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CHOCTAW NATION

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

February 2015 Issue

Tribal Council holds regular session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Jan. 10 at Tvshka Homma.

The Council unanimously approved two grant applications and a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs:

- An application to the U.S. Dept. of Justice for the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Tribal Youth Program: Project Hokli Nittak.
  - An application to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation for the Tribal Transit Program.
  - A cooperative agreement between the BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region and the Choctaw Nation for Wildland Fire Management – Non-recurring funds (based on reimbursements).
- In other business, the Council members offered various committee reports on subjects including Wilburton Head Start, McAlester Travel Plaza, Johnson O'Malley program, dental services, McAlester Health Clinic, Winding Stair Ranch, and housing.

Under new business, the Council discussed strategic planning meetings, ongoing litigation, and procedures for tribal citizens to address the Council.

The Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.

Over 18 years old? Don't forget to update your membership card

If you have recently turned 18 or will be turning 18 within the next 60 days and have not yet obtained your Adult Membership card please complete a new Tribal Membership application and return to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership Department. The application can be found online at [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) or by contacting the Tribal Membership office at (800) 522-6170 or (580) 924-8280.

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The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

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<http://www.choctawnation.com/news-room/biskinik-newspaper-archive/>



Agriculture Secretary visits Choctaw Nation

Thomas Vilsack meets with tribal officials on 1-year Promise Zone anniversary

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack toured the Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Center in Durant on Thursday as part of an overall progress report on the one-year anniversary of the tribe's designation as one of President Barack Obama's first Promise Zones.

Secretary Vilsack said the facility, which opened in June of 2014, was one of many Choctaw Nation initiatives aimed at improving the well being of low-income families while creating jobs and business opportunities.

"Whether a senior citizen on a fixed income or a family struggling, this is an opportunity for you to have access to nutritious food and sufficient quantity to take care of your family," Vilsack said after a tour of the facility led by Jerry Tonubbee, Choctaw Nation Director of Food Distribution. "What's nice about this particular facility is it gives people the opportunity to choose and feel like they are in a grocery store setting."

The Secretary also sampled some muffins made by Carmen Robertson, a tribal nutritionist and host of Cooking With Carmen, a Choctaw Nation-sponsored show that encourages healthy eating habits for food distribution program participants.

But the tour and taste testing were just a small part of Secretary Vilsack's visit to Durant on Thursday. He met with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., as well as several tribal leaders and regional leaders from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Choctaw Nation was the first tribal area to be designated under our Promise Zone Initiative," Vilsack said. "I wanted to get a reading on how well we've done over the last year. \$4.6 million has

been invested by a variety of federal agencies.

"I got a good sense today from leaders of the next steps in the process. Very, very great plans, hundreds of millions of dollars in potential investments that could take place, thousands of jobs that could be created—that's the promise of Promise Zones."

Secretary Vilsack and Chief Gary Batton met and discussed several items of interest to the Choctaw Nation.

"It was a great opportunity to visit with Secretary Vilsack on the progress of our Promise Zone initiatives," said Batton. "We've been successful in creating more jobs and are looking forward to implementing plans to continue improving the economic future of Southeast Oklahoma."

Sara-Jane Smallwood, Director of the Choctaw Nation Promise Zone Initiative, said the tribe was able to show its progress during the first year of the 10-year designation.

"The Secretary's visit is a historic way to mark the one-year anniversary of the Promise Zone," she said. "We were able to demonstrate the steps we have accomplished so far. With the Secretary and Chief Batton providing leadership and guidance, it will make a tremendous impact on southeast Oklahoma over the remaining nine years of the Promise Zone."

USDA officials in attendance of this meeting included Director of Tribal Relations Leslie Wheelock, NRCS State Conservationist Gary O'Neill, Rural Development State Director Ryan McMullen and Ouachita National Forest Supervisor Norm Wagner.

Secretary Vilsack said it was up to local leaders such as these to work with Choctaw Nation to implement the plans outlined in the tribal Promise Zone Initiative.

"There is a very aggressive plan here. The challenge now is to figure out: How do we make that vi-



Photo by Zach Maxwell

Chief Gary Batton shows U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack Choctaw memorabilia during his visit in February.

sion a reality, how do we invest in infrastructure," Secretary Vilsack said. "This is a Promise Zone that is really living up to its responsibilities of being bold and thinking big... This is all about figuring out how to extend paychecks, how to better prepare people for great jobs in the future and how to build those jobs here today. That's the president's vision, and after seeing what I saw here today, I'm pretty sure that's the vision of the Choctaw Nation as well."

Nation to hold town hall meetings on Affordable Care Act

By SHERRIE VARNER

Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation will hold outreach and educational events on the Affordable Care Act beginning in March.

President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law on March 23, 2010. The law mandates every American have health insurance beginning January 1, 2014, or face a new IRS health tax (penalty). Beginning in 2014, the penalty will be either 1 percent of income or \$95 per adult (\$47.50 per child) whichever is higher when a taxpayer files their federal income taxes. Starting in 2015, having no health insurance coverage will lead to a penalty of either 2 percent of income or \$325 per adult (\$162.50 per child), whichever is higher. The penalty will go up each year for those who continue to be without health insurance.

Native Americans qualify for many special benefits under this new law, such as no open enrollment limitations, no deductible, and co-insurance for those with lower incomes plus being able to enroll in affordable insurance coverage locally with the assistance of trained certified Choctaw Nation staff. This health coverage is low cost and for some individuals, it could even be free.

If insurance coverage is not wanted or needed, individuals will still need to take steps and complete a Native American Exemption form to prevent future IRS health tax penalties. The Choctaw Nation will have staff available to assist in completing these forms for individual taxpayers and their families.

Choctaw Nation will provide a detailed presentation to our tribal members regarding the Affordable Care Act law and how it affects tribal citizens. Following the presentations, certified staff will be available to answer one-on-one

questions regarding the varied insurance plans available and the costs associated with getting coverage. Enrollment will also be available on-site. Staff will also be able to assist in completing the Native American Exemption forms for those opting out of insurance coverage.

For those interested in learning about health coverage, the following items are required to complete the process:

- Names, birth dates, and Social Security numbers of those needing insurance,
- Home and/or mailing addresses for all needing coverage,
- Annual income for 2015 and employment information (W2 forms, prior federal income tax return), and
- CDIB and Tribal Membership cards (or other supporting documentation to prove Native American descendency).

The Town Hall Meetings will be held in March at the following locations:

<b>Durant Choctaw Nation Community Bldg.</b>	<b>March 12</b>
2750 Big Lots Parkway	5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
<b>Poteau Choctaw Nation Community Bldg.</b>	<b>March 16</b>
208 B Street (behind the Rubin White Indian Clinic)	5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
<b>Idabel Choctaw Nation Community Bldg.</b>	<b>March 24</b>
2408 E. Lincoln Road	5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
<b>McAlester Choctaw Nation Community Bldg.</b>	<b>March 26</b>
1632 S George Nigh Expressway	5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Light snacks will be provided, and there will be door prize drawings. For more information, please contact a Benefits Coordinator at any of the Choctaw Nation health care facilities.

Chili's, jobs on their way to Choctaw Country in 2015

By SARAH ORO

Choctaw Nation

Residents of Atoka and Poteau will soon be able to enjoy a casual lunch or a night on the town at Chili's® Grill & Bar. The development of the two Chili's restaurants will be the newest additions to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Franchise Division.

The restaurants will bring a new dining option to communities in central Atoka County and north central LeFlore County, as well as for those traveling through these areas. Both Chili's will be built adjacent to the existing Choctaw Nation Travel

Plaza and Casino Too's, located at Highway 69/75 and Highway 3 in Atoka and at the junction of Highway 271 and Highway 112 in Poteau.

"We are excited to bring a popular, nationally recognized restaurant brand of Chili's caliber to these two towns. Even more importantly though, we are thrilled with the jobs these two restaurants will create for the areas' residents," said Choctaw Nation's Chief Gary Batton.

The Atoka location will provide 40 jobs and will be the first casual dining restaurant brand with a national footprint in Atoka. The Poteau restaurant will also provide 40 jobs to the surrounding area.

Construction for the Poteau location is set to start this month and the restaurant is expected to open in August 2015. Construction is scheduled to begin March 2015 for the Atoka restaurant, which has an expected completion date of October 2015.

Chili's® Grill & Bar is the flagship brand of Dallas-based Brinker International, Inc. (NYSE: EAT), a recognized leader in casual dining. Chili's offers a variety of Southwestern-inspired, classic American favorites at more than 1,550 locations in 30 countries and two territories. In addition to Chili's, Brinker owns and operates Maggiano's Little Italy®.



Photo Provided



# FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE

## Giving back to our elders



Our elders are priceless to us as a family and as a tribe. They have been down roads and faced challenges many of us have yet to encounter.

The Choctaw people have handed down stories of the Trail of Tears and overcoming adversity to survive. Each generation has faced new problems and through the wisdom of our elders we learn how to climb every mountain.

I am thankful for the chance to visit with Chahta elders everywhere I go and enjoy hearing about their experiences and their ideas of what would benefit the Nation.

A new programs and services brochure with updated information will be mailed to tribal members this month. Over 100 programs are outlined including many to assist our senior citizens, standing for them as they have stood for us.

One of the most important issues is the health of our elders. The prevalence of diabetes in Native Americans remains high. It's close to home for me because both my brother and sister have diabetes.

The Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center and clinics provide information on preventing Type 2 and managing Type 1 diabetes and complications related to the disease. Each visit to the Diabetes Wellness Center in Talihina includes foot exams, weight and vitals checks, and a general physical exam. Even if you have diabetes in your family, following a healthy diet and increasing exercise can help prevent Type 2. The Diabetes Wellness Center provides a diabetic education program accredited through the American Association of Diabetes Educators along with nutrition screenings.

The Food Distribution Program also shares nutrition information and has a wonderful cook, Carmen Robertson. Her magic transformation of healthy ingredients into great meals is well-known in the Choctaw Nation. The newer market-style centers are equipped with kitchens and Carmen gives cooking demonstrations in each one every month. The schedule is printed in the Biskinik so the Food Distribution participants can attend.

The Senior Nutrition Program is the foundation for meals, transportation, information and group activities for Native Americans over 55 at our community centers. Attending lunch at one of the community centers on Wednesdays is my favorite part of the week! Thank you all for your warm welcomes. The centers aren't only for gathering for lunch. Active groups of seniors form exercise groups, language classes, arts and crafts classes, and travel to events. I don't know if I could keep up with them!

The Health Services' Going Lean project helps both the seniors and local farmers. It is becoming more common to see tables of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at the community centers during the summer. The produce can be bought or eligible seniors can receive vouchers through Going Lean to trade for the fresh food.

There are many more services such as Elder Advocacy, the Eyeglasses, Dentures and Hearing Aid Program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, Community Health Representatives, the Storm Shelter Program, and the Independent Living communities for elders.

Our elders are very important to us and I appreciate the efforts made to show them the care and respect they have earned.

## Choctaw businesses growing



The Choctaw Nation did a soft launch of the Preferred Supplier Program shortly after Labor Day in 2014. The new program, designed to promote and develop established and up-and-coming Choctaw-owned business, has been a big success. It is actually soaring into this new year.

The concept is easy – as a Choctaw-owned business becomes registered within the Preferred Supplier Program the entire Choctaw Nation will be able to access its business information. We sometimes refer to it as the “Angie’s List” of the Choctaw Nation. The success of Angie’s List assistance in finding reputable and quality businesses for services and goods is famous around the world. The Preferred Supplier Program is earning the same reputation in the Choctaw Nation.

There are currently more than 200 registered suppliers in 39 business categories on the Choctaw Nation’s Preferred Supplier list. The Choctaw Nation and Chickasaw Nation began working together this month to qualify Choctaw-owned suppliers and vendors within each of the tribes’ respective programs. The Preferred Supplier list can also be used externally by tribal members with businesses when they are searching for suppliers for sub-contracting or direct procurement.

Verified businesses are made available to all the departments in the Choctaw Nation. If a particular product or service is needed you simply visit the website [preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com](http://preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com) and select from the certified vendors. We are registering new businesses daily, not only here in Oklahoma but nationally as well. This program was designed to help all of our Choctaw businesses far and wide.

Internally it makes shopping for a supplier or vendor easy for departments seeking a service or product. The interaction between our departments and the program have been extremely exciting and profitable for participating Choctaw members. If a Choctaw-owned business has the capability to meet the scope of work required, we want that business to have the opportunity.

The program recognizes and supports entrepreneurial efforts and we’ve been proud to share many of the success stories in the Biskinik. Some of the Choctaw-owned businesses highlighted include Studio 23 Photography, Common Roots and Dottie’s Children’s Boutique, all owned by the Lloyd family in McAlester. The Hamilton family from Coleman, Oklahoma, produces Achukma, a pure pecan oil. Choctaw sisters Cathy Nutt of Missouri and Pat Prigmore of Oklahoma are partners in Haughty Mae’s Chocolate, packaging and selling chocolate gravy mixes. There’s a recipe for chocolate pie, too!

Codi and Icy Conn own an insulation company in Caddo—Blow ‘Em Tight. The idea for the business grew from a need to insulate buildings like barns, shops and houses, and they are now working with Preferred Supplier Program.

And these are just a few of the successes. There are many more.

The growth of this program is amazing. It is a huge step in identifying Choctaw entrepreneurs, supporting their efforts and increasing economic opportunities.

## Chaplain’s Corner Christian Choices



**Rev. Bertram Bobb  
Tribal Chaplain**

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Today, the Church has all but lost its emphasis on this wonderful truth of the second coming of Christ which is so clearly taught in the New Testament. The Church is most effective when she lives in expectancy looking for the return of Jesus. Many of the teachings and parables of the Lord Jesus were about His return to earth.

The entire 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew are devoted to the Lord Jesus teaching on His second coming. There are so many lessons of the coming again of Christ it would be impossible to cover, even a small part of it. But we do want to look into the 25th chapter of Matthew. In this chapter the Lord Jesus gave the parable of the ten virgins. Notice, this takes place at night. The Bible teaches that moral and spiritual darkness will be in general existence as Christ’s return draws near.

The world surely is in darkness and the only light shining upon the darkness of the world comes from the Christian.

Jesus said: “I am the light of the world,” And He said to His disciples: “Ye are the light of the world,” The Christian is the means through which Christ, the light of the world shines out upon the world’s darkness. You, as a Christian, therefore are a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ in the world today.

As we read the Old Testament we are amazed at the blindness of Israel. The prophets of God would warn them time after time of the coming danger. These people not only mocked the prophets but in many cases they killed them for speaking the truth.

Their ears were so dull and dead that they did not want to hear the truth. Don’t you think it is about the same today?

Today when we warn people of coming judgment and the soon return of Christ; many mock and sneer and say, even as Peter wrote: “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of.”

Notice the Scripture says that they are not blind because of ignorance but are blind because they are willingly blind. Too many would rather enjoy the amusements and pleasures for a season than to meet the moral requirements of God through Jesus Christ. Many preachers today, compromise or deny the truth of Christ’s Second Coming with the program of the Church to build a one world church, they do this in order not to miss that salary check. Listen, the church here on this earth is not going to bring in the kingdom. When Jesus Christ comes back, He will set up His Kingdom.

First there will be the rapture of the born again Christians.

Those who have trusted Jesus Christ and Him alone as their personal Savior. The Christians on earth will meet the Lord in the air, the dead in Christ first then we which are alive.

Then after a period of seven years of tribulation when God pours out His wrath on this earth, Jesus will return to set up His Kingdom for a thousand years. After the 1,000 years of peace here on this earth then God’s Great White Throne Judgment will be set up, this is where the unbelievers will be judged and with Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, into a lake of eternal fire and brimstone, to burn forever and ever.

The parable of the ten virgins in the 25th chapter of Matthew reveals several truths regarding Christ’s return.

These virgins, or bridesmaids, in part at least, represent the Church. The Church is the bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom.

