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# MVSKOKE NEWS

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## GOVERNOR VETO DIRECTLY IMPACTS PUBLIC SAFETY

HOUSE BILL 3501 AIMING TO INCREASE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY COORDINATION, BLOCKED BY STITT

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma – The Muscogee Nation responded to Governor Kevin Stitt’s veto of House Bill 3501; legislation developed to increase the coordination between state agencies and tribal judicial systems in the state to promote the general safety of all Oklahomans.

The Nation’s response stated that Stitt’s veto of the public safety bill is just a prime example of how “his actions work against the best interests of every single person in Oklahoma.”

Concerning motor vehicles, the

bill required the Department of Public Safety to recognize and act upon specific reports of conviction and disqualify driving privileges, define certain terms, provide codification and declare an emergency in a qualified tribal court.

“Gov. Stitt directly refuses to allow the State Department of Public Safety to revoke state-issued driver’s license of persons with tribal- court convictions for DUI, vehicular manslaughter/negligent homicide, and other specified crimes.”

According to the Nations response, it is “absurd” that the Stitt will allow this to go on, ultimately giving those criminals the

ability to continue using their state-issued licenses after committing crimes where the state would act by suspending or revoking a license.

“The House and Senate each passed this bill with near unanimity,” the Nation responded.

More than 96 percent of Oklahoma lawmakers supported House Bill 3501 at the state Capitol, only to see the legislation vetoed by Governor Stitt.

The vote in the House was 69 yeas, three nays, 28 exc.; the Senate was 44 yeas, one negative, and three excused.

“We encourage them to answer Gov. Stitt’s veto with a vote to override and ensure this law goes into effect for all in Oklahoma.”

Looking at the relationship between the Oklahoma District and tribal courts including the MCN, history shows that the courts have had a reciprocal (full faith and credit) arrangement since the 1990s.

The response claims that the



MCN encourages state legislatures to override Stitt’s veto. (Shutterstock)

vetoed legislation would apply that full-faith-and-credit relationship to the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety.

“The Governor’s veto, if allowed to stand, means that the Department of Public Safety will lose the benefit of using tribal court convictions to improve public safety on the roadways.”

Below are reference materials provided by the MCN supporting

the full-faith-and-credit in tribal judicial proceedings.

Oklahoma statute recognizing judicial proceedings in tribal faith and credit: <https://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=93646>

Oklahoma District Courts listing of full-faith-and-credit tribal courts: <https://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=458214>



Mary Kathryn Nagle and Jonodev Chaudhuri presented “On the Far End” at the National Capital Play Festival. (Submission)

## “ON THE FAR END” PLAY MAKES PUBLIC DEBUT AT TABLE READING

THE PLAY’S STORY FOCUSES ON MUSCOGEE CULTURE, HISTORY AND ISSUES WHILE HONORING A MVSKOKE MOTHER’S LEGACY

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

BETHESDA, Maryland - A new play titled “On the Far End” debuted its first public table reading April 29 and May 1 at the National Capital Play Festival. The play is about the life of Muscogee activist leader, Ella Jean Chaudhuri. The story’s themes focus on Muscogee culture, history and issues. The play is written and performed by Mary Kathryn Nagle, a Cherokee Citizen and the daughter-in-law of Ella Jean Chaudhuri. Nagle’s husband and Ella Jean’s

son, Jonodev Chaudhuri was ecstatic about the production. “I was very thankful and honored that Mary Kathryn was willing to take on mom’s life story as the subject matter for her next play,” Jonodev Chaudhuri said. “It’s especially fitting to be talking to you about this play the day after mother’s day, mom passed away 25 years ago this year.”

The play’s plot details major events from Ella Jean Chaudhuri’s life including fleeing a Native American boarding school, her marriage to a Bengali scholar, and major advocacy for Native

Americans. Issues that the play tackles include alcoholism, mental health, tribal sovereignty, land rights and the Sterilization of Native American Women. “The play that M.K. (Mary Kathryn) has written is about my mom, but she uses my mom’s life to tell a universal Native story that encapsulates all sorts of policy developments of the 20th century,” Jonodev Chaudhuri said.

The title, “On the Far End” is a reference to the landmark Supreme Court opinion on Mc-

DEBUT 2

## RIBBON IS CUT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FACILITY

NEW FACILITY AIMS TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAVE LIVES THROUGH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS



The Principal Chief, Second Chief, Secretary of Health along with National Council representatives cut ribbon on BHS facility. (Heather Griffin)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The Muscogee Nation held a formal ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly constructed 6,000 square-foot Behavioral Health Facility on Thursday May 12.

“We are pleased to be able to provide these much needed services,” Principal Chief David Hill said. “This is a superior facility and was built with the environment of care in mind.”

According to Secretary of Health Shawn Terry, the impact of the pandemic on Native American

people conveyed a need for a space of this sort.

“The pandemic intensified the high rates of substance abuse, mental health disorders, suicide and behavior-related illnesses across the country, especially in our youth,” Terry said.

The facility will offer prevention and treatment services for substance abuse, family counseling, trauma, and suicide as well as education resources.

Terry said the Nation is dedicated to making resources and behavioral healthcare readily available for Native citizens.

BEHAVIORAL- 2

## MCN LIGHTHORSE DEPARTMENT KEEP CITIZENS SAFE DURING SEVERE WEATHER

OFFICERS PERFORMED WATER RESCUES TO STRANDED CITIZENS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police Department worked around the clock the morning of May 5 when heavy thunderstorms swept through Okmulgee county. Patrolmen across Indian Country kept a close eye on the storms to provide updates to central dispatch. MCN Lighthorse Police worked with state and local officials to perform water rescues to stranded motorists stuck in the floods.

According to Officer Dennis Northcross, patrolmen were more

than prepared to help during severe weather conditions, having dealt with the same issues the previous year.

Thunderstorms were responsible for severe flood damage, including the MCN Tribal Complex. One of the hardest hit buildings included the Lighthorse Police Department. The department building sustained water damage, as well as damaged police equipment. This forced the department to relocate buildings. The street the department building is located on, Miami was covered in near waist-high waters making the road impassable to motorists.

As Mvskoke Media was talking

with Lighthorse officials, a motorist in a tan sedan was spotted driving south on Miami St. into the flood waters. Officer Northcross immediately ran outside to alert the motorist that it was unsafe to proceed. The car then stalled in the tall flood waters, the motorist was unaware the road was impassable. Officer Northcross walked over to the stranded car, and proceeded to help with rescue efforts. The inhabitants of the car included a woman, and two children. They were then taken inside the department building to be examined for medical attention.

According to the National



Lighthorse Police Department was one of several MCN buildings that received flood damage. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

Weather Service, more deaths occur due to flooding than any other thunderstorm-related hazard. The Center for Diseases Control and Prevention

report that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehi-

LIGHTHORSE - 2



Skydance Brewing Co. can be found on Instagram @skydancebrewing. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

## NATIVE BUSINESS OWNER REACTS TO SLANDER

JAKE KEYES OWNS A BREWING COMPANY IN OKC

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma – “You don’t look native enough,” said customers to Jake Keyes when they learn that he is the owner of Skydance Brewing Co., the first Native American owned brewery in OKC, according to its website.

Keyes said, an oppressing issue that Natives must tackle from time to time is the perception of others, particularly non-Natives.

Native American owned business could seem like a foreign term

for some, leading people to believe they could experience something ceremonial or spiritual, according to Keyes.

“I don’t know what some of them expect,” Keyes said. “Then they ask who’s the owner, then they point at me and they seem kind of surprised. I think they’d see somebody with a darker complexion maybe sitting on horse with a tomahawk and a head-dress on.”

Keyes said that he usually doesn’t find these comments or remarks coming from other Native Americans, but non-Natives are the ones

who seem to have something to say about his appearance.

“When a lot of people look at me, they don’t see Native American or what they think a Native American should look like,” Keyes said.

With fair skin, green eyes and even reddish hair, Keyes may not fit the stereotypical Indian.

The picture painted into the head of most comes from the stories of Native Americans that are told by the non-native people which Keyes claims are inevitably wrong.

Keyes said the non-native people making these comments might think it is in defense of Native Americans, but in reality it’s their “weird twisted idea” of what Natives looks like.

“I think it’s more important than ever, that we start telling our own story”

Keyes’ personal story telling in-

cludes entrepreneurship, branding, and business.

“The best part about any brand or business is the story and if we don’t tell our own story then somebody else will,” Keyes said. “And they’re going to get it wrong.”

The younger generation is more open to sharing than the elders because of the trauma and hardship they experienced during times where being Indian was basically illegal, Keyes said.

“Those days are over now,” Keyes said. “We don’t have to hide it.”

On the flip side, with over 200 years of U.S. government policy to assimilate and eradicate Native Americans into the non-native, white, Christian culture; Keyes said the result is less and less people look Native American.

According to Keyes, his own family dynamic of having a full blood native mother and a white father could be used as an example to describe the result of colonization.

“We don’t all look like what you see in a movie,” Keyes said.

In a Facebook post addressing the issue Keyes said, “When you look at me, just know that this is what colonization looks like. When you look at me and wonder how a Native could look like me, you should think about “Indian Removal Act.” You should think about “assimilation...”

Despite the efforts to destroy tribal nations, Native Americans are thriving in today’s world, according to Keyes.

“We are here now,” Keyes said. “We aren’t just some terrible story of what happened to some people.”

“We are thriving, we open businesses like this and were successful at businesses.”

Tribes have come quite a long way by running large cash operations like casinos, by being the largest employers in small towns over the state, and now with McGirt have great government influence, Keyes said.

Keyes said the one thing that they have been able to share at Skydance about Native culture, is that Natives are the ultimate gatherers, storytellers, and love community.

“We always have a reason to have a meal together,” Keyes said jokingly.

He said that the taproom of his brewery is a great symbol of that.

Keyes is registered with the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma and family with the Osage Nation and Otoe-Missouria Tribe, was recently named one of Native Business Magazine’s “Top 50 Native Entrepreneurs.” His fiancé Bobbie is an enrolled Muscogee (Creek) citizen; she helps him with brewing and running the business.

Skydance produces five brews including the favorite Fancy Dance, along with a few seasonal beers, such as Sovereign Nation, inspired by the United States’ recognition of tribes as sovereign nations. Keyes serves his late fathers’ oatmeal stout on tap. The beer is distributed to gas stations and small bars in the Oklahoma City area.

In early October, Skydance made its new home to brew at 1 NE 7th St. Suite A, Oklahoma City, OK 73104. For further questions, call 405-768-2154.

Skydance can be found on Instagram @skydancebrewing.

### LIGHTHORSE

Continued from Page 1

cle is driven into hazardous flood waters.

NWS advises motorists to use their trademark Turn Around Don’t Drown method when facing flood waters. If you are driving and see warning signs for flooded areas, do not pass through. Simply turn around, and go the other way. It only takes 12 inches of water to sweep a motor vehicle away.

For more information on what to do in a flood emergency situation, visit: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood-turn-around-dont-drown>.

### BEHAVIORAL

Continued from Page 1

“We know that we can save lives and improve health outcomes by continuing to prioritize behavioral health.”

In addition to more space, BHS has immediate plans to add a therapeutic playground for younger patients to promote processing and skill learning utilizing therapeutic techniques.

According to minorityhealth.hhs.gov, suicide was the second leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Natives between the ages of 10 and 34 in 2019. American

Indian/Alaska Natives are 60 percent more likely to experience the feeling that everything is an effort, all or most of the time, as compared to non-Hispanic whites

Surgeon General Lance Frye, M.D. claims that more than 50 percent of those who suffer from mental illness do not seek help.

“This is due to the stigma that surrounds the diagnosis and treatment for these illnesses,” Frye said.

According to the Surgeon General, one should treat the medical treatment of mental illness and substance abuse the very same as a broken bone or other physical injury or sickness.

“The tribe is prioritizing mental

health; we want to end the stigma now.”

Patients will now have an easy to find location where behavioral health services will be centralized at 2360 E. Highway 62 Okmulgee, OK 74447.

Ground broke on facility in spring of last year after receiving the Indian Health Service Small Ambulatory Grant award of \$2 million, with the Nation funding the remainder needed to complete the project.

NCA 21-089 authorized a ten percent budget modification for the MCNDH Facilities Management third party budget for FY 2021 to help cover the remaining costs.

Tribal Construction Director Steve Emerson said the new build sits on a 26-acre property bought by the Nation just a few years ago.

Formerly know as the Sewell property, it will serve as the Health Department’s Master Plan site to build new healthcare clinic centralizing all health care needs for the Okmulgee area, according to Emerson.

MCNBH offers services to members of any federally recognized tribe living within the Muscogee Reservation boundaries.

For more information about the programs and services visit [www.creekhealth.org/services](http://www.creekhealth.org/services) or call 918-758-1910.

### DEBUT

Continued from Page 1

Girt v. Oklahoma, which upheld the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s sovereignty.

Ella Jean Chaudhuri’s extensive career in Native American advocacy made her the perfect subject for a two hour theatrical production. She was the Executive Director of the Tucson Indian Center that provided tutoring, employee assistance, alcohol counseling, and Native American health issues. She even opened the first off-reservation Indian Health clinic in Tucson, and was the recipient of numerous awards and honors for her advocacy efforts.

Chaudhuri’s advocacy efforts could only be matched by her

storytelling abilities. Her talents were found across many different mediums including stage, literature and traditional oral storytelling. Ella Jean Chaudhuri co-authored the book “A Sacred Path: the way of the Muscogee Creeks” with her husband, Joyotpaul.

A playwright herself, Ella Jean Chaudhuri penned a musical comedy called “Indians Discover Christopher Columbus” on the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ arrival in America. It was only fitting that her own story would be brought to life on stage by Nagle.

Although Nagle never met Ella Jean Chaudhuri herself, she was the natural choice to tell the story in a theatrical setting. Nagle’s career has many parallels to Ella Jean Chaudhuri’s, they are

both advocates for Native American issues and stage playwrights. Nagle’s playwright credits include “Sovereignty”, “Manahatta” and “Return to Niobrara”.

Nagle worked very closely with her husband, Jonodev Chaudhuri, to tell a story that respectfully portrayed the play’s main heroine. “Her life was pretty amazing, everything she survived, everything she fought for, everything she achieved.” Nagle said. “The struggles she had are just very real, balancing her incredibly hard work as an activist with being a mother and raising her children”.

Although a table reading is not the final product in a stage production, it provides opportunities for the production team to see how an audience reacts

to the story. From there, adjustments are made to make the story more engaging. The table read for “On the Far End” was not only attended by the family of Nagle and Jonodev Chaudhuri, but distinguished Muscogee citizens as well.

The table read also presented advocacy opportunities on current tribal issues. “Right now Creek Nation is almost in an existential battle to try to protect and implement the historic McGirt Decision, having federal officials there understand that these stories aren’t just about abstract notions of law and sovereignty, they speak to the heart of our experiences as Native people” Jonodev Chaudhuri said.

Jonodev Chaudhuri believes the play is important in empow-

ering the next generation of Indigenous people. “When we talked about this play the hope was that the play would provide a road map for younger Natives who also have their own struggles in their lives, trying to live a life of purpose, maybe a life of activism or advocacy, while being true to their roots.” Jonodev Chaudhuri said.

The play is currently seeking to hire Native Americans to work on the production as actresses, costume designers, and lighting designers. Nagle said they are also seeking to hire a Muscogee cultural consultant to make sure all aspects of the Muscogee culture and language are authentically portrayed.

“On the Far End” is set to debut at the Roundhouse Theater April 2023.



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# MUSCOGEE NATION PAGEANT IN PERSON

THE PAGEANT WILL BE HELD AT BEGGS HIGH SCHOOL ON JUNE 4 AT 2 PM

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Beggs High School will host the Miss and Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship Pageant 2022-2023 on Saturday, June 4 at 2 pm.

This year, the pageant will be open to the public with no restrictions, but masks will be available.

Royalty Coordinator LuAnn Bear said that the pageant will now be hosted at a different high school throughout the reservation each year.

“We are going to hit these different high schools, so hopefully, the donation that we make will help the native students in that area,” Bear said.

That’s not the only thing new this year, according to Bear.

Students attending vocational or trade schools are now eligible to compete for the Miss title.

This year will feature category winners, giving the young ladies more opportunities to take home a trophy or multiple.

As time is closing down on the competition, there is a final total of six young Mvskoke Hoktes who are in the running for a title.

One of those six is the single Miss Muscogee Nation contestant Tema Yargee.

Assuming the crown belongs to Yargee, she will still participate in the pageant and experience preparation activities.

Yargee will be succeeding current Miss Muscogee Nation Claudia McHenry, who spoke with Mvskoke Radio Show host Gary Fife about her reign.

Bear claims that there were two contestants for the elder title, but the other contestant had to drop out due to her work schedule, leaving Yargee unopposed.

The Jr. Miss contest will be challenging, with five in the running for the title: Bailey Moore, Chenoa Barnett, Emma Whitmore, Winter Beaver and Ariela Rodrigues.

The pageant will showcase the various beauty and talent among the young ladies in this year’s person contest.

Mental health was a shared platform for the girls and if selected, is something that will be promoted by whoever wins.

Each contestant admitted to their nerves, as most have never competed before.

The Royalty Retreat held on May 7 helped the girls feel more comfortable as they were guided and instructed and even tested on the information they learned to help prepare them for the special ceremony.

Spectators can expect to see storytelling in several forms, and some will incorporate the language and even bring their other known heritages in their presentations.

As the last two years’ reign was limited due to COVID restrictions, Bear said she is offering the ones who held those titles a spot in the parade.



Top left to right: Tema Yargee, Chenoa Barnett, and Winter Beaver. Bottom from left to right: Bailey Moore, Ariela Rodriguez, and Emma Whitmore. (Submission)

Jr. Miss Gabby Noriega said she has many emotions as her time as a crown holder is ending.

“It is surreal right now,” Noriega said.

She encourages the other girls by telling them to have confidence on stage, which she learned from her experience.

Bear smiles from ear to ear, talking about the memories she has created with her exiting royalty crew but is excited to

bring on the new reign without COVID.

Beggs High School is located at 1201 9th St. Beggs, OK 74421.

Mvskoke Media will update with more information as it becomes available.



An official date will be announced at a later time. (Shutterstock)

# SCOTUS AGREES TO HEAR ICWA CHALLENGES NEXT TERM

THE 2022-2023 TERM FOR THE SUPREME COURT WILL BEGIN ON OCTOBER 3

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

WASHINGTON D.C. – The United States Supreme Court has agreed to add Haaland v. Brackeen on the agenda for the next term beginning October 3, 2022 and ending October 3, 2023.

Haaland v. Brackeen is the consolidation of three cases: Cherokee Nation v. Brackeen, Texas v. Haaland and Brackeen v. Haaland, for the purpose of a single oral argument regarding the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The states of Indiana, Louisiana and Texas including mother of Native child (baby O) Altargracia Socorro Hernandez and non-Native couples the Brackeens, Cliffords and Librettis are the plaintiffs in the case.

Baby O was ultimately adopted by the Librettis.

The Cherokee Nation, the Oneida Nation, the Quinault Indian Nation, and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians intervened as defendants in support of ICWA.

ICWA was enacted in 1978 intended to preserve Native American families by placing foster and orphan native children with other family members or tribal foster homes.

The three states along with the seven individuals filed a complaint in the U.S. Court for the Northern District of Texas challenging the constitutionality of several provisions of ICWA in March 2018.

According to the complaint, Article I, the anti-commandeering doctrine of the Tenth Amendment, and the equal protection component of the Fifth Amendment, substantive due process, and the non-delegation doctrine were violated.

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior and tribes filed motions for dismissal of the complaint for a lack of standing. In turn, the plaintiffs moved for a summary judgment.

The district court denied the motions to dismiss while

affirming the plaintiffs’ standing and granting summary judgment for the claims made except the due process claims, ruling the ICWA provisions unconstitutional.

An appeal led the U.S. Court of Appeal for the Fifth Circuit to affirm the plaintiffs’ standing in the lower courts judgment holding that ICWA provisions violates the Tenth Amendment yet, reversing the grants of summary judgment.

The Navajo Nation joined the appealing tribes in support of ICWA.

“It allowed tribes ‘to establish an order of adoptive and foster preferences that is different from the order set forth’ by Congress elsewhere in the statute,” per brief summary of this case from Nat’l Horsemen’s Benevolent & Protective Ass’n v. Black.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on September 3, 2021, who agreed to hear the case, adding it to next terms docket on February 28, 2022.

