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MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY  MVSKOKE MEDIA



The Oklahoma Legislature addressed over 20 bills vetoed by Gov. on May 25. (Shutterstock)

STATE LEGISLATURE OVERRIDES STITT'S VETOES

AFTER THE GOVERNOR TRIED TO SQUASH STUDENTS' RIGHT TO WEAR REGALIA, OK LEG. OVERRIDES VETO

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. - Senate Bill 429 was overridden in a vote of 80 yays, 11 nays and ten excused by the Oklahoma State Legislature on May 25. Students who choose to wear tribal regalia at graduation ceremonies are now protected by the law.

The bill was vetoed by Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt on May 1, just as students were building excitement for educational accomplishments.

Introduced to the Senate in February, the bill passed through with 45 yays and zero nays. In the House of Representatives the bill

flew through 90 yays and one nay.

The bill was sent to the Governor on April 25 and was vetoed within six days.

In his veto message Stitt claimed the "proverbial Pandora's Box" would open, encouraging other groups to "wear what they please" during ceremonies.

The legislature also overrode his veto of SB 299 with overwhelming support with 83 yays, 12 nays, and six excused.

The bill extends the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education until 2026.

The measure modifies the appointing authority for membership by allowing the Speaker of the House of Representatives to

appoint 5 members, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate to appoint 4 members.

It provides that a vacancy on the Council in a seat representing an Indian tribe or the tribal education department of an Indian tribe may be filled by the original appointing authority from a list of nominations submitted by the elected executive leaders of Indian tribes in the state.

Muscogee Nation Principal Chief David Hill released a statement on social media and said, "These bills are now law and we thank our legislators for doing the right thing and advancing measures that should not be considered controversial or used as political maneuvering."

ical maneuvering."

The Muscogee Nation National Council adopted a resolution urging legislators to override the vetoes during an Emergency Session early May.

The bills were just a couple included in the long list of vetoes legislators are referring to as the "tantrum 20" from Stitt.

Stitt released a statement after vetoing 20 plus bills:

"Oklahomans elected me to advocate on their behalf and fight for the taxpayer," Stitt said in the statement. "I take this responsibility seriously. So, I cannot, in good faith, allow another year to go by without cutting taxes and reforming education, both of which we

can absolutely afford with our \$1.2 billion surplus and over \$6 billion in savings.

"Therefore, until the people of Oklahoma have a tax cut, until every teacher in the state gets the pay raise they deserve until parents get a tax credit to send their child to the school of their choice, I am vetoing this unrelated policy and will continue to veto any and all legislation authored by Senators who have not stood with the people of Oklahoma and supported this plan."

Follow Mvskoke Media for updates on tribal policy in the state legislature.



Mvskoke citizens are pictured enjoying senior games. (Courtesy: Muscogee (Creek) Nation)

SENIORS STAY ACTIVE AND CONNECTED AT SENIOR GAMES

THE MCN ELDERS SERVICE AND THE DIABETES PROGRAM ORGANIZED THE ANNUAL SENIOR GAMES EVENT 2023

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla- The 2023 Annual Senior Games, sponsored by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elders Service and the Diabetes Program was held at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Omniplex Dome on May 19.

Youth Services volunteered to help for these events that catered specifically to citizens 55 or older.

These events gave them the opportunity to place first, second and third place. It was separated into two different age groups between 55-65 years old and 65 on up.

Citizens enjoyed competing in bean bag toss, thin pin bowling, jacks, paper airplane flying contest and free throw contest before having lunch together

This event was a little different than last year due to inclement weather that occurred. Instead of having it outside the omnplex, it became an inside event.

The Muscogee Creek Nation Elder Service Director, Angella Fish said "we recognize our elders throughout our nations as a way to honor them and to pay our respects to them."

"It's just a way of allowing them to further and help them approve their range of emotions or other forms of activities to keep them active," Fish said. "The competitive edge keeps them active and more inclined for them to want to do more."

Fish thinks the events foster support for the participants.

"They are also supportive of each other. As you see them accomplish their free throw and they make the baskets, you hear them also applauding one another."

Citizens near and far come to enjoy this time together. "There are some individuals that come in from different areas within the state," Fish said. "It's not just only for the citizens that reside within the Muscogee jurisdiction but also other communities throughout the state and possibly out

of state."

Every year this event occurs, Fish claims there is always great feedback from the community. It makes them want to come back next year.

The elders enjoyed being around people around their age and getting to see some familiar faces or meeting new people.

Organizers make sure language is incorporated into activities.

"We do value our elders and we want to ensure that they are treated with the utmost respect," Fish said. "We look up to them for leadership and guidance because they are the keepers of our culture."

"We want to acknowledge their presence throughout our nation and to know that"

For more information about the department and it's services contact Christy Boone at (918)-732-7765 or ccarson@mcn-nsn.gov

Results of the Senior games of 2023

Woman's Ages 55-65

JACKS
1st: Kathryn Corley
2nd: Joann Fox
3rd: Bonnie Factor

FREE THROW
1st: Penny Harjo
2nd: Sharon Whitehead
3rd: Yvette Powell

BEAN BAG TOSS
1st: Frances Lewis
2nd: Lisa Floyd
3rd: Arlene Burrell

THIN PIN BOWLING
1st: Bonnie Factor
2nd: Yvette Powell
3rd: Katherine Corley

SENIORS

Continued on Page 2



Winnie Cooper brought her guitar and played live music on Mvskoke Radio. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

MVSKOKE MUSICIAN APPEARS ON MVSKOKE RADIO

WINNIE COOPER GIVES AN UPDATE ON HER MUSIC CAREER

by **MERCEDES DUNN**
MEDIA INTERN

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - On May 24 Mvskoke Radio brought on Winnie Cooper for a live studio performance in downtown Okmulgee. Cooper last appeared on Mvskoke Radio in June 2022. Just like last time, Winnie brought out her guitar and sang. During her latest appearance, she provided an update on her music career, as well as shared about exciting new opportunities on the horizon.

Cooper is a 22 year-old Mvskoke musician from Henryetta and now lives in Muskogee, Okla. She took a short break this past year from writing and making music, but has recently been drawn back to it. She will be back in the studio soon to record new songs.

"I took a break from music for a little bit, and then did some more writing here recently," Copper said. "I'm actually going to the studio on the 12th to start working on a new song."

Cooper has sung country and Christian music for a while. If you listen to her

now, you will hear her musical style branch out into different genres. Music helps her find a voice and it allows her to express herself. Cooper's goal when singing is to sing from the soul.

"That's really just the main goal for me," Cooper said, "It's just to sing from my soul."

Cooper said that she felt that she had always sung what she was expected to sing. Now she is composing more original works with a folk style. Her new single is called "Surrounding Me".

When asked by Mvskoke Media Multimedia Producer Morgan Taylor if she still produces music in a Christian style, Cooper replied, "No, I'm doing my original work, more of my style."

Winnie will be taking more opportunities to promote herself by performing live gigs this year. For those interested in listening to Cooper perform, she will be featured in the upcoming 2023 Muscogee Nation Festival. You can catch Winnie live on Saturday, June 24th at the Amphitheater.



Multiple crimes occurred on the Mvskoke Reservation in the early morning hours of June 1. The crimes involved an officer that was shot by a suspected burglar in Okmulgee and a kidnapping in Dewar. (Shutterstock)

OKMULGEE COUNTY EXPERIENCES OVERNIGHT CRIME WAVE

OFFICER SHOT IN OKMULGEE WHILE A WOMAN WAS KIDNAPPED IN DEWAR

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION, Okla. - Late Wednesday night on May 31 Dewar residents witnessed a man drag a woman from her house to a silver Jeep while beating her, then speeding off.

The car was driven by Cameron Gooden, and was hauling at high speeds with the owner, Trudi Blades inside. Gooden is a Muscogee (Creek) citizen.

Blades' adult son and his pregnant girlfriend were left at Blade's home. They were also assaulted by Gooden just before fleeing with Blades.

The pregnant woman was released from the hospital with no serious injuries.

Gooden took a right by the Dewar First Baptist Church, leading him to Holly Road. The road was also the site where seven dead bodies were found just last month in Henryetta.

Dewar police responded to a call on Gooden and began pursuing the vehicle, but lost sight of it

as it turned on Arbeka Road.

Dewar police fell back and reported the case to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police Department. They proceeded to actively search for the couple with no luck.

Gooden's cell phone was pinged at a location near Ryal School on John Artussee Road in southern Henryetta.

The location was searched with no sign of Blades, Gooden, or the vehicle.

Law enforcement stopped actively pursuing the two when an officer was shot in Okmulgee.

Officer shot in Okmulgee

During the search for Blades, Okmulgee police responded to an active burglary call at 1:45 a.m. on June 1 near Second and Central in Okmulgee.

The burglary was a home invasion. The owners were forced out of the home, but were able to contact the police.

The Oklahoma State Bureau

of Investigation said one officer went to the front of the house and a second officer went to the back. The second officer was shot by the suspect, Christopher Harris.

Assistance was called where multiple agencies, including the MCN LPD responded.

The injured officer was taken to the hospital in stable condition, and was released at 9:40 a.m.

Harris' last known location was around Second and Central in Okmulgee around 3:00 a.m.

The area was blocked off by law enforcement for some time as they secured the neighborhood and ensured public safety.

Harris is considered a fugitive, and is armed and dangerous.

Recently released from prison, Harris is well-known to agencies across the state and in other states as well.

The search for Blades

According to social media posts, law enforcement completely withdrew from the search for Blades after the Okmulgee County officer shooting.

Law enforcement's last clue as to Gooden's whereabouts was his cell phone location. It was pinged at Ryal. Concerned friends said the area is a "dead area" for cell phone service and that Blades "could be anywhere".

Reportedly after trying to hide in his old hangout spot near Ryal, Gooden headed east to the Tiger Mountain Area where he ditched the Jeep he kidnapped Blades in.

For most of the night of May 31 Gooden and Blades walked the mountain, a country area filled with dirt roads, woods, small rivers and creeks.

As they were walking, an unknown passerby stopped to ask them if they needed a ride. That is when they returned to Blades' house. When they got inside, Gooden still held Blades hostage.

According to Blades' niece, Blades convinced Gooden to let her go by telling the police that everything was alright, and that she was not in danger.

Finally at about 10:30 a.m on June 1, Blades' family was contacted by the Dewar Police Department, where they stated that they had Blades and that she was safe.

According to Blades' niece, Gooden was threatening Blades with a knife. This kept her frightened.

MCN PD caught Gooden at Blades' residence. He is now currently in custody.

If anyone has information on the whereabouts of Harris, they are encouraged to call 911.

SENIORS

Continued from Page 1

Woman's Ages 66-over

JACKS
1st: Carol Tiger
2nd: Pat Factor
3rd: Nellie Hallum

FREE THROW
1st: Barbara O'Neal
2nd: Pat Factor
3rd: Teresa Jennings

BEAN BAG TOSS
1st: Nancy Barnett
2nd: Janice Bryan
3rd: Louise Sapulpa

THIN PIN BOWLING
1st: Malline Jackson
2nd: Lillian Thomas
3rd: Emma Lowe

Men's Ages 55-65

JACKS
1st: Solomon Hill
2nd: Mitchell Barnett
3rd: George Dunn

FREE THROW
1st: Soloman Hill
2nd: Mitchell Barnett
3rd: Mark Wataske

BEAN BAG TOSS
1st: Phillip Harjo
2nd: Soloman Hill
3rd: Chris Powell

THIN PIN BOWLING
1st: Phillip Harjo
2nd: Mitchell Barnett
3rd: Soloman Hill

Men's Ages 65-over

JACKS
1st: Lyle Wells
2nd: Larry Carlis
3rd: Terry Walker

FREE THROW
1st: Richard Isham
2nd: Charles Proctor
3rd: Michael Coon

BEAN BAG TOSS
1st: Leon Yahola
2nd: Charles Proctor
3rd: Richard Isham

THIN PIN BOWLING
1st: Robert Wildcat
2nd: Larry Carlis
3rd: Bill West

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

JULY 11- AUGUST 3, Mvskokvlke Play 2023, Summer Youth diabetes Prevention Camp, for more info call 918-758-6910

JUNE 13, 10 AM - 4 PM, CESO Native Owned Business Fair, River-spirit Casino Resort, Tulsa, Ok. For more info call 918-549-2969

JUNE 23, 9:30 AM - 11 AM, Muscogee Nation Festival Senior Activities Chair Volleyball, Okmul-gee Elderly Nutrition Center, for more info call 918-732-7765

PRESS RELEASE

FALL CRAFT, FOOD & GIFT BAZAAR, NO ENTRANCE FEE

Friday, August 25, 2023
- 1:00pm to 7:00pm.
Saturday, August 26,
2023 - 9:00am to 4:00pm.