First, they all took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. What a picture of what a Christian should be - clean, holding high their lamps before the world, and looking for the bridegroom. Is your lamp shining for the Lord Jesus Christ? We are taught in the Bible, not to hide our candle under a bushel basket. Don’t extinguish it or let it blow out by being so occupied by the things of the world. If the world has ever needed the glow of the Christian testimony, it is now.

Secondly, there is a difference in their preparation. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. They who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Notice that they were all alike. All ten of them, five foolish and five wise. They were all bridemaids, they were all to meet the bridegroom their future husbands, and they all had lamps.

We see a lesson in this, if what we are doesn’t match what we seem to be, our profession is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. If you had seen these ten bridesmaids walking down the road together, you could not have detected the difference.

But there was a difference. A great difference. Outwardly they were identical. They were the same to the eye but not the heart.

There thousands of professing Christians whose relationship to Christ is all on the outside. They serve Christ with their lips but their hearts are far from Him. There is no oil in their lamps. I ask you today, have you taken time to put oil in your lamp? Is there any depth to your prayer life? Is there any depth to your Bible study? Is there any depth to your witnessing for Christ? Unless emptied of self and filled with the Spirit will you be effective. I ask again, is your lamp shining for the Lord Jesus Christ? At midnight there was a cry made, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.”

The five foolish bridesmaids were rejected.

Yes, Jesus Christ is coming soon. And the only way you can be ready to meet Him is to trust Him and Him alone as your personal Savior. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. You can trust Jesus as your personal Savior by faith today. Pray for America.

Pray for our brave men and women in our armed forces.

## Spotlight on Elders with Jerry and Shirley Lowman

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation

Jerry and Shirley Lowman have dedicated much of their lives to Choctaw traditional music, dancing and artistry.

Some of this happened by chance and some by design. Both were raised in isolated, woodland communities in northern McCurtain County, mostly after World War II. Both spoke only Choctaw until entering nearby grade schools.

They met in high school, married soon thereafter and built a hardscrabble existence in the Smithville area. The isolation kept families – and long-standing traditional life ways – intact in the wooded hills near the Arkansas border.

As young adults in the 1970s, they could see some of the activities that made a distinctive Choctaw culture were fading from the Oklahoma landscape. As other native nations enjoyed a cultural renaissance in the wake of “Wounded Knee ’73,” the Lowmans joined a determined group of Choctaws



Photo by Pollaro Video

a silversmith allows him to create rings and key chains in themes both ancient (such as stickball) and modern (such as the OKC Thunder logo).

The Lowmans’ special contribution to Choctaw chanting and dancing goes back more than 40 years with some trips to learn from our Mississippi kin. These efforts earned them an invitation to lead tribal dances on the capitol grounds at Tvshka Homma this past Labor Day.

“When (Choctaw language instructor Teresa Billy) asked us to chant at Tvshka Homma, we felt so honored,” Shirley said. This honored couple was featured as Febru-

Jerry grew up in the Watson and Buffalo areas, as well as several years in western Oklahoma before returning home at age 18 upon the passing of his grandmother. Shirley was born “at home” into the Ludlow family in the community of the same name.

Both describe an upbringing of hard work, rural isolation and a struggle to adapt to English-speaking classmates and teachers. Shirley’s parents, including mother Minnie (Bonds) Ludlow from Bethel, had 11 children but no electricity until Shirley was grown.

Jerry’s mother was a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, but his vivid memories of childhood centered on his grandparents. “(Grandma) used to wear an apron all the time,” he said. “And she would go barefooted. She would never wear shoes. Maybe when she went to church but when she went to town, she went barefooted.”

Jerry worked at a pallet company, chicken processing plant and U.S. Mortar but settled on working the nearby “log woods” until 1998. Shirley and her family would travel to Texas to “pull cotton” or, closer to home they would find work “peeling poles.”

cont’d on page 10



Photo by Will T. Nelson

**The Lowmans (far right) pictured with a group of traditional Choctaw dancers 1977.**

in keeping tribal music and dancing alive.

Both also participate in various forms of native expression. For Shirley, it’s in the form of beadwork. And for Jerry, his work as

ary “Choctaw valentines” in the 2015 calendar, in a photo of them in full traditional attire from the same event.

The Lowmans will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this June.

### Attention Tribal Members

Would you like your name and address released to candidates who run for Chief and Council?

You will be receiving an Address Release Form in the mail next month from Automated Election Services based in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Please mark your choice “yes” or “no” whether to release your address, and return the form in the pre-paid postage envelope provided with the mailing. The form must be returned by mail.

No phone calls will be accepted in lieu of mailed form.



# BUSINESS

## Five Tribes hold quarterly Inter-Tribal Council

By **BRANDON FRYE**  
Choctaw Nation

Representatives from the Choctaw Nation—including Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Tribal Council Members, and employees from many departments—attended the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes in Broken Arrow from Jan. 8-9.

The Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations comprise the five tribes of the Inter-Tribal Council. These Nations, which represent over 500,000 Indian people throughout the United States, meet four times a year to discuss important issues facing their people, learn from each other’s successes, as well as cooperate on current and future projects.

Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, George Tiger, is the current President of the Inter-Tribal Council. His tribe hosted this most recent meeting.

During the first day of the event, tribal members attended an assortment of work group meetings on topics ranging from language, governance, and information technology to reintegration, education, and employment. Leaders and officials also gathered to discuss and address the most pressing issues common among the tribes.

The event ended with the Inter-Tribal Council General

Session on Friday, Jan. 9. The general session started with speeches from the leaders of each tribe. Chief Batton addressed the Choctaw Nation’s recent progress and future development. He discussed building a new independent living center in Stigler, reclaiming the Choctaw land base with recent 650 and 42,000 acre acquisitions, plans to begin programs meant to assist individuals just outside of the current financial guidelines, building a new food distribution center in Broken Bow, funding more housing repairs, building two new wellness centers in McAlester and Wilburton as well as new head start centers in McAlester and Bethel, and the Nation’s creating nearly 1,000 new jobs in the new year.

Guests from Haskell Indian Nations University, Indian Health Services, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs spent some time in front of the microphone, after the Chiefs and Governors.

Ultimately, the Inter-Tribal Council held open deliberation on proposed resolutions. Leaderships from the tribes discussed these resolutions during the Executive Council Meeting, prior to their presentation at the general session. The purpose of this final general session was to publically decide what to do in regard to each resolution: pass, reject, or table for further deliberation.



Photo by Brandon Frye

(Left to right) Governor of the Chickasaw Nation Bill Anoatubby, Principal Chief of the Seminole Nation Leonard M. Harjo, Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation George Tiger, Deputy Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation S. Joe Crittenden, and Chief of the Choctaw Nation Gary Batton.

Water rights, the expansion of self-governance, federal land law reform, Native American housing, recognition of tribal domestic violence programs, food assistance, juvenile affairs, and forest and national park services were all topics impacted by the support of the Inter-Tribal Council.

## ‘Indianpreneurship’ helps to prepare Choctaw business owners

Three departments with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO)—The Native American Resource Center, Business Development, and Marketing—held a free Native American entrepreneurial empowerment training workshop called Indianpreneurship in Durant, Okla. from Jan. 20-21.

Rural Enterprises Incorporated, known as REI Oklahoma, and Our Native American Business Network (ONABEN), partnered with CNO

to provide the workshop, meant to inform Native American business owners of vital concepts for anyone starting up or running a small business.

The classes and workshops were based on ONABEN’s curriculum. ONABEN pursues the mission of supporting indigenous individuals by increasing opportunities for sustainable economic growth through culturally relevant entrepreneurial training and organizational develop-

ment. REI Oklahoma is an organization that helps Oklahomans expand their businesses, and they hosted the event at their Durant location.

Contacts from CNO taught classes and were available to assist with the needs of over 30 Native business owners, including Choctaw entrepreneurs and artists. Billy Hamilton, Small Business Services Manager with Business Development, covered the practicalities of owning and running a personal business, like managing loans and credit scores.

Verree Shaw, Director of Marketing, focused the group on learning to break even with a business when just beginning.

“We covered topics such as: Is entrepreneurship right for me? How do I put together a financial statement and why should I? How do I to prepare to seek financing?” Jill Reyna, Native American Business Resource Coordinator, said. “Our goal was to create a comfortable environment for them to explore the validity of their business concepts in light of the marketplace, as well as their own readiness for the challenges of self-employment.”

Business planning, access to capital, basic bookkeeping, human



Billy Hamilton and Jill Reyna teach a group of Native American business people at the entrepreneurial empowerment training workshop “Indianpreneurship.”

resources, problem solving, and marketing a small business were also topics covered during the two-day event.

“In a room of over 30 people, I learned many things I wouldn’t have thought to ask about owning or starting a business,” Choctaw artist, Christian McGowan, said. “This workshop focused on stepping stones towards functioning with budgets and financial services. Everything I take from this two-day event, I hope to utilize for my future business with art.”

Cassidy Gilmore, Native American Business Resource Center

Coordinator for REI Oklahoma, said the training recommended a realistic view of starting a business. “The break even analysis activity really helped with understanding the pre-planning that needs to take place,” she said.

The event received a positive response from participants, and there are plans to host similar workshops in the future, according to Reyna. “Many will now continue their journey into entrepreneurship with the help of the one or more of the departments within the Choctaw Nation that assist small businesses,” she said.



Wood carvings and pencil drawings made by Choctaw artists on display around the classroom of the business workshop.

**Homebuyer Education Class**

**ARE YOU READY TO PURCHASE A NEW HOME?**

*FIRST TIME HOME BUYER? NOT SURE WHERE TO START? NOT SURE ABOUT YOUR CREDIT?*

COME TO OUR HOMEBUYER CLASS TO LEARN THE IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE HOME BUYING PROCESS. WE MAKE THE PROCESS FUN AND EDUCATIONAL. CALL TODAY TO REGISTER

Carrie Blackmon, Homebuyer Education Counselor 1-800-235-3087 ext. 318

WHEN: MARCH 12, 2015

WHERE: MCALESTER COMMUNITY CENTER

TIME: 4:30-7:30

WHEN: MARCH 26, 2015

WHERE: DURANT INDEPENDENT ELDERLY COMMUNITY CENTER

TIME: 4:30-7:30

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA  
HOME FINANCE DEPARTMENT  
P.O. BOX G  
Hugo, Oklahoma 74743

MEET THE ARTIST

**Chester Cowen**  
Beadwork Artist

Tuesday, March 3 2015  
1p.m. - 5p.m.  
Choctaw Welcome Center  
1882 Hwy 69/75  
Colbert, OK 74733  
580-296-2672

CHOCTAW NATION  
**SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

The CSBDS provides business assistance to Choctaw tribal entrepreneurs that want to start or expand their business.

Choctaw Tribal members that utilize the services will receive specialized technical assistance through one-on-one business counseling, training workshops, an extensive network of business assistance programs and educational networking opportunities. Assistance offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Planning
- Business Counseling
- Business Registration

- Access to Financing
- 8(a) Certification Assistance
- Minority Business Registration

- Marketing
- Business Taxes
- Bid Assistance

**February Events Calendar:**  
(Please contact CSBDS for more details and to register)  
March 5th – Durant – Small Business Training  
March 12th – Atoka – Small Business Training  
March 26th – Durant – Oklahoma Tax Workshop

Other training opportunities available in McAlester and Idabel. Please contact us for dates and information.

Contact Billy Hamilton, Small Business Development Services Manager today!

bhamilton@choctawnation.com or 580-924-8280 ext.2901

You are cordially invited to attend . . .

**The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s Legal Assistance Events**

Samantha Guinn, a licensed attorney, will be available to provide assistance with simple legal documents. This service is **free** to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters she may be able to assist with are:

- Family law (adoption, divorces, custody, child support)
- Drafting a simple will, power of attorney, or living will
- Contracts and leases

March Community Center Schedule

- 3/5 Hugo (at the field office)
- 3/12 Spiro
- 3/19 Crowder
- 3/26 Broken Bow

April Community Center Schedule

- 4/2 at Bethel
- 4/9 at Smithville
- 4/16 at Coalgate
- 4/23 at Wright City
- 4/30 at Atoka

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Please call ahead during winter months to confirm events have not been canceled due to inclement weather. Currently we are not providing representation in court or assisting in criminal matters.

Our Elders are our culture. They are our teachers, the links to our past and the inspiration for the future. The Choctaw Nation has several programs to provide opportunities for Choctaw elders, including the ones listed below.

**ELDERS**

INDEPENDENT ELDERS RENTAL PROPERTIES

COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE (CHR)

HOMEOWNERS SUBSTANTIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

STORM SHELTER SERVICES

ELDER ADVOCACY PROGRAM

HEALTHY AGING

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

GERIATRIC CLINIC

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

EYEGLASSES, DENTURE AND HEARING AIDS (EDH)

SENIOR NUTRITION

SILVER SNEAKERS

CAREGIVERS

OUTREACH SERVICES

HEALTH SERVICES

DIABETIC WELLNESS CENTERS

**WELLNESS CENTERS:**

Atoka: 580.889.1981

BrokenBow: 580.584.2740

Durant: 580.931.8643

Hugo: 580.326.9422

Idabel: 580.283.7381

Talihina: 800.249.7026

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
choctawnation.com  
800.522.6170

**JOB CONNECT**

Do you know someone looking for a job at the Choctaw Nation? Need guidance on future career planning? Want help with educational goals from GED to college? Would like assistance on where to start a successful career?

We want to meet you are our Job Connect events.

The Choctaw Nation’s Job Connect is a set of informational events for finding jobs, career planning, educational support and financial help. Representatives from Human Resources, Career Development, Educational Services and WIA will sit with you to point you to employment opportunities within the Choctaw Nation. Each representative can answer your questions, provide you with resources or give you advice that fits your specific individual aspirations.

For your convenience, Job Connect events are scheduled at each Community Center over the next four months. Join us between 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM to meet at any of the following Community Centers.

**Hugo**

**Idabel**

**Wright City**

**Broken Bow**

**Bethal**

**Smithville**

**Wilburton**

**Crowder**

**Talihina**

**Spiro**

**Stigler**

**Poteau**

**McAlester**

**Antlers**

**Thursday, February 26, 2015**

**Tuesday, March 03, 2015**

**Friday, March 13, 2015**

**Thursday, March 19, 2015**

**Thursday, March 26, 2015**

**Thursday, April 02, 2015**

**Thursday, April 07, 2015**

**Tuesday, April 14, 2015**

**Tuesday, April 21, 2015**

**Tuesday, April 28, 2015**

**Thursday, May 07, 2015**

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**

**Tuesday, May 19, 2015**

**Thursday, May 21, 2015**

For additional information, please contact Ms. Cynthia Mose, Job Connect Project Leader at 580 924-8280 x2189. See you there!



# HEALTH

## Foundation bolsters commitment to fighting childhood obesity

By ERIN ADAMS

Choctaw Nation  
Halito. February is American Heart Month. Please take a moment to read this interesting blog from the American Heart Association.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted solely to the public’s health, announced a \$500 million commitment to help all kids achieve a healthy weight, focusing on people and places hardest hit by obesity.

About one in three American kids and teens is overweight or obese, according to the American Heart Association. Many of those children struggle with high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and elevated blood cholesterol levels. In addition, excess weight at a young age has been linked to earlier death rates in adulthood.

The foundation said it will commit \$500 million over the next 10 years to expand efforts to help more children grow up at a healthy weight. This builds on a \$500 million commitment made in 2007.

“By 2025, we want to ensure that children in America grow up at a

healthy weight, no matter who they are or where they live,” said RWJF President and CEO Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D. “We have made substantial progress, but there is far more to do and we can’t stop now. We all have a role to play in our homes, schools and neighborhoods to ensure that all kids have healthy food and safe places to play.”