There are three questions being presented to the high court:

1. Whether various provisions of ICWA (particularly the standards, placement, and recordkeeping provisions) violate the tenth amendment.
2. Whether the individual plaintiffs have Article III standing to challenge ICWA’s placement preferences for “other Indian families and Indian foster homes.”
3. Whether Section 1915 (a)(3) and (b)(iii) are rationally related to legitimate governmental interests and therefore consistent with equal protection.

ICWA supporters claim that a ruling invalidating the law could have significant consequences and long-lasting effects for Native American children and tribal rights.

The date of the argument is still pending.

The Supreme Court will likely be made sometime in 2023, depending on the case.



Barrel racers and bull riders come together at CrossBar Arena in Mounds, OK to honor the life of Clay Fisher. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

# FAMILY HONORS YOUNG MAN WITH RODEO EVENT

THE FAMILY OF CLAY FISHER HOSTED THE SECOND FISHER BASH TO HONOR HIS LIFE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

MOUNDS, Oklahoma - The family of Clayton (Clay) Fisher honored his life by hosting the second Fisher Bash 22 barrel racing and bull-riding event at the CrossBar Arena.

According to Fisher’s mother Mandi Atwell, the family decided to keep the legacy going after last year’s benefit rodeo event that was handled by friends and family after Fisher’s passing on June 5, 2021.

The event raised enough funds for funeral costs and even set up the Clayton Fisher Legacy Trust account for the three young children of Fisher’s who at the time of his passing were three years, two years, and one year old.

Atwell claims the trust will be used to support the children.

This year the event was to be more of a memorial for Fisher according to his mother.

“To keep his legacy alive, keep his name out there and let people know what an incredible young man he was,” Atwell said.

His mother was full of pride talking about the loving and doting husband and father her son was for a man of his age.

Fisher loved to rodeo and lived the life of what one may call a typical

country boy according to his family.

Fisher was a welder by trade and started his own welding business Circle F. He was raised in the western culture and loved participating in rodeos.

It was his brother Hagen who came up with the idea for the Fisher Bash the previous year, according to Atwell.

“They came together to bring his dreams to life,” she said.

Since Atwell and the family handled operations they were able to gather an extensive list of sponsors, donors, vendors and even added the barrel race this year.

“We wanted to pay out more money give the opportunity to win money and buckles,” Atwell said.

Out of 69-barrel racers, 20 places were paid and four buckles were given out in the event. The bull-riding portion had 16 riders participating the event and paid the first eight places.

Atwell said they are planning on hosting a third annual bash next year and gives a huge thanks to the volunteers. This event has allowed Atwell to feel in touch with her son again, hearing the stories from friends and the impact he had on each person.

She said, “Her son’s faith reassures her they will see each other again one day.”

# COMMITTEE PASSED GRANT FUNDING FOR AG AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MCN AND TRIBAL TOWNS MUST AGREE TO ALLOCATED HUD FUNDS THAT WERE LOST DUE TO NEEDS REPORT

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held May 10 at the Mound Building.

All passed legislation is subject to the full council approval during the regular session.

LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-063**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with McIntosh Co., for improvements to three county

roads. The resolution is sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud, which was postponed, 4-0.

Maintenance Overlay project includes placing asphalt on RT 1813, RT 1819, and RT 1814. The estimated cost of the project is \$335,000.

**TR 22-081**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with Creek Co., for improvements to Bristow Airport road. The resolution is sponsored by Rep. Nelson Harjo Sr., which was passed, 4-0.

**TR 22-082**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the MCN, Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town,

Kialegee Tribal Town and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town for the Method of Allocation for the Nation's Proportional Share of funding for Housing and Urban Development Funds and the FY- 2023 Indian Housing Block Grant. The resolution is sponsored by Rep. Nelson Harjo Sr., which was passed, 4-0.

HUD has communicated to the Nation and Tribal Towns that if they could not agree on a method of allocation, then HUD would choose the method. HUD used a BIA Tribal Resident Service Area Indian Population Labor Force Report to determine the housing needs of the Nation and Tribal Towns resulting in a substantial loss of funds to the Nation due to overlapping areas.

**TR 22-084**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Temporary Operating Permit with Entertaining Angels for the operation of one temporary fireworks sales facility on tribal trust land. The resolution is sponsored by Rep. Nelson Harjo Sr., which was passed, 4-0.

The Nation has agreed to waive the surety bond and rental fee for Entertaining Angels to operate the Temporary Sales Facility at 2971 N.



Three McIntosh Co. roads set for maintenance.(MM File)

Wood Dr. Okmulgee OK.

**NCA 22-056**

Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of the Interior for the benefit of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Division. The act is sponsored by Rep. Nelson Harjo Sr., which was passed, 4-0.

The department was awarded \$199,597 to preserve and restore the wild turkey population on MCN properties.

**NCA 22-057**

Amending NCA 22-011(Appropriating funds to the Nation's facilities department for equipment). The act is sponsored by Rep. Charles McHenry, which was passed, 4-0.

The original legislation stated that \$227,629 would be appropriated for the department; the amendment states that \$264,357 will be appropriated from the Interest on Permanent Fund Account.

To view agenda, legislation or watch the recorded committee session, visit [www.mcnc.com](http://www.mcnc.com).

# ARPA FUNDS FOSTER CARE AND KINSHIP HOMES

LEGISLATION WILL HONOR THE LEGACY OF LANAKAY HARJOCHEE, FOUNDER OF RAISING NATIVE HOPE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held May 11 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee.

All passed legislation is subject to the full council approval during the regular session.

HEW addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-056**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Certain Agreement between he MCN Department of Health and Ted Conferences, LLC. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the resolution, which was postponed indefinitely, 3-0.

MCNDH desires to enter into this agreement to use TED Talk Videos for the use by Behavioral Health Services.

**TR 22-078**

Authorizing the Principal Chief

to execute a contract with Nihon Kohden on behalf of the MCN Department of Health, Council Oak Comprehensive Health. Rep. Anna Marshall sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

MCNDH desires to enter into this contract with Nihon Kohden to provide certain intensive care unit monitoring equipment. The contract provides for a payment of \$28,885.18.

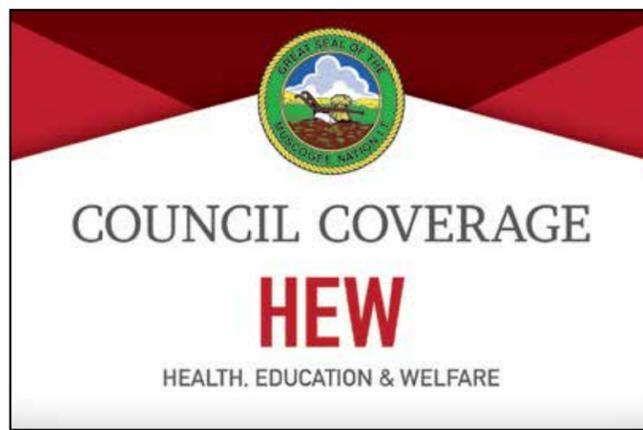
**TR 22-079**

Confirming the nomination of Elizabeth Yahola to serve on the MCN Citizenship Board. Rep. Robert Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

Yahola was nominated by Principal Chief and will serve a term until June 1, 2027.

**TR 22-080**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the Administration for Community Living Administration on Aging Native American Elder Justice Initiative grant program for the Elder Services Department. Rep. Anna Marshall sponsored the



Committee passed Elizabeth Yahola to serve on the MCN Citizenship Board. (MM File)

resolution, which passed, 3-0.

The Nation, through appropriation will commit a 3:1 match in the amount of \$500,00.

The Nation will develop tribal codes that protect elders, identify and develop tribally produced elder abuse prevention resources, hire three additional staff members.

**TR 22-083**

Honoring the legacy of Lanakay Harjochee, founder of Raising Native Hope, and proclaiming the second Saturday of September "Raising Native Hope Day of Service." Rep. Sandra Golden sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

Lanakay Harjochee was a MCN citizen and the founder of Raising Native Hope. The organization helped bring awareness to native

homelessness and provided shelter, "To rest, to heal, to give hope."

**NCA 22-053**

Authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act Fiscal Recovery Funding for the benefit of the Children and Family Services Administration. . Rep. Robert Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

The Foster Care and Kinship Home Recruitment and Retention Program will provide an incentive (total \$2,200,000) for 400 foster care and kinship homes.

**NCA 22-054**

Authorizing the expenditure of funds awarded from the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the MCN Department of Health. . Rep. Robert

Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

The grant funds of \$397,772.00 will be used to improve the physical and mental health status of people with behavioral health issues by developing an integrated and coordinated system of care.

**NCA 22-055**

Authorizing the expenditure of Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration Family to Family Health Information Centers grant funds for the benefit of the MCN Department of Community and Human Services. Rep. Anna Marshall sponsored the resolution, which passed, 3-0.

MCN Department of Community and Human Services will be granted \$96,750 each year for two years. It will be utilized to create Family-to-Family Health Information Center to provide the resources, education, support, referrals and advocacy through a cultural and trauma-informed lens for American Indian and Alaskan Native families with children aged 0-15.

In other business, Secretary of Health Shawn Terry discussed with the National Council the latest update on the tribes Health Systems and the Chief Financial Officer, Mrs. Crawford joined Terry to discuss the finances.

The recorded meeting can be watched at [www.mcnc.com](http://www.mcnc.com).



Tax Commission requests funds to open new office locations. (MM File)

# VEHICLE TAGS ON TAP FOR REGULAR SESSION

THE TAX COMMISSION REQUESTS MORE FUNDS FOR NEW POSITIONS, ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES AND SOFTWARE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held an Emergency Session on May 11 at the Mound Building to address a single Act of the NC.

The Council excused Representative Robert Hufft, with Rep. Galen Cloud absent, and Rep. Joseph Hicks late; constituting a quorum of 13 present and three absent.

All passed legislation is subject to the full council approval during the regular session.

The Council addressed the

following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**NCA 22-061**

Authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the MCN Tax Commission for fiscal year 2022. Rep. Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the Act, which postponed until the Regular Session scheduled for May 21, 10-3. Rep. Randall Hicks, Rep Thomasene Yahola Osborn and Rep. Mark Randolph voted against the motion to postpone.

The Tax Commission is need of funds to open new office location in Jenks, Okemah, and Coweta and to hire additional staff in order to better serve citizens, now that the Motor Vehicle Department can issue tags/license plates throughout the State of OK.

The funds of \$445,956 were proposed to cover the salaries for new positions, additional supplies and software for the remainder of the FY 2022.

According to Deputy Tax Commissioner Mary Mushunkashay, this legislation is based around serving the citizens efficiently and accurately.

She claims that the lease agreements at said locations have been approved by the MCN Attorney General's office.

Due to McGirt the department will experience upcoming rapid growth, Mashunkashay says it is important that there is efficient workspace and space for expansion.

Rep. Joyce Deere asked Mashunkashay if it were true when she said the Nation would make millions off of this service.

"Yes," Mashunkashay said. "All of the revenue from issuing these tags statewide will come back to the Nation."

This is because the MCN does not require any compacts with the state to issue their tags.

"The reason they do compacts is for revenue sharing," she said.

She claims there will be nine positions throughout the three locations immediately available and wants to fill those quickly as possible.

The Jenks location is projected to be the busiest location according to the Deputy Tax Commissioner.

"I think its real important that we are present in Tulsa" Mashunkashay said. "We have so many citizens in that area"

The Okemah location was disclosed as 202 W Atlanta Unit B, which was chosen due to the easy access off of I-40.

The location in Coweta is office space in a strip mall that lies on trust land, which Mashunkashay said was a great opportunity for the

Tax Commission.

Operations at the Southern Regional Office will remain as is.

"We don't have that many that come through that office (SRO Office)," Mashunkashay said.

In the future, the Commission will look at Eufaula for a possible future location.

Rep. Osborn recommended using the Nation's center in OKC for a possible location to serve citizens in that area.

Mashunkashay claimed that she had considered that and even spoke with the Tribal Liason for At-Large Citizens Anne Townsend, which ultimately was not something that could be worked out at this time.

Mashunkashay is aware that department will have to move out further from reservations' central area because Muscogee citizens are spread out all over state

"This is just our first to stepping out," she said. "We are looking at all of these avenues to be able to branch out and service everyone."

It is her wish to start issuing tags to all citizens living in the state of OK as early as June 1 or July 1.

This is a developing story. The recorded Emergency Session can be viewed a [www.mcnc.com](http://www.mcnc.com).

The Regular Session will be live streamed at 10 a.m. on May 21.

## MCN AUTHORIZES PRINCIPAL CHIEF TO PURCHASE REAL ESTATE

CONTRACTS WILL INCLUDE REAL ESTATE IN OKMULGEE AND CREEK COUNTY

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education & Welfare/Land, Natural Resources & Culture Preservation Joint Committee meeting was held in person and teleconference on May 17 at the Mound Building.

All legislation will go before the full Council during the regular May 21.

HEW/LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-086**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract to purchase property in Creek County, Oklahoma. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 9-0.

The property includes 19.7 acres in Bristow for an Indian Community Center.

**TR 22-087**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a purchase and sale agreement for property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Representative Joyce C. Deere sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 9-0.

The property and facilities will be used to benefit the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Government Operations.

**NCA 22-062**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 20-060 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to match the fis-

cal year 2019 and 2020 Indian Community Development Block Grant to support the construction of the College of the Muscogee Nation Public Facility Exhibit/Lecture Hall). Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill, which passed 8-1. Rep. Hicks was the sole dissenting vote.

CMN will receive appropriations of \$4,440,000.00 from the Capital Improvement Fund Account.

**NCA 22-063**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to purchase real property located in Creek County, Oklahoma. Rep. Hicks sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 9-0.

The real property purchase will receive appropriations of \$240,000 for 19 acres of land. Other costs associated with the purchase of the property include the cost of title insurance, title opinions, surveys, environmental studies and applicable taxes.

**NCA 22-064**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to purchase real property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Rep. Deere sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 9-0.

The real property purchase will receive appropriations of \$1,425,000.00. Other costs associated with the property purchase include the cost of title insurance, title opinions, surveys, environmental studies and applicable taxes.

For video of committee meetings visit: [www.mcnc.com](http://www.mcnc.com).

## MCN EXPANDS LICENSE PLATE ELIGIBILITY

ALL MCN CITIZENS LIVING IN OKLAHOMA ARE NOW ELIGIBLE TO PURCHASE TRIBAL PLATES

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation extended MCN license plate eligibility to all MCN citizens (16 years or older) living within the geographical boundaries of Oklahoma in a legislative bill passed through the National Council on April 30. Before, only citizens residing within the boundaries of the Muscogee Nation were eligible to purchase a tribal license plate.

The new legal expansion follows a previous development from 2021 in which the Nation passed legislation to separate the Motor Vehicle Department from the Tax Commission Department.

The change to the law undertook a lengthy process. The Tax Commission took calls from MCN citizens from around the State requesting to purchase a tribal license plate, only to be denied based on their residence.

In some cases, MCN citizens living outside the MCN borders would be denied a tag. However, a fellow citizen in residence across the street would be granted one because they lived within the Nation's borders, according to Deputy Tax Commissioner Mary Mashunkashey.

It was frustrating legal technicalities like these that inspired Mashunkashey and Lindsey Goliightly, Director of Motor Vehicle, to lobby for an amendment to the motor vehicle tax and license code. "We wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't bring these opportunities to the leadership," Mashunkashey said.

MCN is not the first tribe to issue tribal license plates statewide. Of the 39 Native American tribes in Oklahoma, only three have compacts with the State. Mashunkashey says that she is very proud of the Muscogee leadership in how they "took a leap of faith" in expanding their license plate tag services beyond the borders of the Nation.



The MCN Tax Commission is preparing to expand license plate services to all Muscogee (Creek) Citizens from around the State. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

With the new motor vehicle tax and license changes, code comes more foot traffic. MCN Motor Vehicle staff expect the number of citizens they serve to increase significantly.

In preparation for the increased workload, the MCN National Council considered legislation for appropriations to the MCN Tax Commission budget at the May 11 National Council emergency session. If passed, the bill would grant the Tax Commission an allocation of \$445,956.00. The appropriation would allow new tag office locations in Coweta, Okemah and Jenks.

The new locations will allow the Tax Commission to properly serve all citizens residing within the State and lighten the burden on citizens traveling far distances to pick up their tags. The Tax Commission will also be expanding its workforce with newly added positions.

The Motor Vehicle Department brings in approximately \$3 million in license plate revenue yearly. With the new amendment to the law, annual revenues are projected to double, according to Mashunkashey. Tags issued outside the Nation will not cost more than tags issued within the Nation.

With the expansion of tribal tag eligibility, some citizens have expressed concerns about harassment from local law enforcement.

Mashunkashey says the situation is valid, and it's a problem she's seen since she began working for the Tribe. However, a pilot program launched in the early 2000s added some Oklahoma tribes, including MCN, to the national database system. This means that tribal tags can be run through the registry like any other car tag.

Mashunkashey says this should keep citizens safe. Unfortunately, it does not prevent harassment. However, the issue is not a common occurrence. As long as you are following all local traffic laws, law enforcement should have no reason to harass you, according to Mashunkashey.

The new motor vehicle and tax and license code law, if approved, could take effect on June 1. Legislation for appropriations for the MCN Tax Commission will go before the National Council during the regular session on May 21.

For more information about first-time license plate registration, visit: <https://www.muscogee-nation.com/services/tax-commission/#1534782253185-e58c-ca5a-8b8c>.

To view prior Mvskoke Media coverage on the MCN Motor Vehicle and the Tax Commission departments visit: <https://www.mvskoke-media.com/mcgirt-increases-tribal-resources/>.

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# SNAP JUDGEMENT PODCAST "SPOOKED" SEEK STORYTELLERS

## SPOOKED IS LOOKING FOR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE UNKNOWN

by LANI HANSEN  
SENIOR REPORTER



Spooked is a spooky story podcast with Snap Judgement Studios. (Submission)

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma— Are you a fan of hearing scary stories? Or do you have a story of something unexplainable that has happened to you? A podcast called Snap Judgement presents a series Spooked, they are looking for spooky tales.

Spooked features true-life supernatural stories, told firsthand by people who can barely believe it happened themselves. Created in the dark of night, by Snap Judgement Studios and hosted by Glynn Washington. The series streams every other Friday through Spring 2022.

"Spooked is straight storytelling, which is one reason I love it because you're not listening to people talk back and forth," Snap Judgement Podcast Consultant Cody Harjo added.

Harjo is Seminole/Otoe/Creek, living in Southeastern Oklahoma. Halloween is her favorite American holiday. She was hired on with Snap Judgment Podcast early in the year as a story scout (consultant). Her title is to research great "spooky" stories and pitch them to the producers. She said if the story gets a "greenlight" the producers take it from there.

"I made it through a rocky first month as Indigenous style storytelling and themes are hard to translate for their narrative style and western audience," Harjo said. "While I'm clearly the Indigenous hire, I am open to hearing any spooky tale Native or non-Native."

She said there are a few parameters with the narrative format:

- 97 percent of the stories are first-person. But Harjo has heard great episodes that narrate

family lore and community stories. They are searching for the narrator's unique perspective.

- Ideally, there are multiple encounters. So if you saw something, ran away, and smudged off - it's probably not going to work.

- However, longer single encounters will work. If more than one person saw it too, then great, love multiple perspectives.

- Medicine Man Saves the Day type narration, are hard to make work. But Harjo said she will keep trying though.

- There has to be a resolution. So many options with this one. It could be a real external change or an internal reflection of the narrator.

- The length is flexible, but the timing tends to come in at 12-40 minutes long.

- Storytellers aren't paid, but they are heavily promoted at the end of the episode. So if you have a film, event, museum, book, website, persona, etc. to promote, great!

Spooked can be streamed on any NPR or streaming services.

If you have a spooky story and would like more information, contact Cody Harjo at: cspooky41@gmail.com.



Fresh, high quality protein is the standard for the Muscogee Nation's Looped Square employees. (Gary Fife/Radio Communications)

# TRIBAL ENTERPRISE 'MEAT-ING' EXPECTATIONS

## THE FIRST MONTHS OF OPERATIONS LOOK PRODUCTIVE FOR MEAT PROCESSING PLANT

by GARY FIFE

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Okmulgee, Oklahoma—It's been six months since the doors opened for the nation's Looped Square meat processing plant and according to MCN Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources Trent Kissee for the tribally investment, "It's looking really good."