Central Park Community Center, 1500 South Main Street Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 74012.

This 1-stop shopping Bazaar features vendors from Okla-homa cities selling handmade gifts, specialty foods, health & beauty items, fun gifts and dec-orations for the Fall holidays. FREE Face Painting for the kids.

Information companies fea-turing insurance, mosquito & pest control, lake homes, art & craft classes, and health care will give out information.

Non-profit organiza-tions have "free" booths to sell products for fund raising and to give out information.

Food Trucks are available both days to satisfy your hungry needs.

Contact Gretchen for more information: gtinter-national2603@gmail.com



The Mvskoke Fund served hotdogs to the community for the ten year anniversary celebration. (Morgan Taylor/ MM)

MVSKOKE FUND HITS BIG MILESTONE

THE DEPARTMENT CELEBRATED IT'S TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Mvskoke Fund celebrated a decade of providing business lending services to tribal citizens on the Mvskoke Reservation.

In 2013 the National Council enacted legislation to get the Mvskoke Fund operating with offices located in the Housing Building.

According to CEO Robby

Deere, the department had a portfolio containing 40 clients when he joined the program five years ago.

Since then the Mvskoke Fund has grown to serve over 1,100 clients. Eventually they even moved into their own building at 1523 S Wood Dr. in Okmulgee.

"We want to mark the mile-stone, celebrate how far we've come and how much we've grown but also we're out here still trying

to push growth," Deere said.

Business Development Officer Eric Starr joined shortly after Deere.

In the five years on the job, the two claim they have witnessed economic development across the reservation with Native-owned businesses.

"Business development and self-sufficiency wasn't really pushed out there," Starr said. "Back in 2018, we started trying

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The Mvskoke News reserves the right to edit all submissions for space, style and grammar. Receipt of submissions does not obligate The Mvskoke News in any regard. The Mvskoke News is mailed from Stigler, Oklahoma to all enrolled Muscogee (Creek) citizens' households upon request. Inquiries should be directed to Mvskoke Media.

To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: info@mvskokemedia.com.





Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election

Precinct Polling Sites

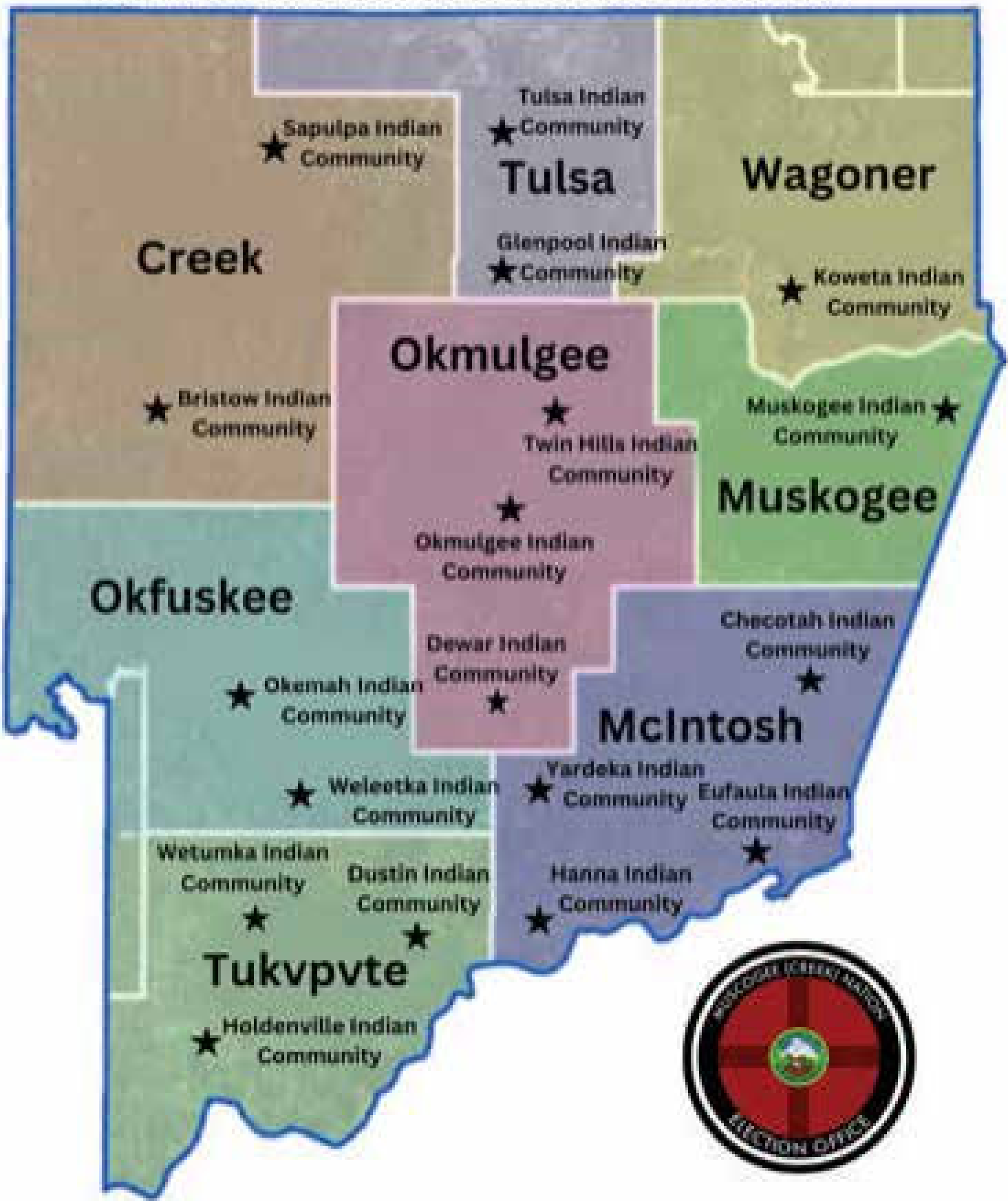


ELECTION DAY		
BRISTOW INDIAN COMMUNITY 710 S. Main / Bristow, OK	GLENPOOL INDIAN COMMUNITY 13839 S. Casper / Glenpool, OK	SAPULPA INDIAN COMMUNITY 1020 N. Brown / Sapulpa, OK
CHECOTAH INDIAN COMMUNITY 500 Owens Ave. / Checotah, OK	HANNA INDIAN COMMUNITY EAST OF HWY 52 on E. 1250 Rd. / Hanna, OK	TULSA INDIAN COMMUNITY 8611 S. Union / Tulsa, OK
COWETA INDIAN COMMUNITY 30925 E. 141 ST / Coweta, OK	HOLDENVILLE INDIAN COMMUNITY 224 E. Poplar / Holdenville, OK	TWIN HILLS INDIAN COMMUNITY 8110 N. HWY 52. / Okmulgee, OK
DEWAR INDIAN COMMUNITY 903 E. 6TH / Dewar, OK	MUSKOGEE INDIAN COMMUNITY 335 N. 4TH ST / Muskogee, OK	WELEETKA INDIAN COMMUNITY 602 S. Chickasaw / Weleetka, OK
DUSTIN INDIAN COMMUNITY Intersection of Broadway Ave & Sparks Ave. / Dustin, OK	OKEMAH INDIAN COMMUNITY 1100 S. Woody Guthrie / Okemah, OK	WETUMKA INDIAN COMMUNITY 608 N. Creek / Wetumka, OK
EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY 800 Birkes Rd. / Eufaula, OK	Okmulgee Indian Community 2900 N. Osage Pl. / Okmulgee, OK	YARDEKA INDIAN COMMUNITY 114089 S. 3080 Rd. / Henryetta, OK

Early Voting Sites	
EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY 800 BIRKES RD. EUFAULA, OK	OKEMAH INDIAN COMMUNITY 1100 S. WOODY GUTHRIE. OKEMAH, OK
OKMULGEE INDIAN COMMUNITY 2900 N OSAGE PL. OKMULGEE, OK	TULSA INDIAN COMMUNITY 8611 S. UNION. TULSA, OK

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election

District Boundaries and Precincts





Lighthorse discovered a hotel room full of stolen property after tracking down suspects. (Courtesy: MCN LPD)

MVSKOKE LIGHTHORSE POLICE DISCOVER STOLEN PROPERTY IN HOTEL

AN ARREST FOR THE VIOLATION OF A PROTECTIVE ORDER LED LPD TO A MUCH LARGER CRIME

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police were led to an interesting discovery after suspect Kyle Acton was jailed and released for a protective order violation.

It was the evening of May 26 when LPD received a call about a possible protective order violation.

While on the way home, an officer located the suspect carrying an airsoft pistol, a knife, and a jar of change.

None of these items were illegal, so LPD gave the objects to Acton's girlfriend. They then took him in on the active warrant.

It was concluded from the protective order investigation that Acton was living in the wood line by his girlfriend's grandmother's house to "keep an eye" on everybody.

Acton, his girlfriend, and his girlfriend's grandmother are all Native Americans. The protective order against Acton is from his girlfriend's grandmother.

The next morning on May 27 LPD received a call about a possible burglary.

The residence was located about a block away from the home where Acton's girlfriend lives with her grandmother.

Responding to the burglary, LPD took a detailed report on the incident which included the missing items such as sports memorabilia, clothes, hunting gear, and jewelry among other items.

While investigating, they discovered a Bass Pro hat and shorts being worn by Acton the day before. In the shorts pocket was

his jail paperwork from the previous day.

Acton's girlfriend's brother was alarmed by the property she had with her, the items Acton was arrested with.

The brother reached out to LPD, concerned that there may have been items involved in the burglary just up the block. LPD then picked up the items and took them back to the burglary victim. The victim identified the stolen items as his.

Linking him to the scene, LPD located Acton at a hotel in Okmulgee. LPD filed for a search warrant of the room, where the items were discovered upon entry.

In the room were five NFL jerseys, rare coins, and jewelry among other items.

"To top it all off, in the bag of stolen stuff was our suspect's jail ID from Friday night," Light horse Corporal Brent Colbert said.

Other items were discovered at the property of St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Okmulgee, which is near the tree line where Acton was staying.

LPD was able to give back the burglary victim all the items they were missing.

"At the end of the day, we're glad to give all that back," Colbert said. "Citizens can sleep safely at night knowing he's off the streets."

Acton was arrested and is being held in Okfuskee County jail for burglary charges.

The LPD is pressing charges on Acton for violating the protective order and are awaiting to see how the MCN Attorney General's Office will handle the situation.

MCN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HAS OVERSIGHT OF WATER PROJECTS

A TOTAL OF \$20 MILLION WILL BE USED FOR WATER RESTORATION

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the State of Oklahoma, and Indian Health Service have matched funds for 14 projects in nine communities across the reservation. The expected amount of funding to be used is about \$20 million.

According to MCN Director of Emergency Management Bobby Howard, the tribe's contribution is over \$6 million.

The MCN National Council passed TR 23-029, which committed to matching funds in collaboration with the state of Oklahoma for the American Rescue Plan Act Tribal Cooperation Grant Program. It allocated \$57 million of ARPA funds to match tribal funds to advance collaborative water infrastructure projects.