With the new commitment, the foundation will support strategies to ensure that children enter kindergarten at a healthy weight. Other focus areas include making healthy school environments the norm, advocating for youth to get more physical activity, making healthy foods and beverages affordable and accessible, and eliminating the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages

in children 5 years of age and under. AHA CEO Nancy Brown said the foundation’s plans will help more children live, learn and play in healthier environments.

“Our organizations are fortunate to have a decades-long partnership in devoting resources that align to advance research, shift individual behaviors and social norms, and advocate for change so that all people can live healthier lives,” she said.

Nationally, childhood obesity rates have begun to level off, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC also released data last year showing rates may be decreasing among the nation’s youngest children.

But these initial reports of declines follow decades of increases, according to the RWJF. And more than one-third of young people are overweight or obese.

The foundation plans to intensify its focus on areas hardest hit by obesity. It said it will work to help eliminate disparities that contribute to higher obesity rates among children of color and those living in poverty.

## NURSERY NEWS

### Claira Iva Thomas

Janie and Petre Thomas would like to make the wonderful announcement of their baby girl Claira Iva Thomas. She was born Jan. 6, 2015, at 12:54 p.m. in Tupelo, Miss., at North Mississippi Women’s Center. She has brown hair and blue eyes. Grandparents are James New and Kathy Thomas and Doug Thomas. The great-grandparents are Dwight Mayo, Helen Malone, Carolyn New, Jerry New, Donald Thomas, Phillis Thomas, Patricia Vesper and Carol Vesper.



### Peter Robert Wieland II

Anthony and Rachael Wieland are the proud parents of a baby boy. Peter Robert Wieland II was born at 2:15 a.m. on Nov. 7, 2014, at home in Glorieta, N.M. He weighed 7 pounds 10 ounces, and was 20 ½ inches long. His parents are Anthony and Rachael Wieland of Glorieta. His grandparents are Dianne Allen of Austin, Texas, and George and Jackie Allen of San Angelo, Texas.



### Jacob Benjamin Doyle

Lawrance and Christy Doyle are happy to announce the birth of their son, Jacob Benjamin Doyle. He was born at 8:51 a.m. on Sept. 17, 2014, at W.W. Hastings Indian Hospital in Tahlequah. At birth he weighed 7 pounds 10 ounces, and was 20 inches long. His two brothers, Lawrance II and Amaziah love their new baby brother. Grandparents are Jamee and Leon Page of Jay, Richard Doyle of Sulphur Springs, Ark., and great-grandpa James Turnbull of Maysville.



### Jett Thomas Eakens

Parents Chris and Charity (Hull) Eakens along with siblings McKinley (10) and Walker (4) are proud to announce the arrival of Jett Thomas Eakens. Jett was born in Ada at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27, 2014, at 12:41 p.m. Jett weighed 7 pounds and 4 ounces, and was 19 3/4 inches long. Proud grandparents are David and Faye Hull of McAlester and Bob and Arlene Eakens of Ada. Great-grandparents are JT and Zoe Hobbs and Rufus Hull of McAlester. He is also the cousin of Kason Hull (7) and Kooper Hull (4) of McAlester.



### Caleb Josiah Carr

Hannah (Ferrell) and Brian Carr of Covington, Wash., are proud to announce the birth of their son Caleb Josiah Carr. Caleb was born on Nov. 16, 2014, at 6:45 p.m. at Overlake Hospital in Bellevue, Wash. Caleb was born weighing 6 pounds, 7 ounces, and was 19 inches long. Excited grandparents reside in Puyallup, Wash., and Castro Valley, Calif., great-grandparents reside in Washington and California and great-great-grandmother resides in Castro Valley. Announcing the birth of Caleb is our pride and joy as he is the 5th generation of our Choctaw family!



### Mia Grace Trueblood

Mia Grace Trueblood was born Nov. 16, 2014, 7 pounds 12 ounces to Josie Vasquez and Nathan Trueblood of Temple, Texas. Maternal grandparents are Marinella and Francisco Vasquez Jr. of Belton, Texas. Paternal grandparents are Shelia Willis-Reeves of Temple and Dave Trueblood of Belton. Great paternal grandparents are Helen Willis of Temple and the late Emerson Benton Willis.



### Recipe of the Month



#### Kid-Friendly Hawaiian Chicken Kebabs with Brown Rice

Simple Cooking with Heart helps you travel to the islands with this recipe. Kids can help make them and because they’ll be in the kitchen where all the action is, they’re probably going to be excited to eat them, too.

##### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts (at least 36 pieces)
- 2 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 20 oz. canned, unsweetened juice from pineapple chunks can
- 2 clove fresh garlic
- 1 tsp. jarred, minced garlic
- non-stick cooking spray
- 36 pineapple chunks
- 2 fresh, chopped bell peppers (chopped into 36 pieces)
- 1 pint grape tomatoes or cherry tomatoes
- 12-15 wooden skewers
- 2 cup brown rice
- 2 8.8- oz. packaged, cooked brown rice

##### Directions:

1. Marinade - In a plastic bag, add chicken chunks. Have kids add soy sauce, 1 cup pineapple juice, and garlic into the plastic bag. Seal and let chicken marinate in the fridge for about 15 minutes.
2. Assemble Chicken Kebabs - Preheat oven to 400° F. Take chicken out of marinade and place in a bowl. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. Have kids wash bell peppers and tomatoes before chopping peppers. For kid-friendly assembly, place the pineapple, chopped peppers, and tomatoes in 3 separate bowls. Let kids add 1 tomato to the bottom of 1 skewer. Top with pineapple, chicken and bell pepper 3 times, letting kids add everything but the raw chicken. Let kids add 1 more tomato to top. Repeat with the rest of skewers. After 12 skewers are made (and all the chicken has been used), have kids make their own skewers with any remaining pieces.
3. Cook & Serve - Cook kabobs in oven until chicken is cooked, about 15 minutes. Serve with rice.

##### Nutrition Facts

Per Serving:  
• 306 Calories 342 mg Sodium \$3.09 Per Serving

##### Additional Information

**Cooking Tips:** Pineapples have an enzyme called bromelain that helps to make meat tender, making pineapple juice an excellent quick marinade. **Keep it Healthy:** Skewering pieces of meat, vegetables, and fruit for dinner makes it fun for kids to eat, along with a having a meal with a quick cooking time.

**Cooking Tips:** Grape tomatoes are smaller than cherry tomatoes, so more will fit in a pint container. If using grape tomatoes, there will be enough tomatoes to add 4 grape tomatoes per skewer. If using cherry tomatoes, just stick with 2 per skewer.

**Safety Tips:** You can also cook these on the grill but first, you would need to soak the wooden skewers in cold water to prevent them from catching on fire.

I hope you will enjoy this recipe! For more information you may contact Erin Adams, RD, Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 x-6959.

### Choctaw Nation WIC



#### WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN

Site	Hours	Days
Antlers (580) 298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tues.
Atoka (580) 889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.
Bethel (580) 241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tues.
Boswell (580) 380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Fri.
Broken Bow (580) 584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs
Coalgate (580) 927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.
Durant (580) 924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo (580) 326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel (580) 286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thur., & Fri.
McAlester (918) 423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau (918) 647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville (580) 244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thur.
Spiro (918) 962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.-Fri.
Stigler (918) 967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Mon.-Wed.
Talihina (918) 567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton (918) 465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thur.

### Choctaw Nation Breastfeeding Classes

Come join us for a breastfeeding class in your area!

Many mothers want to learn more about breastfeeding so that they can feel more confident in their decision to breastfeed.

This breastfeeding class will address the following topics:

- \*latch
- \*frequency of feedings
- \*breastfeeding resources
- \*positioning
- \*growth spurts

<b>DURANT</b> April 8, June 16, August 12, October 14 1:00 - 3:00 pm Choctaw Nation WIC Office	<b>TALIHINA</b> April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7 9:00 - 11:00 am Choctaw Nation DWIC
<b>POTEAU</b> March 4, May 6, September 2, November 4 9:00 - 11:00 am Rubin White Health Clinic Conference Room	<b>IDABEL</b> April 15, June 17, August 19, October 21 9:00 - 11:00 am Choctaw Nation Clinic Education Room
<b>McALESTER</b> March 11, May 13, July 8, September 9, November 18 1:00 - 3:00 pm Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Downstairs Conference Room	

**Sponsored by Choctaw Nation WIC**

For more information, or for breastfeeding help, please call Erin James, IBCLC 1-800-522-6170 extension 2507

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**WAREHOUSES & MARKETS**  
**Antlers:** 306 S.W. “O” St., (580) 298-6443  
**Durant:** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773  
**McAlester:** 1212 S. Main St., (918) 420-5716  
**Poteau:** 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES**  
**Bethel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Broken Bow:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Idabel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Smithville:** Choctaw Community Center

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish or call the State Information/Hotline Numbers (click the link for a listing of hotline numbers by State); found online at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact\\_info/hotlines.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact_info/hotlines.htm).

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

**\*\*\*NEW HOURS \*\*\***  
Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday;  
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Thursday

##### ANTLERS

Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:  
**March 4:** Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 1:30-3:30 p.m. (market open)  
**March 11:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)  
**Closed:** March 30-31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

##### DURANT

Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** March 30-31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

##### McALESTER

Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** March 30-31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

##### POTEAU

Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** March 30-31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 12, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

### Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Seniors

The Choctaw Nation Community Centers will be taking applications for the FMNP for Seniors in **February and March**. If you received checks last year, you will be mailed an application and you may mail it back in or take it to your community center worker and they will mail it for you.

If you receive an application in the mail, please do not fill out another application at the community building.

The guidelines are the same as last year:

1. Meet income requirements (show proof)
2. Choctaw at least 60 years of age (Choctaw CDIB)
3. Disabled persons age 55 and older (show proof)
4. Show proof of residence

Ten checks in \$5.00 increments (the equivalent of \$50.00) will be mailed to qualifying seniors starting in April. The dates for use of the checks will be May 1 to Oct. 31, 2015.

For more information, please contact:

Peggy Carlton  
FMNP for Seniors Coordinator  
800-522-6170 x2303



# NOTES TO THE NATION

## From Fort Collins, Colorado

Hi. My name is Morgan Kueter. I am a junior in college and I just wanted to thank you for all of your help in getting me this far, through scholarships and, recently, a new computer. I would not have made it this far in my education if it were not for all of your amazing generosity and care for my education. I am so proud to be a Choctaw Indian and I am using my culture by being involved in our Native American Club on campus. I just wanted to send you a huge thank you(!) and show you how appreciative I really am.

Morgan Kueter

## Looking for Sumpter family

I'm looking for family members of my Uncle John E. Sumpter. His parents were Jacob and Nancy (Gibson) Sumpter. John married Amanda Loomer. They had seven children around Foster. I heard he has two granddaughters around Lindsay and Purcell. I would appreciate any information. Please call me at 580-475-6133.

Jean Harper

## Family thanks

The children of Alfred Harley would like to say thank you to everyone who came by the house, for their prayers, food, kind words, and help during our time of sorrow. A special thank you goes to the Color Guards, Singers, Councilman Joe Coley and wife Mary, for everything you did for dad.

The family of Alfred Harley

## Looking for family in AR/OK

Adopted child born 1/6/59 in Arkansas/Oklahoma area seeking information about birth mother, Mary Magdalen Jackson. Any and all information is strictly confidential and appreciated. Please contact Clark at P.O. Box 23237, Little Rock, Arkansas 72221 or Morgan at mobenton03@gmail.com.

Morgan Benton

## To Councilman Coley

The Red Oak Committee for Continued Growth thanks you, Chief Batton, and the Tribal Council for your continued support with activities in Red Oak. Over 175 children had their picture made with Santa, as well as receiving a bag of candy and their photo. Without your continued support, this event would not be as successful. We have always appreciated the support that we have received from the Choctaw Nation and you as a Councilman.

Jodie White

## Hello from Sam Houston State

Just wanted to write a quick note to say thank you for the grant I received to attend Sam Houston State University. I sincerely appreciate the assistance of the Choctaw Nation. The cost of college tuition and all the expenses that go along with it continue to rise almost making it impossible for a lot of students to attend, and the money you provide helps tremendously. I plan to complete my business degree at Sam Houston State University, and I will do my best to make the Choctaw Nation proud. Thank you again

Shelby Harris

## Thanks for the Biskinik

The recent Biskinik edition was outstanding. I appreciate receiving each issue. It seems the quality of prints and, of course, color of pictures is improving each issue.

Darlene Gifford

## Reunion for Kemp family

A family reunion for descendants of Stanton Kemp, original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation, will be held July 11, 2015 at the Choctaw Community Center in McAlester, located at 1632 S. George Nigh Expressway, next door to the Choctaw Casino. There will be a potluck luncheon. Everyone please bring your favorite covered dish. If anyone has pictures to share, please bring them. Contact Joyce Kemp-Vaughn by email, joyevaughn@yahoo.com with questions or for more information.

Joyce Kemp-Vaughn

Gary Batton  
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
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of the  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Judy Allen, Senior Executive Officer  
Lisa Reed, Executive Director  
Vonna Shults, Media Director  
Ronni Pierce, Editor  
Zach Maxwell, Reporter/Photographer  
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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double spaced. You must include an address or phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.

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



## Appreciates storm shelter

With grateful appreciation I am writing this letter to thank you for my tornado shelter. We are retired and live in a very rural area in Rains County, Texas. I am on the Choctaw roll and proud to be a Native American, but I am unable to take part in some of the Choctaw benefits because I do not live in a particular county. But in this case I was eligible and now have a tornado shelter that I have wanted and needed for a very long time but could not afford. We had a tornado pass right by us last year and it was very frightening and we are lucky to be here. Usually, we would get in our car and travel to the police station several miles away because we had no place to go. I am sure you will never know how much this means to my family and there are not enough words for me to say, so again, I say thank you for our shelter. We are very truly grateful for you allowing us to be a part of the shelter program that could save our lives even though we live in Texas.

Nancy Reed Phillips & Alex Phillips

## Choctaw Nation Storm Shelter Program

*Oklahoma falls in the middle of tornado alley. And the Choctaw Nation Storm Shelter Grant Program wants to assist tribal members who keep a wary eye on approaching storms.*

*The program, which falls under the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority, provides shelters to eligible tribal members in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Single family residential homeowners are eligible if they are at least 55 years of age or if they have an ambulatory disability. Only one person per household may apply, and mobile home owners must own both the mobile home and the land.*

*All applications are processed on a first come, first serve basis, and funds are limited.*

*For more information, call 800.235.3087.*

## EVENTS

### Miss Indian Oklahoma/ Jr. Miss Indian Pageant

Miss Indian Oklahoma and Jr. Miss Indian Oklahoma Pageant Information and lunch will be February 28, 10:30 am at McAlester Choctaw Center, 1632 S. George Nigh Expwy, McAlester.

Girls need to have CDIB or proof of Tribal membership, 1/4 or more degree of documented American Indian blood of a Federal Recognized Tribe(s). Jr. Miss Indian and OFIW members will be there to answer any questions and to go over eligibility guidelines for MIO and JMIO.

MIO Candidates must be between ages 18 and 24 years, must be 18 years of age before or on the day of the pageant. JMIO Candidates must be between ages 13 and 17 inclusive (must be 13 years before or on the day of pageant).

All interested girls welcome.

For more information email: denac@choctawnation.com or call 918-423-1016.

## Frazier Memorial Gospel Singing

March 27, 2015  
Choctaw Nation Community Center  
707 Bond Street  
Crowder, OK  
6:30pm  
Master of Ceremonies, Luther John  
Special Guest, ReDefined  
Concessions will be available.  
Everyone Welcome!



**District Princess Pageants are Coming Soon!**

*Information packets will be available at local Choctaw Nation field offices by February 13, 2015.*



*For more information please contact your local field office or the Cultural Services Department at 1-800-522-6170, Ext. 2377*


## Arrowhead Pow Wow March 21 McAlester Expo Center

Gourd Dancing: 2:30 p.m.  
Grand Entry: 6:30 p.m.