So far, he says, the numbers are encouraging, "We've got certain indicators that we're looking at. We've got break-even points for both our retail volumes and in the back of the house. On our slaughter floor the more custom animals we can get in here the better, we're gearing up. We've only had the slaughter floor going about six weeks...it's still pretty early, it's premature. Things look good."

With only six months of op-

erations information available it's still quite early to present a thorough report he cautioned, "I reported to BFJ (Business, Finance and Justice) yesterday. I was optimistic, but wanted to be open and honest. We're really don't have a lot of data to go off of yet, but we've only been open for six months."

The section that greets the public is the retail store. It has the refrigeration space for the foods and meats that require the colder temperatures. It also has shelving for other foodstuffs that would compliment meals. Those shelves are not packed with items and Kissee said, it is a part of their plans not to overwhelm their inventories and costs.

"It's pretty good right now. You want to really minimize your known loss. Especially as we are a brand new plant and brand new retail space, you run the risk, if

you put too much out there, of things going bad. Of course we don't want to waste any food."

The operation staff keeps their eyes on customer demand and that is critical. "Being able to pay attention to those trends, the ebbs and flows as the year goes on what the customer wants is different. In the wintertime what the customer wants is stew meats, and roasts and things to make chili with. Now, everybody wants steaks. So, there's a delicate balance you play there."

Their location on busy Highway 75 has contributed to their popularity and success. Customers have commented, Kissee says, that they would prefer to do their shopping at a location that was convenient and not congested with city traffic.

When the plant was being opened some local residents from the area complained about possible pollution of local waterways and the air. Kissee says their facility has continued to meet federal requirements and keeps a close watch on any potential problems.

So far, he added, there are no legal actions filed nor any more 'beefs' heard from the local town.

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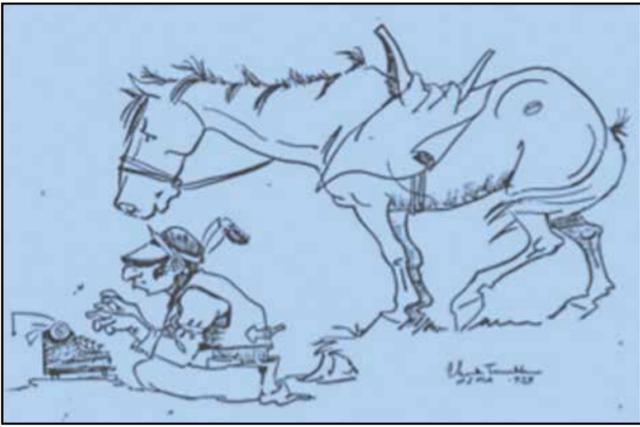
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## POLITICAL FIGHT, STATUES, VETERANS, FRYBREAD

GOVERNOR RILES TRIBES, POSITIVE RECOGNITION, STATUES

by GARY FIFE  
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Okmulgee, Oklahoma—In the latest political advertising campaigns, Governor Kevin Stitt is raising the intensity of his efforts to get re-elected by attacking tribal rights and sovereignty. A main theme in his offensive is to make sure all Oklahomans have equal rights. Never mind that this sovereignty is outlined in numerous federal laws, documents, court decisions and treaties.

Following his plan, federally recognized reservation lands and rights would be eliminated, taking away our jurisdiction over our own lands and giving that control to the state. By the way, Gov., that connection with the federal government is not based on race. Read the Constitution, Stitt, we're mentioned there.

This fight is going to get nastier. The U.S. Supreme Court is now considering a case, Huerta V. Oklahoma that could decide the question of sovereignty over reservation lands in Oklahoma.

At the end of April, Mvskoke poet, writer, musician and artist Joy

Harjo celebrated the conclusion of her third term as U.S. Poet Laureate. The U.S. Library of Congress was the scene of the event showcasing the reading of the work of several Native poets and wrapping up with a performance by Harjo and a dance party in her honor.

To sum it up, Harjo said, "This has been an incredible moment to serve poetry and to celebrate the historic, ongoing contributions of the original peoples of these lands."

More positive recognition for Indigenous people: Cree musician Buffy Ste.-Marie and Onondaga faith keeper Oren Lyon have both been inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, the oldest learned society in the country. Indian Country Today reported those given such honors are "as people who discover and advance knowledge or those who apply that knowledge to address the issues of the world."

A statue of one of Oklahoma's internationally famed ballerinas was stolen, cut up and sold for scrap at the end of April. The statue of Marjorie Tallchief was one of five honoring Osage ballerinas known as the Five Moons. Local news agencies

reported the theft from the Tulsa Historical Society. Folks from the CMC Recycling plant (bless their hearts!) called the Society and reported they had the pieces. The original artist thinks he can repair the statue.

Speaking of important statues honoring Native Americans, here's one. The dedication ceremony for the National Native American Veterans Memorial is set for Veterans Day, November 11, 2022. The event will take place on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian in Disneyland-On-The-Potomac. Event information says the dedication and processional will honor American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian veterans and their families. The ceremony will be live streamed. Check out the Museum website for more information.

Channel 23 Fox News reports that members of the cast and crew of the popular HULU TV series, "Reservation Dogs" have been lending their support to the local SPCA while they're in Tulsa filming their series. Native actors portraying Bear, Willie Jack and Cheese helped out with animal care and raising much-needed donations.

"Dogs' helping dogs....and cats.

Finally...tell us something we don't know? CNN Travel reports that fry bread is listed as one of the tastiest breads around the globe. Their website includes a photo of frybread from the Navajo Nation. But, the tasty treat is listed as the 31st out of 50. The photo caption says it "was created by the Navajo people using government-provided stores of white flour, lard and sugar.

They got that part right, although some might argue about the Navajo bread being the best.

That's it for the June column. Stay cool during the coming summer. Try not to run over any turtles or armadillos.

Hvtvm cerecraes—I will see you.

**Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.**

## SOUTHEASTERN RODEO TEAM ROPES IN HANNA SENIOR

CITIZEN RECEIVES FULL-RIDE SCHOLARSHIP TO CONTINUE HIS EDUCATION AND CAREER

by LANI HANSEN  
SENIOR REPORTER

HANNA, Oklahoma— Hanna Dragon's senior Traden Anderson signed on for a full-ride scholarship with the Southeastern Oklahoma State University Rodeo team.

Anderson, a Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen, is the son of Julie Dickson, Josh and Torie Anderson. His passion for rodeo began as a young child.

"I started out in junior rodeo when I was a young kid," Anderson said. "My dad always put me on good horses and that built my confidence so I've always wanted to do better and better."

When Anderson turned 16, he wanted to start bulldogging or steer wrestling. He began bulldogging his freshman year of high school practicing to build up his confidence.

It was not until his senior year when he started participating in high school rodeo, where he won state for Oklahoma. Anderson is also the National High School Rodeo Champion for rodeo sport steer wrestling.

As Anderson will continue his career of steer wrestling in college, he looks forward to getting more practice and represen-



Hanna Dragon's senior Traden Anderson (Mvskoke) signed on with Southeastern Rodeo Team. (Submission)

tation into furthering his career. His plans in college are getting his permit for the PRCA and pro rodeo. Other goals that Anderson has in mind are being "rookie of the year" and going to the college national finals.

Anderson being a proud citizen has received help through the tribe with school clothing, the COVID relief funding and funding for his rodeo equipment.

The full-ride scholarship offered to Anderson will allow him to continue his education and be a part of the rodeo.



Soggy weather conditions were disadvantageous for the outdoor community walk. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

## END CHILD ABUSE WALK CANCELLED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

MCN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WILL HOST FOSTER CARE RECOGNITION EVENT IN MAY

by BRADEN HARPER  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Child and Family Services Administration cancelled their End Child Abuse Walk when weather conditions were not cooperative with the event's activities. The purpose of the public event was to bring awareness to child abuse, and provide education on CFSA resources. Newly appointed MCN Attorney General Geri Wisner was scheduled to be a guest speaker. The walk was originally scheduled for 1:00 PM on April 28 at the walking trail behind the childcare building. A morning thunderstorm spoiled hopes for a dry event. There are no immediate plans to reschedule the walk, however CFSA will host another event in May to recognize foster care.

Ann Davis is the director of the MCN Children and Family Services Administration. She oversees events hosted by CFSA.

These events are important because they put a spotlight on

uncomfortable, yet important topics. Davis believes that we are all responsible for raising the next generation. "I think that we all play a part in the care and treatment of children, whether you're a teacher or a coach or a doctor or a nurse or an auntie, or relative." Davis said. "I think it's just important to have awareness, and not only have awareness of where there might be child abuse but know how to respond to it."

Child abuse is an issue found on and off the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation.

Services to fight child abuse are available to MCN citizens. If you are experiencing child abuse in your family Davis said one of the most important things to do is to make a report so that it can be assessed what appropriate services need to be recommended.

CFSA has also faced challenges in the wake of the landmark McGirt ruling.

"With the McGirt ruling that has brought a lot more cases, work, a lot more responsibilities to us," Davis said "One of the

challenges we have right now is the need to expand our work, the number of workers we have to respond."

The End Child Abuse Walk, and the foster care recognition event are just a couple of the many services CFSA provides for MCN citizens.

Promoting Safe & Stable Families is a service that helps prevent children who may be at risk of removal. The Family Protection Unit investigates reports of child neglect.

State Reunification Services works with cases that are involved within the State of Oklahoma Child Welfare System. Their purpose is to make sure proper services are offered to families to mitigate issues with the state. They also make sure Indian Child Welfare Act protections are followed.

CFSA also has a team that licenses foster care and adoptive homes. Lastly, CFSA offers tribal reunification which is responsible for families involved with child welfare issues within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

If you need to report child abuse/neglect you can contact the Oklahoma Department of Human Services at (800) 522-3511 or Muscogee (Creek) Nation Child & Family Services Administration at (800) 482-1979.



MCN Environmental Services and volunteers cleaned up trash along Loop 56. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

## MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION CLEANS UP THE ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS PICK UP TRASH

by BRADEN HARPER  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Muscogee Creek Nation Environmental Services and volunteers from around the community gathered to pick up trash and fellowship. The group cleaned up trash along Loop 56, starting at the College of the Muscogee Nation and ending at the Tribal Complex. The event was partnered with the MCN Lighthouse Police Department and the Okmulgee Conservation District.

Event participants involved volunteers from the community and volunteers from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Registration began at the MCN Tribal Executive Building canopy. Event organizers and volunteers were then shuttled to the College of the Muscogee Nation to start their route. Those working the event braved blustery weather conditions along the elevated highway shoulders.

Organizers were careful with volunteer safety. MCN Lighthouse police escorted the event with emergency vehicles, encouraging cars to slow down along the clean-up route. Volunteers were given large garbage bags and gloves to collect trash.

The Community Clean-Up is not the only event where the Okmulgee Conservation District partners with MCN. Jennifer Bailey is the Okmulgee Conservation District Director. Bailey leads a small team that helps with conservation efforts in the

area. "They supply the resources, we supply the food for the pick-up, they also help with our natural resource days," Bailey said.

Natural resource days involve all fifth graders from Okmulgee County. MCN Environmental Services helps with natural resource days by providing recycling education.

Although the event saw fewer volunteers compared to previous years, event organizers were happy to see volunteers come out to donate their service and support the cause.

When asked what her favorite part about community events are, Bailey said networking. "You find different things, different departments and what they do, it's interesting. We can all help one another."

Volunteer Jessica Young believes volunteer events are important because they help keep the community clean and look good. Young's group found debris that included glass, wood and even tools.

Another volunteer, Esther Gee, said her son encouraged her to get involved and give back to the community. "I believe in being environmentally conscious," Gee said. "We need to keep taking care of our environment for our children, for our grandchildren."

After their clean-up route was complete, event participants met at the Cokun Recycling Center for a cookout of hamburgers and hotdogs. MCN Environmental Services also gave out door prizes.

## MUSCOGEE NATION REPRESENTED IN MISS INDIAN WORLD

FORMER PRINCESS AND FORMER TRIBAL TOWN PRINCESS COMPETE FOR HIGHEST TITLE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico – Two Muscogee Hokte's (women) represented the Muscogee Nation at the Miss Indian World Pageant at the Gathering of Nations annual celebration on April 28-30.

Brittany McKane and Jessica Frazier felt honored to have had the opportunity to compete for the most prestigious Native American pageant title.

McKane reigned as the Miss Muscogee Nation 2016-17 where she had her first experience at the Miss Indian Worlds Pageant as a spectator.

Five years after, around the same time of year, McKane began thinking about the MIW pageant and realized she was reaching the age limit requirement of 25 to apply.

Her 25th birthday was six days shy of the deadline.

"If that wasn't a sign," McKane said with a giggle.

After years passing from her princess title to serving in oth-

er leadership positions, McKane claims she wanted to continue to serve and use her voice.

"It had honestly been a dream of mine since I served as Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation," McKane said. "I wanted to be able to continue to advocate for my people, for youth especially."

When she had learned of her acceptance, McKane was reminded of the past roles she has had and what they meant to her.

"It was a full circle moment for me," McKane said.

"No matter what I do, I need to walk with that dignity and with that respect for my people."

Frazier grew up in Wetumka, OK and her descent comes from the Kialegee tribal town though she is an enrolled member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

In 2016-17, Frazier served as Miss Kialegee Tribal Town and several local pageants during her undergraduate years at Northeastern State University.

She currently resides in St. Louis attending school for a mas-

ters degree in social work.

For Frazier, applying for the pageant was a very last minute decision that she felt like she was called to do.

"If you are being called to do it, then do it," Frazier said.

Her passion for pageantry and her history with pageants gave her more confidence to submit the application.

Each contestant wore the sash of their representing tribal nations; Frazier wore both the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Kialegee Tribal Town of the Muscogee Nation.

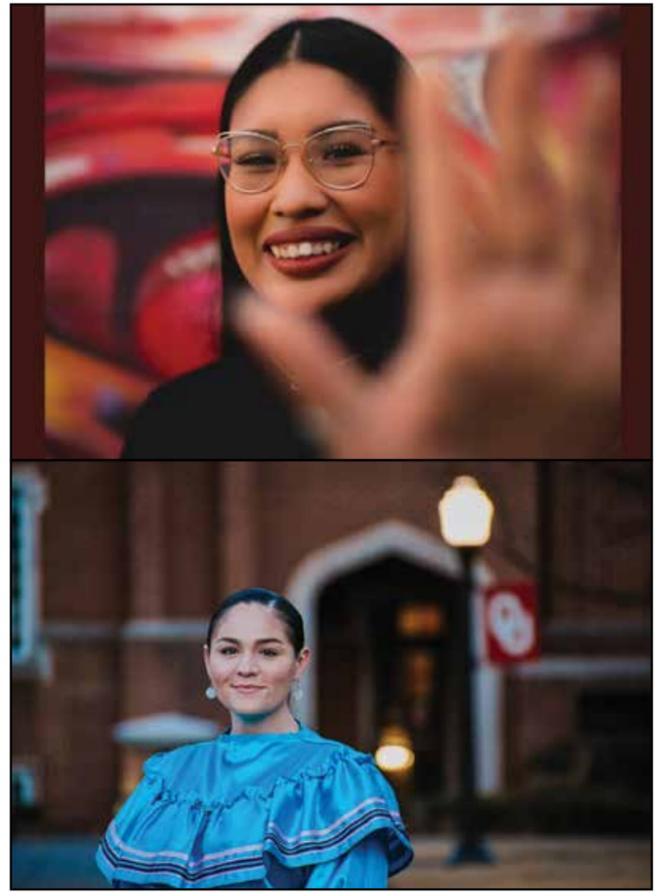
"Its exciting for me because I think sometimes we only think to put one tribe," Frazier said. "I want to make sure that both of my communities are represented."

Promoting identity and cultural awareness are important for Frazier.

The categories for the Miss Indian World competition are a traditional talent presentation representing your tribe, public speaking, personal interview, a dance demonstration through Powwow music and raffle ticket sales. The point system runs off each of the categories listed, the application noted the raffle points are used only for tiebreakers.

Winning was not the important thing for either girls.

Frazier and McKane repre-



Brittany McKane and Jessica Frazier competed for the Miss Indian World title. (Submission)

sented the Muscogee Nation with pride and grace.

It was Sicangu Lakota wom-

an Tashina Red Hawk who was crowned as Miss Indian World 2022-2023.



Students in sixth through 12th grade come to Green Country Technology Center to chat with Astronaut Paul Lockhart. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

## ASTRONAUT SHARES SPACE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATION AND STEM PROGRAM HOPES TO BRING DREAMS TO STUDENTS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Schools around the Mvskoke reservation had the opportunity to bring their students sixth through 12th grade to Green Country Technology Center to chat with Astronaut Paul Lockhart on Wednesday May 11.

To honor Siegfried Space week (May 9-13), MCN Education and Training ACE (Assessing Choices in Education) along with Tulsa Regional STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) Alliance partnered together to be able to host this event at the GCTC after two years of hosting virtual events.

"We are working hard to make sure that kids all across our community and as members of the Muscogee Nation have access to career opportunities that excite them and energize them," Executive Director of the Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance Levy Patrick said.

Oklahoma has a few of its own Native American representatives in the aerospace industry including Mary Golda Ross a Cherokee and John Herrington a Chickasaw.

Patrick said he believes that Native Americans have a natural inclination in the space type industries.

This stimulus allows students to see what is out there in the real world when it comes to having important and exciting career goals, according to Patrick.

"Its definitely our hope that students can see the opportunities," Patrick said.

Students can be anything from a pilot to a manufacturer or technology or engineering that are all included in overall "flight" labor force.

Farming can be another way to use aviation to some potential when it comes to caring for land, crops, and animals.

"Somebody may be really excited about space and somebody may be really excited about taking care of their farm," Patrick said. "In both applications drones or planes or other types of technologies may have a relationship that could excite a child."

Participants from Ryal, Tahlequah, Preston, Graham-Dustin, Liberty Mounds, and homeschool students were in attendance reaching about 40 native and non-native youth.

Lockhart is an American aerospace engineer, retired United States Air force colonel and NASA astronaut, a veteran pilot of two Space Shuttle missions STS-111 and STS-113 in 2002.

Most known for his piloting role on the Endeavor in the late 1980's.

During these missions he directed six space walks in repair and construction of the International Space Station. He accumulated over 26 days in space in support of these missions.

He shared his experience about working in the development of cutting edge technology avionics with the students by giving a detailed presentation with footage recorded on the ship and performing repairs to the ISS while in space.

As he tells his story, it is the hope of Patrick that the students feel like they can literally shoot for the moon.

Texas born and raised, Lockhart does not carry any Native American heritage and was not exposed to Native culture but he insisted on self-educating in his adult years.

"I don't think I've had the chance

to be here directly with the Muscogee Nation," Lockhart said. "I'm very honored to be here."

Herrington, a crewmate of Lockhart was the first Native American to fly in outer space.

"To be here where he's from is very important to me," he said.

This program through the Tulsa STEM program allows heroes like Lockhart to tell their story to the youth.

"I am passing on what someone did to me when I was young," he said. "We all as we go through our lives have those people that pop up and direct us."

Lockhart hopes he made a lasting impression on the young adults and younger teens to go into the STEM field or at least consider it.

The reservation is known for the vast rural areas that are contained inside where the people live far from advancing technology industries.

The second thing Lockhart wanted to convey to these aspiring laborers is the prominence and advancing space technology that America has.

"People come here to study this," he said.

The industry has come far in the last 50 years and has far more to go in the next 50 years, according to Lockhart.

He claims the industry's workforce is diversifying and becoming multidisciplinary using an array talents and knowledge.

Lockhart said he hopes his talk today only aids in the growth of the industry.

"There's nothing better when we pass on, and whatever comes for us after our life is to make sure we have left a strong legacy," Lockhart said.

It may be a common thing in Native communities that children lack appropriate role models and are unaware of the extreme diversity.

"If I have had the opportunity to encourage some of these young adults and children that are part of the Muscogee Nation then I've done my job."



Shannon James is the "meat pie lady" known for her traditional cooking. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

## MEAT PIE LADY GRADUATES KITCHEN 66

SHANNON JAMES COMPLETED THE 12-WEEK PROGRAM TO ASSIST HER WITH FOOD BUSINESS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

TVLSE, Oklahoma – The Meat Pie Lady Shannon James (Cherokee) completed the Mother Road Market Kitchen 66 launch program on May 9.

Her pop up business Rez-Served is one of 10 food businesses that made it through the program that were chosen out of 300 applicants.