MCN identified projects that are crucial to public health and economic growth, matching \$6,750,000 to the projects.

Howard claims that each project is flowing directly through his office.

He also claims most of the systems are currently out of date.

"The systems we are going to rehab, repair or completely rebuild and replace date back to the 70's and

80's," Howard said.

Howard used the City of Beggs as an example.

Beggs residents have had issues with the municipal water for years. Multiple complaints have been made by residents in many forms including public city meetings and on Facebook forums.

According to these complaints, the water pressure in the community runs low and even results in a no-water situation for the water users.

Howard claims his department had taken water buffalo trailers to the community more than eight times during the last year. This was due to the city's recurring water issue from the previous administration.

Howard said in a water system, there is a part called a "clear well" that is an important piece to the water distribution. Somehow the previous administration completely bypassed the clear well, which was pulling water directly from Beggs Lake. This resulted in low pressure when several homes were using the water.

The restoration project is just one of the 14 taking place across the reservation, with projects in Porter, Dewar, Inola, and Wetumka, among others.

Since many of the communi-



The City of Dewar is included in the list of towns for the water restoration project.

ties on the Mvskoke Reservation are small and rural, Howard claims there is no way some of the communities could afford to update their water systems.

Citizens around the reservation can expect these water restoration projects within the next couple years. Howard claims it should not affect water usage.

This is a developing story.



From Left, MCN Second Chief Del Beaver, Representative Galen Cloud, and Representative Darrell Proctor stand pictured behind Head Start students and staff member, Marcus Jeffrey. (Morgan Taylor, MM)

HEAD START PROGRAM HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY

THE MCN HEAD START PROGRAM HOSTED A CEREMONY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program held a graduation ceremony for students at the Oklahoma State University Information Technology Center Student Union on May 19.

According to Family Service Worker Marcus Jeffrey, 19 of the 56 participants at the Okmulgee location received a certificate of completion. The other partici-

pants are eligible to return to the head start program this fall.

Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members gathered to celebrate one of the first educational stepping stones in a child's life.

The group pledged allegiance to the flag, and counted from one to ten in the Mvskoke language in order to display some of the things they learned during the school year.

MCN Second Chief Del Beaver spoke to the young graduates and commended them for their great accomplishment thus far.

"Today is all about you," Beaver said. "We know without a doubt they have started their remarkable journey."

"They have learned so much, they have remained eager and enthusiastic, they have energy, lots of energy, they have grown in so many ways," Beaver said. "From the executive office our thanks and appreciation go out to all the teachers and parents for the fantastic role you have had in facilitating this process."

The ceremony included the Okmulgee location participants.

MCN National Council McIntosh District Representatives Galen Cloud and Darrell Proctor were in attendance.

Jeffrey said other locations may hold their own end-of-the year celebrations in addition to the Okmulgee location's ceremony.

The day prior to the ceremony, the Okmulgee head start

program held a "Family Fun Day" for all families of the 56 participants at the Claude Cox Omniplex that included games, food and summer fun for the families.

Beaver said, "I believe in the Head Start Program, and I believe in the staff of the Head Start Program."

The Head Start Program is now taking applications for the fall. There are six locations across the reservation to serve children from the ages 3-5 with the tribal membership.



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 COUNCIL OAK
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTHCARE



The MCN National Council held an emergency meeting via teleconference June 1. (MM File)

SELF-GOVERNANCE COMPACTS UPDATED FOR FY 2022 AND 2023

LEGISLATION ON NEW MCN DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES ON HOLD

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Emergency Session was held via teleconference June 1.

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

TR 23-055 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an assignment and assumption of purchase and sale agreement and approving certain provisions within the purchase and sale agreement for property located in Wagoner County, Oklahoma. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The property is composed of 36.5 acres and will be used by gaming operations to enhance its commercial activities.

TR 23-056 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek)

Nation authorizing Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC (“MNGE”) to execute the design-build agreement between River Spirit Casino Resort and I-5 Design-Build, Inc. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The agreement will allow I-5 Design-Build Inc. to provide labor and furnish certain materials associated with the renovation of the existing buffet to create a new Sports Bar, VIP Bar, Lounge, and Ballroom at the River Spirit Casino Resort. The total cost of the project is \$13,594,316.

TR 23-057 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an updated compact of self-governance and a multiyear funding agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Secretary of the Interior. Speaker William Lowe sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The compact will allow the Nation to redesign programs,

services, functions and activities, reallocate funds, prioritize said PSFAs, enhance the effectiveness and long-term financial stability of its tribal government and include detentions and corrections services as part of its criminal jurisdiction and justice services. This will retain the multi year funding for fiscal year 2023.

TR 23-058 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an updated compact of self-governance and a multiyear funding agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Secretary of the Interior. Speaker Lowe sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The compact will allow the Nation to redesign programs, services, functions and activities, reallocate funds, prioritize said PSFAs, enhance the effectiveness and long-term financial stability of its tribal government and include detentions and corrections services as part of its criminal jurisdiction and justice services. This will retain the multi year funding for fiscal year 2022.

NCA 23-045 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 16, Chapter 1 § 1-102 entitled “the organization for the executive office of the Principal Chief” to organize various cultural and humanities programs by creating a new cultural and humanities department. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill. It was co-sponsored by Representative Leonard Gouge, and Representative Joseph Hicks. It was unanimously decided that the bill would be postponed until the next HEW/LNC Joint Committee Meeting, 14-0.

According to language in the bill, the purpose of the act is to “organize various cultural and humanities programs throughout the Department

of Culture and Humanities.” If adopted, it will allow for more oversight and administration of the various cultural resource programs.

NCA 23-046 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing a new Title 16, Chapter 4 entitled “Culture and Humanities Department” and appropriating funds. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill. It was co-sponsored by Rep. Gouge and Rep. Joseph Hicks. It was unanimously decided that the bill would be postponed until the next LNC Committee Meeting, 14-0.

The new law would codify new language to be used in future bills moving forward regarding the new department. It would also define jurisdiction, power and authority, qualifications for members of the department, establish expectations and responsibilities, list areas of interest, and continue to preserve culture, oral tradition, history, research, and tribal law. The total cost of the appropriation will be \$273,148.

NCA 23-047 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to create the Mvskoke Language Liaison Program. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Cloud, and was co-sponsored by Rep. Gouge and Rep. Joseph Hicks. It was unanimously decided that the bill would be postponed until the next LNC Committee Meeting, 14-0.

The program would be composed of multi-generational staff responsible for serving as liaisons between Mvskoke speakers and academic, cultural, and tribal institutions in an effort to perpetuate the Mvskoke language. They will collect and manage data on the Mvskoke language and organize efforts to develop more robust communities. The total cost of the staff would be \$325,627.

NCA 23-055 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the department of higher education - emergency scholarship program’s Fiscal Year 2023 budget. Speaker Lowe sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The bill will appropriate \$75,000 to increase the Direct Assistance line item for the Emergency Scholarship Program fiscal year 2023 budget.

NCA 23-056 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 35, Chapter 6, entitled “School Clothing Program”. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The bill will appropriate \$723,000 to the MCN School Clothing Program.

NCA 23-057 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Year Recovery Funds to purchase vehicles for the benefit of the Fleet Management Department. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The bill will expend \$1,332,315.49 for the benefit of the Fleet Management Department.

NCA 23-058 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Year recovery funds to purchase vehicles for the benefit of the Fleet Management Department. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The bill will expend \$292,555.43 for the benefit of the Fleet Management Department.

View the full meeting at www.mcnn.com



The HVRP Job Fair was held at the Mvskoke Dome. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

MCN DEPARTMENTS PARTNER TOGETHER FOR A JOB FAIR

THE EVENT OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VETERANS TO FIND EMPLOYMENT

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Departments partnered together to bring job opportunities to the Okmulgee area by hosting a job fair at the Mvskoke Dome on May 24.

The collaborating departments included the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Employment and Training, the Reintegration Program and Muscogee Nation Business Enterprise and Transit.

MCN Transit provided transportation from the Tulsa and Muskogee areas for those interested in attending the event.

MNBE assisted participants with resume building.

Organizations like Walmart, Home Depot, Paccar Winch, Bama Pie, Central Technology Center, and Green Country Technology Center were featured at the fair. College of Muscogee Nation, and other

MCN Departments and businesses brought information as well, and some even hosted on-site interviews.

According to the MCN Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Coordinator Tacia Berryhill, employment is one of the greatest needs amongst her clients along with transportation.

Being a veteran herself, Berryhill understands the struggle of many veterans getting back out into the workforce.

“Being a veteran, you don’t want anybody to know you’re falling on hard times,” Berryhill said. “You’re supposed to endure what you need to do and figure it out on your own.”

HVRP Case Manager Kaylea Berry said that getting veterans in a financially stable situation and to be able to sustain that is the goal.

Also a veteran, Berry agrees that it helps to make that connection to those in need who do not want to ask for help.

“It helps to bring that camaraderie,” Berry said.

MCN Employment and

Training Workforce Development Coordinator Gerrel “Coach” Thomas assisted with the job fair to help the event run accordingly.

“There is a great need for employment,” he said.

Thomas regularly helps 50 plus citizens weekly with proper job placement and preparation.

According to Thomas, events like job fairs can expedite the process by bringing all components under one roof.

MCN Reintegration Outreach Specialist Mark Harjo said the direct contact does help in speeding up the process.

Many of the Reintegration Program clients are coming out of incarceration, and deal with employment obstacles like criminal background histories. With the fiber optic training course, many have been able to find employment security.

Unemployment rates are currently considered to be in a stable condition according to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

The commission reported the number of initial unemployment claims totaled 1,426 on May 13. This was a decrease of 71 claims from the previous week’s total of 1,497. Continued claims totaled 10,104, a decrease of 109 from the previous week’s total of 10,213.

For more information on employment, call 918-732-7600 to be directed to any of the aforementioned MCN departments.

PRESS RELEASE

NAJA to vote on Indigenous Journalists Association name change during 2023 election

The Native American Journalists Association will vote to change the name and elect

board members July 31-Aug. 10; Board candidacy declarations due June 29

The Native American Journalists Association will host elections online July 31-Aug. 9 and in-person Aug. 10. NAJA members will elect members of the board of directors and vote on a ballot measure to formally change the name to the Indigenous Journalists Association.

The organization was established in 1983 when Native American and First Nations journalists met to form the Native American Press Association. In 1990, the group changed to the Native American Journalists Association to lift Indigenous voices across all media platforms, and work to ensure accurate and contextual reporting about Indigenous peoples. In 2023, NAJA will celebrate its 40th anniversary and continues to develop and deliver resources, education and training for journalists covering Indigenous communities across the globe.

NAJA is calling for candidate declarations to serve on the board of directors through June 29. There are three vacancies for 3-year terms, starting in August 2023 and running through 2026.

For online voting, eligible NAJA members will receive a unique link in the email associated with their membership. Members may only cast one vote (either online or in-person) and all votes will be verified so there are no duplicates.

In-person voting will take place on Thursday, Aug. 10, from 5-8 p.m., CST at the Delta Hotel Winnipeg during the NAJA Opening Night Reception in coordination with the 2023 National Native Media Conference Aug. 10-12 in downtown Winnipeg.

Election results will be

announced during the NAJA Membership Luncheon at the RBC Convention Centre on Aug. 11.

Declaring Board Candidacy

The NAJA Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to strengthening journalism in Indigenous communities.

Board members are required to attend monthly meetings and serve on designated committees. Meeting times are determined by the board on a month-to-month basis but usually occur the first Thursday of the month. If an elected member misses more than three meetings due to unexcused absences, they may be removed from office.

Board members are required to seek and secure funding for the organization. Fundraising supports membership and a pipeline of Indigenous talent into media careers, including the Native American Journalism Fellowship and the next generation of storytellers.

Candidates must be verified NAJA members in good standing in order to be eligible to run for any position within the board. Associate members are not eligible for board candidacy. Read more about nominations and board elections in Article VII of the NAJA bylaws.

After the NAJA Election Committee has determined eligibility, candidates are required to submit a biography, photo, resumé, and outline how they will address membership needs and meet fundraising goals (no more than 500 words) to the election committee.

All candidacy declaration documents must be submitted to NAJA Election Chair Christine Trudeau at trudeau@naja.com by 5 p.m. CDT on June 29, 2023.





Youth participated in basket-weaving at the Spring Celebration on May 23 at the Claude Cox Omniplex, which is located at 2950 Warrior Road in Okmulgee, Okla. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

SPRING CELEBRATION EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

THE SPRING CELEBRATION WAS HELD IN PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE PRE-COVID

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Spring Celebration has returned to an in-person event for the first time in four years with an unexpected turnout at the Claude Cox Omniplex on May 23.

The event is hosted by the Mvskoke Tribal Child and Youth Coalition, which includes several departments such as MCN Behavioral Health, Tribal TANF Youth Services, and other agencies.

The TCYC’s mission is to keep families together, provide a stable and safe environment, and promote family bonding.

According to MCN Behavioral Health Project Director for Native Connections Grant Coordinator Tyler Stone, he was happy with the unexpected turnout.

MCN Behavioral Health and Event Coordinator Jasmine Jack claimed that participation had reached half of the projected number of 1,000 in just 30 minutes.

Participants were provided a resource fair, free haircuts, 3-on-3 basketball, face painting, inflat-

ables, door prizes and cultural activities like basket weaving, small pottery, corn husk doll making lessons, stick ball demonstration and lunch.

They incorporated activities for every age group to be able to join in on the fun.

There were physical activities for the children to do whether it was jumping on the inflatables, playing stickball, jamming out to the music that the disc jockey played or playing with their friends.

Numerous resource booths included information about programs and some offered tips for emotional well being.

Local vendors with departments from the Muscogee Nation included the MCN Center for Victim Services, Department of Health, College of the Muscogee Nation, Reintegration Program, Food Distribution, Mvskoke Language Program, Tobacco Prevention, Youth Services, TANF, Tax Commission, and many more. Some were even non-Muscogee to help broaden the services.

“Whenever we reach out

to different vendors, we want to make sure that there are resources that kind of tackle that entire lifespan,” Stone said

McIntosh District Representative Galen Cloud was asked to emcee the event.

“I am overwhelmed with all the kids that we have,” Cloud said about the turnout.

For Cloud, seeing the kids participate in the different cultural activities is of high importance.

“For them to be out here, to take away something that’s Mvskoke, that’s very important to me,” Cloud said.

Stone mentioned that they wanted to bring in the Mvskoke cultural aspect to give citizens that “spiritual connection.”

“The culture is the protective factor,” Stone said.

Stone stated that these different dimensions of health tying together with all of the different events that were provided was what they were wanting to provide the citizens.

For more information about the different services the Muscogee Nation has to offer, visit www.muscogeenation.com.

BAD PRESS PREMIERES INTERNATIONALLY

ANGEL ELLIS SPEAKS ON THE DEBUT OF BAD PRESS IN POLAND

by **MERCEDES DUNN**
MEDIA INTERN

POLAND – After several months of traveling film festival circuits across the United States, the film “Bad Press” recently made it’s international debut in May. It was featured in the Millennium Docs Against Gravity Film Festival in Poland, and was seen in Warsaw, Wrocław, and Poznań.

The film “Bad Press” premiered at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival and won the Special Jury Award for Freedom of Expression. This film was co-directed by Joe Peeler and Mvskoke citizen Rebecca Landsberry-Baker. It featured Mvskoke Media Director Angel Ellis as a reporter battling for freedom of the press and tribal government transparency.

“Bad Press” is a documentary that displays the significant effects of the Muscogee Nation’s election season after the MCN National Council repealed the media free press law. The film follows a Mvskoke Media reporter, Angel Ellis as a reporter battling for freedom of the press and transparency. It documents the outreach and advocacy for press freedoms that Muscogee (Creek) citizens ultimately voted in favor of.

Ellis was invited by the documentary team to attend the film’s question and answer panels that were held after each screening. Ellis felt this exposed her to the world-wide issue of press freedom.

“It really was kind of an eye-opening situation,” Ellis said. “What happened in the tribal nation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation with censorship and freedom of the press has become a world issue.”

The film festival organizers chose Bad Press for the

issue of people not getting the information they want. A lot of people in Poland are fighting for rights, and are advocating for press freedom under a state-run media.

“One of the big questions I was asked on the road,” Ellis said. “How do you overcome that?”

Ellis feels that this advocacy and journalism has to be people centric.

“It has to be people-driven,” Ellis said. “It has to come from the most grassroots effort.”


Ellis and other reporters produce these stories for the people. Ellis believes the news should work for you. The news organization should go out and answer these questions for the citizens, so people can get involved in proper civic responsibilities. Ellis wants to report on all issues for the people and future generations.

“If you address it head on we’re really solving the problem,” Ellis said. “If we sweep it under the rug we’re just leaving that problem for the next generation to figure out.”

Ellis said this film is a valuable blueprint for other communities to rally around local news. The freedom of telling these stories has backed up Indigenous peoples’ image for years. This motivates Ellis to tell these stories and provide the context for citizens.

“We know as Indigenous people how powerful storytelling is, it’s really the only way we have survived,” Ellis said.

The deadCenter Film Festival will be premiering “Bad Press” from June 8 to June 11 in Oklahoma City.

**MUSCOGEE(CREEK)NATION
ELECTION BOARD**

**2023 MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION ELECTION
FOR PRINCIPAL CHIEF, SECOND CHIEF &
NATIONAL COUNCIL SEAT A**

**Corrected date on in-person voting
registration deadline**

Absentee Ballot Mail Out Starting August 17th, 2023	Absentee Registration & Ballot Requesting Deadline August 23rd, 2023 @ 5PM	In-Person Voting Registration Deadline September 5th, 2023 @ 5PM
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**Primary Election
September 16th, 2023 7:00A.M-7:00P.M**


**Early Voting for Primary Election
September 13th & 14th, 2023 7:00A.M-7:00P.M (each day)**

Voter Registration form can be found on the Election Board website or Camphouse Portal users may use the election board tab to update or register to vote

For questions please contact us at 918.732.7631 or email us at Election@mcn-election.com

For more information please look at our website

<https://www.muscogeenation.com/election-board/>

**Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Election Board**

**CANDIDATE
PRESENTATION**

**The Election Board will present
information to citizens interested
in filling for elective office for
2023 Election**

**JULY 13TH, 2023
6:30 P.M.**

**LOCATION: THE COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION
STUDENT CENTER ROOM 108
2170 RAVEN CIRCLE, OKMULGEE, OK 74447**

**TO WATCH THE PRESENTATION VIA ZOOM GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:
[HTTPS://MCN-NSN.ZOOM.US/J/88999649144](https://mcn-nsn.zoom.us/j/88999649144)**



There have been many updates regarding ongoing legal battles within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

ONGOING LEGAL COVERAGE UPDATES

COUNCIL REP. CHARGES, FREEDMAN CASE, STATE INCOME TAX CHALLENGE AND BACONE MONITORED

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION, Okla. - Mvskoke Media has several long-term stories we are monitoring. Here is an update on the ongoing coverage.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court

Former MCN National Council Representative Travis Scott has a pre-trial conference hearing scheduled for Aug 1. Scott was charged with Felony False Swearing and four misdemeanor charges of Conflict of Interest by Tribal Officials on Feb. 11, 2022. These charges were filed in relation to Scott's impeachment, which was found unconstitutional by the MCN Supreme Court.

MCN National Council Representative Joseph Hicks is scheduled to appear in court on July 7 for his second

misdemeanor DUI charge, filed on Feb 14.

The trial for Rhonda Grayson and Jeffery Kennedy's suit against the MCN Citizenship Board concluded April 4, 2023. It has been close to two months and no decision has been delivered.

Oklahoma Supreme Court

Muscogee (Creek) citizen Alicia Stroble was handed a win last year when an administrative law judge for the Oklahoma Tax Commission ruled that she was exempt from paying state income taxes. Stroble is a tribal citizen that worked for the MCN government and resided in the reservation boundaries.

The Oklahoma Administrative Code delineates the following;

"Instances in which income is exempt. The income of an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian tribe shall be

exempt from Oklahoma individual income tax when:

(1) The member is living within "Indian Country" under the jurisdiction of the tribe to which the member belongs; and, the income is earned from sources within "Indian Country" under the jurisdiction of the tribe to which the member belongs; or," (Okla. Admin. Code § 710:50-15-2)

Although the code appears to be cut and dried, the tax commission decided that their own judge got it wrong and rejected Stroble's appeal. After the tax commission decision, an appeal was filed, and the Oklahoma Supreme Court decided to retain the case instead of assigning it to the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Seminole Nation, Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw and Choctaw Nation have all filed briefs supporting Stroble in the case.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court has not decided at this stage whether oral arguments will be heard

in the case or if the justices will simply decide the matter based on the briefs. Mvskoke Media will report the court's decision as soon as it is available.

Bacone College

Bacone College has been put on heightened cash monitoring by the U.S. Department of Education. Heightened cash monitoring is instituted by the department when colleges or universities have a number of financial or federal compliance issues. Bacone was placed on Heightened Cash Monitoring 1 (HCM1) on March 1 of this year.

There are two levels of heightened cash monitoring. The first, HCM1 occurs when a school makes disbursements to eligible students from institutional funds. The disbursement records are submitted to the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System. Federal Student Aid funds are used to cover those disbursements.

The second, HCM2 is where a school no longer receives funds under the Advance Payment Method. After disbursements are made to students from an institution's own funds, a Reimbursement Payment Request must be submitted to supply the funds.

Higher learning institutions can be placed on HCM1, or HCM2 due to a number of issues. These can include late or missing annual financial statements,

audits, outstanding liabilities, denial of re-certifications, concerns about the school's administrative capabilities or concerns around a school's financial responsibility.

Academic institutions on heightened cash monitoring can be searched by quarter on the FSA website.

Institutions also receive annual composite scores from the DOE that reflect their overall relative financial health. These are referred to as Financial Responsibility Composite Scores, and are scored on a scale of negative one to positive three.

Bacone's Financial Responsibility Composite Score was reported as a 1.4 for the 2020-2021 financial year, the last financial year the composite scores were published.

Mvskoke Media previously reported on a Higher Learning Commission accreditation complaint filed by a former Bacone employee against the college. This complaint alleged that Bacone had Clery Act violations that had resulted in a \$200,000 fine. Mvskoke Media has since received a statement from a spokesperson at the Department of Education on the fines.

According to the statement, "As of October 2022, the fine is still pending. Fines are not reported on the public page until they are imposed."

Mvskoke Media will continue to monitor these stories and publish updates when available.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



GABRIEL HARJO

Gabriel Harjo is an enrolled Mvskoke citizen from Tulsa and is the son of Faith Harjo-Jones and Brian Jones. He is twelve years old and attends Victory Christian School. He is a straight A student, and plays basketball and golf. He also plays the trumpet, and is an artist as well. He was recently awarded as the outstanding student for 6th grade Spanish.

Gabriel began playing the electric guitar one year ago. He is self taught and plays by ear. He learned to play the National Anthem to honor his father, U.S. Army Sergeant Brian Jones, his great grandfather who is a Korean War veteran, and all of our active duty and veteran service men and women.

Gabriel has a strong Mvskoke legacy. His grandfather is Dr. Jim B. Harjo of Tulsa. His great grandfather is the late Duke Harjo, a former Muscogee (Creek) Nation Councilman for

Sapulpa.

He loves music, especially rock and roll, and will continue perfecting his guitar skills!

IN MEMORIAM



RENA BELLE (GRAY) BUCK

Rena Belle (Gray) Buck, beloved mom, granny and aunt was called to her eternal resting place on May 22, 2023 at the age of 96 years, 6 months and 24 days. She entered this world on October 29, 1926 in Coweta, Oklahoma to Moses and Manoah (Bemo) Gray. Her Aunt Edna believed that if she gave her an ugly nickname, she would be real pretty and live a long life. She came up with the nickname "Punk" because that was the ugliest name she could think of. Rena was lovingly known as Punk and Granny by everyone. She was a proud member of the Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nations and was Bear Clan. She was baptized at an early age at Cedar Creek Baptist Church on a cold December day and would tell the story of how they had to break the ice that day.

Rena attended Bixby Schools growing up and later Haskell Institute. She worked for the US Postal Service for 43 years, retiring at the age of 83. Other occupations included bookkeeper, waitress and your friendly Avon lady. She was a member of Bemo Indian Baptist Church and faithfully served as a woman's leader, Sunday school teacher and song leader for many years. Among the things she loved to do were playing the piano and

singing at different events, traveling to different churches and cultural events, and shopping for shoes and purses. She also enjoyed fishing, but would never eat the fish.

Parents, Moses and Manoah Gray; brothers Napoleon "Sonny" Gray, Siah "Spider" Gray; sister Patsy Randolph; sons Allan "Chebon" Whitecloud, Johnny Whitecloud, Nathan Buck III; grandsons Moses "Hootie" Whitecloud, Lance "Windyboy" Whitecloud; granddaughter Chenenna Whitecloud preceded Rena in death. Left to cherish the memory of Rena are her son, Gary Whitecloud, Sr. of the home; numerous grandchildren; great and great-great grandchildren; a host of nephews, nieces other relatives and friends.

MVSKOKECREATIVE

Let us print your banners, business cards, brochures, copies, etc.

Contact
creative@mvskokemedia.com
or call 918-732-7720

MUSCOGEE NATION FESTIVAL

SCHEDULE of EVENTS

[f @muscogeenationfestival](#)
[MuscogeeNationFestival.com](#)

JUNE 2023	
FRI 16	7:00PM SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT 7:30PM INFR RODEO Bob Arrington Arena
SAT 17	8:00AM TENNIS TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park 8:00AM SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT HORSESHOES TOURNAMENT BASKETBALL 3on3 Adult MVSCKE Dome 10:00AM BLOWDARTS Youth Cultural Lawn 10:00AM BOWSHOOT Cultural Lawn TOMAHAWK THROW (Following Bowshoot) Cultural Lawn 7:30PM INFR RODEO Bob Arrington Arena
SUN 18	8:00AM TENNIS TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park 8:00AM SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT FINALS 11:00AM CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
THUR 22	11:00AM LIVING LEGENDS Faith Church 7:00PM STOMP DANCE 7:00PM-10:00PM FUN FAIR FOOD VENDORS
FRI 23	8:00AM JUNIOR OLYMPICS Harmon Stadium 8:00AM SENIOR ACTIVITIES Elderly Nutrition 8:00AM GOLF TOURNAMENT Fountainhead Creek Golf Course 11:00AM-11:00PM FUN FAIR ARTS & CRAFTS FOOD VENDORS 8:00PM HP BIRTHDAY BULL BASH BULL RIDING Bob Arrington Arena 7:00PM FAST PITCH TOURNAMENT 7:00PM LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Amphitheater
SAT 24	7:30AM SK 8:00AM FASTPITCH TOURNAMENT BASKETBALL 3on3 Youth MVSCKE Dome 10:00AM PARADE 11:00AM-2:00PM MEET & GREET Safe Space Principal Chief Hill & Second Chief Beaver 11:00AM-4:00PM INFO/RESOURCE FAIR 11:00AM-11:00PM FUN FAIR ARTS & CRAFTS FOOD VENDORS 4:00PM-6:00PM COSPEL/HYMN SINGING MVSCKE Dome LEGENDS SOFTBALL REUNION Safe Space 8:30PM HP BIRTHDAY BULL BASH BULL RIDING Bob Arrington Arena 7:00PM LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Amphitheater
SUN 25	9:00AM FASTPITCH TOURNAMENT FINALS 9:00AM-11:30 FOURTH SUNDAY on the RESERVATION featuring GOLDWING EXPRESS MVSCKE Dome
SHUTTLE	FRI 23 5:00PM-12:00AM SAT 24 12:00PM-12:00AM PICK UP/DROP OFF Intersection NE of MVSCKE Dome Parking Lot North Parking Lots, Complex Housing Administration Parking Lot
LOCATIONS	Bob Arrington Arena MVSCKE Dome Amphitheater Safe Space Hawthorn Park (Tennis & City Softball Fields) N. Okmulgee Ave & W. Fairfax St. Okmulgee Cultural Lawn Complex South Side Okmulgee Faith Church 1901 S. 11TH St. S. Okmulgee Harmon Stadium 301 East 28th Street Okmulgee Elderly Nutrition Fountainhead Creek Golf Course 10499 OK 1001 Checotah

MuscogeeNation.com

CLASS OF 2023



DeMicah R. Adams

School: Sapulpa High School
Bio: DeMicah is a 2023 graduate of Sapulpa High School and plans to attend Tulsa Tech in the fall of 2023. He will pursue a career in barbering, and wants to someday own his own barbershop. His parents are Terrence Vincent, DeMekia Adms McCormack and Philip McCormack.

Harlea Adams

School: Eufaula Public Schools
Bio: Harlea Adams is the 18-year old daughter of Mike and Leah Adams, and the older sister of Savanna and Sami-Jo Adams. Her maternal grandparents are Louis and Gloria Hicks, her paternal grandparents are Barbara and Don Adams. Harlea has attended Eufaula Public Schools since she was in pre-k. She is a member of the Technical Honor Society and a State FFA Degree recipient. Harlea has grown up getting to rodeo. She breakaway ropes and barrel races. She is a member of the Arrington McSpadden All Indian Rodeo Association, the Oklahoma High School Rodeo Association and the Cowboys Regional Rodeo Association. Harlea plans to continue her education at The College of The Muscogee Nation, then will transfer to Tulsa Community College for the Radiology Program.



Hasim Adams

School: Colorado State University
Bio: Hasim Adams is graduating with a Bachelor's of Science in Human Development and Family Studies with a Pre-Health concentration. He plans on pursuing a career as a physician assistant (PA), working in the field of family medicine. His overall goal is to bring a better sense of representation for minorities in medicine, while also working to limit health disparities in underserved and low-income communities.

Luke Adcock

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Luke is the son of Cory and Nichole Adcock of Eufaula. He is the grandson of Mark and Carolyn Harjo of Eufaula, and Bill and Mary Adcock of Stigler. Luke plans to attend Seminole State college to play baseball and pursue a degree in business. He is finishing his high school career as a top-ten graduate of his class and an All-Star by class football player.



Abbygail Allen

School: Coweta High School
Bio: Abbygail Allen is the daughter of Eric and Heather Allen (Pigeon). She graduated from Coweta High School, where she has attended for the past eight years within that school district. Abbygail's future plans are to attend Tulsa Community College for her associate degree, then will transfer to Oklahoma State University to pursue a degree in early childhood education specializing in working with SPED children. During high school, Abbygail has participated in soccer, game club, peer tutoring, Native American studies, and was the senior team manager for the high school girl's basketball team. Abbygail loves spending time with her family and friends, and spoiling her dog, Lily. Abbygail would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love, support, and for pushing her to do her very best.

Amelia Alvarado

School: Union Public Schools
Bio: Amelia Alvarado is a senior at Union Public Schools. She graduated early, and is very proud of herself for achieving this accomplishment. She also attended Tulsa Technology for health sciences. She says that she plans to do great things in her life.



Amya Elizabeth Andy

School: Sapulpa High School
Bio: Amya is the daughter of Terrence and Candace Andy. Amya is a member of the Native American Students Association and has participated in events with the group, showing her pride in her Native American Heritage. Amya was a member of her junior high and high school choir, and is an accomplished artist. She also participated in a leadership group, FCCLA showing leadership skills by being a co-leader in the culinary club. Amya did concurrent enrollment in Central Tech in Drumright her junior year as well as Tulsa Community College her senior year in addition to her regular high school studies. Amya will attend Haskell Indian Nation University in Lawrence, Kansas in the fall.

Anysa Mae Andy

School: Sapulpa High School
Bio: Anysa is the daughter of Terrence and Candace Andy. Anysa demonstrated pride in her Native American heritage by joining the Native America Students Association. Anysa was a member of other clubs such as FCCLA and co-lead the culinary club. Anysa is an honors student as well as salutatorian of her 2023 graduating class. Anysa has been a member of the volleyball team as well as a member of the color guard for the band. Anysa took classes at Tulsa Community College her second semester of high school, in addition to her regular high school studies. Anysa will attend Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence Kansas in the fall.



Jazmyne Arthurs

School: Okemah High School
Bio: Jazmyne is the daughter of Darci and James Arthurs and the great-granddaughter of Mary Dearman and the late Walter Dearman. In addition to her high school curriculum, Jazmyne completed eight college courses and played four years of basketball, and softball. Jazmyne was highly active in school organizations including Este Cate Club (four years), Beta Club (four years), FCA (one year), and STUCO (two years). She also helped with the Special Olympics for two years. During her senior year she was an office aide and graduated as one of the top ten in her class. Jazmyne graduated from Wes Watkins with a Certificate in Biotechnology. While there, she was a Gold Star Ambassador for two years and served one as the HOSA President. She is currently working as a CNA at Okemah Care Center and will be attending the University of Oklahoma in the fall, majoring in nursing.

Chenoa Barnett

School: Preston High School
Bio: Chenoa currently holds the title of 2022-2023 Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She is the eldest daughter of Roger Barnett and Stephanie Good Voice. She comes from the Wotkvlke, or Raccoon clan and her tribal town is Nuyaka. She attends Montesoma Baptist Church. She plans to attain an associate degree from the College of the Muscogee Nation and continue her education at the University of New Mexico where she will double major in Native American studies and education. Her dream is to be an Indian education teacher before one day entering into the world of tribal politics.



Janessa Kaitlyn Bass

School: Moore High School
Bio: Janessa Kaitlyn Bass is of Yuchi (Euchee), Muscogee Creek, and Cherokee heritage. She is the daughter of Regina Allen Bass and granddaughter of Ponf Gayle Allen & Stan Davis. In the fall Janessa will be heading to Oklahoma City Community College to study in the Respiratory Care Therapist program. Once she is finished with her associate degree, she wants to further pursue her education at the University of Oklahoma (OU) as a respiratory specialist in hopes of one day working in the NICU at one of the many Tribal Hospitals in Oklahoma.

Olivia Begay

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Olivia Begay is graduating on May 19, 2023 from Eufaula High School. She is the daughter of Lisa Johnson and Cecil Begay. Olivia has attended the Muscogee Nation Dormitory since the first grade. She has attended the Kiamichi Technology program where she earned her Certified Nursing Assistant and Certified Medical Assistant certifications. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society. Olivia has enlisted in the United States Navy and will be stationed in Chicago. Olivia plans to one day become an anesthesiologist.





Justin Albert Tenetke Berryhill

School: Guthrie High School
Bio: Tenetke is the son of Rene Berryhill and is the best big brother to Fayv Berryhill. His grandparents are Beatrice and Terry Meshaya and Merle Berryhill. His great-grandparents are the late Albert and Liz Lowe, Lona Mae Scott and Rev. John & Eliza Lowe. He is of Muscogee Creek/Choctaw decent and is of the sweet potato clan. Tenetke was team captain and a two-year starter on the Bluejays 5A football team and All district 5A-2 first team offensive lineman. He is on the GHS 5A regional champs powerlifting team, placing 2nd at regionals and a state qualifier. He is a discus state qualifier for the GHS track/field team. Berryhill will continue his academics and football career at Langston University.

Trinitee Bigpond

School: Glenpool HS
Bio: Trinitee Bigpond is the daughter of Negiel and Colette Bigpond of Glenpool. Her grandparents are Negiel & Jan Bigpond of Hectorville and Hoovie and Della Perez of Tulsa. She is of the Turtle Clan. She attends church at Morning Star Church of All Nations where she participates as a pianist. Trinitee has attended Glenpool schools all her life and has been a member of the Glenpool Band for seven years as a pianist and percussionist. She already has received her certification as a CNA from Tulsa Technology Center and plans to enter the nursing field. She will attend Tulsa Community College for two years and will then plan to transfer to the University of Central Oklahoma to finish her education.



Memphis Black

School: Epic Charter Schools
Bio: Memphis Black is graduating from Epic Charter Schools on May 20. He is the son of Chris and Margaret Black, and the big brother of Albany and Brooklyn. He has attended Epic for the past eight years, where is a member of the National Honor Society. Memphis has also competed in the sport of power tumbling for the past eight years at McIntosh Tumbling (MT). He has been a member of two national teams and won five USTA National Championships and four AAU Jr Olympic National Championships. He is also a coach at MT. Memphis wants to be an entrepreneur, and has already started a business during his senior year. He plans to continue his education at Tulsa Technology Center next year.

Daysia Raye Blackwell

School: Oklahoma State University
Bio: Daysia is a first-generation student from Duncan, OK. Her Five Clifton Strengths are communication, woo, empathy, development, and positivity. During her four years at OSU she used those strengths throughout her involvement in residential life as a board of director member and resident assistant, the Cowboy Marching Band as a member, then a captain, student union activities board as a member, Camp Cowboy as a counselor then a director, Summit Leadership Coaching as a facilitator, and the Wine Forum of Oklahoma as the executive marketing chair. She is a top five senior in her department and received the Hargis Leadership Institute Overall Student Leader Award due to her proficiency in the 7 Cs of leadership: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, common purpose, controversy with civility, collaboration, and citizenship. After she gains experience working in hotels and earning a master's degree, Daysia plans on becoming a professor.



Anthony Sage Brown

School: Kiefer High School
Bio: Anthony Sage Brown was born to Andrea Brown and TJ Charles. He is a member of the Mvskoke Creek Nation. He was raised by Patricia and Gary Akers in the Sapulpa/Kiefer area. Anthony has attended Kiefer Public Schools since kindergarten, where he maintained good grades and made lifelong friends. He participated in weightlifting while in high school. In his free time he taught himself to play the guitar and enjoys Airsoft with his buddies. Anthony has always been respectful of others. While he always celebrated the last day of school each year, he enjoyed his art, English and science classes. Anthony is grateful for everyone that knows him and has helped him in one way or another. "The size of the problems you face are unprecedented compared to the greatness of the solution."

Kamber Dawn Brown

School: Langston University School of Physical Therapy
Bio: May 6th, 2023 marked the culmination of hard work, dedication, sacrifice and most of all, being raised by her momma to "believe". Kamber was ceremoniously hooded as a Doctor of Physical Therapy. However, her momma who is a big part of who Kamber has become, was not in the bleachers, but instead walked beside her. After a three-year battle with cervical cancer, with this day acting as her guiding light, Kamber's momma passed away on March 17th. Kamber is a 2015 graduate of Paden High School, a 2017 graduate of Seminole State, and a 2019 graduate of Oklahoma State University. Kamber is the daughter of the late Krendy (Seaton) Brown and the granddaughter of Larry and Redonna Seaton of Paden. She is Hotlvkke and also of Cherokee heritage. Kamber completed her clinical rotation at Integris Baptist. She is studying for her state accreditation test in June. She did it momma!



Koesha Brown

School: Mid America Christian University
Bio: Koesha attended Mid America Christian University and received a Master's Degree in Business/Human Resources in May 2023. She has been married to her husband, Thomas for 11 years and they have three children together: Brandon, Kaliyah, and Kaylie. They currently live in Mustang, Oklahoma. Koesha is an employee for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. She also owns and operates her small business, Clean N Up Cleaning Company LLC, which she established in 2017. In her free time she loves to travel, hang out with her daughters, and watch soccer. Her favorite soccer player is her son, Brandon. Koesha hopes that in the future she can help serve and uplift the Muscogee (Creek) Nation tribe in any way that she can. "I am blessed to have accomplished so much and I hope to be able to serve our Nation in any way that I can in the future, Mwto."

Tayshon Brown

School: Klein Cain High School
Bio: Tayshon plays the violin and earned his pharmacy technician certification during his senior year in high school. He plans to attend classes in the fall of 2023 at Lone Star College to possibly continue pursuing a career in pharmacy management.



Kaden Gunnar Bumgarner

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Kaden graduated from Eufaula High School on May 19th, 2023 in Eufaula, Oklahoma. He participated in many school sports throughout his high school career. Kaden played for the Eufaula Ironheads football team for four years and the Eufaula Ironheads baseball team for three years. He also participated in powerlifting, and placed third in the 168lb weight class at the 2023 Small School State Powerlifting meet. He was a four-year member of the National Honor Society at EHS. Kaden was also concurrently enrolled at Connors State College during his Senior year. His plans are to continue his education at Connors State College, then transfer to Oklahoma State University. Kaden is a member of the Deer Clan. He is the son of Kenny and Rashelle Bumgarner of Eufaula, Oklahoma.

Sierra Nikole Bumgarner

School: Northeastern State University
Bio: Sierra graduated from Northeastern State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration on May 8 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is a 2018 graduate of Eufaula High School in Eufaula, Oklahoma. Sierra is a member of the Deer Clan. She is the daughter of Kenny and Rashelle Bumgarner of Eufaula, Oklahoma.



D'Addolyn Chairs

School: Wichita Heights High School
Bio: D'Addolyn (Addy) Chairs is of the deer clan and will be graduating from Wichita Heights High School in Wichita, Kansas. She will be taking summer courses at Butler County Community College, then will begin at Haskell Indian Nations University in the fall. She has participated in the WPS Native American Program since kindergarten. She has completed dual credit classes at WSU, Newman University and WSU-Tech where she jumpstarted her collegiate studies. Addy intends to major in education and to one day attend law school and become a corporate attorney. Addy loves fashion and listening to music in her spare time.

Camryn Clark

School: Westmoore High School
Bio: Camryn Christine Clark is the daughter of Lisa Bear & Billy Clark. She is Hotlvkke and is from the Conchartry tribal town. Camryn attended Westmoore High School in Oklahoma City where she played softball for four years, and will graduate with a 3.5 grade point average. She will continue her education at the University of Science & Arts (USAO) on a softball scholarship. Here Mahe Baby Girl we are so proud of you!



Mozes Coachman

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Mozes Coachman will graduate from Eufaula High School this May. He is the son of Denise Coachman. Mozes has attended the Eufaula Dormitory for one year. He was a member of the Eufaula Ironhead basketball team. Mozes' future plans include making a lot of money.

Miranda Colbert

School: Okemah High School/Wes Watkins Technology Center
Bio: Miranda is the daughter of Kirsten and Randy Colbert. She is the granddaughter of the late Millie Jean and James Rudolph Colbert. She is also the granddaughter of the late Ella Mae and Charles Jake. Miranda is a member of Indian Nations Baptist Church in Seminole (where her father is the pastor). Miranda played four years of softball and basketball for the Lady Panthers. Miranda is a two-year member of the Beta Club, a four-year member of the Este Cate Club, and is in the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. She enjoys hanging out with her friends, her older sister Katee, and her cat Noodles. She also enjoys drawing, painting, and traveling. After high school, Miranda is going to attend the University of Oklahoma where she will major in art, technology, and culture.





Connor Dane Conklin

School: Ada High School

Bio: Connor graduated from Ada High School with a general studies degree. During his time there, Connor took the aviation course. It was in this class that Connor found his love for planes, drones, and all things that fly. He obtained his unmanned aircraft systems license and became a certified commercial drone pilot in February of 2023. He is currently working on his private pilot's license. Connor also has a passion for computers and technology. He attended the Information Technology program at the Pontotoc Technology Center. During this time he became Test Out Pro certified, CPR certified, and received a silver for his Career Development Readiness test along with his completion certification for the Information Technology Program. He is also a member of the National Technical Honor Society. He has been accepted at the Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology where he will graduate with his Aviation Maintenance Technology degree.

Sabina Correa

School: Oklahoma State University

Bio: Sabina Correa is a nontraditional first-generation student and a mother to a beautiful, ambitious teenage daughter named Mia. In 2016 she was diagnosed with Lupus, which changed everything for her. Being diagnosed with Lupus lit a fire in her, thus she decided to not to let this define her. She wanted to live, and stop surviving. She knew she had to be the change in her family. At that moment, she decided to attend college and earn a degree. She enrolled at Tulsa Community College and earned an associate degree in science. She then applied to Oklahoma State University and was accepted. She graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration in Accounting with Cum Laude distinction. She is excited to announce that she has been accepted into the Master's of Accounting program at OSU and will start this summer.



Braylon Davis

School: Beggs High School

Bio: Braylon Davis has attended Beggs Public Schools since he was in the first grade. His love of sports lead him to play both football and baseball during all four years of high school. He received All-District in baseball for the 2023 season. Braylon plans on pursuing a career as a lineman through Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology.

Rachel Dillard

School: Oklahoma State University

Bio: Rachel Dillard, 23 is from Broken Arrow, and graduates from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Administration and Operations. She graduated from Broken Arrow High School in 2018. She received her Associate in Aviation Management from Tulsa Community College in May 2021. Rachel is an active member with Women in Aviation International in their North Texas Chapter as well as the OSU-Tulsa Aviation club. She is now an official member of the Oklahoma State University – North Texas Alumni Association, the largest group of OSU alumni outside of Oklahoma. Rachel now resides in DFW where she hopes to pursue her dreams in the aerospace industry. Rachel would not be where she is today without the support of her loving family. Thank you to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Higher Education Department for their support in helping me pursue my dreams of a higher education.



Samuel Dillon

School: Betty Fairfax High School

Bio: Samuel has been accepted to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. He plans to major in physics. He is the son of Alfreda Wise and Anthony Dillon. His maternal grandparents are Karen Allison Wise of Komatke AZ, and the late Alfred Wise of Weleetka, OK. His paternal grandparents are Aleathia Dillon and the late Orien Dillon of San Carlos, AZ. He is the great-grandson of the late Webster Wise of Bowlegs, OK and the late Lindy Manley of Weleetka, OK. He is of Mvskoke, Seminole, Ootham, and Apache descent.

Rin Taylor Marie Donaldson

School: Union High School

Bio: Rin graduated from Union High School with a 3.978 GPA. They also successfully completed the Tulsa Technology School Cosmetology Program and was awarded the Silver Key Award from the Oklahoma State University Alliance for 2023 Young Artists & Writers competition. Rin was a member of the Zephyrus Winder Guard, earning recognition as a 2023 WGI Tulsa Finalist, a 2023 WGI Dallas Finalist, and a 2023 WGI Semi- Finalist.



Aiyana Marie Dreadfulwater

School: Waynesville Senior High School

Bio: Aiyana is the daughter of Woodson and Katherine Dreadfulwater and the granddaughter of Pauline Hammons. Aiyana Dreadfulwater is a member of the Mvskoke (Creek) Nation and is of the Turtle Clan. She is a National Technical Honor Society inductee, has been awarded the CTE, achieved a Gold WorkKeys, is a Certified Nursing Assistant and is earning her certification for phlebotomy. Aiyana has been active in music and band since sixth grade, and has been a member of the Tiger Pride Marching Band all four years of high school. She was in both JROTC and soccer for three years. She will be attending the Waynesville School of Practical Nursing to become an LPN, then plans to continue her education in a field of specialized nursing.

Anna Malyn Dudley

School: Pottsboro High School

Bio: Anna Dudley is a graduate of the Pottsboro High School Class of 2023. She has a 3.898 grade point average, and has been inducted into the National Honor Society and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She has participated in Cross Examination debate and in UIL Journalism. She has participated in PALS, Circle of Friends, FCCLA and student council. She has been a member of varsity tennis, basketball and track and field teams. She is also a member of Sisters of and has been a member of the Girl Scouts since she was in kindergarten. She recently completed her Gold Award project, Playground Inclusion Communication Boards. A total of 29 communication boards have been installed in six different elementary school campuses in two school districts. In addition to the above, she has also worked part-time at Starbucks. She hopes to attend the University of Arkansas in the Fall.



Hallie Dudley

School: Pottsboro High School

Bio: Hallie Dudley is a graduate of the Pottsboro High School Class of 2023. She has a 3.8 grade point average and has been inducted in the National Honor Society. She participated in cross examination debate and in UIL Journalism. She has participated in PALS, Circle of Friends, FCCLA and student council. She has been a member of the Varsity tennis, basketball and track and field teams. She has been a member of Sisters of and has been a member of the Girl Scouts since she was in kindergarten. She recently completed her Gold Award project, Celebration Monarch!. She currently works part time at Starbucks. She hopes to attend the University of Arkansas in the fall and study political science. Her parents are Jeff and Lorene Dudley.

Cassidy Fixico

School: South Grand Prairie High School

Bio: Cassidy Fixico is a senior at South Grand Prairie High School in Texas. She is the daughter of Charles and Mandy Fixico. In high school, she played varsity softball all four years and has received the following awards; 2021 and 2022 Academic All District, 8-6A MVP for 2021 and 2022. She is currently the senior class president and has a 4.26 GPA. She is in the top 5% of her class. She will attend Louisiana Tech University in the fall and plans on majoring in biomedical engineering.



Isaiah Flores

School: Broken Arrow High School

Bio: Isaiah has been a member of the Pride of Broken Arrow for four years and a member of the jazz band for two years. He has been active in the Native American Student Association committee and AP Club for the last two years. He plans to attend Oklahoma State University in the fall of 2023. Isaiah's great-grandparents are the late Sonnie and Nannie Lewis of Dustin, OK, his maternal grandparents are Minnie and Gilbert McCulley of Dustin, his paternal grandparents are Juan and Maria Flores of Broken Arrow and his parents are Akeyah McCulley and Everardo Flores of Broken Arrow, OK.

Cyrus Franks

School: Holdenville High School

Bio: Cyrus will be graduating from Holdenville High School. Cyrus is the son of Chris and Elsie Franks. His paternal grandparents are Little Charlie Franks and Susanna and Elliot Barnett. His maternal grandparents are Preciosa Dagasdas and Felix Batchanucha. Cyrus was active in DECA and FCCLA for four years, robotics, art club for three years, and eSports for one year. He was also active in baseball and football. Cyrus plans to further his education at the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, then go into the field of information security.



Halle Frieden

School: Oklahoma State University

Bio: Halle Frieden is a Muscogee Creek Native filmmaker, film set and travel photographer based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies with concentrations in Management and American Studies, and a minor in Screen Studies. She studied abroad in 2022 in Salzburg, Austria and has traveled to 15 countries. She has worked on the upcoming film, Killers of the Flower Moon, directed by Martin Scorsese and for the FX Hulu show, Reservation Dogs. She also worked as a camera operator for ESPN+ and she freelances for documentary and commercial projects. She participated in the Cinetechy Lab hosted by Atomic Culture and Blackhorse Lowe, and the Cricket Director Mentorship by Richard Janes. She has created multiple short films, and looks forward to sharing more stories with people everywhere.

Mollie M. Gibbs

School: Northeastern State University Broken Arrow

Bio: Mollie Gibbs is a full-time analyst for a large Tulsa healthcare network. She is a Sapulpa native. She studied at Northeastern State University Broken Arrow campus in the MAFA program. Her master's degree is in accounting and financial analysis. She is eager to start studying for the CPA exam this summer. She will be forever grateful for the Muskogee (Creek) Nation's master's grant program. Because of their help, she was able to obtain her degree debt free. She would like to say thank you to the MCN Higher Education department for believing in her and her dreams of becoming a CPA. She would also like to thank her parents, family, and friends for all their love and encouragement. She would also like to say congratulations to all the 2023 graduates.





Addesen Glass

School: Hilldale High School
Bio: During high school Addesen has tried her hardest to stay involved and prioritize education. She is a current member of the Native American student association, teen republicans, and the National Honor Society. She has also been a member of the math club and FCCLA in the past. In addition, she competed in soccer and golf for Hilldale High School. She has won two state championships with the golf team (2021 & 2022). Lastly, she is the valedictorian for Hilldale's Class of 2023. Following high school, she will attend the Univeristy of Sciences and Arts to play collegiate golf. While there, she will also major in biology and minor in cultural studies. After her undergraduate studies are complete, she plans to attend medical school to pursue her dream of becoming an anesthesiologist.

Amy Jo Gower

School: University of Oklahoma
Bio: Amy Gower of Collinsville graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She had the privilege of being inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, which has allowed her to connect and engage in the nursing profession on a deeper level. Amy has had a passion for nursing from a young age and is thrilled to have accomplished her goal. She will begin her RN career at the Oklahoma Children's Hospital by loving on and caring for pediatric patients and their families. Amy is the daughter of Toby and Jo Ann Gower and the sister of Bethany Gower. She is the granddaughter of Joe and Marsha Woodard and James and Connie Hawk. Amy is a member of the Mvskoke Nation and is also of Chickasaw descent. She is thankful to the MCN for their support and for the possibilities it provided for her through school.



Shakota LittleEagle GrayWolfe

School: Mannford High School
Bio: Shakota GrayWolfe is the daughter of Cameron Gray, Amanda Homchanh, Jynnifer Wolfe, and Brian Bamford. She is 17 years old and will be 18 on June 7. Shakota has participated in student council, leadership council, spirit club, basketball, cross country, and soccer her senior year. During her junior and senior year she has been going to tech school for half of the school day to start and further her interior design career. She is also furthering her interior design career by going to University Of North Texas.

Grant Garcia Greever

School: Union High School
Bio: Grant Garcia Greever is a senior at Union High School. He is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on his maternal side. Debbie Herron-Greever is his mom, his is father is Chris Greever of Tulsa. He has been attending Tulsa Tech for culinary studies. He will be attending Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in Okmulgee in the fall to earn an applied associate degree. Upon completing two years, he will attend the Culinary Institute of America in upstate New York to earn his bachelor's degree in culinary science. His passion for cooking was fanned into flame when he made the decision to eat healthier a few years ago. He started to experiment with flavors and textures, and soon realized he prefers to eat his own cooking over many restaurants. He shared his dishes with others, and many enjoyed it, which inspired him to keep pursing the culinary arts.



Ethan Hall

School: Dewar High School
Bio: Ethan Hall is the son of Jennifer Watters and Torlando Hall. He is the grandson of Linda Watters, Constance Clay and Floyd Combs. During high school, Ethan participated in band, and was a member of the student council and academic team. After graduation he plans to attend the College of Muscogee Nation.

Eli Roberts Hammer

School: Tahlequah Sequoyah High School/Indian Capital Technology Center of Tahlequah
Bio: Eli Hammer has attended Sequoyah High School for four years and has been active in organizations including Fellowship of Christian Athletes, National Honor Society, varsity football and varsity track. He is concurrently enrolled at Northeastern State University. He has also attended Indian Capital Technology Center and will graduate with a certificate of completion as a heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration technician apprentice. Eli is an active member of his church at Park Hill Baptist Church. He plans to continue to master his trade and work in the commercial HVAC industry after graduation. Eli is the son of Jeromie and Sunny Roberts Hammer of Tahlequah, OK and the grandson of Carney and the late Lerena Roberts of Okemah and Jim and Brenda Hammer of Tahlequah. Eli has one sibling, his sister LynDee Hammer. Eli is Muscogee (Creek) and Cherokee, and a member of Nuyaka Tribal Town and the Wind Clan.



Benjamin Vernon Haney

School: Edmond Santa Fe High School
Bio: Benjamin (Benji) Haney is a senior at Edmond Santa Fe High School. During his high school career, he has held a senator position for Edmond Santa Fe's Student Council for the past two years. ESFHS StuCo has given him the opportunity to volunteer for his community and meet with other community leaders across the state. These opportunities have built and shaped not only his character, but also his future. He has aspirations to be a commercial pilot so he can travel the world and own his own business. With his school/community involvement and hard work in academics, he has been accepted into Arizona State University's Aviation Technology Management (Professional Flight) Program. There he will further his education to lock in his dream career of becoming a pilot.

Rebecca Hargrove-Santos

School: Oklahoma City University School of Law
Bio: I am originally from Okemah, but I live in Oklahoma City with my husband, Eder Santos. I received my Bachelor of Psychology at the University of Oklahoma and worked in the service industry for over a decade. I decided to go to law school after volunteering as a court-appointed special advocate. When the McGirt decision was released as I was taking my first law school final, I knew becoming an attorney would be a way to give back to my tribe that had given me so much. I am proud to be Mvskoke, and my goal is to help fight for sovereignty. I also want to use this opportunity to help strengthen tribal communities throughout Oklahoma. I am incredibly grateful for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Higher Education Doctoral Grant. I could not have done this without the help of my family and the tribe.



Kadyn Harjo

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Kady Harjo is graduating from Eufaula High School on May 19th. Kady is the son of Diana Harjo and David Larson. He is a member of the Sac & Fox tribe. Kady has resided at the Muscogee Nation Dormitory in Eufaula for nine years. Kady's future plans are to attend the fiber optics program and become certified.

Micco Elijah Knotchapone-Harjo

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Micco Elijah Knotchapone-Harjo graduated May 19 from Eufaula High School. Micco is the son of Elijah Harjo and Kendra Knotchapone. He is Muscogee Creek and Navajo. He has attended the Eufaula Dormitory for five years. Micco's future plans include becoming certified in the fiber optics program and graduating from college with a degree in chemistry.



Sutv Violet Harjo

School: Henryetta High School
Bio: Sutv is Ecovlke, and attends Springfield United Methodist Church. Her Tribal Town is Fishpond. She played basketball for four years, fast pitch and slow pitch softball for three years, participated in BETA Club for two years, Este-Cate Club for three years and Mvskoke Nation Youth Council for four years. Sutv is currently taking concurrent classes at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, and plans to continue through the summer. She will be attending the University of Central Oklahoma in the fall as a forensic biology major.

Garrett Harper

School: Oklahoma State University/Saint Francis Health System
Bio: Garrett Harper is a 2023 graduate of Oklahoma State University and the Saint Francis School of Medical Laboratory Science. He graduated as one of 15 students, the largest class in the program's history. The Saint Francis MLS program presents a challenging curriculum due to it's accelerated nature. Nevertheless, Garrett received his Bachelor's of Science in Microbiology. Garrett will go on to work as a laboratory scientist for the Saint Francis Health System in Tulsa. Garrett's hobbies include video games, board games and card games. His parents are Terry and Lisa Harper, his brother is Braden Harper and his grandparents are the late Mary and Herman Harper. His aunt and uncle are Linda and Tim Harper, and his cousins are Stuart and Kendall Harper. Garrett is of the bird clan (Fuswlke) and his tribal town is Tukabahchee (Tokepahche).



Tatiyona Harris

School: Okmulgee High School
Bio: Tatiyona Harris is the daughter of Terra Beaver. She was inducted into the National Honor Society (NHS), the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS), and the Oklahoma Student Indian Honor Society (OCIE). Her academic awards include Okmulgee 4x Letter "O" award recipient, Mvskoke Women's Leadership Student of the Year, and the 2023 Outstanding JOM Girl of the Year. Her athletic awards include the 2022-2023 Fastpitch Honorable Mention, Senior Outstanding Cheerleader, and being crowned prom queen. Tatiyona serves as the senior class president and cheerleader co-captain. Her extracurricular activities included cheerleading, softball, fast-pitch, and basketball. Tatiyona's academic math achievements have led to many recognitions throughout her high school years. She plans to attend East Central University (ECU) as a biomedical engineer.

Tanyon Harrison

School: Desert Vista High School
Bio: Tanyon Harrison is a member of the Class of 2023 at Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, Arizona. His parents are Eric and Sher-rill Harrison of Phoenix, his maternal grandmother is Ella Barnett of Mesa, AZ, his paternal grandmother is Judi Harrison of Chandler, AZ, his great-grandmother is Mary Barnett and his great-grandparents are Toney and Rhoda Barnett. Tanyon has been playing soccer since the age of five, he has been in Club Soccer since age nine, and played all four years at Desert Vista. He was a member of the Boys Team Charity (BTC) - Ahwatukee Chapter, earning philanthropy hours all throughout high school. He is currently considering one of two colleges where he will continue his soccer career while studying sports medicine.





Joshua Haskew
School: College of the Muscogee Nation
Bio: Joshua Haskew received his Associate Degree in Casino Operations from the College of the Muscogee Nation. He is the son of Joseph and Ginia Haskew. He is the brother of Ryan Haskew. He is also the grandson of the late Virginia Asbury of Eufaula and the grandson of the late Mary and Joseph Haskew Sr. of Tulsa.

James Hayes
School: Union High School
Bio: James was born in Texas and moved to Broken Arrow with his family when he was five years old. He loves the outdoors and has traveled to several places with the Boy Scouts. He has worked to be an Eagle Scout. He has participated in extra-curricular activities including marching band, concert band, jazz, SkillsUSA, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Cadet Lawman, sports, and college classes. He has also been on an environmental science field study of the Florida Everglades. His goals are to graduate from college with a B.S. in aerospace engineering. He also plans to earn a recreational pilot's license and join the Air-Force. He believes that it is his life's goal is to take the gifts and ideas that God has given him to better those around him and others throughout the world.



Alicia Araceli Hernandez
School: Okmulgee High School
Bio: Alicia Araceli Hernandez is a graduating senior at Okmulgee High School and has been on the principal's honor roll. Alicia is Mexican, Ponca-Omaha and Mvskoke. She is eco clan and is an enrolled member of the Thloppocho Tribal Town. Alicia loves music, art, movies, shopping and doing hair and makeup. Her cousins are often her test subjects. Alicia plans on enjoying the summer with her siblings and family before deciding on where to continue her education. Her proud family includes her mother, Shawn Tyndall, step-parent DesRay Roland, extended parent Eric Shields Sr., brother Eric Shields Jr., sister Kaylah Shields, grandparents Sharon Chalakee & Freeland Harjo, aunt Carrie Tyndall, uncle Rayne Harjo, and aunt Cherisse Ingram. Her late grandfather is Horace Tyndall, her late father is Manuel Hernandez.

Jalen Herring
School: Desert Vista High School
Bio: Jalen Herring is a senior at Desert Vista High School in Arizona. Jalen is an athlete with a 3.5 GPA. He participated in football, basketball, wrestling and track. Last year he was chosen to play in the Indigenous All-Star Football Bowl in the Minnesota Vikings Stadium where his team won. Jalen has applied to several universities and has been accepted to every one. His top three choices are the University of Oklahoma, New Mexico State and Abilene Christian. He has received football scholarships from Luther and Hastings College. He plans to major in communications with a focus on film and media studies. He will soon decide where to attend based on where he can play football and achieve his degree. Jalen volunteers with his church every week in the youth department. We thank God He has great plans for Jalen. He can do all things through Christ who strengthens him!



Jarrett Hicks
School: Glenpool High School
Bio: Jarrett Hicks grew up in Glenpool, Oklahoma. His ceremonial ground is Arbeka and he is a part of the Bird Clan. He wrestled for eight years at Glenpool Schools as well as for different clubs. Jarrett won the "Mr. Westling of Tulsa" title. He is a two time state placer and will wrestle for all-state this summer. Jarrett's plan after high school is to go to the fire academy and become a fireman. "Congratulations Bub, we are so proud of the man you have become and will continue to be! We love you to the moon & back infinity. We'll be there every step of the way". Love, Mom, Dad & Juli.

Adam Michael Hill
School: Graham – Dustin Public School
Bio: Adam is the valedictorian for the 2023 graduating class of Graham – Dustin school. His future plans are working for the summer youth program, then attend the College of the Muscogee Nation. His goals are to get a degree in computer science, then find a job he can work, and understand the science behind computers. In his eighth grade year he was the salutatorian for his class. He told himself to work harder, and to become the valedictorian for his senior class. Not only for the purpose of making himself proud of his accomplishments, but his family as well. He lost his father during his seventh grade year, then his mother his junior year. He knows they are proud of the man he has become. He is a thinker and always tries to be positive about any situation that may come his way.



Dale Hill
School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Dale Hill will be graduating on May 19 from Eufaula High School. He is the son of Vanessa Hill and the grandson of the late Jimmy "Bunny" Hill. He is a third-generation graduate of Eufaula High School. He has attended the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Dormitory for 10 years. Dale enjoyed his time as a member of the Eufaula Ironhead football team. He plans to attend a technical school for training, then will join the workforce.

Hayden Hobia
School: Wetumka High School
Bio: Hayden Hobia is the son of Keri Poole and Jeff Hobia. He is the grandson of Albert Poole and Susan Giles, Joetta Mannon, Fannie Hobia and the late Ricky Hobia. Hayden graduated from Wetumka High School on May 11, 2023. Hayden participated in football, baseball, powerlifting, and track during his senior year. He was also involved in the FFA, where he showed a goat and pigs. One of Hayden's big accomplishments from his senior year is when he made the All-Star team for football. He will be playing in the All-Star game in Miami, OK in June. Hayden's future plans are to attend Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in Okmulgee and to become a natural gas compression mechanic.



Cole Holleyman
School: University of Central Oklahoma
Bio: Cole Holleyman will be graduating from the University of Central Oklahoma with a BA in Jazz Performance. His instrument of focus is percussion, specifically, drums. He intends on pursuing a career of a professional musician and is currently a member of two bands, which perform regularly. He has performed in many musical theater shows, as well as performed as a freelance jazz musician. Cole is very proud of his heritage and looks forward to representing the Mvskoke Nation. He would like to thank the Mvskoke Nation for all the monetary support and help that he has received.

Eastman Holloway
School: Oklahoma City University
Bio: Henscil My name is Eastman Holloway. I am graduating from law school with a certificate in estate planning and Native law. These past three years were only possible through the encouragement of my fiancée, my parents, and the support of my Nation. Through the Higher Education Program, I was given the opportunity to learn and thrive at my school. After the bar, I will continue to work with Mr. Joe Williams, who is a Native attorney in Okmulgee. As I continue to grow in confidence and knowledge of Indian law, I hope to help protect our elders and support our tribal government through my education. I want to give a special Mvto, to my father, who has loved me and sacrificed so much to get me to this moment and my mother, who has given me God's love through all that she does. Thank you again for this opportunity.



Joseph Hounarmand
School: University of Oklahoma
Bio: Joseph Hounarmand a proud citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. He is graduating with his Bachelor of Architecture from The University of Oklahoma. Boomer!

Abby Huie
School: Howe High School/Carl Albert State College
Bio: Abby Huie (Creek/Cherokee) is the daughter of Bob "Tooter" and Rhonda (Richards) Huie and graduated with dual degrees from Howe High School and Carl Albert State College with honors. She was the valedictorian of her high school class and graduated CASC with a GPA of 4.0. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa, BPA and Gear Up. She has played three sports throughout her high school career. She received All State honors in all three sports including, fast pitch, basketball and slow-pitch softball. She also received Oklahoma Native All State honors for fast pitch and basketball. She has signed a letter of intent to play softball for Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville to attain her bachelor's of science in the nursing program.



Kayleah Jo Hurst
School: Mounds High School
Bio: Kayleah Jo Hurst is the daughter of Jerry and Laurie Hurst. She has attended Mounds School for the past 12 years. Kayleah loves rodeoing, physical training, and spending time with family and friends. She plans to attend Southeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall to get her bachelor's degree in health and human performance in hopes of pursuing a profession in the health and medical industry. Kayleah is the proud granddaughter of Louis and Gloria Hicks of Okmulgee, OK, and Jerry and Evelyn Hurst of Kellyville, OK. She is grateful to her family for pushing her to succeed.

Sieriah Husman
School: Okmulgee High School/Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology
Bio: Sieriah Husman is the Salutatorian of the Okmulgee High School Class of 2023. She plans on attending the College of the Muscogee Nation to pursue general studies. She plans on attending another college after that to obtain a bachelor's degree in accounting. She is excited to start this new chapter of her life and see how everything goes.





Hannah Jenkins

School: Porter Consolidated High School Putnam
Bio: Hannah Jenkins is from the Porter Consolidated High School class of 2023. Her future plans are to attend Oral Roberts University and major in clinical psychology in hopes to someday work in a mental health institution. She was involved in many organizations throughout high school, including student council for four years, leadership for three years, National Honor Society for one year, troop support for three years, FCCLA for two years, soccer for three years, cheer for four years, softball for one year, yearbook for one year, trap for three years, archery for two years, class treasure for one year, class vice president for two years, and prom committee for one year.

Hunter Johnson

School: The College of the Muscogee Nation
Bio: Hunter Johnson graduated from the College of Muscogee Nation with an Associate of Applied Science in Tribal Gaming. He is 26 years old and is from Wetumka, OK. He plans to transfer to a bachelor's degree program at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence Kansas in the fall. He is undecided about a degree program, but is interested in the Haskell School of Business. Hunter is very thankful for his experience at CMN and looks forward to seeing the school grow. He enjoys playing basketball, listening to music, collecting shoes, being a great uncle, and spending lots of time with his family. He plans to one day coach a basketball team of his own as well as making a good life for his family. We are all very proud of you and no matter what you decide to do in life we are always going to support you!



Autumnn Jones

School: University of Oklahoma
Bio: We are honored to announce Autumnn Jones' graduation from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center's College of Pharmacy with a Doctorate degree in Pharmacy. Autumnn's parents are Oscar and Allison Rose and her grandparents are Arthur and Beverly Rose, and William Buckskin and Trudy (Bigpond) Frank. During her time in pharmacy school Autumnn was a class vice-president, an ambassador for the College of Pharmacy, a Crimson Club member, a social media chair for the Native American Student Association, a member of the African American Student Association, a member of Phi Lambda Sigma Honor Society, a member of Phi Delta Chi pharmacy fraternity, and also worked at the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information as a Poison Information Provider.

Hailey Jones

School: Creekview High School
Bio: Hailey Jones is graduating from Creekview High School in Canton, GA at the top of her class with a 4.15 GPA. Hailey is the president of the American Sign Language Club, the founder and president of the Homeless Pet Shelter Club, a member of the Beta Club, a member of Mu Alpha Theta, and a member of the National Honor Society. She works daily in the after school program at the local elementary school. Hailey has the honor of attending the University of Georgia in the fall where she will study elementary education and continue to pursue her passion in ASL.



Chance Jordan

School: Morris High School
Bio: Chance Jordan graduated from Morris High School. He is the son of Amber Burgess. He is also the grandson of Roger and Deborah Burgess of Coalton, Oklahoma. Chance is a Muscogee (Creek) tribal member and is also Cherokee. He is of the Bird Clan. Chance loves playing sports, particularly football because he likes tackling people, and baseball because he loves hitting the ball over the fence. He received several college offers to play football and chose to continue his football career with an offer from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College.

Deaven Knox

School: Preston High School
Bio: Muscogee (Creek) citizen Deaven Knox is a 2023 Preston High School honors graduate and is the son of Sparkel and DeLeon Tuggle and Lonell Knox. Deaven is a lover of all things related to music and will begin his higher education path at The College of Muscogee Nation before pursuing his passion and musical talents at the University of Central Oklahoma to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Contemporary Music. