

She was born September 9, 1945, at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and grew up on her family's dairy farm in Newcastle, Oklahoma.

A dedicated student, Elaine attended Newcastle High School and later earned a bachelor's degree from the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts in Chickasha, Oklahoma, in 1967. Her passion for learning led her to pursue a master's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma and to perform some graduate work at the University of Oklahoma, all while working full time and raising her family.

She had a fulfilling career as a special education teacher and later as a special education administrator, serving for 35 years, including 23 years in the Newcastle education system. She found her greatest joy in advocating for children with special needs leaving a lasting impact on her community.

Beyond her professional life, she was deeply involved in civic engagement. A lifelong Democrat, she was active in the Oklahoma Democratic Party and was recognized statewide for her dedication. She ran a spirited and competitive campaign for the state House of Representatives, winning her primary election and narrowly losing the general election.

She also lived an adventurous life. After her retirement, she spent two years in Saudi Arabia with her then-husband, Dennis Perales, embracing new experiences and cultures. She enjoyed traveling, gardening, and was very proud of her Chickasaw Native American heritage.

She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Mae Jean Griffith; a brother, Sherrill "Butch" Griffith; a beloved nephew, Todd Griffith; her long-time partner, Ron Spencer; and many other family members and friends.

She is survived by a daughter, Rebecca Griffith-Eskew and husband, James, of Waco, Texas;

a granddaughter, Lyla Eskew; grandson, Colton Eskew; and great-grandson, Callan Eskew, all of Waco; a sister, Debra Scroggins; and sister-in-law Sandra Griffith Grinage, (wife of the late Butch Griffith) of Newcastle; nieces and nephews, Kayla Nail (Karl), of Newcastle, Leslie Chester Griffith (wife of the late Todd Griffith), Ty Griffith (Teri Ann), of Maumelle, Arkansas and Whitney Fambrough (Ben), of Yukon, Oklahoma.

She continued a close relationship with her former step-daughters Lisa Henderson Gardner and Laura Henderson Browder.

A celebration of her life was December 21, 2024, at Asher Point, Waco, Texas where she lived independently for the last few years. A second celebration of life was February 1, 2025 at The Railhouse Event Center, Norman, Oklahoma.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Newcastle Education Foundation or to Wounded Warriors in her memory.

Richard Moss Hill



Richard Moss Hill was born January 31, 1940 at Oklahoma City to Ida Leota (Moss) and Emmaunuel Columbus Waldron Hill. He was the third child of seven siblings.

He grew up in the Oklahoma City area attending Oklahoma City schools. He enlisted in the military but was unable to serve a full term and eventually passing the General Educational Development Test (GED) in 1986.

He loved to read about the American "wild west" history and was a proud citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. He was an intelligent man who enjoyed sharing many great stories of his heritage and was politically knowledgeable often speaking his mind to any who would listen and discuss with him.

He loved eating especially enjoying his brother Bob's beans and stew.

He returned to his Christian roots while attending GRACE Church in Nicoma Park, Oklahoma and then met his wonderful life companion, Patricia Peak. Together they shared fun trips and travel adventures, caring for each other in sickness and health growing in love and grace for each other. Attending church and Christian groups regularly they have helped all they could in serving their Saviour, Jesus.

He loved all of his family and was a doting father and grandfather who enjoyed his grandchildren, Trinitie, Talisia (TT) and Chris, every chance he got. One of his favorite things to do was to take his only grandson, Chris, to the annual Men's retreat at church which they attended his past October.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two sisters, Judi Jones and Sue Terry; a brother, Danny Hill; two sister-in-laws; two brother-in-laws; two nephews; and friend, Elizabeth "Liz".

He is survived by his longtime companion, Patricia Peak, of their home in Harrah, Oklahoma; a son, Richard "Doug" Hill, of Hinton, Oklahoma; and a daughter, Talya (and Roy) Spanger, of Midwest City, Oklahoma; three granddaughters; and one grandson; three great-granddaughters; two sisters, Barbara Hill, of Sulphur, Oklahoma and Cindy Peery, of Wellston, Oklahoma; a brother, Bobbie Beck, of Midwest City; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He will be missed.

Remains will be interred at Washington Cemetery, Washington, Oklahoma at a later date.

Janice Renee Hogue



Memorial services for Janice Renee Hogue were January 17, 2025 at Ada First Baptist Church, Ada, Oklahoma, with Pastor Brad Graves officiating.

She passed away January 2 at her home. She was born May 9, 1963 at Lawton, Oklahoma to Kenneth Eugene Bond and LaQuita June (Priddy) Bond.

On August 3, 1985 she married her longtime love, Harvey Lynn Hogue, at Ada. Anyone who knew her, knows how much she loved and adored her "Harv".

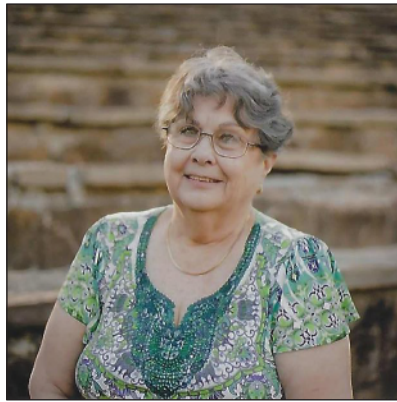
She earned a degree in math and a master's degree in human resources. She proudly worked for the Chickasaw Nation for a number of years in numerous roles. She also worked at East Central University, Ada, as director of Native American academic services.

She was a devoted and loving mother to her two children and their spouses, but her favorite accomplishment in life was becoming a "NaNa" to her grandbaby, Nolan.

She is survived by her husband, Harvey Hogue, of the home; son, Chaylum Hogue and wife Kaci, of Ada; daughter, Ceara Atkinson and husband, Dillon and their son, Nolan, of Ada; her mom, LaQuita Bond, of Ada; brother, Rusty Bond, of Ada; sister, Roxanne Seidel, and husband, Howard, of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania; sister, Regina Inmon, and husband, Frank, of Huntsville, Texas; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her dad, Kenneth Bond; and a nephew, Elliot Seidel.

Barbara A. Isaacs



Memorial services for Barbara A. Isaacs were January 6, 2025 at Covenant Cumberland Presbyterian Church with Rev. Duawn Mearns officiating.

She was born December 1949 to William H. and Dorothea (Dottie) W. Richardson in Oklahoma City. She grew up there attending school through graduation at John Marshall High School. She married Derral L. Isaacs in November 1972. They had two sons, James and Justin Isaacs.

She passed from this life December 31, 2024. She was an active member of Covenant Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Latta, Oklahoma. She was also involved in the Oklahoma Nurse's Association and served in the United States Public Health Service for twenty years.

She is survived by her husband Derral, of the home; son James and wife Kayla, and their son, Grady and son, Justin, and wife Johnna, and their sons Sullivan and Rhett; two bonus grandchildren, Kady Russell and Brody Russell.

Memorials may be made to Covenant Cumberland Presbyterian Church or to Stephenson Cancer Center.

Carolyn A. Krumanocker

Carolyn A. Krumanocker, 77, passed away January 2, 2025 at Midwest City, Oklahoma.

She was born September 3, 1947 to Wendol L. and Idella L. (Matthews) Robsion. She graduated from Capitol Hill High School in 1965.

She and James Krumanocker were married February 14, 1983.

She worked for 30 years at General Motors and after retirement, she worked at the Oklahoma History Center until her death, assisting people with genealogy research.

She loved her family and would always do whatever she could for them, including taking care of her grandparents, her parents, and her daughter.

She loved making porcelain dolls for many years, each one made with love. Some of her dolls were Native American and she dressed and did all the beadwork herself. Her house was filled in every corner with dolls. She also enjoyed scuba diving.

As a proud Chickasaw citizen, she became deeply involved in her family genealogy and had books and books on her family, after years and years of research and walking cemeteries.

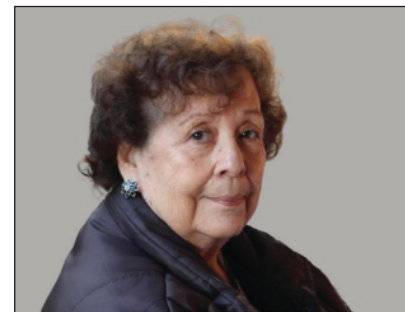
She was a one-of-a-kind special person.