The lack of native representation in the food industry is what James believes caught the attention of the program based on her application.

"I feel like this is our time," James said. "We took the back seat for a long time."

As the meat pie lady, she is most known for the meat pies she makes and serves by the bundles.

She claims to have made the Indian taco more convenient where one can walk around and eat it, calling it the "skoden taco" along with other dishes containing traditional foods.

She credits the name of her business to an old friend from school that gifted her the name.

James claims her biggest fan base and customer base has been elders and Muscogee people.

As a Cherokee citizen, she claims upon moving to the Okmulgee area in February she felt welcome than ever.

"I've never even thought about moving to Okmulgee," James said. "Its great, I don't want to move."

She claims the Muscogee people have opened their arms to her and her family.

James said she is booked for a couple months for different events including graduations and elder center events.

She has catered for the Reservation Dogs crew and sees future business ventures happening with them for filming days.

"They loved the meat pies," James

said of the Rez Dogs crew.

The business has now become a family affair for James and her four children, allowing them to spend more time together. She claims this quality time together helps her continue her journey in sobriety and even keeps her older sons from taking the wrong path.

As a young girl, James spent lots of time in the kitchen with her grandma.

"I'm glad I was forced to stay in the kitchen," James said jokingly.

She grew to love cooking and learning these dishes we call traditional.

Even as a single mother working as a dental assistant, James fed her children everything she cooks today.

"Eating out was expensive," James said.

She started selling meat pies out of the back of her car for extra money and everyone loved them.

Even after receiving a 48-hour eviction notice from her landlords at her last known cooking location in Okmulgee, James and her children continued to push forward with the program and goals they had set.

Currently, with the assistance of Muscogee Nation, the family is staying in hotel.

This does put a slow down to cooking for James, but she says she can take pre-orders until they are able to find a secure location. Despite the challenges, James and her children feel as though the possibilities are endless and the opportunities are abundant.

Her current project is fundraising for a food truck through selling t-shirts with a company called V&M Prints.

The best way to stay updated is through social media accounts Rez-Served on Facebook and Instagram.

James can be reached by phone at 918-901-3183.

# MUSCOGEE CITIZEN BRINGS HEALING TO THE REZ

JOHNNY DAVIS (JOHNNY FIVE) CLAIMS HE HAS ABILITIES TO HEAL INDIVIDUALS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OWASSO, Oklahoma – Johnny Five (Johnny Davis), or J5 for short, traveled to the Reservation from Conway, AR, to offer his psychic services to customers at Enhancements and Oddities. In a short time, his mid-afternoon sessions were booked completely.

Reviews from his website, www.j5psychic.com, indicate that Johnny Five's healing energy is a true force that people believe can heal their traumas. Davis works to release negative energy with his hands using crystals.

He believes it is a holistic treatment for sexual abuse trauma, childhood trauma, or other forms of trauma that people may hold.

There is an open door in the back of the store where J5's clients were to go. Upon entering the room, it is well lit and airy.

The crystals staged around the room bring a peaceful and calming energy to the center. A massage table stands draped in a purple cover that J5 has set up to perform energy extraction services.

After asking the individual to remove their socks and shoes, he asks them to lie face down on the table.

Starting with the feet, Davis holds crystals in the palm of his hands and places them in the middle of the feet. He closes his eyes, holding the crystals on the client's feet. Davis becomes very still.

He does this in several places, including the legs, lower and upper spine, and the neck. He asks the client to roll over and does the same thing on the forehead.

According to Davis, the crystals act as mediums and store the energy drawn from the client. The whole process of energy extraction takes around 40 minutes.

The experience of each client varies from case to case. Accord-



Enhancements and Oddities in Owasso hosted Johnny Five as a guest to provide services. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

ing to Davis, some people may not react, while others may have an extreme reaction.

"Most people feel something," Davis said. "Energetic tingling, electric shocks, pulsating, movement." One thing each client has had in common is overall soreness the next day.

Megan, an Owasso local and store regular, decided she would schedule an appointment when she learned Davis would be working at the event. Megan has taken part in energy extraction services before, but this was her first time with Davis.

"It was intense," Megan said after her extraction. "As soon as it started, I felt vibrations in my feet

and as he worked up my legs."

As a woman who deals with past sexual trauma, she thinks this technique works for her and her healing.

Davis relates his practice to his native culture, although he was never aware of the traditions. He says, "He was different from others around him."

He believes anyone could be capable of energy extraction, something he has written about in his books. Traveling for services in the OK and AR areas is something Davis frequently does. He performs an array of services.

For more information on Johnny Five, visit his website listed above.

# FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN IN SPACE SPEAKS TO YOUNG MCN STUDENTS

JOHN HERRINGTON SPOKE ON HIS LIFE AND CAREER AS AN ASTRONAUT AT THE DISCOVERY LAB



John Herrington spoke on his career leading to becoming the first Native American astronaut in space. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

TULSA, Oklahoma - Muscogee (Creek) Nation students aged 3rd-5th grade had the opportunity to meet astronaut John Herrington, the first enrolled member of a federally recognized Native American tribe to fly in space. Born in Muscogee Nation in Wetumka, Oklahoma, Herrington is a member of the Chickasaw Nation. Herrington spoke at the Space Day event co-sponsored by the Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance and the MCN Accessing Choices for Education at the Discovery Lab on Riverside. Students also had the opportunity to play and learn through the museum's interactive exhibits.

Space Day was the final event in a series for Seigfried Space Week.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Herrington's space

flight. Herrington was assigned as a mission specialist aboard the Endeavour space shuttle that launched on Nov. 23, 2002. His mission delivered the space crew to the space station and transferred cargo. Herrington performed three spacewalks and personally brought onboard eagle feathers, arrowheads, wooden flutes, and flags of the Chickasaw and Crow Nations.

One of the tenets of Herrington's message is communicating he is no different than the students he speaks to; anyone can make it to space. "Just getting to connect, you know, 'that guy's kind of like me!'" Herrington said. "I'm from a small town in Oklahoma, and I just want kids to recognize if there's something they dream about doing, they can do it."

SPACE - 10

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**SPACE**

Continued from Page 9

Flying in space aboard the Endeavor profoundly affected Herrington's perspective on life and the Earth.

"It made me appreciate how fortunate we are to live on such a remarkable planet, and it's our responsibility to take care of it," Herrington said.

"In some cases, I don't think we're doing as good a job of it as we could"

Although Herrington is officially the first Native American in space, he treats his role in history with humility and reverence.

"It's huge shoes to fill that haven't been filled before. If a child could look at me and say they can aspire to do something like this, whatever their dream may be, they can do it," Herrington said. "If I can be an example for that, then I'm doing what I think the Creator put me on the Earth to do."

Herrington left NASA and retired from the US Navy in 2005. Since then, he has worked for a commercial space company in Oklahoma, biked cross-country across the nation, earned an honorary Ph.D. in education, and has done work with the Chickasaw Nation.

Herrington has served on the Native American Science and Engineering Society board and recognizes how important it is to expose young Native American students to other Native Americans working in STEM

career fields.

"The idea is getting them in front of students," Herrington said. "Getting kids to recognize there are a lot of professionals from the exact same communities, exact same social problems that have succeeded at it."

Pete Coser Jr. and his son Philip Coser were in attendance at the Space Day event.

Philip Coser was one of the Muscogee students who heard Herrington speak on his space flight.

"It really helps whenever little Native kids can see Native people doing big things, so seeing John Herrington in person and hearing about his story, him talking about his pride and his heritage, it was really big," Coser Jr. said. "It lets the kids know that they can be themselves and do things like science, engineering, or being an astronaut."

When asked what their favorite part about Space Day was, Philip Coser said it was playing on the interactive jungle gym exhibits.

According to Pete Coser Jr., STEM has always played a vital role in Muscogee culture. "Even our Creek folks, when you talk about those mounds back east, our people were incredibly intelligent. They had to know architecture, calculus, and be mathematically intelligent to build those kinds of things," Pete Coser Jr. said.

If you would like to stay up to date on events and services hosted by ACE, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MCNDNET/>.



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**MVSKOKEMEDIA**

**Muscogee Nation Festival Parade | June 25, 2022**

**Hesci!**

We are thrilled to be back for the Muscogee Nation Festival and Festival Parade! Thank you for your interest in participating in the 2022 Muscogee (Creek) Festival Parade. Please read this letter prior to submission of the parade form. The parade is on **Saturday, June 25th, at 10 a.m.** in downtown Okmulgee. **Deadline for submission is Friday, June 17th at 5 p.m.** Any applications received after this date, are not guaranteed a spot in the lineup.

**Parade Lineup**

Participants may start lining up at 8:00 a.m. on June 25th. All participants must be in line by 9:30 a.m. (unless you are a contestant in the parade, see below). Lineup for this year's parade will begin at the intersection of 6th street and Okmulgee. Please see the attached map for more information. Lineup positions will be available on Wednesday, June 22nd. If an email is available on your application, we will email you your lineup position. If you have no email available, please call for your lineup number.

Though we welcome animal participation, participants are required to provide a cleanup crew in the assembly area, along the parade route and in the disbanding area. Failure to comply may result in non-participation. Most of our volunteers participate and volunteer in many of the other festival's activities and events. We appreciate your assistance on cleanup!

**If you are a contestant in the parade, please check the appropriate box on the form.** Judging will take place at lineup beginning at 9:00am. Contestants must be in line and ready for judging at this time. The winners will be announced during the parade.

In case of inclement weather, contact the coordinator at 918-549-2434 for information.

- Lineup A & B will be along Okmulgee St. and on the North Side of 6th St.
- Lineup C & D will be along Okmulgee St. and on the South Side of 6th St.
- Lineup E & F will be on 6th St.
- Sign in will be located on the southeast corner of 6th St. and Okmulgee St.
- Lineup numbers could change depending on the number of entries



**Saturday, June 25th at 10am.** Parade will follow a route along Main Street (6th) passing directly in front of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Council House.

**THEME:** Mvskoke Strong: We are Indian Territory

**EVERYONE WELCOME!** Enter a float advertising your company. All MCN departments, organizations, communities, churches, & ceremonial grounds are encouraged to enter.

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	<b>CONTACT NAME:</b> _____	
	<b>PHONE &amp; EMAIL:</b> _____	
	<b>PLEASE CHECK:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Walking <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle Group <input type="checkbox"/> Driving <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback	

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Friday, June 17th at 5pm. For more information, contact ShaVon Agee 918.549.2434 or [sagee@muscogeenation.com](mailto:sagee@muscogeenation.com)

**MAIL TO:** ShaVon Agee MCN Cultural Center & Archives P.O. Box 580 Okmulgee, OK 74447

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# MUSCOGEE VETERAN BRINGS NATIONAL MEMORIAL HOME

## THE WAR AT HOME MEMORIAL FINDS PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN BROKEN ARROW

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

BROKEN ARROW, Oklahoma – Muscogee (Creek) Veteran Michael D. Coon's vision of a national war memorial honoring deceased veterans lost to suicide is finally coming to fruition. Funded by the Mission 22 Project, the War at Home Memorial is a first of its kind: a monument honoring veterans lost to mental illness. The memorial is significant to Michael D. Coon because his son, Michael K. Coon is one of the veterans honored and the only Muscogee (Creek) Veteran to be featured.

The War at Home Memorial is dedicated to veterans who did not survive their battle with mental illnesses, including posttraumatic stress disorder, mesial temporal sclerosis, and traumatic brain injuries.

Army Staff Sgt. Michael K. Coon served in the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan. When he came back, Michael struggled to adapt to life back home. After struggling with PTSD, he took his own life in 2015. The dedication of his silhouette monument took place at the Military History Center in Broken Arrow on May 8, 2021. Michael K. Coon's monument was funded by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the City of Broken Arrow and the Mission 22 Project.

SINCE HIS SON'S PASSING, Michael D. Coon has worked closely with the Mission 22 project. He believes the War at Home Memorial is essential for veterans that are still in the healing process. "We don't know what they endured overseas; well, we need to have something for them so the soldiers still dealing with PTSD can have a place to gather their thoughts, think about the situation where they're at." Micheal D.

Coon said.

Michael D. Coon was assigned as a guardian of the War at Home Memorial, then became a steward. He's presented dedications of the Memorial in Texas, Virginia and now home in Oklahoma.

The Memorial was originally going to be a moving one. However, the logistics made finding a permanent home in Broken Arrow more practical.

Broken Arrow Mayor Debra Wimpee was instrumental in the planning stages, and she has been involved since the beginning. "Broken Arrow loves our veterans, and we love honoring our veterans. There was no way we could not take this unique opportunity of awareness of veteran suicide," Mayor Wimpee said.

Groundbreaking for the War at Home Memorial began in August 2021 and will officially be completed in June. Micheal K. Coon will join 19 other fallen soldiers.

The War at Home Memorial consists of 20 steel plate silhouette monuments, standing at 10 feet tall and weighing 1,000 pounds, each created in the likeness of an American Veteran lost to suicide due to mental illness. The Memorial will be an extension to Veteran's Park in Broken Arrow, overlooking the pond.

A monument honoring Gold Star Families stands at the north end of the Memorial. At the south end stands a monument honoring Blue Star Families.

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, an average of 20 veterans lose their battle with mental illness every day through suicide.

Mission 22 aims to fight the war against mental illness and save lives. Their goal is to serve veterans struggling with their transition back into civilian life and spread awareness for veteran



The War At Home Memorial features 20 monuments overlooking the pond at Broken Arrow's Veteran's Park. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

suicides. They not only want to save veterans, but they also want to see them thrive.

The Nonprofit offers services like biometric monitoring of stress, meditation, coaching, exercise/wellness programs, and learning resources. They know precisely what their recipients need because they have gone through the same experiences.

The nonprofit's mission is personal because veterans founded it. Most of their staff comprises veterans, spouses of veterans, or immediate family members who have served in the military.

Families of the soldiers included in the Memorial will attend the dedication. For some, it will be their first time viewing the monuments.

The dedication ceremony will feature an honor guard composed of the Muscogee Nation, Broken Arrow Civil Servants and veterans from various organizations. A flyover is scheduled for 10 AM, with a 21-gun salute to follow.

The Dedication Ceremony

will honor Muscogee (Creek) and Native Culture. A Native Drummer and Bugler will perform a victory song and a warrior song, and each monument will also receive a blessing with an eagle feather.

"To me, it was like the Creator is the One that put this vision in me. I was His tool to make the process come out of how He wanted His people to feel when they see these silhouettes, you know that they had broken hearts, but He wanted a way to heal them, to give them that spot where they can come back." Michael D. Coon said.

The Memorial is more than just a site. They are sacred grounds that inhabit the spirits of those who have passed on, according to Michael D. Coon. He said it's an honor to build the National Memorial in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation because it will attract visitors from across the United States to pay their respects.

When asked what she hopes visitors will take away from the

memorial, Mayor Wimpee said, "a greater sense of what our service members and their families go through." To her, the likeness of each monument is more than just soldiers. They're individuals.

When asked the same question, Michael D. Coon said, "to feel the presence of these 20 warriors that have served our nation to have what we have right now, free speech, free worship, free elections." Although it can be somber to pay respects to the fallen, he said people should be proud of their service.

The dedication for the War at Home Memorial is scheduled for 10 AM on June 11 at Veterans Park in Broken Arrow. The event is open to the public.

If you would like to donate or learn more about the Mission 22 Project, visit: <https://mission22.com/>.

To view prior Mvskoke Media coverage of this story, visit <https://www.mvskokemedia.com/muscogee-soldier-honored-in-dedication/>.

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GREAT SEAL OF THE  
MUSCOGEE NATION

# CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE TAKES CONTROVERSIAL STANCE ON TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

## FORMER STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BENNETT IS RUNNING FOR HOUSE SEAT VACATED BY MULLIN

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

OKLAHOMA CITY - John Bennett announced last month he will place his bid to run for Congress in the U.S House of Representatives. The House seat vacancy opened after Mark Wayne Mullin announced his candidacy for the U.S Senate. Unlike the other four Oklahoma congressional district races, Bennett will not be facing an incumbent candidate.

Bennett is a former member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and the former chair of the Oklahoma GOP. He served eight years as a state representative for District 2 from 2010-2018.

Bennett's candidacy comes as a shock to Oklahoma tribal leaders due to his outspoken

anti-tribal views on the McGirt Decision. He has stated that not only does he believe the McGirt decision should be overturned, but specifically the Muscogee (Creek) Nation should be stripped of jurisdiction in Indian Country.

"Congress needs to go back, and they need to de-establish the Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation. I say once they do that, then they can carry on as they have, you know, all of these years," Bennett told the Washington Examiner.

Tribal leaders from the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, including Principal Chief David Hill, released a statement in response to Bennett's announcement:

"The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Tribes is disappointed to



John Bennett has expressed controversial views regarding tribal sovereignty. (Source: Ballotpedia.org)

hear that candidate John Bennett seeking to represent Oklahoma in Congress is echoing shameful, anti-tribal arguments. Oklahoma is strongest when our tribes are at the table. Candidates who seek to restrict our rights and disestablish our reservations, after the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed twice that they have always existed, do not deserve to represent our state. Mr. Bennett and those who seek to undermine tribal sovereignty also undermine our values partners, our friends and neighbors and our efforts to improve the quality of life for all Oklahomans."

The statement also said the tribes are proud of the progress they have made expanding their criminal justice systems in the two years since the McGirt ruling. It goes on to say that the

Inter-Tribal Council is disappointed by Bennett's anti-tribal views and Governor Stitt's legal efforts to overturn the historic Supreme Court decision.

The McGirt decision declared that the lands reserved for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation still constituted Indian Country. Furthermore, Oklahoma State Courts do not have jurisdiction in prosecuting Natives for crimes committed in Indian Country.

Despite Bennett's run for Congress, Inter-Tribal Council members are still hopeful they can work together with state leaders in prosecuting criminal cases in the wake of the McGirt decision.

Bennett is expected to appear in the Republican Primary on June 28.

### SUBMISSION

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
OKMULGEE DISTRICT

DISTRICT COURT FILED

In Re the Name Change of: **CAMERON DAVID BOONE** CASE NO. CV 22-15047-9 P 2 22

NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

TO: All interested persons,

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that CAMERON DAVID BOONE by and through his parents, DANIEL BOONE and COURTNEY BOONE have filed a Petition to Have his Name Changed From CAMERON DAVID BOONE to CAMERON DEAN BOONE in the District Court of Muscogee Creek Nation, Okmulgee Division, Okmulgee Oklahoma.

A Hearing on said Petition is set for 10 o'clock, A.M. on the 11 day of July, 2022, before Judge Leads in Courtroom in the District Court of the Muscogee Creek Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

Should you know of some reason why this change of name should not be allowed you must file a written protest in the above styled action prior to the above date with the Clerk of the Court.

Should you fail to do so, the Petition for Name Change will be granted as prayed for in the Petition.

Prepared by: Rayanne G. Tobey, OBA 16659  
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74152  
918-260-5265 telephone  
Attorney for Petitioner

Note to Publisher: Publish once at least 10 days prior to the date set for hearing.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
OKMULGEE DISTRICT

DISTRICT COURT FILED

IN RE THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: )  
E. T. N., )  
DOB: 12/28/2010; )  
and )  
J. L. N., )  
DOB: 08/24/2016; )  
Minor Children. )

NOTICE OF HEARING APPLICATION FOR ORDER DETERMINING CHILDREN TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT OF NATURAL FATHER

TO: Joshua David Newby

On the 27 day of April, 2022 an Amended Application was filed in this Court for a determination that E.T.N. a minor child born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on 12/28/2010; and J.L.N. a minor child born in Tulsa, Oklahoma to Joshua David Newby and Amber Michele Scott, hereinafter seeking that the children be declared eligible for adoption without the consent of the Natural Father, so that the adoption of said children may occur. Said Application is set for hearing on the 13th day of July, 2022 at the hour of 11:00 o'clock a.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Okmulgee District Courtroom, located in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Mound Building, in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, before the Honorable Judge at the District Court.

Petitioners have alleged in the Amended Petition that you are the biological father. Petitioners allege that your consent to this adoption should be deemed unnecessary and your parental rights terminated because you failed to pay child support for the children in accordance with the order of the Court during the preceding year of the filing of the original Petition for Adoption and Application for Order Determining Child to be Eligible for Adoption Without

Consent of the Natural Father and that you failed to establish and/or maintain a significant relationship with the children for a period of six (6) consecutive months out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately preceding the filing of the Petition for Adoption.

YOU ARE, THEREFORE, NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE, WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT, HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AT SAID TIME AND PLACE, AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT.

YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT SAID HEARING SHALL COMMUNICATE YOUR DECISION NOT TO OPPOSE THE APPLICATION TO DETERMINE THE CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT AND SHALL COMMUNICATE A DENIAL OF YOUR INTEREST IN THE CHILDREN, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE TO YOU OF THIS OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDING, IN THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT AND IN THE CHILDREN'S ADOPTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION. YOU ARE ALSO NOTIFIED THAT YOUR DUTY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUPPORT OF THE CHILDREN STILL CONTINUES AFTER YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED.

Signed and dated this 27 day of April, 2022

Judge of the District Court

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
STATE OF OKLAHOMA OKMULGEE COUNTY  
The undersigned hereby certifies this instrument to be a full, true and correct copy of the original, as the same appears on the record in the District Court Records.

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### Brandon Aikins

**School:** Glenpool High School

**Bio:** Aikins is the son of Brian and Crystal Aikins. He has a twin brother Brian Aikins and sister Braylen Aikins. Paternal grandparents are Elizabeth Aikins and the late Abraham "Abe" Aikins. Maternal grandparents are Kathy Guthrie, Robert "Bobby" Wegley, and Virginia and Ed Wertman. Paternal great-grandparents are the late Ethel and Abraham John Aikins and Leo and Lucille Wallace. Maternal great-grandparents are Cogee Keith-Long, David Long and the late Walter Keith. He is the great-great grandson of the late Principal Chief Claude Cox and is of the Nokose Clan. Aikins participated in Challenge Bowl throughout middle and high school. He was the NASA President his senior year. Brandon also participated in basketball and golf. He was a 3-time 5A state qualifier in golf and finished 10th place his junior year. Aikins will be attending Oklahoma State University in Stillwater in the fall.

### Brian Aikins

**School:** Glenpool High School

**Bio:** Aikins is the son of Brian and Crystal Aikins. He has a twin brother Brandon Aikins and sister Braylen Aikins. Paternal grandparents are Elizabeth Aikins and the late Abraham "Abe" Aikins. Maternal grandparents are Kathy Guthrie, Robert "Bobby" Wegley, and Virginia and Ed Wertman. Paternal great-grandparents are the late Ethel and Abraham John Aikins and Leo and Lucille Wallace. Maternal great-grandparents are Cogee Keith-Long, David Long and the late Walter Keith. He is the great-great grandson of the late Principal Chief Claude Cox and is of the Nokose Clan. Aikins participated in Challenge Bowl throughout middle and high school. He was the NASA Vice President his senior year. He also participated in basketball and golf. He was a 3-time 5A state qualifier in golf and finished 9th place his senior year. Aikins will be attending Oklahoma State University in Stillwater in the fall.



### Anthony Allen

**School:** Broken Arrow High School

**Bio:** Allen is the son of Kali Allen and Melissa Tiger. Grandparents are Milton and Melissa Allen, and Artman Tiger and the late Irene Tiger. Maternal great grandparents are the late Rev. C. D. and Marie Harjo, and the late Jimmie and Rachel Gutierrez. Allen has attended all of his school years in Broken Arrow, where he played basketball and participated in track and field for the Tigers. In 2022, he was named to the OCA Large East All State Basketball Team, Frontier Valley All Conference First Team, OBCA Region 7 All District Team, Visit Mesa Basketball Challenge All Tournament Team, Shawnee Tournament MVP and Tulsa World Player of the Week. Allen helped the Tigers win a Class 6A Regional Basketball Championship and set a new Broken Arrow HS record in long jump. He signed his NLI to play basketball and pursue a degree at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK.

### Josiah Emmanuel Avelar

**School:** Memorial High School

**Bio:** Josiah Emmanuel Avelar of Tulsa, Oklahoma is the son of Tonya Mitchell, and stepson of Eric Mitchell. He is also the grandson of Tony and Ramona Faulkner. His family is the Buck and Faulkner families out of Holdenville, Oklahoma. He is an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation. He is Bear Clan and Tuskigi Tribal town. He enjoys working hard and spending time with friends and family. He currently works as a team leader for Urban Air in Tulsa and plans on attending the College of Muscogee Nation in Okmulgee.



### Amanda Renea Baker

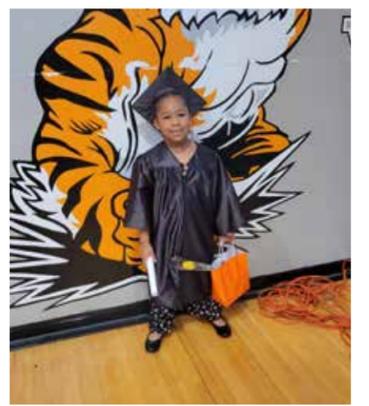
**School:** University of Central Oklahoma

**Bio:** Amanda Renea Baker from Piedmont, Oklahoma graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. She enjoys reading and painting in her spare time. She plans to pursue a career in management/human resources. She is the daughter of Debra (Reschke) and Darell Baker. Her grandparents are Ruth Jane (Harjo) and Roland Reschke from Wewoka, OK and Dorothy and Roy Baker from Crescent, OK. Great-grandparents were Bessie (Soweka-Caesar) and Bill Harjo from Wewoka. Amanda is both Seminole and Creek from her maternal lineage.

### Victoria M. Banks

**School:** Wewoka Public Schools

**Bio:** Victoria M. Banks graduated from Kindergarten in Wewoka, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of VaShawnda Carter and Robert Banks. Victoria's Muscogee Creek bloodline is maternal and she has been raised on the Seminole Reservation. Victoria's ancestral tribal towns are Tulwarthlocco and Broken Arrow. She is of the bird clan.



### Kaiden Keith Bear

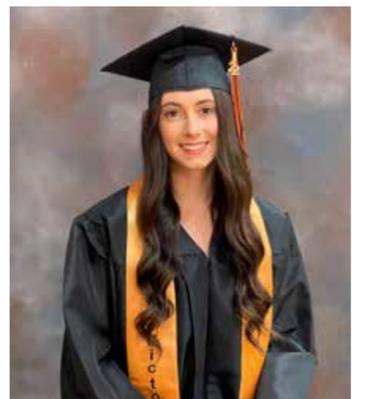
**School:** Okemah High School

**Bio:** Bear is the son of Dennis and Tina Canard and David Keith Bear. He the grand son of David and Delores Bear, Wayne and Melinda Lindsey, Agnes Hicks, Hanson Hicks, and Jim McGertt. He is of the Raccoon Clan and the Eufaulagee Tribal Town. He is a member of OMNIC Community in Okemah. He is graduating as Valedictorian of Okemah High School and has maintained principals honor roll at OSU-IT. At Okemah, Bear participated in competitive sports, gifted and talented, Este Cate Club, Beta Club, STUCO, National Honor Society and the Oklahoma Honor Society. He plans to attend the University of Oklahoma and major in the medical field.

### Talyn Been

**School:** Dewar High School

**Bio:** Talyn graduated from Dewar High School this year as Valedictorian. She also completed 27 concurrent hours of higher education. Been will be attending the University of Central Oklahoma next year. She will be participating in the Track and Field program as a Pole Vaulter while getting her degree.



### Desmond Paul Bible

**School:** Sapulpa High School

**Bio:** Bible is the son of Jennifer and Jeremy Coon of Sapulpa. Desmond has two older sisters, Jaeden and Jerika and a younger brother, Mekko. Bible was actively involved in Native American Student Association, Kiwanis, NJHS and Builders Club throughout his four years. He is a two-year letterman in Cross-country and Track, as well as a three-year letterman in Golf. His hobbies encompass a variety of activities to include Esports, playing Basketball and Golf, and spending time with his friends and family. Bible was accepted into Kansas Wesleyan University on an Academic and Esports scholarship.

### Emery Graeme Birdcreek

**School:** Weleetka High School

**Bio:** Birdcreek is a member of the Mvskoke (Creek) Nation and he is of the Deer Clan. He is the son of Roger and Janice Birdcreek, grandson of Elouise Johnson and the late Wallace Johnson Sr. and Joyce Harrison. Birdcreek has attended Weleetka Schools for 11 years. He has participated in baseball, football and FFA for four years, basketball and fishing team for two years. He is on the Honor Roll, active in Native American Youth Council, JOM, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and is Secretary of the Senior Class. He has attended College of Muscogee Nation and OSU-IT while in high school. Birdcreek will be continuing his education at Rose State College in the fall.



### Miklahea Black-Cooke

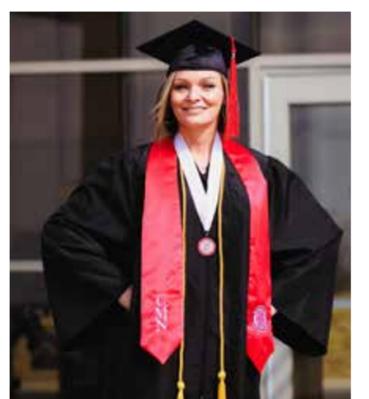
**School:** Eufaula High School

**Bio:** Black-Cooke is a graduate of Eufaula High School. She is the daughter of Kahle Black (Cheyenne & Arapaho) and Michael Cooke (Navajo). She attended The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Dormitory during her senior year. Her future plans are to attend Haskell Indian Nations University to study social work.

### JOHNNIE LORENE BRANSON

**School:** College of Muscogee Nation

**Bio:** Branson is the daughter of the late Gene Branson of Wilson and Harvey and Carolyn Torix of Preston. She is the granddaughter of the late Rufus V. Cox Sr., Johnnie Lorene Branson. She graduated from the College of Muscogee Nation receiving an Associate Degree in General Studies. She is a member of the Raccoon Clan and from Hechetee Town. She has four children and is thankful to Muscogee Creek Nation for the opportunity to continue her education at the Creek College.





### Lucille Briggs

**School:** Northeastern State University

**Bio:** Lucille Briggs is a mother, wife, and career woman. She belongs to the turtle clan and her home ground is polecat. She is the daughter of Sharon Lee (Watashe) and Jackie Tiger. She attended and graduated from the College of Muscogee Nation before transferring to Northeastern State University (NSU). She is a 2021-2022 graduate of Northeastern State University where she earned my bachelors of social work. Briggs will be pursuing masters at the University of Oklahoma. She is grateful for the Muscogee Nation education department.

### Kacie Briones

**School:** Holdenville High School

**Bio:** Kacie Briones graduated from Holdenville High School. She attended Holdenville schools her whole life. She is the daughter of Kimberly Brown and Pedro Briones. She has a little sister, Kenzi and a brother, Kenny and a late brother, Kaden Briones. Her maternal Grandparents are Deborah Clark and the late Kenneth Brown. Maternal great grandparents were Lizzie Harjo Bruner and George Bruner.



### Michael M. G. Brown

**School:** Norman High School

**Bio:** Michael Brown is a graduate of Norman High School in Norman, OK. His parents are Robert and Bobbie L. Brown, maternal grandparents are Bobby and Roselyn Frye of Okmulgee, paternal grandmother Kathryn Pierce. His clan is Bird and tribal town is Eufaula Canadian. He is a member of the Native American Club. He has participated in the Muscogee Nation Battle of Books in elementary and in the MCN Challenge Bowl in middle school and high school. He participated in Band for seven years. He has been in several marching contests with the Norman High School Marching Band. He plays clarinet and bass clarinet. He is planning to attend the University of Oklahoma. Michael has been an active member of the community, enrolled in AVID, which encourages leadership and outreach to others and the Tulsa Creek Indian Community youth group.

### Matthew Brett Bruner

**School:** University of Central Oklahoma

**Bio:** Bruner graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Software Engineering. He was a member of Sigma Alpha Lambda and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Bruner worked as an intern with Paycom during his senior year at UCO and has accepted a career position as a software developer with Paycom. Bruner is the son of Armando and Angela Bruner of Edmond, Oklahoma. His paternal grandparents are Lewis and Rachel Bruner of Bristow, Oklahoma and his maternal grandmother is Hazel Hornbeak of Beggs, Oklahoma.



### Nicole Alyssa Bruner

**School:** Oklahoma Baptist University

**Bio:** Nicole Bruner is graduating from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma with a degree in mathematics. She will be attending the University of Alabama where she accepted an offer of admissions into their PhD program in mathematics. She is excited to begin her graduate studies. Bruner is thankful to her friends, family, and tribe for their unending support and encouragement over these past four years. Bruner says her parents and grandparents have been her biggest supporters.

### Erin N. Bunner

**School:** Dartmouth College

**Bio:** Erin Bunner is the daughter of Keith and Katura Bunner, the granddaughter of Grace Bunner and the late Kenneth Bunner, and the great granddaughter of Nora Manley Cheek. She is Bird Clan and her tribal town is Thlopthlocco.

Bunner is graduating with honors from Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Native American/Indigenous Studies and Sociology. Her main involvements at Dartmouth included her service as Co-President of the Native Americans at Dartmouth student group, a residential Undergraduate Advisor, an Indigenous Student Peer Advisor, and a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow. She intends to pursue a career serving in Indian education.



### Cohen Michael Cannon

**School:** Broken Arrow High School

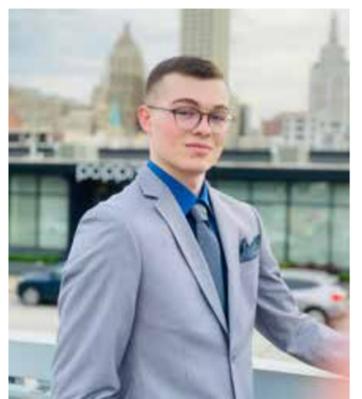
**Bio:** Cohen Cannon is a senior at Broken Arrow High School. He has attended Broken Arrow Schools for grades K - 12. Cohen will be graduating from Broken Arrow High School and Tulsa Tech in May 2022 with a trade in Mechatronics.

He is the son of Ashley Lillig Jones and the Bonus son of Lance Jones and the brother of Addison "Jonsey" Jones. He is also the son of Chance Cannon. Cohen's Clan is Echaww and his tribal town is Lovcpokv. Cohen is the grandson of Mike and Candy Lillig, Jackie and Kathy Jones, and Corky Cannon. Cohen is the Great grandson of Ron and Carol McHenry Williams. His Muscogee Creek ancestors include Lewis and Gladys McHenry, Jeanetta Haikey and Louis D. Bland, Jesse and Georgie McHenry, Reverend James McHenry and Great Great Great Grandmother Lucy Randall. Cohen plans to attend Oklahoma State University majoring in Electrical Engineering in the fall of 2022.

### Brighton Cantrell

**School:** Jenks High School

**Bio:** Brighton Cantrell graduated from Jenks High School on May 16. Cantrell is the son of Jared and Angel Cantrell-Ellis, the grandson of Timothy and Lesa Cantrell and Terri and the late Larry Stiver. He is the great grandson of Mary and the late Billy Cantrell, the late Lois and Thomas Pate and the late Guy and Lucille Hammack. His brother Jacob and sister Avalynn celebrated his accomplishment with him. Brighton enjoys science, chess and plans to pursue a career as a dental hygienist.



### Kaden Carter-Taylor

**School:** Wewoka High School

**Bio:** Kaden Carter-Taylor graduated from Wewoka High School, Wewoka, Oklahoma. While attending Wewoka High School Kaden also completed courses concurrently at Seminole State College in Seminole Oklahoma. He received several scholarships and is expected to complete his associates at SSC. During his senior year he was voted All District Wide receiver in football. Carter-Taylor also enjoyed playing basketball for the Tigers.

He is the son of VaShawnda Carter and Willie Taylor. His Muscogee Creek bloodline is maternal and he has been raised on the Seminole Reservation. His ancestry tribal towns are Tulwarthlocco and Broken Arrow. He is of the bird clan.

### Kamden Rae Coachman

**School:** Wetumka High School

**Bio:** Muscogee (Creek) Citizen Kamden Coachman is the son of Denise Coachman, grandson of Dan Coachman and the late Wilma Coachman. Coachman's Paternal Grandparents are late Albert and late Abbie Coachman, Maternal Grandparents are Rev. Walter Roberts and late Christine Dewochee Roberts.

He is a member of the Kialegee Tribal Town and his clan is Tiger. Coachman has attended Wetumka School since head start. His plans at this moment are undecided.



### Kylie Coker

**School:** Jenks High School

**Bio:** Kylie Coker graduated from Jenks as a Distinguished Graduate and member of FCCLA, Chinese Club, and Native American Club. After high school graduation, she will be attending Newberry College in South Carolina to play lacrosse. She plans to major in nursing.

### Zoe Arielle Cooper

**School:** Penn Foster High School

**Bio:** Cooper graduated high school two years early at the age of 16. She is an accomplished Bassoonist and artist and Participated in volleyball and track. She is currently enrolled at Ashworth College for Business where she plans to pursue a career as a Creative Director with an additional degree in Animation.



### Kaden Raynes Counterman

**School:** Enterprise High School

**Bio:** Kaden Counterman of Henryetta Oklahoma is now graduating from Enterprise High School in Alabama. He plans to pursue a certification in welding and work for the department of defense.

### Genevieve Estelle Cowan

**School:** Flour Bluff High School

**Bio:** Genevieve Estelle Cowan, daughter of Grady E. Cowan, III and Alisha R. Cowan (Self), is a fourth-generation graduate of Flour Bluff High School. She was involved in many extra-curricular activities, including Head Drum Major of the FB Hornet Band and The Coastal Cotillion. She maintained a GPA of 4.78 and earned 49 college credits while also working part-time. Cowan will attend Texas Woman's University in the Fall, majoring in Exercise Science with a Pre-Physical Therapy focus. She is the eldest granddaughter of Mitchell (Robin) Self, great-granddaughter of Calvin (Renee) Self, and great-great-granddaughter of John Haskell (Florine) Self.





### Samuel James Criner

**School:** Twin Hills Public School  
**Bio:** Samuel James Criner graduated as the Valedictorian of the 8th grade graduating class of 2022. He is the son of Russell and Terri Criner and is the grandson of the late Russell and Barbara Criner of Twin Hills and late Bob and Barbara Sams of Beggs. Criner has been a Twin Hills Hornet since Pre-k and academically, he has worked very hard to maintain the top ranking grade point average. He is in the Gifted and Talented program, a member of the Twin Hills Academic Team, and participated in the after-school STEM program. Criner has represented Twin Hills School in the annual Tulsa Tech Engineering Challenge and competed in the ORES State Scholastic Competition. He enjoys being a member of the Hornet basketball and track teams. He is an active member of the Beggs Crossroads Baptist Church youth group.

### Lyryc Cummings

**School:** Eufaula High School  
**Bio:** Cummings is a graduate of Eufaula High School. She is the daughter of Micco Cummings and Tonya Osborne. She has attended Muscogee (Creek) Nation Dormitory for five years. Lyryc is a certified CAN and her future plans include furthering her education in Nursing. She plans to attend the College of the Muscogee Nation in the fall.



### Amari Davis

**School:** Booker T Washington High School  
**Bio:** Amari Davis is a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa. During high school she was involved in the African American Society and Women Empowered social clubs. Through her hard work, she was accepted into multiple colleges, universities, and HBCU's. She plans to attend Oklahoma State University where she will focus on Pre-Med and Business. Her ultimate goal is to attend medical school and become a pediatrician. She wants thank all her teachers for the knowledge and wisdom instilled in her and making a positive impact. She especially thanks her mom and other family for pushing her and for instilling in her confidence, love, and courage.

### Cadence Sloane Davis

**School:** Broken Arrow High School  
**Bio:** Cadence Davis spent all years of high school mastering Clarinet and Flute. She was a member of the Broken Arrow High School Wind Ensemble all years in high school. She's been a proud member of The Pride of Broken Arrow marching band, which won Grand National Champions in 2021. In her spare time, Cadence also supported the Broken Arrow High School Show Choir, performing in the Combo Band, playing various auxiliary instruments. In 2022, she was a member of the Oklahoma All State Wind Symphony. Through her high school career, Cadence has also worked in the retail food industry, as a server and To-Go Specialist. Cadence will be attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, majoring in Music.



### Alexa Rene Deerinwater

**School:** Olive Public Schools  
**Bio:** Alexa Deerinwater has attended Olive High School for all four years of high school. She played one year of fast pitch softball, two years of cheerleading, three years of FFA including secretary her second year, one year on the academic team, two years in Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics. She plans on attending Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina to Major in Marine Science and become a Marine Biologist.

### Avery Deeringwater

**School:** Morris Public School  
**Bio:** Avery Deeringwater is the daughter of Darrin and Melissa Elam. She is the sister of Devin Deeringwater, Cade and Michael Elam. She is the granddaughter of Melinda Deeringwater and Diana Elam. Deeringwater graduated from Morris public schools, which she has been attending since kindergarten. She has dedicated her life to playing softball for 12 years, while also enjoying going to car shows, spending time with family and friends. After Graduation she plans on attending college at OSUIT to study business and mechanics.



### Syeann DeLaune

**School:** Morris High School  
**Bio:** Syeann DeLaune is the daughter of Darren DeLaune and Winomie Wilson. Throughout her time at MHS she has participated in FFA, yearbook and basketball. After graduating high school, she plans to attend College of the Muscogee Nation.

### Jahmarian-Joaquin Diaz

**School:** Renton High School, Renton, WA  
**Bio:** Diaz was born and raised in the Pacific NW area. He comes from a family with strong ties to Oklahoma and He is very proud of his Mvskoke heritage. Diaz continue to strive to make the best future that he can. His ancestors/families history is what pushes him to be the best he can due to the sacrifices they made. IDiaz will be transitioning to college to obtain a business management degree and utilize it to open the doors for his entrepreneurial spirit. He played baseball since little league and he is eager to see what the future holds at a collegiate level. He is excited for the future and will have Mvskoke pride throughout his Journey.



### Mercedes Don Dunn

**School:** Morris High School  
**Bio:** Mercedes Don Dunn is the daughter of Darweshi and Lisa Spencer and George Dunn Jr. She is the Granddaughter of Ivalene Tottress and George Sr and Barbara Dunn. She is the Great granddaughter of Eliza Sanders. She is of the Bear Clan. Dunn has been a member of the Pride of Morris Marching/Concert Band for 8 years. Serving as Drum Major this past year. She was a Morris Cheerleader for 2 years. She also wrestler for 1.5 years and was part of Drama Team for 1 year. She is a member of National Honor Society and Gifted and Talented. She currently serves as Senior Class Treasurer and NHS Secretary. Dunn plans to continue her education at Haskell Indian Nations University in the fall and major in Media Communication.

### Warren Dunn

**School:** Coweta High School  
**Bio:** Warren Dunn is a graduate of Coweta High School. He has attended Coweta schools since 2nd grade. He was a member of the basketball team and Native American Student Organization during high school. Dunn has participated in Creek Nation Challenge Bowl every year since 4th grade. He is the son of Marjorie and Korran Crawford of Coweta. Also Edwin Dunn of Tahlequah. He is the grandson of Jackson and Jill Lewis of Eufaula, Tommy and Cheryl Crawford of Eufaula, and Dora Dunn from Tahlequah and the late Richard Mark Dunn. Dunn has enlisted in the National Guard and will leave for basic training in July. He plans to attend Northeastern State University after returning home from training.



### Fausto Esparza-bland

**School:** Indian Springs High School  
**Bio:** Fausto Esparza-Bland is the son of Evelyn and Larry Bland and a recent graduate of Indian Springs High School in San Bernardino California. While earning exceptional grades and attendance as a "COYOTE," Esparza-Bland participated in the school marching band as a saxophonist performing at football games, parades, concerts, and Battle of the Bands. He enjoys watching and attending sporting events, especially his LA Dodgers, Angels and the Seattle Seahawks when they are playing in Los Angeles. He also enjoys softball league games, which he plays outfield along with two of his brothers. His great grandparents are Leo Bland from Broken Arrow and Betty Bland Barnett from Wetumpka Oklahoma, grandparents are Joe and Connie and Esparza from San Pedro California. He is considering possible trade school as HVAC technician or attending college in an undecided major.

### Taylor Nicole Lee Fehrenback

**School:** Preston High School  
**Bio:** Taylor Nicole Lee Fehrenback is the Great-granddaughter of the late Rufus V. Cox Sr. and Dorothy Lorene Cox. She is a member of the Raccoon Clan and from Heechetee Town. She is the daughter of Timothy Shane Fehrenback and Johnnie Lorene Branson. She is the granddaughter of the late Gene Branson Sr., Connie Fehrenback of Tulsa and Harvey and Carolyn (Cox) Torix of Preston. Fehrenback is a member of the National Honor Society, receiving an honor award for accomplishing a 29 ACT score. Her future plans include an educational tour of Italy, France, and Spain this summer. She attended the College of Muscogee Nation (CMN) during her Junior and Senior year as a concurrent student and will continue to pursue her college education at CMN this fall.



### Autumn Elizabeth (Sewell) Fenenbock

**School:** University of Oklahoma-Tulsa  
**Bio:** Autumn Elizabeth (Sewell) Fenenbock Graduated OU-Tulsa with a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education. She has accepted a 2nd grade teaching position within the Sand Springs Public Schools. She is cheered on by her mom, dad, Austin and Kyle.

### Jay Fife

**School:** Yale University  
**Bio:** Jay Fife is of the Hotlklvke Clan and Oce Vpofv Tribal Town. He attended Yale University in New Haven, CT and received his B.A in American Studies. Fife was a devoted, active member of Davenport College and the Yale Native American Cultural Center communities. In 2019, he received the Edward A. Bouchet Fellowship to pursue paid research on an academic project. This culminated in Fife's senior thesis, which constructed a history of the Mvskoke language. In 2021, Jay received the Yale Domestic Summer Award to fund a summer internship at the US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma. His involvement on campus exceeded beyond the classroom as he interacted with various social communities at Yale. He is a member of Yale's oldest and most prestigious senior society. He is the first graduate of Preston High School to obtain an Ivy League degree. Moreover, Jay Fife is the first Mvskoke speaker to graduate from Yale. He will return to the Mvskoke Reservation to continue thinking, fostering community, and living his best Mvskoke life.





### Kennedie Morgan Finley

**School:** Oklahoma State University

**Bio:** Kennedie Morgan Finley graduated from Oklahoma State University with an Associate of Science degree. She graduated from Kiefer High School in 2019. She is of Echaswv Clan and her tribal town is Lovcpokv.

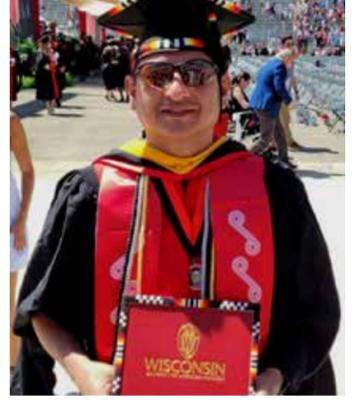
She is the daughter of Dawn and Pat Rivera and Kenneth Finley, and the sister of Dawson, Paxton and Brynne Finley.

Finley is the granddaughter of Carolyn Peebles and Karrie Williams Phillips, the Great granddaughter of Ron and Carol McHenry Williams. Her Muscogee Creek ancestors include Lewis and Gladys McHenry, Louis and Jeanetta Haikey Bland, Jesse and Georgie McHenry, Reverend James McHenry and Great Great Grandmother Lucy Randall. Kennedie plans to attend the Oklahoma State University Nursing program at Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

### Tim Fish

**School:** School of Human Ecology at UW-Madison

**Bio:** Tim Fish is a current doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, Wisconsin. As he works his way towards his Ph.D., He graduated this Spring with a second Master's degree from the School of Human Ecology at UW-Madison and a professional certificate in cybersecurity. He graduated with distinctions and honors and was inducted into the UW-Madison Chapter of the National Honor Society of Leadership and Success. Fish anticipates graduating with his doctoral degree next year in Civil Society and Community Research with a distributive minor in digital media and civic education. Tim's clan is raccoon and his family is originally from Wetumka, Ok. Tim's parents are Pusler Peter Fish, who currently lives in Pawhuska, OK, and Cynthia Bell from Apache Junction, AZ. He would also like to say mvtv to the Mvskoke Nation, the Mvskoke Nation Higher Education Department, and his family and friends for their support.



### Brooke Nicole Fogarty

**School:** The University of Alabama

**Bio:** Brooke Nicole Fogarty is a cum laude graduate from University of Alabama with a Bachelor's in Business Management with a specialization in Human Resources and a minor in Creative Media. She was on the Dean's List every semester.

Post graduation, she has taken a position as the Director of Women's Basketball Operations at Stetson University.

Her proud parents are Renee and Shawn Fogarty of Orange County, California. Her brother is Derek Fogarty; grandparents are John Windes and Mary LaLonde Windes. Her great grandmother is the late Evelyn Ellen Freeman of Checotah, Oklahoma.

### Madison Brooke Franks

**School:** East Central University

**Bio:** Madison Brooke Franks earned a Bachelor degree graduate from East Central University. Her mother is Angeline Lowe of the Wind Clan and father is Norman D. Frank of the Sweet Potato Clan. Her maternal grandparents are the late Tochee Narcomey and Dan Narcomey. Her paternal grandparents are Little C. Frank and Susanna and Elliot Barnett.



### Mya Gildon

**School:** Glenpool High School

**Bio:** Mya Gildon is the daughter of Justus and Tina Gildon. She is a 2022 graduate of Glenpool High School. She has had the honor of being a starter for Glenpool soccer since ninth grade. She has also participated in junior ROTC, currently serving as a Staff Sergeant and platoon commander. She will be attending McPherson College, in Kansas, on an academic and soccer scholarship. She will major in Sociology with an emphasis in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. Her goal is to work for the FBI as an investigator.

### Autumn Girod

**School:** Tulsa Community College

**Bio:** Pre-Professional Health Sciences AS, Pre-Veterinary Medicine Autumn Girod has loved animals from an early age and this is what led her to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. She currently has three fish, one gecko, and two dogs. She is graduating with Phi Theta Kappa and National Success and Leadership society honors. Autumn is very proud of her Native American Heritage and the assistance her tribe has provided to help her pursue her dreams. She is Creek, Choctaw and a member of the raccoon clan. Her parents are Gerald and Cynthia Girod. Her grandparents are Darwin and Debbie Moore, the late Perry Taylor, Helena McIntosh Girod and the late Russell Girod, Pasty Cupps and the late Ricky Cupps, and Rachelle Harjo and the late Henry Harjo. Autumn will continue to work towards her dreams and goals.



### Kassandra Marie Gould

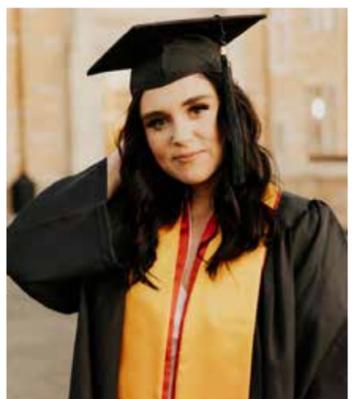
**School:** Broken Arrow High School/Options Academy

**Bio:** Excelling in her junior year, Kassandra Marie Gould will graduate a year early in 2022. She enjoyed working on the yearbook staff and will miss seeing her friends daily as well as her favorite teachers Mr. Cook and Ms. Pefley. Her favorite Quote: "Sometimes you won't know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory." Dr. Seuss

### Cloe Graham

**School:** The University of Tulsa

**Bio:** Cloee Graham is a proud citizen of the Muscogee Nation and recent graduate of the University of Tulsa. Graham plans attend law school. She hopes to use her education to fight for sovereignty across Indian country.



### Debbie Greever

**School:** Langston University

**Bio:** Debbie Greever graduated from Langston University with Masters In Rehabilitation Counseling. She is proud to be Muscogee-Creek from her father, Charles Wilson Herron. Greever is Cherokee and Blackfoot from her mother, Elizabeth Hilton. She has been a committed Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) and Indian Education Counselor at Union Public Schools for 15 years. She is passionate and dedicated to working with American Indian high school students. Her primary focus is to facilitate the graduation of American Indian students placed in the Union's Native American program and help prepare them for higher education. Greever, advocated for passage of the Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program (JOM Modernization Act), which became public law on December 31, 2018. This law allows schools throughout the United States to establish a JOM program which will enhance the education of their American Indian students. Her greatest achievement is being a mother to her son, Grant.

### Stephon Joseph Menewa Hall

**School:** University of Science and Arts University of Oklahoma

**Bio:** Hall is the son of Lisa Bear and John Hall of OKC, grandson of the late Ivan Bear Sr. of Okmulgee. He is HotMike and of the Concharly tribal town. Hall earned his Bachelor's from the University of Science and Arts University of Oklahoma, while being a student athlete for USAO's men's basketball team. He is one the programs top all time performers by setting the all time record in assists (382), reaching the 1000 pt mark, junior season then 1500 pts Senior season. He helped his team reach the elite 8 in the national tournament (freshman season), a Conference tournament Championship and All Tourney (Jr season), Season Conference Champions, All Conference selection, Conference player of the week and NAIA ALL AMERICAN Honorable Mention, Sr Season. Hall will take advantage of his extra year of eligibility to continue his education and basketball career at the Academy of Arts University in San Francisco. Playing professionally would be a dream, but Coaching is where he sees himself in the future.



### Lillian Geneva B. Harjo

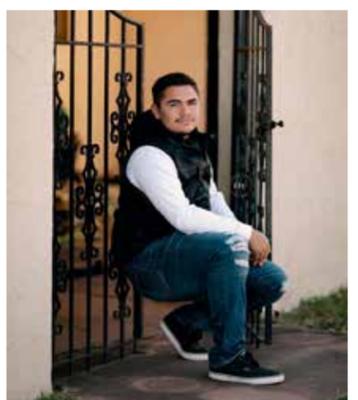
**School:** Langston University

**Bio:** Lillian Geneva B. Harjo graduated from Langston University as a Biology major with her Bachelor's of Science degree on May 14th with the scholastic honor of Magna Cum Laude. She was a four year Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program member and collegiate athlete as well as a starting second baseman for Lady Lions softball team. She is of the turtle clan. She is daughter of Keri and Sam B. Harjo. She will work towards her Masters in Education at the University of Missouri Kansas City while serving in a competitive internship at the Kansas City International Academy.

### Makhan Oktaha Harjo

**School:** Okemah High School

**Bio:** Makhan Oktaha Harjo is a 2022 graduate of Okemah High School and Wes Watkins Technology Center completing the Residential Electrical Program. While in high school he participated in football, basketball and baseball. He was also a member of the Este Cate club, Beta Club, National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, and WWTC student of the month for October 2021. He was awarded Class 2A All-Star by Class in football by the Oklahoma Coaches Association. Makhan will attend Wichita State University majoring in Electrical Engineering.



### Nathan Perry R Harjo

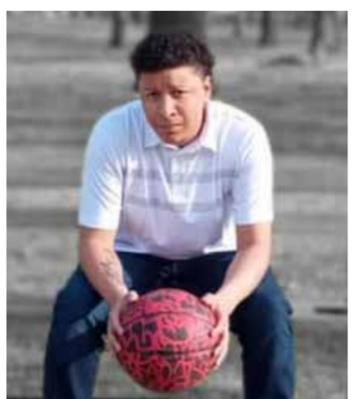
**School:** Choctaw High School

**Bio:** Nathan Perry B. Harjo graduated from Choctaw High School on May 16. He is turtle clan, the son of Keri & Sam B. Harjo of Choctaw and grandson of Agnes Perryman of Coweta and Geneva and the late Sam B. Harjo of Henryetta. He is a loving brother and son as well as a great competitor in the sport of wrestling. He will continue landscaping and plans to have his own landscaping business.

### Simon Harjo

**School:** McLain High School

**Bio:** Simon Chebon Harjo graduated from McLain High School in Tulsa Oklahoma. Harjo is the son of Rachel Harjo and Joseph Scott. The grandson of Jerri Harjo and the late Jimmie 'Corky' Harjo. Great grandson of the Late J.W and Naomi Harjo, Late Ralph and Patsy Horton. Harjo is Wind Clan and a member of Greenleaf Ceremonial Grounds he also attends Greenleaf Missionary Baptist Church in Okemah Oklahoma. He enjoyed his Senior year playing on the McLain Titans basketball team. Along with general studies, he also took H.S. AP classes to obtain college credit in order to further his education. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with friends and family and playing his PS4.





**Aliyah Cheyenne Harjochee**

**School:** Henryetta High School  
**Bio:** Harjochee is the daughter of Billie Proctor and Paul Harjochee. Granddaughter of Bill and Minnie Proctor and the late Barney and Deborah Harjochee. Great Granddaughter of Lena Proctor and Lorene Culley and the late Charlie Proctor and Paul Culley. She is a member of Yardeka Baptist Church and Greenleaf Cermonial Ground and is of the Deer Clan. Harjochee has attended Green Country Vo-Tech the past 2 years in the Medical Assistant Program and has been at Henryetta High School the past 3 years and has been on the Principals Honor Roll. She enjoys playing basketball and spending time with family. She plans to attend Seminole State College and receive a degree in Nursing.

**Nakea Charleen Harjochee**

**School:** Connors State College  
**Bio:** Harjochee is the daughter of Billie Proctor and Paul Harjochee. Granddaughter of Bill and Minnie Proctor and the late Barney and Deborah Harjochee. Great Granddaughter of Lena Proctor and Lorene Culley and the late Charlie Proctor and Paul Culley. She is a member of Yardeka Baptist Church and Greenleaf Cermonial Ground and is of the Deer Clan. Harjochee has earned her Associates in Business. Nakea loves spending time with family. She hopes to earn a Cosmetology License and one day own her own beauty shop.



**Lynden Ada Ipolani Harry**

**School:** Warner Pacific University  
**Bio:** Lynden Ada Ipolani Harry recently graduated from Warner Pacific University in Portland, Oregon with a BA in Kinesiology. She is the daughter of Shawn Harry (Yuchi/Creek) and June Smith (Warm Springs – Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Oregon). Harry is granddaughter of Danny McKinney and Ethleen Harry (the Harry family from the Duck Creek Community). She played basketball through her college years and will now be exploring career options in coaching or personal training. She is currently undecided about enrolling in a Master's program but is considering her options.

**Emily Harwell**

**School:** Cornell Law School, Juris Doctor degree (J.D.)  
**Bio:** The Harwell family of Prague, Oklahoma celebrated the graduation of Emily Harwell on May 14, 2022. Harwell, a Mvskoke citizen and wind clan, received her Juris Doctor degree (J.D.) from Cornell Law School where she served as the President of the Native American Law Student Association. She graduated from Prague High School in 2012 and received her Bachelor of Arts from Dartmouth College in 2016. In the summer of 2019, Emily attended the American Indian Law Center's Pre-Law Summer Institute for Native American students. She has accepted a position with Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP in New York City. She looks forward to serving the Mvskoke Nation and other tribal communities in the coming years. The Harwell family would like to acknowledge Mvskoke artist, Massey Barnett, for creating a gorget worn by Emily in honor of her legal accomplishments.



**Lauren Heck**

**School:** Austin Community College  
**Bio:** Heck is the daughter of Earl and Erin Heck of Okmulgee and the oldest granddaughter of Regina Keith of Okmulgee. Heck is from the Bird Clan. She has completed her Associates of Art in Early Childhood to 6th grade and will continue towards her Bachelors in Art Education in the fall at Texas State. Heck currently works in the Austin Independent School District in Austin, TX, and looks forward to her career as an educator.

**Chloe Henshaw**

**School:** Olive Public School  
**Bio:** Henshaw has attended Olive Public Schools for 14 years and attended Drumright Central Tech for the last 2 years in the Health Careers Program. She played softball, golf, and cheer throughout her high school career. She maintained a 4.0 GPA all throughout high school. Her future plans are to attend Northeastern State University in the fall and earn a BSN degree.

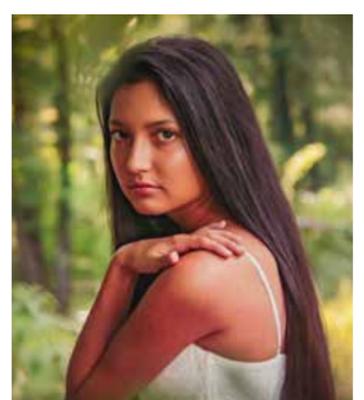


**Ashlinn Storm Hicks**

**School:** Salina High School  
**Bio:** Hicks is a graduate of Salina High School. She is the daughter of Joshua Hicks and Jami Ehly, the granddaughter of Tracy and Beatrice (Hicks) Scates. Her great grandparents are the late Edna Mitchell and Charlie Hicks Sr. She is of the Deer Clan. Hicks is a member of the National Honor Society.

**McKenzie Hicks**

**School:** Bryant High School  
**Bio:** McKenzie Hicks, a graduate of Bryant High School in Bryant, Arkansas, is attending Southeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall on a cross country and track scholarship. She will also be a part of their Honors Program for which she is receiving a scholarship as well. Hicks was also involved in fine arts in high school, being a part of her school's top competitive choir and portraying Gingy in Shrek the Musical last spring. She will graduate in the top 10% of her class with a 4.1 GPA and plans to major in Political Science with a minor in Native American Studies. Her future career plans are to attend law school and work as a tribal prosecutor for the Muscogee Creek Nation.



**Gabrielle Higbee**

**School:** Dewey High School  
**Bio:** Gabrielle Higbee is graduating high school from Dewey High School. She is one of the Valedictorians. She is a member of the National Honor Society. She will be attending college in the fall at Tulsa University. She also received academic and an athletic scholarship to play softball at TU.

**Breana Elizabeth Hill**

**School:** The University of Oklahoma  
**Bio:** Breana Elizabeth Hill is a proud member of the Mvskoke Nation (Ecvilke) and of Ihanktonwan Dakota descent. Her parents are Debbie Hill of Marty, SD and Levi Hill of Eufaula, OK. Hill graduated from the University of Oklahoma with Magna Cum Laude Graduate Honors on May 14, 2022.



**Miles Hill**

**School:** Bixby High School  
**Bio:** Hill is an accomplished student athlete, competing in football, basketball, and track throughout his high school career. During his senior football season, he was a key member of Bixby's starting defense, one of the stoutest in Oklahoma, allowing only 9 points per game. His season stats include 13 sacks, 21 solo tackles, 29 assisted tackles, 3 fumble recoveries, and a 66-yard rushing touchdown (in 19 of a possible 32 quarters of action, as the starting defense only played into the 3rd quarter for 3 games of the season). Hill and his Bixby Spartan teammates finished the season with a 49-0 winning record, claiming the Oklahoma high school football state record for longest winning streak, and completed their mission of winning the Oklahoma Football Class 6A-II State Championship for all 4 years of their high school career, 2018-2019-2020-2021. In addition to his success in sports, he was recognized as an Academic All-Conference Honorable Mention.

**Reese Hoggans**

**School:** University of Michigan Law School  
**Bio:** Reese Hoggans earned a Juris Doctor, University of Michigan Law School. He is from Okmulgee and graduated from OHS in 2016. He is a Registered Nurse and earned a Bachelor of Science with a major in nursing from New York University in 2019. After law school, He plans to work as a medical ethicist for Northwell Health in New York City, advocating for trans and nonbinary youth and adults and women seeking medical care. His interests include health policy, jurisprudence, international indigenous law, and feminist legal theory.



**Nashoba Mae Holuby**

**School:** Weleetka High School  
**Bio:** Holuby is graduating from Weleetka High School with a GPA of 4.11. She is the daughter of Shane and Audria Holuby. She is Salutatorian of her class and on the President honor roll at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. She played basketball for the Weleetka Outlaws for 4 years. Holuby is on course to graduate from Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology with her Associate's degree in Pre-professional Studies in December of this year. From there she plans are to attend Northeastern State University to obtain her Bachelor's degree in Political Science. She then plans to attend the University Oklahoma to obtain her law degree.

**John Ellis Horsechief**

**School:** University of Pennsylvania  
**Bio:** Horsechief obtained his Master of Science degree in Non-profit Leadership from UPenn's School of Social Policy and Practice and is also an alumnus of Creighton University. He is married to Tabitha, together they have four children, Exodus and Selah (twins), Hadassah and Hosanna. He is the son of Sherri and Greg Smith and the late Ellis Horsechief Jr. and the grandson of Myron and the late Christine (Bruner) Sekayouma. Horsechief is employed full-time on the Development team at the Open Door Mission (ODM) homeless shelter in Omaha, Nebraska. Through his work with ODM, he is very involved in the Omaha community and he also volunteers personal time mentoring and speaking to youth on the importance of education.





## Hannah Elizabeth Houx

**School:** Coweta High School

**Bio:** Hannah Elizabeth Houx is the daughter of Chasidy Steele and the late Zachary Houx, and the granddaughter of Mike Houx and the late Connie (Nutt) Olson. She is graduating from Coweta High School and has maintained a 4.059 GPA on an unweighted scale, she ranked 16 out of 193 students in her graduating class. Houx has received several scholarships including Oklahoma State University Academic Excellence Scholarship as well as being inducted into the Oklahoma High School honor society. She has been very active in her school and community where she has been the high school football and basketball trainer for the past four years. Houx plans to attend Oklahoma State University and major in Human Development and Family Science. She is of the Deer Clan and belongs to Polecat Ceremonial Ground.

## Hanks Douglas Huddleston

**School:** Atoka High School

**Bio:** Hanks Douglas Huddleston is a senior at Atoka High School. He is graduating with a 4.0 unweighted GPA, Top Ten Percent, National Honor Society Member, HOSA, and 36 hours of college hours. He has been a varsity member of Atoka High School's Esports Shadow Cats Team. For the past two years, he has studied Health Careers Exploration at Atoka's Kiamichi Technology and is certified as a Medical Assistant, Nursing Assistant, and a Phlebotomist. He will attend Oklahoma State University and has been accepted into their Honor's College and will be a Microbiology major with aspirations to become a family practice physician working for IHS. "I want to give back to my tribe and serve Native American families in Oklahoma." He is the son of Brian and Tara Huddleston. His maternal grandmother, Glenda Graham Byrd, was named one of Muscogee Nation's Outstanding Tribal Elders.



## Zahayfa Echota Hummingbird

**School:** Sequoyah High School

**Bio:** Zahayfa Echota Hummingbird is a graduate from Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He is Creek, Cherokee, Potawatomie, Seminole, Kiowa, Creek, and Yuchi. Hummingbird was apart of many extra-curricular activities including football, basketball, powerlifting, wrestling, baseball, and track. He was also a part of HOPE club, which stands for Honor Our Peoples Existence. Hummingbird was a member of Student Council, named Student of the Month and he enjoys playing stickball outside of my school sports. His goal is to work on leadership skills and hopefully put that in use later in life. He plans to attend Connors State College to obtain an Engineering degree. He thanks his family for their support and expresses his love for them and his culture.

## Ronald "Rico" Johnson Jr.

**School:** Epic Charter Schools

**Bio:** Johnson is the Great grandson of late Timmy "Okchvnpvlla" and late Louella Jackson, of Hanna, OK, Grandson of Andrew Jackson, formerly of Weleetka, OK, now of OKC, and Son of Lauri Jackson, of OKC.

Growing up in South OKC, Rico started in the Moore school district. With the threat of Covid and every school moving to distance learning, he chose to homeschool for his final 2 years through Epic Charter. This allowed him to continue his baseball career, ending his high school season with Destiny Christian private school in Del City, OK.

In the fall, Johnson will be pursuing a business degree at Southwestern Christian University in Bethany, OK on a baseball scholarship.



## Katie Elizabeth Keele

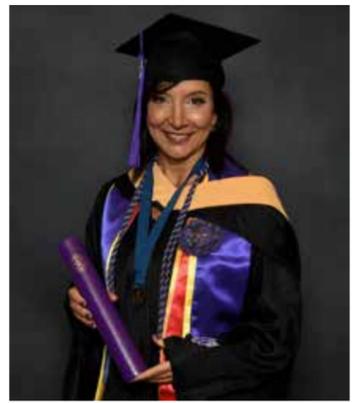
**School:** North Lamar ISD

**Bio:** Keele graduated from North Lamar ISD in Paris, Texas on May 28th. She is the daughter of Tim and Leslie Keele. Keele has been a cheerleader all 4 years of high school, involved in FFA, Beta, and her church youth group. She has enjoyed raising 3 show hogs. Keele is the recipient of the Sgt. Jay M Hoskins memorial scholarship. This scholarship was available to high school seniors who had a parent that was a veteran or active duty military member. Keele wrote a very moving essay and was selected as the recipient of the scholarship from the Marine Detachment and was showcased on the front page of the Paris newspaper. Keele is attending the University of Texas in Tyler in the fall to pursue a degree in nursing. She has completed several college-credited hours while in high school.

## Carolyn Michelle (Shelly Lodes) Ladden

**School:** Stephen F. Austin State University

**Bio:** Ladden graduated with honors from the Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. She had earned a bachelor's degree in Communications from Cameron University previously. Ladden is the Granddaughter of the late Rufus V. Cox Sr. and is a member of the Raccoon Clan from Hechete Town. She is the daughter of Carolyn (Cox) Torix of Preston and Ronald Lodes of Lawton, Oklahoma. Following graduation, Ladden will pursue a career as a medical social worker in the Houston area. She extends grateful appreciation to the tribe and the Department of Higher Education for the financial support provided to reach this milestone.



## Chandler G. Lee

**School:** Berryhill High School

**Bio:** Lee attended Pretty Water School from pre K to 8th grade. From there, he transferred to attend Berryhill High School. Lee has been on the President's Honor Roll for the past 2 years, graduating with a 3.8 GPA. Lee has also held down a part time job during the last 2 years, all the while attending High School.

Lee is a very intelligent, honest, and trustworthy young man who will do well and succeed in all of his future endeavors.

Lee plans to sign up with the US Navy upon graduation, where he hopes to be a part of a larger group of like individuals who have a calling to serve this country. He hopes to travel and see other interesting parts of the world during his tour of duty. After the Navy, Lee plans to pursue his college degree.

## Kaden Lewis

**School:** Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology

**Bio:** Lewis graduated with honors from the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSU-IT) with a degree in Engineering Graphics & Design Drafting Technologies. Lewis is Fuswlke (Bird Clan) and lives in Okmulgee, OK. During Lewis's last semester of the Engineering program, he completed an internship at the MCN Tribal Construction Department and learned valuable skills and gained hands on experience working in the field. Lewis is currently working full-time as an Engineer at Cyntergy, an architecture, engineering and construction company, in Tulsa, OK.



## Khayla Jasmin Lowe

**School:** Oklahoma State University

**Bio:** Lowe is the daughter of Khalid and Trina Lowe of Tulsa, Oklahoma. She graduated from OSU Class of 2022, Magna Cum Laude, with a degree in Recreational Therapy. Lowe was the Vice President of the Recreational Therapy Club and Treasurer of the Occupational Therapy Club. She interned at a rehab hospital and a community center for people with disabilities, with over 1000 volunteer hours. She is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority and was the Philanthropy Treasurer. Lowe plans on attending graduate school.

## Ericka Luginbill

**School:** Tulsa Community College

**Bio:** Luginbill graduated May 13 with her associate's degree in nursing from Tulsa community college. She would like to thank the nation for their continued support while she achieved her dream of becoming a nurse.



## Jarrett Russel Lumsden

**School:** Lamar University

**Bio:** Lumsden was granted a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Lamar University in Beaumont, TX. He is the son of Barry and Connie Baker Lumsden of Rhome, TX; grandson of the late Sarah Molly Gordon Baker and George Baker of Tulsa; and great grandson of the late Lena McFarland Gordon of Dustin. Lumsden plans to live in Dallas and pursue a career in software development.

## Paul Lee McCart

**School:** Morris High School

**Bio:** McCart is the son of Billy Nickolls, Laci LeGrand, Tonya Legrand and the late Bob McCart. He attended Morris for all of school years and participated in many various activities throughout them. He has many goals he plans on achieving after high school. His whole family is really proud of all he has accomplished and all he will accomplish.



## Claudia McHenry

**School:** College of the Muscogee Nation

**Bio:** Claudia McHenry is the 23 year old daughter of Arlene Isham and Joe McHenry. Her maternal grandparents are the late Christine Wolfe and Clarence Isham. Her paternal grandparents are Jessie Cox and Arthur McHenry. She is Wind Clan and her tribal town is Tvlmccvse. She dances for Helvpe ceremonial grounds. She is a recipient of the 2020 United Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) 25 under 25 award, the 2020 Mvskoke Women's Leadership College Student of the Year award, and is the 2021-2022 Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation. McHenry enjoys sewing traditional Mvskoke clothing, spending time with her family, meeting new people, volunteering, making jokes and attending stomp dances. She is thankful to have earned a Certificate of Language.

## Adison McLaughlin

**School:** Eufaula High School

**Bio:** McLaughlin graduated from Eufaula High School. She was the salutatorian and the class president. McLaughlin is a four-year member of the Lady Ironhead basketball and softball team, and received Academic All-State for both basketball and slow pitch. She's also a five-year member of the FFA where she received her State Farmer Degree with Academic Excellence. She is also a four-year member of the National Honor Society and FCA. She has completed her freshman year of college at Connors State College while attending high school. McLaughlin plans to pursue her degree in Speech Pathology.





**Josh McNac**

**School:** Hilldale High School  
**Bio:** As a freshman attending Hilldale, McNac grew as an adult by becoming president of the Native American Student Association and Young Democrats. He is very thankful for the teachers at Hilldale for showing him how to be patient and more organized. He is thankful for his family and friends for all of the laughs, cries, anger, and love through his high school career because without that support he would not be able to achieve the point he is at now.

**Kenzi Jean Mercer**

**School:** Bixby High School  
**Bio:** Mercer is the daughter of Benjamin and Kristen Mercer. She has four sisters: Karlee, Allison, Kamri and Kendall. Her maternal grandparents are Billie Bible and the late Kenneth Childers Sr; she is the great granddaughter of the late Andy and Joanne Bible. Her paternal grandparents are Jana Mercer and the late Ronnie Mercer. Mercer has attended Bixby schools all 13 years since Pre-K. In high school, she was involved in BPA, FCCLA, yearbook, and was a four year starter on the softball team. She has played softball since she was four years old and has played on several competitive teams since she was eight. She will continue her education at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M in Miami, where she received an athletic scholarship to play softball. She will major in Psychology and Sociology and plans on becoming a Child Psychologist.



**Avery Miller**

**School:** Henryetta High School  
**Bio:** Avery Miller is a Muscogee Creek citizen, and a member of the Deer Clan. She is graduating with a 4.21 GPA, is a member of The National Honor Society, Native American National Honor Society and is a 2022 Valedictorian for Henryetta High School. She has played fast pitch softball for four years, slowpitch softball for four years and was named 2022 Middle East All-State Pitcher for fast pitch and Middle East All-State Slowpitch as a third Baseman. Miller plans to continue her education and playing softball in college.

**Adrian Morgan**

**School:** Sapulpa High School  
**Bio:** Morgan is the daughter of Rebecca Greene and Elmo Morgan, Jr. She is an enrolled member of the Mvskoke (Creek) Nation and is also of Euchee/Yuchi and Cherokee descent. She was on the A/B honor roll all through school. She was a 4-year letterman and starter for the Sapulpa Lady Chieftains Soccer team. She earned All district honorable mention her Jr year, Frontier Valley Conference Academic All-Conference Honorable mention for 4 years, was co-captain her Sr year and has been chosen for the All-State Soccer team. Morgan was a Winter Court attendant both her Jr and Sr years. She also participated in Education Talent Search for 3 years. After graduation, Morgan plans to take a gap year and either work or travel.



**Katelyn Nash**

**School:** Central High School  
**Bio:** Nash is graduating with High Honors as Valedictorian for Central High. She is the great granddaughter of Raymond and Leona (Lowe) Harjo, granddaughter of Charles and Emma Smith, and daughter of Thomas and Cassandra Nash. Nash developed an interest in Robotics in the 5th grade and joined her school's Robotics Team where she learned programming, presentation, and critical thinking skills. She has worked hard to achieve her goals by taking part in Leadership and several AP courses. Nash will be pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering from California State University Fresno starting this fall.

**Chris Natseway**

**School:** Eufaula High School  
**Bio:** Chris Natseway is son of Chris Natseway of Glenpool, OK and Carmelita Natseway of Rio Rancho, NM. His siblings are Cedric Noriega and Cale Natseway. Maternal Grandparents are the late Manuel Noriega and the late Ramona (Harjo) Noriega. Paternal Grandparents are Ron Natseway of Albuquerque, NM and Edna (Francis) Natseway of Tulsa, OK. Natseway is a citizens of the Muscogee Nation, Seminole and Laguna (Pueblo) tribes. He is of the Deer clan. Natseway plans to attend Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, NM and the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, NM.



**Monica Jane Bergmann Olsen**

**School:** Liberty University  
**Bio:** Monica Jan Bergmann graduated on May 6th, Summa cum laude, having majored in Religion with an emphasis in Christian Counseling. Her desire is to eventually obtain a master's degree in counseling with the hope of doing equine assisted therapy. She would like to extend her heartfelt gratitude to Creek Nation for helping make her education possible. Mvto.

**MyKah Os'Ke-entacy Faye Osborne**

**School:** Eufaula High School  
**Bio:** MyKah Os'Ke-entacy Faye Osborne is graduating with the 2022 Senior Class of Eufaula High School, Eufaula OK. She is the daughter of LeAndra Feeling and the late Floyd Osborne Jr. She is the granddaughter of Jack and Stella Feeling and the late Christine Hill and Floyd Osborne Sr. She is a member of Okfuskee Baptist Church and is Raccoon Clan. Osborne has attended Eufaula Schools her entire life. She has played basketball and fast and slow pitch softball for four years for the Lady Ironheads earning many honors for both sports. She is a member of the National Honor Society and honor rolls. She also competed with the FFA Range Judging on state and national levels. She plans to attend college at OSUIT and study nursing. She dedicates her all her accomplishments to her late father.



**Maggie Lynn Pembrook**

**School:** The University of Oklahoma  
**Bio:** Maggie Lynn Pembrook obtained a Bachelors of Elementary Education from Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education in 2019. In 2022 she obtained a Masters of Educational Psychology in Clinical Professional Counseling from Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. Pembrook is the daughter of Albert and Tammy Pembrook, Broken Arrow, OK. Her siblings are Trent Pembrook, Bixby, OK, Hally Pembrook, Dallas, TX, and grandparents are Art and Fern Kerr, Broken Arrow, OK.

**Alexa Perdomo-Lena**

**School:** El Reno High School  
**Bio:** Perdomo-Lena is an enrolled Muscogee-Creek member; his other tribal blood is Cheyenne and Seminole. His parents are Lesley Lena and Gino Perdomo. Grandparents are Dinka and Marsha (Nibs) Lena; He is the Great Grandson of Timothy and Nancy Marshall Nibs and Walter and Stella Lena. Lena has played football at El Reno high school since he was a Freshman. That is where he first learned to play the sport. Lena loved the sport and team camaraderie. He played four years as Offensive linemen, #74. The El Reno football team went to State in his Junior year. He did competition weight lifting too and placed every year representing his high school. His plans are to attend college and train to be an athletic trainer.



**Bryce Layton Phillips**

**School:** Kiefer High School  
**Bio:** Phillips is a senior at Kiefer High School class of 2022. He has attended Kiefer Schools for 13 years lettering in Football, Cross Country, Weightlifting and Band. His passions are music, sports, and video games with his buddies. Phillips is Cherokee by Blood on the Phillips side and Muskogee Creek by Love on the Williams side. He is the son of Anna and Danny Phillips Jr and brother of Christopher Phillips. Grandson of Karrie Williams Phillips, Danny Phillips Sr., and Mary Henning. Bryce is the great grandson of Ron and Carol McHenry Williams and Jerri Goines Phillips. He plans to attend Oklahoma State University majoring in Computer Science Engineering Fall of 2022.

**Christopher Phillips**

**School:** Oklahoma State University  
**Bio:** Christopher Phillips is receiving his bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University May 2022. He graduated from Kiefer High School in 2019 and has completed his BA after just three years in college. He has worked tirelessly hours getting to this point and will graduate with a 3.8 GPA. His major is in accounting from the Spears Business School. Phillips is Cherokee by Blood on the Phillips side and Muskogee Creek by love on the Williams side. Chris is the son of Anna and Danny Phillips Jr and brother of Bryce Phillips. Grandson of Karrie Williams Phillips, Danny Phillips Sr., and Mary Henning. Phillips is the great grandson of Ron and Carol McHenry Williams and Jerri Goines Phillips. His accomplishment to graduate at the age of 21 is a big achievement. One that his family and friends are proud of.



**LeBryant Benjamin Pigeon**

**School:** Graham-Dustin High School  
**Bio:** LeBryant Benjamin Pigeon is the son of John Edward Pigeon and Leshia Hill of Dewar and Jacklynn Harrison of Devol, Ok. He is the grandson of Dennis and Cindy Pigeon of Dustin, Mike and Bee Hill of Dewar and the late Christine Fixco. He is the Valedictorian of the Class of 2022 at Graham-Dustin High School. He is a four-year member of the Oklahoma Honor Society and a two-year member of the National Technical Honor Society. He is on the Oklahoma Indian Honor Society. LeBryant has attended WWTC for his junior and senior year enrolled in the Bio Med program. He was Student of the Month for March 2022 and is a student of the year candidate at WWTC. He received the Rising Star Award and an Award of Academic Excellence at WWTC. He plans to attend USAO in Chickasha in the fall.

**Chloe Marie Powell**

**School:** Oklahoma Virtual Charter Academy  
**Bio:** Powell is the 18-year-old daughter of Rebecca Fields and Jeff Powell. Her maternal grandparents are Susan "Hokte" Isham and the late Richard Fields. She is enrolled Mvskoke but is also of Seminole descent. She is Hotlvkve and her tribal town is Tvlmocvse. Her ceremonial grounds is Helvpe. After graduation she plans to attend school for cosmetology, she likes to do acrylic and poly-gel nails and hopes to expand on those skills. She is very thankful to her great-great-aunt, the late SueAnn Davis, for pushing her to do well in school.





## Jadyn Powell

**School:** Oklahoma State University

**Bio:** Jadyn Powell from alligator clan and tribal town of Weogufkee graduated from Oklahoma State University, May 7th. She was a double major in psychology and sociology with a minor in criminology and criminal justice. She was the director of the multicultural affairs committee at OSU for 3 years and was the programming director of Camp Cowboy. She will attend Northeastern University in Boston, MA, Fall 2022. She was granted an excellence award, which covers 100% of her tuition for her academic career. She wants to pursue masters in Criminal Justice. Her research interests include the deprioritization of criminal cases involving native female victims and justice for missing and murdered indigenous women. Powell is the granddaughter of Gaye Thompson, Eufaula, OK and daughter of Bryant and Michelle Powell of Wellston, OK.

## Michelle Anna Proctor

**School:** Okmulgee High School

**Bio:** Mvskoke Creek citizen, Michelle Anna Proctor, graduated Okmulgee High School. Proctor is of the Wind Clan. Her parents are Grant and Cindy Harjo and she is the oldest to 5 other siblings. Proctor believes family is important and she is thankful for hers. Her plans after graduation are to explore opportunities. Proctor thanks God for her blessings and her parents, Grant and Cindy Harjo. She is also thankful to Coach Wilson.



## Samantha Rangel-Branscum

**School:** University of Oklahoma

**Bio:** Samantha Rangel-Branscum is a member of Muscogee Nation and a Euclidean citizen. She is graduating from the University of Oklahoma Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work with a Master of Social Work degree and Graduate Certificate in Social Work with American Indians. Rangel-Branscum maintained a 4.00 GPA, served as the OU-Tulsa Student Government Association Secretary, was voted 2021-2022 Graduate Student of the year, was a WEI-UP scholar, and member of Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Post-graduation, she plans to pursue her LMSW while continuing to work for the Muscogee Nation Children and Family Services Administration. Rangel-Branscum is the daughter of Joseph and Virginia Rangel and granddaughter of the late Leonard and Mary Bevenue of Sapulpa, OK. She would like to thank her husband, children, co-workers, family and friends for supporting her on this journey.

## Gya-Blaze Lyndzey Ratliff

**School:** Glenpool High School, Tulsa Tech - Medical Assistant

**Bio:** Ratliff is the daughter of Geebee Ratliff and Robert Ratliff, Granddaughter of Susie Deo and Late Alex Lindsey, Robert Ratliff Sr and Tammy Haggard, Great-granddaughter of Amy Hill and Late Sam Watson, Late Melissa Wacoche and Late Buddy Lindsey. She has attended Glenpool High School for 13 yrs. She is honored in NHS, FCCLA, and HOSA, where she holds a title of FCCLA secretary and HOSA vice president. She attended Tulsa Tech for Medical Assisting and graduated May 3, 2022. She enjoyed Varsity basketball for four years and has always played in multiple sports since she was eight, including softball, cheerleading, basketball, volleyball. She plans to attend OSU-IT to get her degree in Allied Health and join their RN program.



## Anna Rose Reece

**School:** Johnson County Community College

**Bio:** Anna Rose Reece, of Lindsborg, Kansas, graduated from Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, with an Associates Degree in Animation. She will be attending the Disney College Program in June. She is a member of the Wind clan and is the granddaughter of Martha Jane (Chalakee) Reece of Coweta, Oklahoma. Her parents are Howard and Diane Reece of Lindsborg, Kansas.

## Joshua Roberts

**School:** East Central University

**Bio:** Joshua Roberts is matrilineal from the Deer Clan, and patrilineal from the Bear Clan. He is a member of the Iron Post Ceremonial ground, located near Bristow, OK. His wife and son supported him through his academic achievements. Roberts graduated from East Central University, in Ada, OK on May 7th, 2022 with his Bachelors in Native American Studies. His plans are to pursue a Master's Degree from the University of Oklahoma in Native American Leadership. He will use his education to come back to his Indigenous community and become the difference in. He hopes to set a good example for his children to follow.



## NaTalia Sewell

**School:** Seminole High School

**Bio:** NaTalia Sewell graduated Seminole High School where she lives with her parents Jay Fields, Tishia Sewell, and my 3 younger sisters Avaleigh, Mikaela, and Margaret Fields. She is a proud Muscogee (Creek) Nation tribal member. Sewell is a member of National Honor Society, Native American club, and student council. She attended Seminole State College for concurrent classes since her junior year. She played basketball for 3 years and softball for all 4 years of high school. She was named all-district, all-region, and all-state honorable mention for her Seminole High School softball program. She plans to continue her softball journey at Seward County Community College in Liberal Kansas on an athletic scholarship for pitching. After university she plans to become a physical therapist.

## Shayleigh Riyana Sloan

**School:** Glenpool High School

**Bio:** Shayleigh Riyana Sloan graduated from Glenpool High School. She is the daughter of Michael Sloan and Tamera Edwards. She is the granddaughter of Marilyn "Kay" Sloan and Joeshp "Jojo" Johnson as well as Kenneth Christopher "Chris" Edwards and Melinda "Linda" Basquez. Sloan is a proud Mvskoke tribe member and of the Tiger Clan. She is the first generation in her family protected by state law and the first to be able to wear her regalia to graduate. She will be proudly wearing her ribbon skirt, a beaded graduation hat and wearing her eagle feather as she crosses the stage. After graduating she plans on attending TCC for her basic before deciding on her major.



## Christopher James Smiley

**School:** Wynne High School

**Bio:** Christopher James Smiley will be attending the University of Oklahoma-Norman Fall 2022, He will be majoring in Multimedia Broadcasting. Smiley is the son of Essie Mae Burton. He is a youth leader at his church, President of the Wynne High School Broadcast Program, Sports Director, Reporter, Producer and will be leaving with a 3.3 GPA.

## Kalyska Jo Smith

**School:** McDaniel College in Maryland

**Bio:** Kalyska Jo Smith is the daughter of Kelly Jo Seaton and the granddaughter of Larry and Redonna Seaton of Paden. She is Hotvlkve and her tribal town is Hitchite. She is the great-great-granddaughter of original enrollees Ollie(Grayson)Moody and Rocky Cochran. Smith's honors include Dean's Honor Roll two years, Highest Honors two years, Phi Mu Honor Committee and Honor Committee Chairwoman, she attended the DisneyWorldPhi Mu Officer Academy, was named Phi Mu of the Day and Most Ambitious Sister. She is also the Green Terror, her college mascot and will graduate with a 3.9 GPA. Smith will be continuing her education to obtain her Masters Degree in Education and Counseling. She is very proud of her heritage and hopes to incorporate lessons in her classroom to help others expand their knowledge about diversity while learning about her tribe. Proud sisters are Laramie, Magdalyn and Willow.



## Kaya Nicole Smith

**School:** Jenks High School

**Bio:** Smith has attended Jenks High School for four years and has been active in organizations including Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Native American Education, National Honor Society, Computer Science National Honor Society, Key Club, Chinese Club, Jenks Trojan Swim Club, and Jenks Varsity Swim Team. In fall, Smith will attend the University of Tulsa, majoring in Biology and eventually apply to medical school. She has also signed a letter of intent to Row with the TU Rowing team. Smith is the daughter of Seneca and Pamela Smith. She has two siblings who also attend Jenks, Jonas and Makenna. Her favorite verse is: Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

## Sheraton Snow

**School:** Morris High School

**Bio:** Snow is a graduate at Morris High School. Her high school activities have included band, academic team, Ag, gifted and talented, speech/drama, and JOM. She will be attending the University of Oklahoma in the fall.



## Abigayle Sourjohn

**School:** University of Oklahoma

**Bio:** Abigayle Sourjohn is the mother of two young children and a volunteer at our local soccer club. She attends the First Church of God in Bristow. She is excited to begin her teaching career and begin making a difference in young children's lives. She earned her Bachelors in Early Childhood Education.

## Rylie Claire Spaulding

**School:** Wagoner High School, Connors State College

**Bio:** Rylie Claire Spaulding is a senior at Wagoner High School and class Valedictorian. She has been involved in numerous clubs: Native American Club, National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Science Club, Spanish Club, Student Council, FCCLA, Prom Committee, and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She also plays varsity golf and volleyball. As a Senior at Wagoner Spaulding also graduated with an Associate in Arts from Connors State College summa cum laude in May. She has signed to play NCAA Women's Golf at Oklahoma Baptist University. At OBU, where she will major in Biology/Pre-Med. After graduation from college, her goal is to attend medical school to ultimately service the indigenous tribes of Oklahoma.



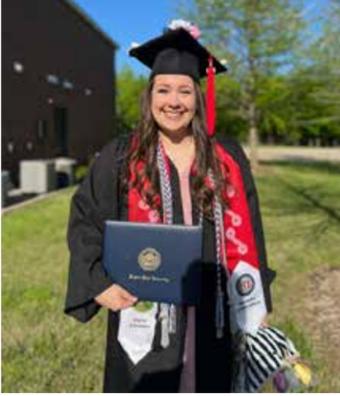


**Collette Spirou**

**School:** Antelope High School  
**Bio:** Collette Spirou graduated from Antelope High School in California with honors and was active in Business Academy and Cheer. Collette is the daughter of Jeanna Goodman and David Spirou. Collette's future plans are to attend American River College in Sacramento and earn her A.S. in Environmental Sciences and eventually earn her B.S. in Forest Ecology Management.

**Ashley Stafford**

**School:** Choctaw High School  
**Bio:** Ashley Stafford is a graduate of Choctaw High School. She helps provide for her mom and family with the support they need. Stafford helps take care of her mother by fixing her breakfast, lunch and dinner. She performs errands her brother and mom their doc appointments. She enjoys cooking and is looking forward to going to college after graduation.



**Kayla Thomas**

**School:** Rogers State University  
**Bio:** Kayla Thomas graduated this May with her Bachelors of Science in Nursing. She currently lives in Broken Arrow with her husband, and plans to work at Hillcrest Medical Center on their Labor and Delivery unit. Her next step is passing the NCLEX exam to become a Registered Nurse. She loves babies and can't wait to help them make their entry into the world.

**Mya Tiger**

**School:** Preston High School  
**Bio:** Mya Tiger is the daughter of Melinda Yargee and Michael Tiger. She has 2 siblings, Coleman Tiger and Lillian McHenry. Her maternal grandparents are Jacky Yargee and Lillie Hill; paternal grandparents are the late Kenneth Tiger and the late Lana Bible. Mya is a citizen of the Muscogee Creek Nation. She belongs to the Wind Clan. Also, she belongs to the Weogufkee ceremonial ground and she is the granddaughter of the Alabama ceremonial ground. She attended Preston for four years and was active with girls' varsity basketball team. She plans to further her education and continue to play basketball at the Seminole State College in Seminole, Oklahoma.



**Feather Ann Two Shields**

**School:** Fort Gibson High School  
**Bio:** Feather Ann Two Shields is the daughter of Joseph and Bennette Two Shields of Fort Gibson, Ok. She is the granddaughter of Bonnie (Wacoche) and the late Douglas Two Shields of Fort Gibson, OK, Audrey (McDaniel) and the late Jack Cross-of Perry, OK and Mary (Bender) and the Late Bennie Harjo of Glenpool. She graduated from Fort Gibson High School. Two Shields was active in various school clubs including the Native American Student Association where she was the President her senior year. She also played basketball as a Lady Tiger where she was part of the tradition of punching the state ticket for 18 consecutive years. Her love of the game as lead to continue to play and further her education at Heston College where she will major in Early Childhood.

**Phoenix Voice**

**School:** Broken Arrow High School  
**Bio:** Voice graduated from Broken Arrow High school. She loves all of her family so much. Love and support has gotten her to where she is today.

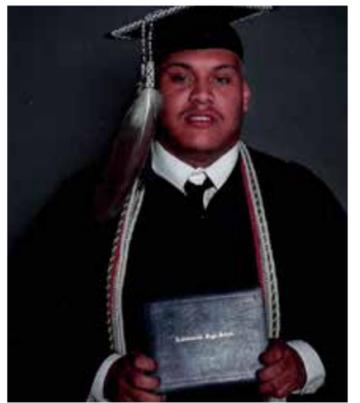


**Montana Warrior**

**School:**  
**Bio:** Warrior will be attending Connors State College after graduation. He loves playing basketball, fishing and spending time with his brother in his spare time. Montana is the son of Amy Johnston and the grandson of Sue and Kevin Harris and Randy and Laquita Johnston of Eufaula.

**Carlos Mendez Wesley**

**School:** Robbinsville High School  
**Bio:** Wesley is the son of Steven and Scharlene (Wesley) Hardrick and Juan Mendez. He is the grandson of the Late Clarence and Margaret (Sootawakey) Wesley, the great grandson of the Late John and Polly (Scott) Wesley. He is Muscogee Creek and Cherokee, is of the Bear clan. Wesley lettered in Football, Basketball, Wrestling and Track/Field. He was named 2021 Football Lineman of the Year, 2x NC First-Team OL All-State, 2x Smoky Mountain Conference and The Asheville Citizens-Times Player of the Week. He is the Wrestling 2x SMC HWT Champion. His wrestling coaches dubbed him "the Bear". In 2021-2022, Wesley was Runner-up in Regional and State and wrestled for 2022 North Carolina All-Star Team. He plans to attend a 4 year college and major in Criminal Justice and to wrestle.



**Braylen Rashaun Whittaker**

**School:** Jenks High School  
**Bio:** Whittaker attended Jenks Public Schools since Pre-K. He has a love for sports and a special love for basketball, which he has played since his freshman year. He plans to continue his education and continue to play the sport he loves. Whittaker was very encouraged by Mrs. Tiger and Coach Owens. He thanks God and his Mother as well as his village who have helped him along the way. Whittaker feels like this is a new beginning and cannot wait to see what God has in store for the future.

**Maya M'Kenzie Wind**

**School:** Seminole High School  
**Bio:** Wind is the daughter of Clayton Wind and Angelina Lenora. She is of the Muscogee Creek Bear clan. She is the granddaughter of JD and Gayle Wind and Gloria and Tony Lenora. Wind is a Varsity Volleyball and Cheerleader, and was Academic All-State Cheer in 2021. She is planning to attend Seminole State College to pursue a future in special education.



**Josephine Catherine Windes**

**School:** Brea Olinda High School  
**Bio:** Josephine Catherine Windes has graduated from Brea Olinda High School in Orange County, California. She was accepted with several partial scholarships to University of New Mexico and University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, but plans to stay local with her family, intending to attend Fullerton Community College for two years, then transfer to a four-year university. Josie hopes to focus on sustainable architecture and urban design. She made the Principal List every semester while taking AP classes, and is graduating with a 3.8 GPA. Her proud parents are Stephen Joseph Windes and Kari Windes of Brea, California; grandparents are John Windes and Mary LaLonde Windes of Orange County, California. Her great grandmother is the late Evelyn Ellen Freeman of Checotah, Oklahoma.

**Stephen Joseph Windes**

**School:** California State University Fullerton  
**Bio:** Stephen Joseph Windes has graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a Masters in Sociology, with an emphasis in Criminology. He gave the graduation address at both the general CSUF graduation ceremony, as well as the Native American graduation ceremony at the school. He plans to continue his work on system-impacted youth. Windes has been a teacher for the Orange County Department of Education for more than 20 years, working with incarcerated youth and youth entering the foster system. Over the course of his studies, he did some research on the McGirt decision and also explored the Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, California. His Muskogee tribal town is Tuskegee. Windes, his wife Kari, and their three children, live in Orange County, California. His parents are John Windes and Mary LaLonde Windes of California. His grandmother is the late Evelyn Ellen Freeman of Checotah, Oklahoma.



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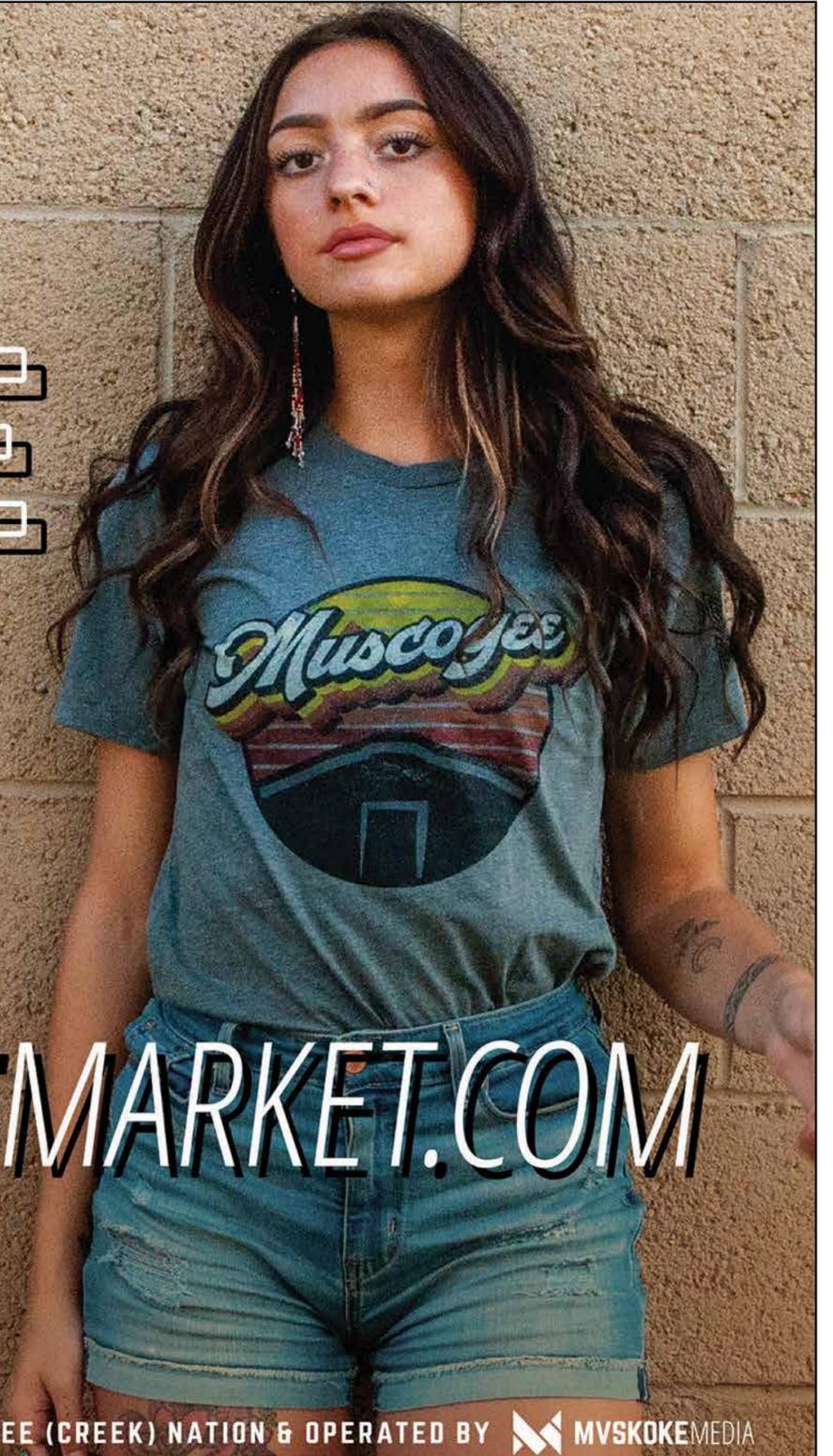
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