Contests Dancing Registration Closes at 6 p.m.  
Vendors: Set up \$50.00 + 1 donated item

Contact Info:  
Dena Cantrell, 918.423.1016  
Email: denac@choctawnation.com

ChoctawStore.com



Choctaw Welcome Center  
1882 Hwy 69/75 Colbert, OK 74755  
855-865-7854  
www.choctawstore.com

Like Us on Facebook!

## MOVE Study

Talihina & Hugo Fitness Centers

## Needs Research Volunteers

- \* The goal of the research is to increase the amount of weekly exercise in order to lower the risk of developing diabetes.
- \* To qualify for the research:
- \* 11-17 years old boy or girl
- \* American Indian
- \* Low physical activity and overweight
- \* No current diabetes

For more information, call  
**Mary Ayn Tullier @**  
**800-349-7026 ex. 6593**  
**E-mail: matullier@cnhsa.com**



MOVE



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
**PEDIATRICS**  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

- \* What is involved?
- \* There is a screening, consenting and physical exam with blood work that is required to get started in the study.
- \* First visit: explanation of the study, consent and a medical exam to determine eligibility.
- \* Blood glucose test, exercise fitness (a stationary bicycle test), and body composition (to measure body fat and muscle). These tests will be repeated 3 more times during the study, after exercising for 4, 8 and 12 months, respectively. Payments are provided for completing each of these milestone visits.
- \* The Exercise Program
- \* The exercise program will begin after the second visit and will be performed at the Talihina Choctaw Nation Wellness Center. The goal is to complete 3 or more days of exercise per week for about 12 months. Payments will be provided for completing the exercise sessions.

The University of Oklahoma is an Equal Opportunity Institution.  
PI's: Dr. Copeland & Dr. Short; IRB#0434



# OBITUARIES

## Nicholas Dees

Nicholas Glenn Dees, 30, of Seminole, went to his heavenly home Jan. 31, 2015 in Shawnee.

Nicholas was born Jan. 23, 1985 in Fairview, the son of Bruce Dees and Shelley Glenn Russell. He graduated from Bridgecreek High School in 2003. Nicholas married the love of his life, Brandi Rudisill Dees on July 23, 2005 in Hot Springs, Ark. He attended Southeastern State University in Durant, graduating in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. In February of 2013 Nicholas's lifelong dream came true when he entered the 61st Academy of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol in Oklahoma City, graduating in July of 2013. He served under the Troop D Division in McAlester under Badge No. 731. Nicholas loved music, playing the guitar, watching cop shows, going to the movies and working out. He was a loving and devoted husband and father. His children were his pride and joy and he cherished his time with them. He was a member of the Haworth First Assembly of God Church in Haworth, but was recently attending the Seminole First Assembly of God in Seminole.

Nicholas was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Billy and Ruth Glenn and paternal grandparents, Wallace and Dovie Dees.



He leaves to cherish his memory, wife, Brandi Rudisill Dees of Seminole; daughters, Claire and Piper Dees of Seminole; mother, Shelley Russell and husband Mike of Durant; father, Bruce Dees and wife Joyce of Bridgewater; brothers, Darren Dees and wife Jennifer of Grovetown, Ga. and Barry Dees and wife Jennifer of Bethel Acres; sister Tracy Upchurch of Hugo; step-sister, Alisha Sams and husband Mike of Chandler; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Randy and Sandra Rudisill of Broken Bow; a host of other relatives and many special friends.

Funeral services were held on Feb. 7, 2015 at the Broken Bow Sports Complex in Broken Bow with the Rev. Jason Smith and Rev. Doyle Long officiating. Interment was at Denison Cemetery in Idabel.

## Maxine Cason

Maxine Cason, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, passed away Jan. 28, 2014 at Hillcrest Medical Center in Tulsa.

Maxine was born June 23, 1944 in Plainview, Hale County, Texas to Alwyn Durell Cason (deceased) and Alice Mozell Ward (deceased).

Her siblings: Bronzie Alice (Cason) Fields (deceased), Delmer Dean Cason (deceased), Bernice "Lonnie" (Cason) Donner of Mojave, Ariz., Christine (Cason) Nesbitt of Bull Head, Ariz.; Connie Lee Cason of Louisville, Ky.

Children: Stanley Dee Rodriguez (stillborn), Michael Lynn Donner of Phoenix, Ariz.; Debra Anne (Donner) Eslinger of Highlands Park, Calif.; Patricia Arlene (Donner) Hofferber of Fort Smith, Ark.; seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Married: Anthony Lee Rodriguez (1962), divorced 1963; Cloyd Duane Donner, June 21, 1963 in Grand Junction, Colo., divorced 1979.



Originally from Texas, Maxine moved with her family to Fruita, Colo. when she was two years old. She grew up in Grand Junction where she attended school and eventually met and married Cloyd Donner who had two small children he was raising on his own. Maxine became their mother, and two years later after moving to Craig, Colo., they were blessed with a baby girl. Many years later, Maxine moved with her daughter, Patricia and grandson, William, to Oklahoma so they could be close to the Choctaw Nation. She was the granddaughter of original Choctaw enrollee Edward A. Ward.

She spent her life raising her children and making a home. Her hobbies included reading, drawing and painting, singing in church choir, cake decorating, and family history. Throughout her life, she was many things: reverend, licensed hypnotist, licensed private investigator; but most just called her friend.

She is missed by her friends and her family, but we know that she is resting in the arms of Jesus.

## Juanita S. Townsend

Juanita S. Townsend, 85, passed away Dec. 10, 2014, in Oklahoma City. She was a resident of Epworth Villa Retirement Community in Oklahoma City.

Juanita was born in Valliant to Clark and Ethel Townsend on Aug. 16, 1929. She was one of 12 children. After attending Valliant High School, Juanita moved to Oklahoma City where she was employed by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. She retired in February 1979, after more than 31 years of dedicated service. Post-retirement, she went to work for the Oklahoma State Senate, earning her a second retirement after twenty years of loyal service as a switchboard operator.

Juanita was a long time member of St. Luke's Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. She was also a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Juanita was prideful of her Indian heritage and her family. She loved to come to McCurtain County to visit relatives and friends. In recent years she was an avid supporter of the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Juanita was preceded in death by her parents, Clark and Ethel Townsend; two sisters, Pauline Tidwell and Lucy Stephens; five brothers, Bill, Sam, Joe Clark, Brunson and Pushmataha Townsend; and her dearest friend for over 50 years, Tom Myers.

Juanita is survived by her sisters, Mary Daniels of Idabel, Sarah Dunaway of Oklahoma City, Jane Whitten and husband Bobby of Idabel and Pat Privott and husband Norman of McCloud; sister-in-law, Carol Townsend of Clay Center, Neb. She leaves her siblings, her nieces and nephews and numerous family members and friends a lifetime of loving memories.



Burial was at Valliant Cemetery in Valliant.

## Margie Christine Dale

Margie Christine Dale, 82, passed away Jan. 8, 2015.

Mrs. Dale was born May 16, 1932 in Blackwell, Texas. She was a member of Gray Baptist Church. She loved her family dearly and she loved her furry friends. She loved God and she loved her church.

Mrs. Dale was preceded in death by her husband Donald Dale Sr. and her daughter Valarie Dale.

She is survived by her children: Donna and husband Jack Swanson of Vivian, La., Pelinda Arvin of Evansville, Indiana, Ventetia and husband Danny Mahaffey of Gary, Indiana, Betsy and husband Terry Wright of Alvin, Texas, Donald and wife Brenda Dale of Blanchard, La., Jason Dale of Vivian, La.; her grandchildren: Terry Wright, Bobby Elam, Tiffany Jones, Margie Mahaffey, Chrissy and Clayton Arvin, Justin and Nicole Dale, and Jessie Arvin; and her great-grandchildren: Braygen, TJ, Hayden, Raymond, Malcolm, Kane, Nuno, Selena, Maria and baby Axle on the way.

Burial was in Vivian Cemetery, Vivian, La.



## Judge Ben P. Choate, Jr.

Judge Ben P. Choate, Jr., died on Sept. 20, 2014, in Muskogee. He was born on July 17, 1928, in Stillwater, to Ben P. Choate, Sr. and Frances Fectel Choate. In 1943 the family moved back to the homestead established by their Choate ancestors in 1854 at Choate Prairie, near Indianola, in Pittsburg County.

Judge Choate graduated with the class of 1946 at Indianola High School and then served in the U.S. Navy for two years. He was a graduate of the Basic and Advanced Engineering School of the U.S. Navy. He participated in atomic bomb testing on the island of Bikini, Marshall Islands, while aboard the USS Chilton.

Following his discharge, he enrolled at Eastern Oklahoma A&M College, now EOSC in Wilburton, where he was a member of the Navy R.O.T.C. and served as a military escort at funeral services for veterans. He won the Carl Albert Oratorical Medal and graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree.



Judge Choate continued his education at the University of Oklahoma where he joined the U.S. Army R.O.T.C. and received his commission as a 2nd Lt. He was studying for his law degree when he was called to active duty during the Korean War.

After his tour of duty, he returned to O.U. and received his Juris Doctorate in 1955. He was a member of Delta Theta Phi honorary legal fraternity, and the Scabbard & Blade, an honorary military society.

He served as County Attorney of Latimer County, and Assistant County Attorney of Pittsburg County.

After a time spent in private practice in McAlester, he began his career as an attorney for the U.S. Veterans Administration, where he spent 27 years, retiring in 1988 as Assistant District Counsel for the state of Oklahoma. Later that year he was appointed to the bench by Gov. Henry Bellmon, and served as a Judge of the State Workers' Compensation Court for a period of six years in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. He was then appointed as a Special District Judge for a five county district in Northeastern Oklahoma, retiring from that position in 1996.

Judge Choate had a lengthy military career spanning 35 years of service in the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army, and the Army Reserve Corps. He retired with the rank of Colonel. He was a graduate of the Command and General Staff College of the U.S. Army; the Artillery Career Course of the U.S. Army; of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; and served as the Commanding Officer of the USAR Logistical Command. He was a member of the U.S. Army Personnel Team attached to the Pentagon. His high regard for the United States Military and his respect and concern for the veterans entrusted to his care were hallmarks of his career. Among his awards were the World War II Victory Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and an Outstanding Service Award from the Veterans Administration.

Judge Choate was descended from a prominent Choctaw family with roots in Attala County, Miss. His great-great-grandfather, James C. Choate, brought the family to the Canadian River bottomlands near Indianola in 1854. The Choate Prairie area is named for his family. The log house built by his great-grandfather, George W. Choate, in 1867, has been preserved on the Bynum Property as a museum and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Choate Prairie Baptist Church was established by his great-grandmother, Eliza Wade Choate, and is the oldest church having continuous services in Pittsburg County. Judge Choate is also a descendant of other prominent Choctaw families, including the Beams, Wade and Folsom families.

Survivors include his wife, Jackye K. McLean Choate, of the home; a son, Dr. B. Paul Choate, III and his wife, Kathy, of Colorado Springs, Colo.; grandchildren, Aaron Choate and wife, Cinamyn, and their children, Autumn and Kaylee; Sarah Choate and her children, Annie and Luca; Miriam Larsen and husband, Jeremy, and their child, Eowyn Larsen; stepdaughter, Sydnee L. Thompson of Oklahoma City; numerous cousins and nieces. Memorial gifts may be made to the Indianola Alumni Association at P. O. Box 119, Indianola, OK 74442, or the Choate Prairie Baptist Church at HC67, Box 455, Indianola, OK 74442.

## Benjamin James Fobb

Benjamin James Fobb passed from this life on July 2, 2014 in Antlers, at the age of 59. He was born on Oct. 2, 1954 to Lebies James Fobb and Nancy Jean (Rivenbark) Fobb in Tampa, Fla.

He was an extremely strong willed and courageous man. Jim never met a stranger. He was a member of the Darwin Baptist Church, and he was very devoted to God and his church.

Jim was preceded in death by his father, Jim Fobb.

He is survived by his mother, Nancy Fobb of Bushnell, Fla.; daughter, Kelli Moghaddassi and husband Moe of Round Rock, Texas; grandchildren, Brandin, Joshua and Emily all of Round Rock, Texas; sister, Jeri Payne and husband Jeffrey of Miami, Fla.; two brothers, Joel Fobb and wife Janie of Homestead, Fla., and Jeffrey Fobb and wife Sandy also of Homestead, Fla.; nieces and nephews, Teri Glover, Tim Glover, Todd Glover, Matthew Payne, Jeremy Fobb, Jacob Fobb, Erin Fobb, Kiera Fobb, Michael Barry, Aaron Barry, and Justin Brackett; best friend, Mike Barry; aunts, Bonnie Mims and Annelle Rivenbark; along with numerous cousins, other relatives, and friends.

A memorial service was held on July 9, 2014 at Burkhart Funeral Service Chapel with Shane Meshaya officiating and music by The Choctaw Singers. Cremation services provided by Burkhart Funeral Service of Antlers.



## Ennie Cusher

Ennie (Tonihka) Cusher, 92, of Broken Bow, passed away Dec. 26, 2014 at her home in Broken Bow. She was born Oct. 15, 1922 in McCurtain County, the daughter of Jowicks and Francis (Wilson) Tonihka.

Ennie was a lifetime member of Yasho Methodist Church in Broken Bow. She enjoyed the laughter of her family at gatherings and enjoyed cooking and making sure there was plenty of food for everyone. Ennie also enjoyed beautiful flowers, working puzzles, sewing, quilting and beading.

Ennie leaves to cherish her memory her children, Johnny Tonihka and wife, Barbara of Durant, Georgia Griffin and husband, Charles of Horatio, Ark., Sharon Noley and husband, Grayson of Norman, Ada Smithson of Dallas, Myrtle Williston of Idabel, Sue Dodson of Broken Bow, Eddie Cusher and wife, Ruthie of McAlester and Elias Cusher and wife, Annette of Ringold; daughter-in-law, Leslie Tonihka of Tulsa; 26 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, numerous great-great grandchildren; one brother, Buddy Tonihka of Albuquerque, N.M.; two sisters, Mary Bell Williston of Idabel and Pauline Tonihka of Oklahoma City; a host of nieces, nephews, other family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Lee Cusher; three sons, Kenneth Ray Tonihka, Alfred G. Cusher, and Lee Cusher, Jr.; grandson, Michael D. Cusher; three granddaughters, Neko Dodson, Taloa Noley and Rebecca Battiest; two sisters, Ida Crosby and Rebecca Billy; two brothers Jessie and Joe Tonihka; and son-in-law, Ricky Smithson.

Interment was at Broken Bow Cemetery, Broken Bow.



## Gregory Duane 'Greg' Rodgers

Gregory Duane "Greg" Rodgers, 46, left this life Dec. 17, 2014. He was born in Oklahoma City on Sept. 8, 1968.

He is survived by his mother, Sheron Folsom Rodgers of Warr Acres; and his two sisters, Robyn Fansler of Oklahoma City and Dondi Rodgers of Warr Acres; his grandmother, Mae Folsom of Warr Acres.

He was predeceased by his father, Al Rodgers; and grandparents Ralph and Pauline Rodgers and R.L. "Tubby" Folsom; and a brother-in-law, Joey Fansler.

Greg enjoyed a delightful relationship — as "Uncle Gregg" — with nieces and nephews Chris, Carly, Lexi, Cameron, Stevie and Dylan Fansler and Malachie Rodgers.



Greg graduated from Putnam City High School in 1986. He was interested in everything. He loved his family and friends, meeting new people and traveling to new places. He had a brilliant mind and a boundless curiosity. A proud member of the Choctaw Nation, he was a lifelong learner, graduating from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Native American Studies. He celebrated his Native American heritage and gave back to the tribes enthusiastically. He was a descendant of Choctaws Rev. Israel Folsom, Judge Julius Folsom, Don J. Folsom, Jack H. Folsom and Richard L. Folsom and Chickasaw Great-Grandmother Francis Malachi Turnbull Folsom. He became a Choctaw Storyteller of national renown. He wrote three books — "The Ghost of Mingo Creek and Other Spooky Oklahoma Legends," "One Dark Night in Oklahoma" and a highly popular children's book, "Chukfi Rabbit's Big Bad Bellyache." He was a member of the Territory Tellers of Oklahoma.