She is survived by her Husband, James; daughter, Shelley Fields (Jimmy); grandsons, Josh (Makenzie) and Caleb Fields; two great-grandchildren, Axton and Maggie Fields; and two half-brothers, Ray and James Bourbonnais.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and a sister, Rowena Ake.

Funeral service were January 13, 2025 at Oklahoma City, burial followed at Dale Cemetery, Dale, Oklahoma.

Doris Alberta Postoak



Doris Alberta Postoak, 90, of Ada, Oklahoma passed away December 26, 2024 in Oklahoma City. She was born October 23, 1934 at Fittstown, Oklahoma to George Earnest Hawkins and Ethel Virginia (Souttee).

She graduated high school and then attained a position as supervisor at ARCO for many years. She married the love of her life, Edmond Postoak August 20, 1955 at McAlester Baptist Church, Ardmore, Oklahoma. They shared fifty-six beautiful years together until his passing in 2016. She adored her time with him while they were both early contributors of the Inter Tribal Council of Houston. She enjoyed playing cards and any games that could be played with her family. The time that she spent with her family was precious to her, especially when it came to her grandchildren. She deeply cherished each and every special relationship she had with them.

She will be greatly missed by all of those who were blessed to have met her, and her legacy will forever live through her family.

She is preceded in death by her husband of fifty-six years, Edmond Postoak; a daughter, Janice Postoak; a son, Patrick Postoak; a granddaughter, Brittany Postoak; and a grandson Keith Wiley.

She is survived by a son, Darrel and wife Nicole; daughter, Pamela Postoak, and son Sammy Postoak and wife Laura; twenty-one grandchildren; many great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

To honor her life there was a funeral service January 4, 2025 at Phillips Funeral Home, Ada, Oklahoma, with burial in the afternoon at McAlester Cemetery, Ardmore.

Jason Michael Reed



Jason Michael Reed, 49, of Harden City, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully December 29, 2024 at his home surrounded by many loving friends and family members.

He was born January 22, 1975 in Apple Valley, California to his parents Michael Reed and Brenda June Reed (McGavock). After he graduated from Timberline High School in 1993, he later attended the University of Oklahoma, where he became an OU Super Fan and lifelong supporter of all OU sports. He was a firm believer in Christ and he served his community at the Okchamali (Blue) Baptist Church as a youth leader as well as taking the role of sound engineer for services at the church. He was also a proud member to serve his tribe, the Chickasaw Nation, at the Cultural Center as the projectionist, where he was surrounded by many co-workers and friends that cherished his presence.

When he wasn't working or serving his community he found joy in traveling to see new sights as well as relaxing and spending time with his friends and family. He was a true joy in this life, and he will be dearly missed by all of those who made his acquaintance.

He is survived by a sister, Shawna McFarland and husband, Randy; nephews Taylor Franks and Zakkary McFarland.

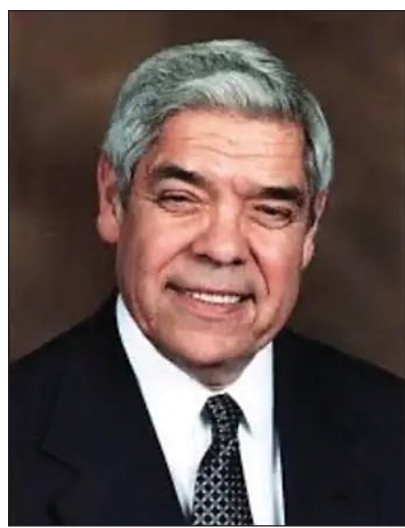
He is preceded in death by his parents Michael and Brenda Reed; his maternal grandparents, Robert and Phyllis McGavock, and his paternal grandparents Alonzo and Irene Seeley.

Honorary Pallbearers were Josh Hinson, Burgess Navarro, Kelsey Smith, Tim Underwood, Chad Hamilton, Clovis Hamilton, Taylor Franks and Zakkary McFarland.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Halo Hospice, the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center Emergency Department, the Chickasaw Nation Cultural Center staff, Okchamali (Blue) Baptist Church, Phillips Funeral Home, Robby Boston and DJ Adair.

Graveside services were January 4, 2025 at Pontotoc Cemetery.

Neal A. McCaleb



Neal A. McCaleb, a distinguished civil engineer, public servant, and proud member of the Chickasaw Nation, passed away January 7, 2025, at the age of 89.

He was born in Oklahoma City in 1935. He grew up hunting and fishing on the shores of Lake Overholser and graduated from Putnam City High School in 1953. He then earned a bachelor's degree with honors in civil engineering from Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University) in 1957.

He was first and foremost a family man. He was devoted to his wife, Georgann, who he was married to for 69 years, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He could often be found at the family dinner table, engaging in meaningful conversation with whomever he was sitting next to. He was a natural mentor and had many who considered him their mentor.

Mr. McCaleb helped fund higher education for all of his grandchildren, whether they went to cosmetology school, earned a bachelor's degree, or attended law school. He did so with the wisdom that a good education would aid his children and grandchildren long into their adult lives. He and his wife, Georgann, have been a bedrock of hospitality to the rest of the family, many friends and the community, for decades.

He was appointed as Oklahoma's first Secretary of Transportation by Governor Henry Bellmon in 1987, a role he reprised under Governor Frank Keating in 1995. He was also the first person in state history to hold three concurrent positions as Secretary of Transportation, ODOT Director and OTA Director. He continued to be an active voice for changing the direction of transportation in Oklahoma for the better and paved the way for many transportation leaders who came after him. He was considered the "Czar of Transportation" in the inner circles as he truly revolutionized transportation in Oklahoma. He never took credit for this work and always praised others for their work in advancing transportation.

Mr. McCaleb's career spanned over eight decades, during which he made significant contributions to Oklahoma's infrastructure and Native American affairs.

Mr. McCaleb's public service began in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, where he served from 1975 to 1983, including a term as House Minority Leader.

Of the accomplishments Mr. McCaleb himself was most proud of, he considered his work bringing the first cable barrier system to Oklahoma highways, which has saved thousands of Oklahoman lives since they have been installed, to be among the most important work of his life.

He was responsible for many transportation programs and initiatives during his tenure, all of which improved transportation infrastructure in Oklahoma, including the construction of the urban turnpikes in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. And also safety initiatives and programs to improve access to rural Oklahoma.

In 2001, President George W. Bush appointed McCaleb as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, where he led the Bureau of Indian Affairs and advocated for tribal economic development. He also served as a presidential appointee on Ronald Reagan's Commission on Indian Reservation Economics in the 1980's.

After returning to Oklahoma in 2003, he served as an economic development consultant and special advisor to Governor Bill Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation. He eventually rose to the role of Ambassador of the Chickasaw Nation—a post he held until his passing.

Throughout his life, Mr. McCaleb received numerous honors, including induction into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 1999 and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2014 as well as OSU Hall of Fame and the OSU Engineering Hall of Fame.

He loved spending his free time with Georgann and their family at their condo in Colorado, where he skied into his 70s and was still enjoying hikes well into his 80s.

He was always an avid reader, and amateur history expert. He played a significant role within his own family and many others he mentored, with regard to sharing, through stories of personal experience and tribal history, of what it means to be a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation. His surviving family will forever be grateful for this.

He is preceded in death by his father and mother, Burt and Zelma McCaleb; siblings Juanita Roper, John B. McCaleb, and Marion McCaleb; and a son, Adam McCaleb.

He is survived by his wife, Georgann; a son Kevin McCaleb; a daughter and son-in-law, Kate and Bryan Turner; and a son and daughter-in-law, Caleb and Terri McCaleb; sixteen grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren, to name a few.

Neal McCaleb's legacy is marked by his unwavering dedication to public service, his commitment to improving infrastructure, and his advocacy for Native American communities and businesses. To celebrate this legacy, the Chickasaw Nation has opened a scholarship in his honor, called the "Ambassador Neal McCaleb Scholarship for undergraduate Chickasaw students attending Oklahoma State University".

His life's work has left an indelible impact on Oklahoma, the country, and on the Chickasaw Nation. His good humor, temperance, and diplomacy will be missed, but his long legacy will endure for many years to come. He will be remembered for his unswerving love of Oklahoma and his family, his intellect, wisdom, knowledge, humility and ability to naturally fall into leadership positions and mentoring others, to name a few.

In lieu of flowers please donations may be made to Ambassador Neal McCaleb Scholarship through the Chickasaw Foundation at ChickasawFoundation.org.

Russell Andrew McCreary



Russell Andrew McCreary, of Waco, Texas passed away December 14, 2024 at home after a short illness. Services were December 18 at Oakcrest Funeral Home with Pastor Buddy Sipe officiating and his granddaughters eulogizing for their PaPa.

The eldest of four children he was born September 20, 1933 at Caddo, Oklahoma to Russell and Gail McCreary.

His grandfather, Mose Downing, was a very proud Chickasaw.

Mr. McCreary is a 1951 graduate of Dundee High School and was active on the football, basketball and track teams.

He attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University on a football scholarship. He met Sue Harper, at college and they were married August 21, 1954 and celebrated their 70th anniversary in

2024. The couple had two sons, Dickie and Greg.

Greg's wife, Glenda, and twin daughters, Jennifer and Jordan brought much joy to his life.

Mr. McCreary worked for Continental Oil Company before becoming self-employed as an oil jobbeer. He loved to hunt, fish and attend sports events. He was very involved at Grace Temple Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Sue; sons, Dickie and Greg and his wife, Glenda and their daughters, Jennifer and Jordan; and brother Harold McCreary.

His legacy is the many friends he made through the years. He was a good husband, a good father, and a great PaPa.

Larry "Bub" Seeley



Larry "Bub" Seeley, moved to Heaven at 4:45 p.m., November 27, 2024, at his home in Dickson, Oklahoma. Larry and his twin, Rhonda, were born February 25, 1951 to Ben and Viola Quinton Seeley at Sulphur, Oklahoma. He was a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation through grandparents as original enrollees. He attended school in Sulphur his entire life and graduated from there in 1969.

In high school he excelled in football and baseball and cooked part time at a local diner, Archie's Cafe. Archie put a new item on the menu named after Larry. It was a hamburger steak smothered in onions, cheese and brown gravy. He was so proud when they named it Bub's Special. After graduation he went to work for Sequoyah Carpet Mills.

He and his sisters were well known for singing at many churches, weddings, and funerals in Southern Oklahoma.

In March of 1974 he was hired at Uniroyal Tire Company in Ardmore where his badge number was 1680. He was proudly employed there for 36 years, 4 months and 12 days, retiring in 2010. He loved anything OU after his dad took him to his first football game when he was a young boy.

He met Sammie Jo Minyard at Uniroyal and they were married September 9, 1988, at Enville, Oklahoma. They established their first home in Enville before moving to Dickson in 1991.

He rededicated his life to Christ at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ardmore in 2017 being baptized there February 4, 2018. He sang in the choir, taught Bible Study when needed and was a member of the kitchen committee along with his wife. Him and Walter Grady formed a singing duo and sang at Emmanuel Baptist and other local churches.

He was affectionately known as Bub, Bubby, Squeeze Muffin, Dad, and Pop but his heart melted when he was called Papa!

He was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents William and Tula Quinton; paternal grandparents Walter and Mamie Tushkatombay Seeley; parents, Ben and Viola Seeley; sisters, Donna Bellefeuille and Sharon Sartors; a niece, Cris Bellefeuille; brothers-in-law, Russell Bellefeuille and Rick Priddy; and in-laws, Jim and Jereta Minyard.

He is survived by a twin sister, Rhonda "Suzy" Priddy, Sulphur; wife, Sammie Jo Seeley, of the home; daughter, Schelle Armstrong and husband, David, Sulphur; son, Shawn Seeley and wife, Katy, Lawton; son, Skip Seeley and wife Whitney, Sulphur;

daughter, Annie Morgan and husband Dylan, Dickson; 10 grandchildren, Logan, Marissa, Brianna, McKayla, Lexy, Jax, Courtney, Jagger, Hazel and Z.J.; one great-grandchild, Decklin; brothers and sisters-in-law, Buger and wife Deleta Minyard, Marietta, Deborah Stepp, Dickson, Nancy Minyard and Kent Porterfield, both of Burneyville, Chub and Candace Minyard, Marietta; Janet Taylor, Bristow.

Pall bearers were Shawn Seeley, Skip Seeley, David Miller, Deborah Stepp, Nancy Minyard, Derrick Priddy, Benji Sartors and Chuck Bellefeuille. Honorary bearers were Derrie Minyard, Verlon Duggan, Walter Grady, Morris Nalls, Buger Minyard, and Chub Minyard

Services were December 2 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ardmore. Donny Custar officiated and was assisted by David Miller.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

January 6, 2025
Present: Beth Alexander, Connie Barker, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Dr. Karen Goodnight, Lisa Impson, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood

Absent: Lisa Johnson-Billy

Financy Committee
January 1, 2025
Present: Charles Marris, Nancy Elliott, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

Absent: Lisa Johnson-Billy

January 13, 2025
Present: Nancy Elliott, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

Committee of the Whole Meeting

January 13, 2025
Present: Beth Alexander, Shana Tate Darter, Nancy Elliott, Lisa Impson, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker
Absent: Dr. Karen Goodnight

THE CHICKASAW NATION
SUMMER EBT
ChickasawNationHealth.net/SummerEBT

the Chickasaw Nation
 USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Summer EBT for Children is an initiative of the Chickasaw Nation. This material is based upon work supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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2025

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NOVEMBER 2024 MINUTES

CHICKASAW TRIBAL LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION
Legislative Building
Ada, Oklahoma
November 15, 2024

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, Lisa Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

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

Guest present: Loné Beasley

AGENDA ITEM #3 INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Toby Perkins.

AGENDA ITEM #4 READING OF MINUTES – October 18, 2024

A motion was made by Mr. Wood and seconded by Mrs. Alexander to approve the minutes of October 18, 2024.

Members voting yes: 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

13 yes votes

The motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2024 carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #5 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss

AGENDA ITEM #6 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(A) **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT** by Committee Chair Charles Marris

General Resolution Number 42-006 Approval of Development Budget Revision Records Information Management Building

This resolution approves the revision to the Development Budget for the Records Information Management Building in the amount of \$11,795,155. This project will consist of a 37,861 square foot single-story facility.

Originally purchased in 2002, the current Administrative Service Center warehouse has served as the primary location for the Chickasaw Nation's physical records for 20 years. Over time, the building has begun to deteriorate putting our physical records at risk of environment damage. The current facilities housing our physical historical and business records are not climate controlled, are in a flood plain, and have begun to leak increasing the risk of physical records being damaged or destroyed.

In addition, based on an analysis of trends of boxes received and destroyed over a 10-year period, it is estimated that it will take approximately 12,000 additional square feet to store our physical records over the next 10 years for records information management.

A motion was made by Mr. Perkins and seconded by Mrs. Alexander to approve GR42-006.

Members voting yes: 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

13 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-006 carried unanimously.

Mr. Marris concluded his report.

(B) **LAND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT** by Committee Chair Toby Perkins
General Resolution Number 42-005 Authorization and Approval of Grazing Lease 4200445032 (G09-2078) On Joint Tract in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma

This resolution approves Grazing Lease No. 4200445032 (G09-2078), for grazing purposes only, more particularly described as part of the E/2 SE/4 NW/4 SW/4 and the W/2 SW/4 NE/4 SW/4 lying north of road in Section 13, Township 6 North, Range 14 East, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma, containing 7.5 acres, more or less, in favor of CJ Winn. The proposed lease will be for a three (3) year term beginning September 1, 2024, and expiring on August 31, 2027, with a total rental payment of \$270.00. Of this amount, \$67.50 is owed to the Chickasaw Nation for the term of the lease. This lease was approved by the Choctaw Nation in Choctaw Nation Council Bill CB-78-24 on July 13, 2024. The lessee has requested to prepay all rentals in lieu of a performance bond.

A motion was made by Mr. Perkins and seconded by Mrs. Alexander to approve GR42-005.

Members voting yes: 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

13 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-005 carried unanimously.

Mr. Perkins concluded his report.

AGENDA ITEM #7 NEW BUSINESS (comments from citizens)

There was no new business to discuss or comments from citizens.

AGENDA ITEM #8 ADJOURNMENT

The Legislative Session adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Karen Goodnight, Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

Prepared by:

Doretta Sellers, Recording Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

DECEMBER 2024 MINUTES

CHICKASAW TRIBAL LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION
Legislative Building
Ada, Oklahoma
December 20, 2024

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 Johnson-Billy, Charles Marris, Dusk Monetathchi, Toby Perkins, Derrick Priddy, David Woerz, Scott Wood, Connie Barker

Member absent: Lisa Impson

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

Guest present: Justin Lofton

AGENDA ITEM #3 INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Mr. Perkins

AGENDA ITEM #4 READING OF MINUTES – November 15, 2024

A motion was made by Mrs. Alexander and seconded by Mr. Marris to table the minutes of November 15, 2024.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to table the minutes of November 15, 2024 carried unanimously.

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 42-001 Amendments to Title 8 of the Chickasaw Nation Code (Filing Fees)

This resolution amends Title 8 to update the provisions related to the Filing Fees for candidates applying for public office of the Nation.

A motion was made by Mr. Woerz and seconded by Mr. Wood to approve PR42-001.

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

11 yes votes

Member voting no: Lisa Johnson-Billy

1 no vote

The motion to approve PR42-001 carried.

Permanent Resolution Number 42-002 Amendments to Title 2 of the Chickasaw Nation Code (Chickasaw Honor Guard)

This resolution allows the Chickasaw Nation Honor Guard to operate as an Executive Department agency. The Chickasaw Honor Guard will be subject to Executive Department policies and procedures rather than being governed independently by separate by-laws.

A motion was made by Mr. Woerz and seconded by Mr. Priddy to approve PR42-002.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to approve PR42-002 carried unanimously.

Mr. Woerz concluded his report.

(B) **HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT** by Committee Chair Nancy Elliott

General Resolution Number 42-007 Application for Federal Grant Under the Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration Office of Tribal Transportation: Tribal Transportation Facility Bridge Program

This resolution approves the Chickasaw Nation's applications for the Tribal Transportation Facility Bridge Program by the U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration: Office of Tribal Transportation to cover costs associated with the bridge construction and rehabilitation projects located within the Chickasaw Nation.

A motion was made by Ms. Johnson-Billy and seconded by Mr. Perkins to approve GR42-007.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-007 carried unanimously.

General Resolution Number 42-008 Gubernatorial Appointment – Chickasaw Nation Election Secretary/Tribal Registrar (Jerri Martin)

This resolution approves Governor Bill Anoatubby's appointment of Ms. Jerri Martin as Election Secretary/Tribal Registrar.

A motion was made by Mr. Perkins and seconded by Mr. Monetathchi to approve GR42-008.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-008 carried unanimously.

General Resolution Number 42-009 Authorizing and Approving Setting Salary Scale (Election Secretary/Tribal Registrar)

This resolution establishes the salary scale for the Chickasaw Nation Election Secretary/Tribal Registrar.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood and seconded by Mr. Priddy to approve GR42-009.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-009 carried unanimously.

General Resolution Number 42-010 Gubernatorial Appointment – Chickasaw Nation Election Commission (Ms. Rose Jefferson)

This resolution approves Governor Bill Anoatubby's reappointment of Ms. Rose Jefferson to the Chickasaw Nation Election Commission as the Pontotoc District representative to fill a term of office ending on December 31, 2027.

A motion was made by Mr. Perkins and seconded by Mrs. Alexander to approve GR42-010.

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

12 yes votes

The motion to approve GR42-010 carried unanimously.

Ms. Elliott concluded report.

AGENDA ITEM #7 NEW BUSINESS (comments from citizens)

There was no new business to discuss or comments from citizens.

AGENDA ITEM #8 ADJOURNMENT

The Legislative Session adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Karen Goodnight, Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

Prepared by:

Doretta Sellers, Recording Secretary

Chickasaw Tribal Legislature

JANUARY 2025 RESOLUTIONS

General Resolution Number 42-011**Resolution Changing the Meeting Days for February 2025****Chickasaw Tribal Legislature****Explanation:**

This resolution changes the meeting days for the Chickasaw Tribal Legislature in February 2025, moving all dates up one week within the month.

Presented By: Legislative 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 42-012**Resolution Changing the Meeting Day for April 2025****Legislative Session****Explanation:**

This resolution changes the meeting day for the Regular Session of the Chickasaw Tribal Legislature in April 2025. The April Regular Session falls on Good Friday, which is a Chickasaw Nation scheduled Holiday; therefore, it is imperative the Legislative Session be held on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Presented By: Legislative 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 42-013**Approval of Development Budget Revision****Hina Chokma' Center****Explanation:**

This resolution approves the revision to the Development Budget for the Hina Chokma' Center in the amount of \$9,992,845. This project will consist of a 13,500 square foot single-story facility.

The current residential structure is 24 years old with a small, outdated structural layout which makes it difficult to meet increasing needs. The dormitory-style sleeping, and bathroom arrangement is problematic for delivery of best practices and creates infection prevention and control issues.

A new men's recovery center is critical due to the current aging facilities, and the continued surge in requests for services related to co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions. This project will provide a new and improved facility providing trauma informed care, treatment, and services to meet citizens needs and reduce continued costly repairs and maintenance of aging structures. Improved safety and quality of the physical environment where care, treatment and services are delivered will provide much needed private and semi-private space and other necessary amenities to support early recovery.

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



ELDERS CLOTHING GRANT

Chickasaw citizens age 60 or older can receive a \$250 grant for clothing purchases on a nonreloadable Visa card.

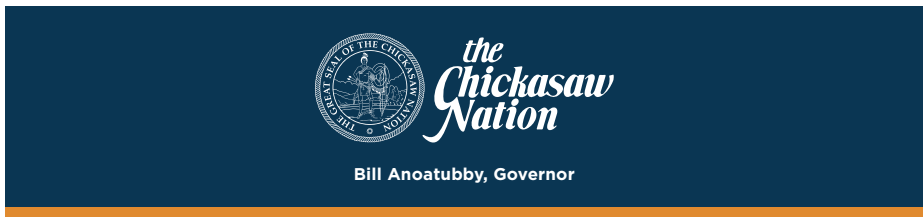
- Eligible clothing is purchased with a nonreloadable Visa card.
- Card is issued after application approval and is valid for 12 months.
- Elders can apply once per calendar year.

HOW TO APPLY:

Online: Visit Chickasaw.net/EldersClothingGrant to print and mail an application or submit an electronic form.

In Person: Visit the Chickasaw Nation Youth Services Division at 231 Seabrook Road in Ada, Oklahoma for a printed form.

Phone: Call (580) 310-6620 to apply over the phone.



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CALLING ALL FIRST AMERICAN ARTISTS

The 12th annual Artesian Arts Festival is accepting applications for First American artists through January 9, 2025! Secure your booth and a chance to win cash prizes in the art competition spanning 21 categories at this popular outdoor festival in downtown Sulphur.

Festival Date:
APRIL 5, 2025 | 10 A.M. - 6 P.M.

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CHICKASAW EXPLORERS

Archaeological Survey

..... May 23-June 7

Join the Chickasaw Explorers Program on a two-week journey excavating and learning in the historic Chickasaw Homeland. Participants will learn archaeological documentation techniques to recover artifacts and record data on a Chickasaw archaeological site.

APPLICATION DEADLINE MARCH 1, 2025
Travel and lodging expenses are provided. Availability is limited.
Open to Chickasaw high school and college students.

For eligibility information or to obtain an application, visit Chickasaw.net/ChickasawExplorers or contact the heritage preservation division at (580) 272-1379 or HeritagePreservationDivision@Chickasaw.net.

the Chickasaw Nation