As an oral performer, Greg was a quiet genius, ushering the audience down a path of faith and fear and always ending in triumph of the good. Those fortunate enough to have seen him perform the Trail of Tears story, "Harriet's Burden" will never forget that experience. He will be with us as a Rabbit Trickster, a protective Panther and a spirit Canine.

In August 2012, he moved to Urbana-Champaign to attend the University of Illinois to pursue his master's degree in creative writing. As part of that program, he taught numerous classes and was respected and liked by both students and faculty.

He had a generous heart, freely sharing his time and talents with others. Affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution, he traveled throughout the country conducting workshops and telling stories before audiences of thousands.

He was a member of a large and loving extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins who are devastated by his death at such an early age.

In the preface of his first, and as yet unpublished, novel, he wrote: "Our Choctaw homelands speak to us in many voices. They are mostly soft and caring — summer rain dripping through a forest of pines, wind whistling across a mountain lake, rippling the waters — but on the worst of nights, the land emits a terrible scream. Our places can feel pain, deep and connected to all. They know of death, and life, and death again."

A memorial service was held Dec. 21, 2014 at Forest Hill Christian Church with burial at Resurrection Cemetery in Oklahoma City. Brother Olin Williams and Tim Tingle officiated.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials to The Greg Rodgers Book Fund for purchasing "Read for Fun" books for Choctaw Nation elementary school children. Please make checks payable to ATALM (Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums), 6308 Harden Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73118 or visit <https://atalm.formstack.com/forms/grfund>. Alternatively, memorials may be sent to Coffee Creek Riding Center, 17 Coffee Creek Road, Edmond, Oklahoma 73034.

## Jackie Lou DeWitt

Jackie Lou DeWitt quietly entered the gates of Heaven on Oct. 28, 2014. She was 75 years old. She was preceded in death by her father Christopher Ward in 1976 and her amazing mother Mabel Ward just two short months before.

Jackie was born in Spiro on March 24, 1939 and moved to California while a teenager. She graduated from Hawthorne High School in 1957. In the early 60s she got a job as a secretary at Hallet Manufacturing, which became Livingston Industries and relocated to Redding in 1975. She worked at Livingston until the early 80s, when she would take a job as the secretary for the Centerville Water District, where she worked until her retirement in 2004.

She was an inspiration to all, as she was a three-time cancer survivor. She was a tough fighter and an inspiration to all who she came in contact with. Once you met Mom she was your friend. Even doctors and nurses marveled at her strength and courage as she battled cancer and won. Unfortunately, she didn't get to enjoy the victory of that third battle which left her body weary. She kept her sense of humor throughout.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Buddy.

She is survived by the love of her life, Gordon DeWitt, her husband of 42 years. He spent the last two and a half years taking care of her. She is also survived by her six children and their families: Robert and Sheila Withrow of Redding, Calif., Ianna DeWitt of Redding, Calif., Lisa and Ron Spliethof of Crescent City, Calif., Ray and Stephanie DeWitt of Kentucky, Steven and Tame DeWitt of Ponca City and Gordon and Lynn Anne DeWitt of Redding, Calif.

She is also survived by her brothers and sisters: Billy and Pat Ward of Anaheim, Calif.; Brenda and Charles Wisdom of Chino, Calif.; Linda and Ali Asif of Chino Hills, Calif.; Chris Ward of Colorado Springs, Colo.; Donald and Myun-Suk Ward of Puyallup, Wash.; and Wayne Ward of San Marcos, Calif.

Her 15 grandchildren are Jennifer King, Rebecca Spliethof and Stacey Spliethof, all of Red Bluff, Calif., Chris Withrow of Las Vegas, Alex Withrow of Santa Barbara and Sam Withrow of Redding, McKenzie, Tannor, Maddie, Isiah and Aleena DeWitt of Redding, Kianie, Hunter and Mikayla of Ponca City. She also has 10 great-grandchildren, and numerous friends and family who will dearly miss her, but are comforted with the fact that she is now with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## Ella Jean Hansen

Ella Jean Hansen of Dewey, Arizona, passed away on Jan. 4, 2014. Ella Jean was proud of her Choctaw heritage.

Her parents, Dwight and Ruby Jossrand, were from Durant. She will be greatly missed by her husband, William Hansen of 64 years; her son Randolph Hansen; her daughter Vicki Hansen; and her brother Howard Jossrand. She is survived by five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Ella Jean was a devout Christian who had several hobbies and interests, including spending time with her family, searching for her family ancestry, arts and crafts and playing games like Bunko and marbles.





# OBITUARIES

## Perry Michael Crow

Perry Michael Crow, 48, a long-time Lane resident, passed away on Jan. 2, 2015 at Lane.

He was born on Aug. 10, 1966, to Virgil Lee and Norene Ann (Peters) Crow, at McAlester.

He graduated U.S. Grant High School in Oklahoma City. Perry worked as a welder. He enjoyed hunting (deer and turkey), fishing (bass), playing guitar and Indian flute.

He is survived by his father, Virgil Crow of Lane; son, Easton Crow of Lane; daughter, Kylee Crow of Canadian; mother of his children, Mechelle Crow; brother, Virgil Lynn Crow and wife Krista of Mustang; nieces, Ginna Crow and Carah Crow of Mustang; nephew, Vance Crow of Mustang; longtime friend known as a brother, Teddy Smith of Oklahoma City; special cousin, Jennifer Wagoner and husband Alvis; special aunts, Veronica McDaniel and husband Chock of Blackjack, Carolyn June, Mary Frances and Barbara Katherine; aunts, Delinda Sue Evans and husband Winfred of Atoka, Christeen Walters and husband Gary of Arkansas; uncles, Glenn Crow and wife Charlotte of Lakeside, Arizona, Robert Crow and wife Jeannie of Phoenix, John Henry Crow and wife Tammy of Stringtown, Jerry Crow of Atoka, Ralph Crow and wife Pam of Lane, Douglas Woods and wife Debbie of Denison, Texas; special friend and companion, Melissa Burris of Soper; Serina Jo Greenwood, who was like a daughter to Perry; along with cousins, other relatives and many dear friends.

Perry was preceded in death by mother Norene Crow; maternal grandparents Ellis and Edna Jackson; paternal grandparents Arto and Billie Jean Crow.

Interment was held at Double Springs Cemetery in Atoka.



## Gale Norman Izard

Gale Norman Izard passed away Dec. 12, 2014, at his home in Greenville, Texas. He was born Aug. 21, 1938, in Ada to Roy Preston and Jewell Allie Norman Izard. He graduated from Ada High School in 1957, Okla. City University in 1978 with a Bachelor's Degree in Bank Management, and from Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in 1981. While a seminary student, he pastored the First United Methodist Church at Tom Bean, Texas. He loved to say he was the senior pastor, the senior secretary and the senior custodian of the small church which experienced the largest numerical growth in the Sherman-McKinney District under his leadership from 1978-81.

After his graduation from SMU, he was ordained an elder in the Okla. Conference of the UMC and pastored several churches. He was particularly proud of his three years as Missions Pastor at First UMC in Tulsa. He served as Spiritual Director for Pioneer Country Walk to Emmaus and Hong Kong Walk to Emmaus, a program he loved. He was a certified leader in Celebrating Marriage and Adventure in Healing and Wholeness, programs developed by the United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Holley Robinson Izard, and his daughters, Cyndi Bracy and her husband, Steve, and Sara Martinez and her husband, Saturn; nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters Peggy Colwell and her husband, Connie of Seminole and Mary Lou Marshall of Richardson, Texas. He was preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Norma Joyce Izard.

Gale was very proud of his 27 years of military service beginning at the age of 16 in the Okla. National Guard, 45th Division. He served one year with the New Mexico National Guard and was honored by the governor for meritorious service during a blizzard in 1973. He spent most of his military career in the Army Reserve attaining the rank of Captain. He was always prepared for the call to active duty.

He was very proud of his Choctaw heritage. His family settled in Indian Territory about 1875. His father, Roy Preston Izard, grandfather Silas Preston Izard, great-grandmother Sarah Ann Elizabeth Moran Izard and great-great grandmother Elizabeth Buckholts Moran, were original enrollees of the Choctaw tribe.

During his banking career he was active in civic affairs including President of the Shawnee Jaycees, President of Kay County Bankers Institute, and was named Outstanding Young Man of Ponca City by the Jaycees in 1972. He served on the School Board in Shawnee, and several years on the Board of Directors of the Okla. Federal Credit Union.

His favorite activities were flying and motorcycles. Holley and Gale were members for about 10 years in the Ada Hobos, a camping club that kept them in contact with many friends in their hometown.

## Clyde Maurice Mandelin

Clyde Maurice Mandelin of Parks, Arizona passed away on Dec. 9, 2014 at the age of 58. Clyde was born in Greenville, Mississippi on Dec. 15, 1955 to Clyde D. Mandelin and Ruby Elinor (Williams) Mandelin. He was raised in Phoenix.

Clyde attended West Point Preparatory Academy, along with several universities in the U.S. Following his time in the Army, Clyde worked as a printer and was retired from Arizona State University. He was a disabled veteran. Clyde loved his family, ROTC, the Devil Pups and being 'airborne' in the Army.

He is preceded in death by his brother Michael; his parents; and his grandparents, including original enrollee Frank Williams.

Clyde is survived by his wife of 37 years, Mary Dee and their two children, Clyde D. and Elizabeth M.; grandchildren Jared C., Kaleb A., Ashlee E., and Lauren R.; siblings John "JD", Greg, Nyla, Nikki, Melanie, Teresa and David; along with many nieces and nephews.

Services were held at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, in Phoenix on Dec. 30, 2014. Arrangements by Lazono's Flagstaff Mortuary and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

## Marguriete L. 'Ginger' Blanche

Marguriete L. "Ginger" Blanche went to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Dec. 22, 2014. She departed this life holding the hand of Dalton, her loving and devoted husband of over 70 years.

She was born July 7, 1920 to George and Lena Klotzbach in Humboldt, Kansas. She attended St. Joseph Catholic School, St. Mary's Jr. College, Pittsburg Teachers College and received her Bachelors and Master's degrees from Central State University. Ginger taught school in Oklahoma for 28 years, eight years at St. Eugene Catholic School and 20 years at Coronado Heights in Putnam City teaching third and fourth grade. She began her teaching career teaching first through eighth grade in a one room schoolhouse in Humboldt, Kansas. During WWII she worked as a quality control inspector in a Boeing aircraft plant in Wichita, Kansas where she met her future husband Dalton. They were married on April 19, 1944 shortly before Dalton left to serve in the Army.

Ginger was a devoted wife and mother and is survived by her loving husband Dalton; sons Greg and his wife Marilyn of Traverse City, Michigan, Gary of Edmond, and Phil and his wife Debbie of Yukon.



## Walter Burl McKee

Walter Burl McKee, 81, of Soper, passed away on Jan. 4, 2015 in Durant.

Walter Burl McKee was born Aug. 21, 1933 in Mud Sand Community, the son of George Mark McKee and Martha Ellen (Taylor) McKee and had lived all of his life in the Buckhorn area. His parents preceded him in death. He was also preceded in death by a sister, Ruby Tyson and four brothers, Johnny, Harvey, Wilburn and Charlie McKee.

Burl married Barbara Davis on April 28, 1970 in Boswell; He enjoyed playing his guitar, fishing, and spending time with his grandchildren. His favorite color was blue.

Survivors include his wife, Barbara McKee; two daughters, Christy McIntire and husband, Jimmy of the Buckhorn community and Teresa Bartlett and husband, Lorne of Sasakwa; seven grandchildren, J.D. Todd, Preston Todd, Airman Henry Bartlett, Shania Todd, Trena Bartlett, SkyLynn Graham and Xavier "Boo" Martinez; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and a host of other family and friends.

Interment was at the McKee Family Cemetery in Soper.



## Wyndle Dewayne David

Wyndle Dewayne David, 84, of Sawyer, passed away on Jan. 16, 2015 at his home.

Wyndle Dewayne David was born Oct. 28, 1930 in Fort Towson, the son of Wister David and Jencie (Gable) David and had lived all of his life in Choctaw County. His parents preceded him in death. He was also preceded in death by a son, Jerry David; three brothers, Virgil David, Arville David and Hathaway David; also three sisters, Bertha Micco, Eunella Satterfield and Louella Williams.

Wyndle had worked for Kerr & McGee and had owned and operated David's Timber Co. for many years. He had served on the Fort Towson School Board, was a KEDDO board member and had served three terms as Choctaw County Commissioner for District 3. Wyndle was a member of First Baptist Church of Fort Towson. He married Nadean Snead on Oct. 26, 1951 in DeQueen, Ark.

Survivors include: his wife, Nadean David; son, Doug David of Idabel; daughter, Cathey Hooker and husband, Larry of Clayton; grandchildren, Erica (Ernie) Bourne and husband, Geoff of Allen, Texas; their children, Alex and Nate; Cody Cheney of Paris, Texas; and Brad and Lori Hooker of Bentonville, Ark.; Jennifer (Jeepers) Kinslow and husband, Tanner of Sawyer, with children, Madison (Madi) MacDonald and Emily and Wyatt Kinslow; DJ (D) David and wife, Lynci of Idabel; April David Beene of Sawyer; Stacey Penner and husband, Sammy of Antlers with children, Kylie and Jon; Casey (Beefier) David and wife, Kristin of Idabel with child Peyton; Nancy Castillo and husband, Carlos of Sawyer; many nieces and nephews; special sister, Mary with son, Jon Loar and Neil Carroll of Fort Towson; sister, Doris Rakestraw of California along with many other relatives and friends.

Interment was in Fort Towson Cemetery.



## Elbert Kenneth Williams

Elbert Kenneth Williams, 81, died Dec. 27, 2014 at his home in Wardville.

Elbert Kenneth Williams was born Aug. 14, 1933 at Atoka to Elbert James and Martha Florance (Sylar) Williams. He was a farm worker on a cotton ranch and married Donna Long on Feb. 24, 1987 in Coalgate. He enjoyed playing video games and watching westerns on TV. Elbert was a member of the Choctaw Nation District 12 Senior Citizens. Elbert was proud of his Indian heritage He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Surviving relatives: Wife, Donna Williams of the home; children and spouses, Kenneth Charles Williams of Princeton, La. and Sherry and Danny Kurth of Claremore; seven grandchildren, one great-grandchild; seven brothers, Harold, Charles, Jerry, Clifford, Johnny, Larry and Jimmie Williams; two sisters, Hazel and Rita; niece, Linda Lynn of Bakersfield, Calif.; three nephews, Russel Cramer of Susanville, Calif., Tommy Lynn of Bakersfield, Calif., Earl Lynn of Bakersfield, Calif.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Elbert James and Martha Florence Williams; grandparents, David and Martha Jane (Beal) Sylar.

The family wants to pay a special thank you to Heartland Hospice.



## Mildred Francis (Garvin) Prince

Mildred Francis (Garvin) Prince, 80, of Bloomfield, N.M., passed away on Dec. 7, 2014 in Bloomfield, N.M.

Mildred was born on Dec. 13, 1934 in Wilburton to Simpson Garvin and Irene (Daney) Garvin.

Mildred graduated from Wilburton High School and attended the junior college at Wilburton (now Eastern Oklahoma State) for one and a half years. She was employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1962-84 and with U.S. Fish and Wildlife from 1984-95. She retired in 1995 from federal service.

Mildred was a member of the Baptist Church of Farmington, N.M. and a proud member of the Choctaw tribe. She loved to bowl and was an active member on three senior bowling teams until illness forced her to retire from the sport. She loved her family, church and friends with a passion.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Cecil, Ray and Roy Garvin; sister Cora Garvin Brown; grandparents Louis Garvin and Sophia McCurtain Garvin.

Mildred is survived by: husband, Everett F. Prince; son, Jimmy D. Prince of Bethel, Alaska; daughter, Debra Ann Prince Nicholson of Bethel, Alaska; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild; and a brother, Edwin Garvin of Allen.



## Faith Nicole Roberts

Faith Nicole Roberts of Hugo passed away on Jan. 10, 2015 in Oklahoma City.

Faith Nicole Roberts was born on Jan. 9, 2015 in Oklahoma City, daughter of Paul Randell Roberts and Jessie Nicole (Ply) Roberts. She was loved by many and touched many lives. Early in pregnancy, Faith was diagnosed with a heart disorder, but proving she was a fighter, Faith held on and made it so her parents could hold her in their arms, if only for a short while. She will forever be in the hearts of her family and loved ones. She is preceded in death by maternal great-grandfather, David Ply, maternal great-grandfather Jack Irvin; and paternal great-grandparents: Winnie Wesley, Jimmy Deere, Lee Fannie Roberts and Eliud Roberts.

Survivors include her parents: Paul Randell Roberts and Jessie Nicole (Ply) Roberts of Hugo; brother, Max Jameson Roberts of Hugo; maternal grandparents, DeeAnn and David Ply of Boswell; maternal great-grandparents, Mack and Marti Goodwin of Boswell; Ada Irvin of Denison, Texas, and Louise James of Madill; paternal grandparents, James and Kizzie Roberts of Cromwell; two uncles: Kevin Goodwin of Denison, Texas, and Taylor Ply of Boswell; four aunts: Kasey Ply of Poteau, Tracy Ply and Jimmy Collins of Colbert, Teresa Cooper and husband Michael of Marlow, and Richenda Hicks and husband Oscar of Okemah; along with a host of other relatives and friends.

Interment was at Restland Cemetery in Boswell.



## Joanne Chester Holz

Joanne Chester Holz, daughter of Bertha Mae Orndorff, an original enrollee, and Linder Revere Chester, was born April 20, 1926, in Oklahoma City, died peacefully on Dec. 27, 2014 in Phoenix, Arizona.

She was a devoted wife and mother for whom family was her first priority. Her husband John was a retired Navy officer, civil servant and financial adviser. As her sons grew, she was involved in parents' organizations supporting their activities. She was an accomplished florist whose work was in demand for weddings and special occasions, as well as seamstress making garments for her family, baker and cake decorator. She had the greenest thumb around, with the ability to grow amazing flowers and plants. The wife of a member of the Shrine, she was a member of the Daughters of the Nile, serving in various positions before being elected Queen. Joanne was proud of her Choctaw heritage and instilled that in her sons and grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband of 65 years, John; sons John (wife Carol) and Thomas (wife Dawne); grandchildren John Christopher (wife Jaylin), Heidi (husband Matthew) and Matthew (wife Danielle) and three great-grandchildren as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.



## John Lavere Yarbrough

Our beloved father, John Lavere Yarbrough, "Big Daddy," was born on July 14, 1924, to Steve Yarbrough and Agnes Corrine Turley in Eufaula. In 1938, at age 14, he joined the Oklahoma National Guard and was on duty in the Louisiana swamps until his father insisted he come home. After graduating from Eufaula High School in 1942, John attended the Roswell New Mexico Military Institute until his unit in the Army Air Corp was activated, and he was assigned to Italy as a B-24 bomber pilot during World War II. After his military term he graduated from Oklahoma A&M with a degree in Animal Husbandry, married Shirley McMakin, and then was called into service again during the Korean War. While serving in Korea he was the unit commander of Eufaula National Guard until called home due to the death of his father.

John had his first ranch in Stidham, later moving to Marietta with his wife and daughter and was owner of the Lazy Y Ranch in Rubottom while at the same time managing the Lazy K Ranch owned by his father-in-law, G.C. McMakin. The cattle business was a big part of his life and he was eventually appointed as a Director of the Oklahoma Cattleman's Association. Subsequently, he entered the world of banking and became the Executive Vice President and Director of the First National Bank of Marietta.

During the next stage of his life, he became co-owner of Helms & Yarbrough Realty, President of the Carter County Board of Realtors and married Beth Smith. He was one of the original founders and directors of Citizen's Bank and Trust in Ardmore.

Upon his retirement, golf became his "work." He loved all of his time on the golf course and considered his golfing buddies his family also, even if they took his money.

He was affiliated with the Methodist Church, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Masons and Shriners.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father; three sisters, Mildred, Stevella and Nadine; one brother, Harmon; and son-in-law Danny Southerland.

He is survived by three daughters, Sally Lewis, Diane Boland and Tina Bigham; three grandsons, Travis Southerland and wife Tasha, Jay Boland and Barry Boland and wife Ragan; two granddaughters, Jaci Inman and Jenna Swboni; seven great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews who looked to him as the patriarch of the family. He also leaves behind special friends June Maddox, Lonnie and Louise Harris.



## Richard 'Rick' Darwin Daney

Richard "Rick" Darwin Daney, 64, loving husband, father and brother, ended his cancer journey with family at his side on Nov. 26, 2014, in Wichita, Kansas.

Rick was born at the old Indian hospital in Talihina to Richard Solomon Daney and Vada Marie (Hatton) Daney, both originally from Talihina. Richard is the grandson of original Choctaw enrollees, Solomon Daney and Mary Jefferson, both whom also resided in Talihina.

Rick was a member of the Choctaw tribe, as well as a Vietnam veteran decorated with a bronze star, and former owner of Arrow Automotive and recently retired from Eurotech Saab. Rick enjoyed the outdoors and as a hunter, he traveled to western Kansas each pheasant season.

He was welcomed into heaven by his mom, Vada Daney. Rick is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 45 years, Carol (Hume) Daney; and his two children, Aaron Daney and wife Jennifer and Kelly Arrowsmith and husband Chad; as well as two brothers, Michael of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dale of Lawrence, Kansas; and sister, Linda of Wichita, Kansas.



### Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes or other official sources. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers through a funeral home service. Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice. Notices may be edited for space limitations.

Send official obituary notices to:  
Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702  
or  
email: biskinik@choctawnation.com



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## Trueblood serves as judge advocate



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Citizen Travis Trueblood of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., recently completed the Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala. Captain Trueblood, who is a reservist in the United States Air Force, serves as a Judge Advocate assigned to Joint Base Andrews near Washington, DC.

## Covel earns medical assistant cert.



Kati Covel (holding certificate) recently completed her medical assistant’s certificate at Pima Medical Institute (PMI). She is pictured here with her family and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. during the Choctaw cultural gathering in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Kati was also awarded outstanding student by PMI for making the honor roll and holding perfect attendance.

## Mayo serves Masonic Lodge and raises funds for hospital



Tribal member Jackie Mayo served as Worshipful Master of Billie Mosse Masonic Lodge number 1152 in 2011-2012 and was the first Native American to serve as Worshipful Master in this lodge. In December 2013 he was appointed and installed as District Deputy Grand Master for District 4-A of the Grand Lodge of Texas for the year of 2014. He was elected to serve as President of the North Texas Shrine Club for the year of 2015. The Shrine

Club conducts fund raisers for The Shriners Hospitals, which provide medical treatment for children and adults who would otherwise have no medical care. He served as Worthy Patron in the Order of the Eastern Star in 2014.

## Youth compete in basketball shootout



Nineteen Choctaw youth represented the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma at the Warrior Showcase Shootout in Henryetta on Nov. 28, 2014.

A girls team and a boys team represented their tribe well with sportsmanship and determination.

Team Choctaw boys team: CJ Briley, Wright City; Darian Williams, Rock Creek; Braden Shaw, Rattan; Quinton Owens, Broken Bow; Devon Whitfield, Broken Bow; Hayden Pierce, Boswell; Garrett Addington, Clayton; Dylan Turner, Lone Grove; and Kaden Johnson, Rock Creek.

Team Choctaw girls team: Jacey Gibbs, Rattan; Alyssa Kindred, Tushka; Tristan Hamilton, Durant; Whitney Anderson, Idabel; Katelyn Crosthwait, Washington; Gracie Wells, Washington; Crystal Needham, Eufala; and Sabra Williams, Eufala.

## Scott named Public Health Champion



The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) presented Choctaw Kenneth R. Scott the Public Health Champion Award for his tireless and unselfish dedication to the healthcare of the American Indians residing in the state of Illinois.

The award is given to individuals whose contributions to their communities, families, and professional endeavors have been vital in improving the health of the

public and the people they serve. Scott serves American Indians as an advocate to better their opportunities. He has served as the Executive Director of American Indian Health Service of Chicago, Inc. since 2003, during his tenure he brought numerous resources to the community to address the various healthcare disparities experienced by the people he serves.

IDPH wrote “we can think of no one more deserving of this award than Ken, and we are happy and appreciative of this recognition.”

## Sykes retires from Air Force



Master Sergeant Roberta Sykes is retiring from the Air Force after 22.5 years. Roberta is married to Major John Sykes, USAF; and they have three boys: Joshua, Christian and Andrew. Roberta is the daughter of June Williams of Eagletown and the late Johnny Shomo of Idabel. She is the granddaughter of Moses Williams and the late Helen Williams from Eagletown. She is also the granddaughter of the late J.D. and Nellie Shomo of

Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Roberta enlisted into the Air Force in Nov., 1992. She has served all her years in the Health Services Management career field. She has been stationed at Hickam Airforce Base (AFB), Hawaii; Columbus AFB, Miss.; Tinker AFB; Warner Robins, Ga.; and Maxwell AFB-Gunter Annex, Ala. She has also served tours in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, and Germany. Her retirement ceremony is set for 18 May 2015 at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Ala.

## Choctaw YAB visits Clayton Seniors



Teens from the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board (YAB) of Clayton surprised seniors with a Christmas visit on Tuesday, Dec. 23. The YAB played Santa Claus in more ways than one. Seniors were greeted at the door by YAB teens in cheery bright orange t-shirts

as they arrived for lunch. The YAB gave each senior a plaid blanket from Children and Family Services of the Choctaw Nation, a candy cane, and a Christmas card. Band members played Christmas music and others sang along. Then, the Choctaw youth and advisor Becky Nail joined seniors for lunch. Mary-Helen White, Tiffany Smith, Gage Clark, Michael Creel and Tyler Macon, all of Clayton, were YAB members taking part.

## Wells celebrates 90th birthday



World War II naval veteran Sylvester Wells turned 90 years old on Jan. 3, 2015. He celebrated a large birthday party, hosted by his youngest daughter Leslie Hays, with friends and family on Jan. 4. “We love you with all of our hearts, daddy, and we wish you many more happy birthdays to come,” said Tanis Wells, Sylvester’s eldest daughter.

## Kirsten Scott signs on with OCU



Kirsten Scott, daughter of Boyde and Kristie McCarty-Scott, has signed a letter of intent to play four years of softball at Oklahoma Christian University as a catcher and third baseman. Kirsten played catcher for El Reno High School varsity team. In four years she hit .371 career batting average and closed her career with a .957 career fielding percentage. She had 34 doubles, seven triples and 14 home runs for her varsity team. Kirsten is the great-granddaughter of the late Bettie Brown McCarty.



## Ardmore language class graduates

The Ardmore Community Language Class, part of the School of Choctaw Language, held their graduation activity on Monday, Dec. 29, in Ardmore. Pictured (not in order): JoAnn Cantley, Luther Wooley, McClain Lang, Vonya Lang, Carrie Williamson, Ricky Dobbs, Deloris Marris, Kathy Eye, Leona Johnson and instructor Lillian Vaughn.

## Ellis competes in gymnastics



Acelee Ellis competed in her first gymnastics meet in Weleetka on Dec. 20, 2014. She is a member of Victory Elite Athletics and won first place in sub-beginner tumbling and first in beginner double-mini trampoline. Additionally, Acelee placed fourth in beginner trampoline. She is the three-year-old daughter of Jerren and Heather Ellis of Moss. Her grandparents are Glen and Lahoma Hines of Soper and Kelvin and Tammy Edwards of Fort Towson.

## Bogle places first in supercross series



Justin Bogle finished first at the 2014 AMA East Supercross 250cc championship for 2014. He is shown with grandparents Joe and Shirley Byington of Cushing. For the season, Bogle had two wins and three runner-up finishes in the regional championships.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) supercross is featured in high-profile stadiums across North America. The races draw in riders from across the globe. The championship divisions

split the U.S. into East and West, and the riders into the 450cc class and 250cc classes, in reference to the size of the motorcycle’s engine.



## Nipp and family celebrate first birthday

Addilynn Nipp celebrated her first birthday on Jan. 3, 2015. She is the daughter of Travis and Audrey Ladner Nipp of the Simon community in Love County. Her grandparents are Curtis and Brenda Nipp of Simon, and Brian and Melissa Ladner of Jimtown. Her great-grandmother is Laquitta Ladner of Jimtown, and great-grandfather is the late Ott Ladner.

Addilynn is the great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Sis Stout, Mississippi Choctaw original enrollee.

## Fox cares for great-grandmother



Sixteen-year old Taylor Fox carried his great-grandmother Ina Robison into her house after a family outing left her exhausted. The family had been out celebrating the birthday of Taylor’s grandmother and Ina’s daughter, Brenda Robison.

Brenda said Ina, pictured above, started laughing when Taylor picked her up. She also said the grandkids and great-grandkids help her care for Ina. “They are so good to her!” she said.

## Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

**March 2015**  
Durant - Mon., Wed. and Fri.  
Broken Bow - Mon., Wed. and Fri.; Idabel by appt.  
Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-0115 Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Durant 8:00-4:30	3	4 Antlers by appt.	5	6 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	7
8	9 Durant 8:00-4:30	10 Talihina 10:00-2:00 Wilburton by appt.	11 Crowder by appt.	12	13 Wright City by appt.	14
15	16 Durant 8:00-4:30	17 Poteau 11:30-1:00	18 McAlester 10:00-2:00	19	20	21
22	23 Durant 8:00-4:30	24 Stigler by appt.	25 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	26	27 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	28
29	30 Durant 8:00-4:30	31				



# SPORTS

## Athlete-scholar takes success from football field to workforce

Cordell Zalenski is the embodiment of a successful college student.

Zalenski is a 2012 graduate of Durant High School and is pursuing a degree in accounting at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. He is on an athletic scholarship for football, playing defensive positions for the Harding Bison.

He has completed two summer internships within the Choctaw Nation and will be branching out in 2015 with an internship at WalMart corporate headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas.

For Zalenski, each experience has been a stepping stone toward greater successes, in the classroom, on the football field and in the real world. His summer internships at Choctaw Nation—with Chahta Foundation in 2013 and Health Services in 2014—were eye-opening experiences.

“I really learned a lot those two summers, it was a blast,” Zalenski said on a recent holiday visit to Choctaw Nation headquarters in Durant. “It really helped me, working on those projects, to get real-world experience.”

He also worked with the summer youth employment program, now called Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, while in high school. He credits that program, as well



Cordell Zalenski credits a pair of Choctaw Nation internships, as well as success on the football field, for helping pave his path to academic success.

as Seth Fairchild at Chahta Foundation and Kellie Elliott at Health Services, for helping him achieve major milestones on his collegiate path.

But, let’s be honest: This really starts on the gridiron.

Zalenski was a stand-out defenseman for the Durant Lions, which earned him a spot on the Harding roster. The Bison have finished 9-2 for the past several seasons and once again reached the Division II playoff bracket this past December.

Zalenski played in 11 games, racking up

nearly two dozen tackles, three quarterback sacks and a forced fumble. “I did have a blocked kick, but it’s not on my stats,” he said. “I remember feeling it.”

With a red-shirt season behind him, he has two seasons of eligibility remaining. Thoughts of a college transfer have given way to loyalty to his Bison teammates, and Zalenski says he plans to remain a Bison this coming fall.

“We have really high aspirations and we know we can do better,” he said. “We have really good guys, a team full of leaders. It’s going to be a fun year.”

But the off-season takes a lot of work. “You’re usually sore all the time,” he said of the winter and spring work-outs.

“It’s every day training, a lot of working hard to get better. It sounds old-fashioned,” Zalenski said. “It’s just being able to run every play as fast as you can, waking up and eating a lot of protein shakes, training your body to take blows so you can last through the season.”

Then of course there are accounting classes and the big internship awaiting him in the summer. “My mom’s more proud of the academic side, I think,” he said.

Connie Zalenski’s pride in her children goes way beyond academics or athletics.

“I admire each and every one of them,” she said of her three children, two of whom also work at Choctaw Nation. On Cordell, she says: “I am proud of his faith in God. He takes it into the classroom and onto the field. He doesn’t just talk it, he lives it.”

As a single parent, she received support from the Choctaw Nation as well as their local church in Lane while the kids were growing up. She said Cordell has been “a real positive role model” for his young nephew who has been adopted into the household.

Zalenski said his mom is urging him to return to the Choctaw Nation, which he said he may do after “testing the waters” outside of the 10 ½ counties. His mother works in the tribal accounting office, while brother Waddell Hearn Jr. is in marketing and sister Amber Hearn is a therapist at WindHorse, a tribally run facility in McAlester.

But first, there is the matter of a 12-game football season starting this September: “Hopefully, I’ll be wearing some (championship) rings,” Zalenski said.

It could be the latest in many successes ahead for this Choctaw athlete.

## It’s official: Wood to OU



Dalton Wood

Dalton Wood of McAlester has committed to play football at the University of Oklahoma.

“Officially signed!!! Part of the family now. Ready to do this thing. #boomer-sooner,” reads his Twitter feed at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 4 – the second prospect of the morning to commit according to soonersports.com.

Woods was a quarterback all four years for the Buffaloes, amassing 3,955 passing yards and 3,170 on the ground. He had his hand in 97 touchdowns during his high school career.

The Woods family has roots in Clayton. Dalton, a 6-foot-4 potential tight end for the Sooners, says one of the many things for which he gives thanks is “being Choctaw.”



Evan Sanders, a junior left-handed pitcher from Haileyville, joins the Savage Storm squad this season.

## Sanders to continue education at SE

Choctaw Nation member Evan Sanders has joined the baseball squad at Southeastern Oklahoma State University after two seasons at the two-year college level.

Sanders is a native of the Hartshorne and Haileyville areas. The 6-foot-2 junior is the son of Dwayne and Lori Sanders. His father is a maintenance supervisor at Jones Academy.

He is a left-handed pitcher for the Savage Storm this season and saw his first Division II action in the season opener

Jan. 31 against Texas A&M University International in Laredo.

“I started playing tee-ball when I was five,” Sanders said. From there, he played at Hartshorne High School where he was an all-state selection and earned his scholarship at EOSC.

He credits EOSC coaches Craig Price and Curt Dixon for helping him capitalize on the opportunity to continue his collegiate career at Southeastern. Sanders is an occupational health and safety major at SE.

“I’m thinking about fire safety, maybe being a firefighter,” Sanders said of post-graduate plans. “I may turn that around for natural gas safety, maybe stay closer to home. That may be a better fit for me, I’m not a big city guy.”

The outdoor life has always appealed to Sanders and his family and there is no shortage of opportunity in his chosen field, closer to home. Sanders’ success story is of one Choctaw who is finding ways to keep his talents and opportunities here within the Choctaw Nation.

## Youth Stickball League taking applications for new season

Choctaw Nation Youth Stickball is gearing up for its second season with games to be held through April. This season will start with six Choctaw Nation teams and one from the Chickasaw Nation.

Depending on participation, there are plans for two divisions for 8-12 years and 13-17 years. Teams for 2015:

### Talihina: Koi Iskitini (Little Cats)

Colors: Black and gold.  
Practices: Wed./Thurs. 6 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m.  
Head Coach: Mikey Melton (918) 318-0785

### Broken Bow Area: Hiloha Osi (Little Thunder)

Colors: Blue and orange.  
Practices: Mon./Tues./Fri. 4-6 p.m.  
Head Coach: Stanley Shomo (580) 584-3636

### Hugo/Antlers: Nashoba Homma (Red Wolves)

Colors: Red and black.  
Practices: Mon./Fri. 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 3 p.m.  
Head Coach: Brandy Sigler (580) 775-1648

### Durant: Osi Heli (Flying Eagles)

Colors: Neon yellow, gray and pink.  
Practices: Thurs. 4:45 p.m. and Sunday 5 p.m.  
Head Coach: Jared (Pinti) Tom (580) 775-0725

### Poteau: Yvnnvsh Homma (Red Buffalo)

Colors: Red and white  
Head Coach: Duane Hornbuckle (918) 721-1294

### McAlester: Tanvp Issuba (War Horse)

Colors: Purple, gold, neon yellow and black  
Head Coach: Rashad Cusher (918) 424-1220

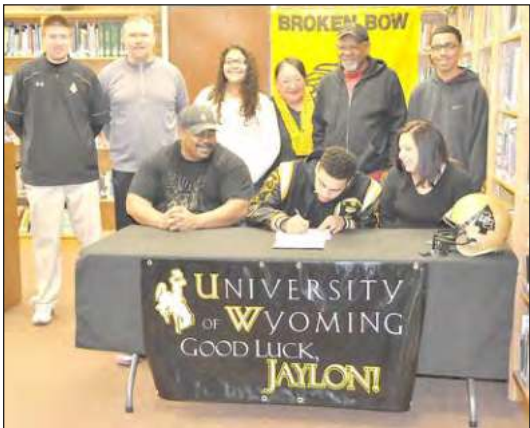
### Chickasaw Nation: Bak Bak (Woodpeckers)

Colors: Yellow, blue and red.  
Head Coach: Clovis Hamilton (580) 795-6417

### Stickball Parents:

Please fill out the membership application form and save it. Contact your team coach for more information about registration.

## Jaylon Watson selects Wyoming



Jaylon Watson signs his letter of intent to play football at Wyoming seated with parents Lonnie Watson Jr. and Jennifer Watson. (back, l-r) Broken Bow coaches Brad Hill and Scott Pratt, sister Mya, grandmother Brenda Hadley, grandfather Lonnie Watson Sr. and brother Reece.

Jaylon Watson from Broken Bow continued the parade of Choctaws committing to Division I collegiate football on National Signing Day, Feb. 4.

Watson was surrounded by family and Savage coaches when he signed his letter of intent. Mom Jennifer Watson and dad Lonnie Watson—both collegiate athletes themselves—were in attendance and beaming with pride.

Watson was named an all-star defensive lineman for his work in the 2014 season. This led to his recruitment by several colleges and ultimately Watson chose the University of Wyoming.

“Ever since third grade, he has had a pigskin in his hands,” said father Lonnie Watson, who played baseball at Southeastern. His mother, Jennifer, was an all-state guard for the Eagle-town Eagles and went on to play basketball at Connors State.

Jaylon’s brother Reece, a two-sport athlete himself, and sister Mya were on hand at the signing ceremony, as well as Jaylon’s grandparents and Broken Bow coaches Scott Pratt and Brad Hill.

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

2015 – STICKBALL YOUTH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

AGE RANGE – 8 – 17 YEARS

CHILD’S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNICITY: ☐ African American ☐ Caucasian ☐ American Indian ☐ Hispanic ☐ Multi-Racial ☐ other

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ GENDER: ☐ M ☐ F SHIRT SIZE \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY INFORMATION:

PARENT/GUARDIAN’S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL# \_\_\_\_\_ WORK# \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE LIST ADDITIONAL RELATIVE AND /OR FRIEND TO CONTACT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AND PARENTS CANNOT BE REACHED.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RELATION \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RELATION \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any serious medical problems/conditions/handicaps, explain in detail: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE ATTACH HEALTH INSURANCE VERIFICATION AND A COPY OF TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP IF APPLICABLE

TEAMS: ☐ TALIHINA ☐ MCCURTAIN COUNTY ☐ HUGO/ANTLERS ☐ DURANT

☐ Poteau ☐ McAlester ☐ Chickasaw Nation

\*\*\*\*\*PARENT PERMISSION\*\*\*\*\*

My child is joining **The Choctaw Nation Stickball League** with my permission. I understand that Choctaw Nation is not responsible for injury, medical expense, or loss of personal property while this CHILD is participating in the league. If, in my opinion of Choctaw Nation staff/volunteers, my child has a medical emergency, I give my permission for him/her to be examined/treated by licensed medical personnel at my expense. An ambulance may be called if deemed necessary for transportation. By signing below, I also give my expressed permission for my child to be videotaped or photographed for publicity purposes.

CONSENT FOR TRANSPORTATION: As a participant of the Choctaw Nation Stickball League, I understand the representatives of the Choctaw Nation Stickball League may provide transportation to the player as part of this activity. I also understand that the player may engage in activities while in the company of the Choctaw Nation Stickball League representatives which may involve the risk of personal injury and/or property damage.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Coming soon: Team Tvshka Homma trading cards

Biskinik is currently gathering posed and action photos of Choctaw stickball players for an ongoing trading card project. We will start with Team Tvshka Homma, the official team of Choctaw Nation, but this could branch out to other adult and youth teams in the future. To submit photos for this project, email a photo with name and phone number to:

biskinik@choctawnation.com



(FRONT)



EDUCATION

Native Studies master’s degree offered at SE

By ZACH MAXWELL  
Choctaw Nation

The first participants in a new Native-themed master’s degree program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University have taken to (online) classrooms as of January. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education approved the degree plan last fall. Its official name: The Master of Science in Native American Leadership, known in academic circles by its acronym, MSNAL.

“Southeastern is recognized around the country as a leader in providing higher education opportunities and services to its Native American students,” said Southeastern President Sean Burrage, a Choctaw Nation tribal member. “This innovative master’s degree certainly enhances the programs we have in place at the university.”

Co-directors of the new program are Dr. Bryon Clark, a dean at SE and an associate vice president for academic affairs at the university, as well as Chris Wesberry, director of the school’s Native American Center for Student Success.

“The MSNAL is a result of university faculty and staff working with tribal partners to develop a degree that includes Native American topics and leadership concepts,” Wesberry said. “With this degree, students are able to take courses such as ‘Effective Communication Through Presentations’ while also taking ‘Geography and Treaties.’ The combination of historical and culturally relevant courses and courses focused on leadership skills is very unique.”

The curriculum was two years in the making, Wesberry



Photo by Brandon Frye  
Masters students Jennifer Kemp and Twahna Hamill (left to right) with professor and advisor Chris Wesberry on the front lawn of Southeastern Oklahoma State University as students play stickball behind them. Kemp and Hamill are both working to earn a master’s degree in Native Studies.

said, and includes a required 32 hours from a list of courses with titles such as “Developing the Native American Leader” and “Current Topics in Indian Country.” All classes are online, with students in five states currently enrolled, but live classes could be on the horizon.

At an average price of \$10,000, Wesberry said the Native master’s degree is very affordable compared to those offered at other universities. Coupled with tribal member and employee incentives at the Choctaw Nation, the value becomes evident.

“It’s really catered to tribal employees who work 40-plus hours a week,” Wesberry said. “It’s not limited to them, but (tribal employees) were definitely our target. You have to have some leadership

skills in all management positions.” Southeastern’s partnership with the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations was enhanced recently with the announcement of a \$1.1 million, four-year grant from the U.S. department of Education Office of Indian Education. This Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Grant will assist native students pursuing degrees in early childhood and special education.

There are currently 30 participants in the master’s program being taught by five instructors. Southeastern also offers an MBA (accounting) program with an emphasis on Native American Leadership. For more information on these new degree tracks, contact Wesberry at (580) 745-2376. Or visit: <http://www.se.edu/dept/native-american-leadership-masters/>

Yardley earns bachelor’s degree



Max Thomas Yardley graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond on Dec. 13, 2014 having studied Business Administration and Finance, with a minor in Spanish.

Yardley has been employed at Midfirst Bank in Edmond for the last two years. He will continue his education by beginning a master’s degree in banking and finance.

He is the great grandson of the late Roy D. Trahern, original enrollee from Ada, the grandson of the late Jim R. Trahern of Ada, and son of Julie N. Trahern-Yardley and Rockie Yardley.

Max and his family would like to take this opportunity to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the financial support he has received from them during his college years.

Child Care Assistance Now Accepting Applications

Child Care Assistance is currently accepting applications. We are contacting people on the waiting list to fill out an application. If you are on the waiting list and have not been contacted or would like to fill out an application, please contact the eligibility caseworker for your county.

Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw and Coal Co.: Margie Cloud 580-924-8280 ext. 2387 [mccloud@choctawnation.com](mailto:mccloud@choctawnation.com)  
Haskell, Hughes, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg and Pushmataha Co.: Courtney Loper 580-924-8280 ext. 2390 [cloper@choctawnation.com](mailto:cloper@choctawnation.com)

Spotlight on Elders

cont’d from page 2

This work involved stripping small trees of their bark with a draw knife so they could be made into fence posts. Jerry called it a “running thing” in the 1950s, with post yards all over the piney hills of far southeastern Oklahoma.

“A machine does it now,” Shirley said of the post work. “Dad used to tell us, you better get an education because a machine will take this over in the future.”

Wages were low and indeed, peeling poles became a thing of the past. Once the Lowman’s daughter reached schooling age, Shirley applied to work as a teacher’s aide in the Johnson O’Malley program. She retired a few years ago after 35 years as an aide and bus driver for Smithville schools.

In the early 1970s, the Lowmans were part of a large group who joined Pastors Gene Wilson and John Bohanan on a journey to eastern Mississippi to visit the Choctaw Reservation at Pearl River.

“Gene was in charge of Christian education and he wanted to do cultural things for the Choctaws here,” Shirley said. “He wrote a proposal and received a grant. For me, culture was something I never thought about: Who we were, where we came from.”

They visited Nvnih Waiya, even as local Choctaws warned them not to go inside the cave. “They said, ‘Something is going to grab you,’” Jerry said.

“I was kind of afraid but I followed the trail and made it to look at the real Nvnih Waiya,” he said. “You see the big mound out there and say, ‘How did people build something like that?’ It is something to see Nvnih Waiya out there.”

They also experienced first-hand the racism of the Deep South in the wake of the Civil Rights era – something they said was absent from rural Oklahoma at the time. The Lowmans shared stories with Teresa Billy about their Mississippi visit, where white business owners refused to let them do laundry and others denied them shelter at a church after their car broke down.

And it took a few visits to the Mississippi Choctaw Indian Fair, but soon the Lowmans were in contact with people like Tony Bell and Prentiss and Amy Jackson—keepers of the time-honored dances and chants of the Choctaws.

“If a person wants to learn, he’s going to have to be really dedicated to want to learn it,” Jerry said of the chanting. “My goal was to chant, to learn. We practiced just about every week and finally got it down the way it’s supposed to be done.”

They speak of three dance styles: Social dancing, animal dances and the War Dance. Over the years, the Lowmans were at the head of a group that took the dances to fairs, festivals and parades across the Choctaw Nation.

Jerry said the animal dances honor the contributions that various creatures made to the Choctaws. Dances honoring turtles, ducks and of course the rattlesnake are meant to show appreciation to these creatures for providing food or protecting crops from nuisances.

Jerry also spoke of the rarely seen Ribbon Woman Dance that honors the four directions and offers a chance for a historian to tell the Choctaw story while a couple chants in very low tones. The Lowmans said their group employed this dance but they know of no pictures or videos of this particular dance.

Like the language, there are subtle differences between Oklahoma Choctaw dancing and the Mississippi style. But both are flourishing in recent years thanks to a new generation of Choctaws on both sides of the river following in the footsteps of honored elders such as Jerry and Shirley Lowman.

To see the Lowmans’ interview, go to [choctawnation.com](http://choctawnation.com).

Chahta Anumpa  
Aii khvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Pronoun – you (all) – hvsh

**Katimikma tvmaha hvsh ilhkola chi?**  
When will you (all) go to town?

**A chukka hvsh ona chike!**  
You (all) (come and arrive) to my house!

**Hvsh talowa hinla ho?**  
Can you (all) sing?

**Hiloha hvsh haklo ha?**  
Did you (all) hear the thunder?

**Katimma hvsh impa ha?**  
Where did you (all) eat?

**Nanta hvsh chompa chi?**  
What will you (all) buy?

hvsh – you (all)  
a chukka – my house  
achi – future tense  
ha?– past tense(did)  
ho? – question marker  
chike – shall; in the future  
ilhkola chi– go; plural, as in a group(future tense)  
ona – to arrive  
talowa – sing  
hinla – can/may  
hiloha – thunder  
haklo – hear/listen  
katimma – where?  
tvmaha – town, city  
impa – eat  
nanta – what?  
chompa – buy  
katimikma – when?, in the future

[www.choctawschool.com](http://www.choctawschool.com)

Williston earns bachelor’s degree



Teyler Bryse Williston graduated with his bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from East Central University, in Ada. He is employed with the Pontotoc County Sheriff’s department, and is an active reservist in the United States Air Force. His future plans include attending the Federal Marshal Training Academy.

He is the son of Angie McKinney-Williston of Durant, and Terry Williston of Idabel. He is the grandson of the late William Williston of Idabel.

**Les Williston**  
**Coach**

HOMETOWN: BROKEN BOW

OCCUPATION: CHOCTAW NATION CULTURAL EVENTS

FAVORITE MOMENT: "EVERY TIME WE PLAY"

QUOTE: "STICKBALL IS A SACRED CEREMONY, AN ANCESTRAL CONNECTION"

#69

(BACK)

**Lots of fun for the kids**  
Learn to play & Participate in Corn Game – Chunky and Rabbit stick toss  
Temporary Tattoos  
Learn to make a blow gun dart  
1<sup>st</sup> 25 get free traditional style blow gun  
Make and take crafts classes

**SPECIAL RAFFLE ON SATURDAY**  
Tickets to California Theme Parks  
Make sure to purchase your tickets at the gathering.

**Learn how to play & participate in**  
**Stickball youth & adult**  
**Corn Game**  
**Rabbit stick Toss**  
**Traditional Dance**  
**Learn the war dance**  
**Flint Napping**

**We need young ladies 6- 23 yrs to run**  
**for Okla Chahta Clan Princess**  
**contact us to see how**

**Save the Date**  
**May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015**  
**20<sup>th</sup>**  
**Annual California Choctaw Cultural Gathering**  
**Facebook: Okla Chahta Clan Of California**  
**Ambassador**  
**Okla Chahta Clan of CA Inc.**  
**Bakersfield College**  
**Bakersfield, CA**

**History & Culture Booth**  
traditional items on display

**Make & take classes**  
Beading Baskets  
pottery

**SUNDAY FREE PANCAKE BREAKFAST**  
Enjoy Choctaw Church on Sunday w/Olin Williams  
Classes & dancing

**More being planned**  
Stay tuned  
Follow us on twitter - @oklachahta  
[www.oklachahta.org](http://www.oklachahta.org)  
661-319-6308  
[choctaws@oklachahta.org](mailto:choctaws@oklachahta.org)

**Special Honoring of our Warriors Past and Present**  
Email us a picture of your vet/active duty warrior for our wall of honor. List name, rank & branch or bring picture with you to gathering

Sunday have your picture taken in traditional Choctaw clothing  
Participate in Traditional dancing

**Free Saturday dinner**  
Email or call to register  
Evening social dancing and Stickball after dinner

Please email us and give us your email address so we can keep you informed of events  
[choctaws@oklachahta.org](mailto:choctaws@oklachahta.org)  
get involved email and let us know your interests & skills



# CULTURAL

Iti Fabussa

## Choctaws and the War of 1812: A high point in relations with the U.S.

Part 2 of 2 (continued from January)

Some Choctaws joined the Creek War on their own initiative. Mushulatubbe preferred not to fight alongside U.S. soldiers in battle for fear that the Euro-Americans wouldn't recognize the Choctaws as allies. In the fall of 1813, he and Talking Warrior led Choctaw war parties against the Red Sticks on the Black Warrior River, in former Choctaw territory that had been taken by the Muscogee.

Pushmataha raised a battalion of 135 men, made up of four companies of Choctaw warriors. All of its officers were Choctaw war leaders. The battalion was commanded by Pushmataha, who received a commission of Lieutenant Colonel. Men from the Choctaw battalion engaged and defeated Red Sticks on Burnt Corn Creek in Dec 1813. A few days later, the Choctaw battalion saw minor action under General Claiborne at the Battle of Holy Ground Dec 23, 1813, where a Red Stick force, low on ammunition, was routed.

In January, Choctaw forces destroyed two Red Stick towns and a fort in the Black Warrior River Valley. In February, Pushmataha lead another successful campaign in the area. By March, Choctaw war parties had swept the Black Warrior region of Red Stick forces. In March, a force of more than 400 Choctaws accompanied General Cole to Alabama heights, saw limited action for a month, then returned home for spring planting. Like many other U.S. soldiers, they did not receive payment.

In late August, Andrew Jackson wrote a letter requesting the help of the Choctaw warriors in his upcoming campaign

against British forces in the Southeast. 795 Choctaws, including Pushmataha reported to Fort Montgomery and were mustered in as regular troops. In and around Pensacola, they fought in the last skirmishes of the Creek War, moping up Red Stick warriors concealed in the swamps.

After the Red Sticks were subdued, the US, ignoring the fact that many Muscogees had fought against the Red Sticks in the war, demanded that Muscogee communities cede to the United States more than 21 million acres of land in the Treat of Fort Jackson.

In late December 1814, more than 11,000 British troupes massed in coastal Louisiana. Their intent was to capture the town of New Orleans and force an end to the War of 1812. A group of 50 or 60 Choctaws, under Pierre Juzan, left Pensacola and joined the impending battle under Andrew Jackson. For a while, the Choctaws made patrols to prevent British incursions into the American line. As the British force pushed closer to New Orleans, the Choctaws' position was on the extreme left of the American line, at the edge of a swamp.

On December 28th, a party of 200 Tennessee riflemen under Captain Canvell, entered the swamp and came upon a British force supported by two companies. In the skirmish, the British killed Captain Canvell and several men. Suddenly, withering rifle fire began from the British rear. It was the Choctaws. They could not be seen, but their effect was devastating. The Choctaw contingent, much smaller than the American force, inflicted more than half of the casualties on the British in that engagement.

After that, the Choctaws were constantly engaged day and night in skirmishes with the British sentries in the area. One Choctaw man named Poindexter killed 5 British pickets in three nights. Ultimately, the Americans won the Battle of New Orleans, with very few casualties. The small Choctaw force played a significant role, by constantly harassing the British. This battle essentially ended the War of 1812. The Choctaws who fought in it called the engagement "Balbaha Ittibi", literally "Foreign-Language-Speaking Battle" (Hudson 1932) after the old Choctaw name for the Mississippi River.

In December 1815, Mississippi territorial government gave special recognition to Pushmataha and other Choctaw leaders for their efforts in protecting Anglo settlements in the Creek War. Just 14 years later, Mississippi, which had by then been admitted to the Union, passed resolutions that declared Choctaw lands "state property", and "terminated" Choctaw sovereignty, thereby making Choctaw communities subject to the state's laws and possible attack by the militia (Hudson 1976:455). In 1830, Andrew Jackson who had called on and received Choctaw aid when he needed it most, signed the Indian Removal Act. The same year, he sent government agents into Choctaw country, who threatened the Choctaw people with unprovoked military action by the United States, if they did not agree to relinquish their homeland.

Unless otherwise noted, the above information is summarized from "The Creek War of 1813 and 1814" (Halbert and Ball 1895).



Photo provided

Raven Baker, in 1800's style Choctaw dress, cuts sausage in preparation for the day's meal. Behind are visitors of the park interacting with students involved in a cooking demonstration.



Photo provided by the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

Caleb Sullivan participates in a musket firing demonstration for park visitors. He is wearing a turban and French frock coat—both were worn by Choctaw men in the early 1800's.

## Choctaw Nation participates in Battle of New Orleans reenactment

By RYAN SPRING

Choctaw Nation

On Jan. 8, 1815, a group of Choctaw warriors helped Andrew Jackson save the United States from a massive British invasion at the end of the War of 1812. Two hundred years later to the day, Raven Baker and Caleb Sullivan, two youths from the Choctaw Nation traveled to New Orleans to participate in the celebration of the anniversary of this battle.

Mentored by Ryan Spring of the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department, Raven and Caleb were part of the National Park Service's "Recognizing our Roots: Choctaw Youth Living History Program."

Each year, this program works with Choctaw students from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, to learn about the history of the battle and the War of 1812. At the end, students from each of the three Choctaw tribes are able to come together on the original battle site, Chalmette Battlefield, and participate in a reenactment where they portray the lifestyle of the Choctaw people who fought at that battle in 1815.

In October 2014, these Choctaw youths traveled to Jena, Louisiana, to participate in the 2nd Annual Tribal EXPO hosted by the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians. At the EXPO the students

were fitted into period clothing, learned history on the War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans, and instructed in military drills from the period. They were also able to see Choctaw basketry makers, potters, leather workers, finger weavers, and other artists.

On Jan. 8, the day of the bicentennial had arrived and the students were excited to begin showing what they had learned as a battle reenactment took place. Men began to construct tents, build a Choctaw palmetto shelter, gather firewood, and carry buckets of water. Meanwhile the women began to build a fire and prepare the food that everyone would be eating that day.

Soon, after the camp was set-up, hundreds of visitors began to arrive. The students now had to put their skills to the test to teach the eager visitors about Choctaw culture and history. In between musket firing drills and tending the camp, the students demonstrated stickball, teaching visitors fundamentals of the game. During downtime the youths were able to visit other camps such as blacksmiths, powder horn makers and the British camp.

If any parents or students are interested in participating in the "Recognizing our Roots: Choctaw Youth Living History Program" next year, please contact Ryan L. Spring with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Historic Preservation Dept. at (800) 522-6170 ext. 2137 or send an email to rspring@choctawnation.com. Students must be from the ages of 14 to 17 and must be a Tribal Member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. More details will be available this September.

## Choctaw families come together with CNO Children and Family Services

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma seeks to promote healthy, successful, productive, and self-sufficient lifestyles for its proud families. Children and Family Services—with the help of outstanding Choctaw men and women—helps to ensure such lifestyles for our Choctaw children.

Among the individuals protecting and nurturing our youth are husband and wife Cliff and Cindy Taylor, both from large families of their own, who received a wonderful addition to their family when they adopted their son Hayden.

"Cliff and I have wanted to have children of our own—with many attempts and doctor appointments we tried to conceive," Cindy said. "We were both open to the thought of adoption."

After the two moved back to Cindy's hometown of McAlester, they began looking into foster care and adoption. They said the process was exciting and nerve-wracking.

"We took in our first child, Hayden, a 3-year-old little boy, in September of 2012. He is full of energy and keeps us on our toes at all times, but he is what we live for everyday," Cindy said. The couple finalized the adoption on July 31, 2013.

"We would love for our family size to grow. Hayden is asking for a baby brother or sister. I have to remind Hayden it is all up to God and what He wants for us, I tell him to pray and ask God to bless us with a baby brother or sister."

Patrik and Keaton Lovell of McCurtain are also among the Choctaw citizens working to protect our youth. Patrik is a Physical Therapist Assistant and Keaton is a Speech Language Pathologist.

The tragic loss of their first baby in July 2013 led the Lovells to the path of foster care. It was a heart-breaking time in their lives, but they say good has come from the loss.

"We originally applied for the adoption program,



Photo Provided

Cliff and Cindy Taylor enjoy a day outdoors with their son Hayden.

but God directed us to foster care," said Keaton. "He opened our eyes and hearts to foster children, children who need a safe, loving home."

Keaton is Choctaw and was very excited to find out they could be involved in foster care through the Choctaw Nation.

"We are thankful for the Choctaw Family Services," she said. "It hasn't always been easy, but it's been worth it. Today, we have two beautiful foster children in our home and our beautiful two-month-old baby girl. We hope and pray that more people decide to become involved in foster care through knowing us and the precious children currently in our lives."

The Taylor and Lovell families are perfect examples of successful Choctaw homes growing thanks to the Choctaw Nation's Children and Family Services. But, there are more of our Choctaw children in need of stable homes and families.

The Choctaw Nation Adoption and Foster Care Department is in desperate need of many more homes for our youth. If you are a member of a Choctaw family that lives in Oklahoma and are interested in foster care or just want to help by being a respite home, contact Larry Behrens at (580) 924-8280 ext. 2331 and lbehrens@choctawnation.com, or Justin McDaniel at (580) 924-8280 ext. 2539 and jrmdaniel@choctawnation.com.



Chief Gary Batton

MARCH 14 - 11AM

EASTER CELEBRATION

SPEAKERS: CHIEF GARY BATTON ASST. CHIEF AUSTIN

BRING LAWN CHAIRS & ENJOY FAMILY FUN



THE GREAT SEAL OF THE CHOCTAW NATION

TVSKAHOMMA - CAPITAL GROUNDS

GOSPEL SINGING • KIDS (12&UNDER) & ELDERLY (55&UP) EGG HUNT • EASTER BUNNY PHOTOS

INFLATABLES • STICKBALL • HORSESHOES • CHECKERS • DOMINOS

SUPERVISED SOFTBALL & BASKETBALL COURTS (NO SCHEDULED TOURNAMENTS)

RAIN OR SHINE • LUNCH PROVIDED • LIMITED TRANSPORTATION FROM COMMUNITY CENTERS



# CULTURAL GATHERINGS

## San Antonio



Catherine Caldwell brought her two sons, Adam and Caleb, to learn about their Choctaw heritage.



Jeannette Kralik and her granddaughter, Lezlie Pond, purchase stick-ball sticks from Brenner Billy.



Joel Briggs, Rena Winship, and Chief Gary Batton, pose in front of the landscape Mr. Briggs painted. He donated the proceeds to Choctaw Nation Higher Ed.



Terrence and Vanessa Carter register their children, Avery and Noah, for their CDIB cards.



Cindy Smith and her daughter Jerica model their matching Choctaw beadwork.



Chief Gary Batton visits with Danette, Spencer, and Fletcher Koebele from Austin, Texas.

## Fresno



Victor Balderaz and his son, Maximus, present Chief Gary Batton with a hand made wood carving.



Rayson Allen and his family from San Jose, California, enjoy experiencing the Choctaw culture in Fresno.



Jimmie Stolz, Carole Stolz, and Eric Stolz (left to right) of Manteca, California, visit with Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



Lt. Carrie Thrasher from the U.S. Public Health Service pauses for a picture during the Fresno cultural meeting.



Glenda and Homer Bell show off their newly made loop beaded earrings during the make & take.



The Morris family from Fresno, California, pose with Chief Batton during the Fresno cultural meeting.

Photos by  
Ronni Pierce &  
Payton Guthrie

## San Bernardino



Bill Harrison shows Cody Rasch how to use a traditional Choctaw kiti.



Nina Ramos of Beaumont, California, learns how to bead an earring.



Rebecca Knight and her family pose with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



Miss Okla-Chahta Princess 2014-2015 Haley Scott and her family help spread the Choctaw Culture during the San Bernardino cultural meeting.

### Upcoming cultural events

March 2015 • Ada, Muskogee, and Tulsa, Oklahoma

If you are not receiving your letter informing you of upcoming cultural events in your area, please give us a call. We'll make sure your contact information is correct.  
800.522.6170, ext. 2116, 2409 or 2310  
Dates and locations are subject to change.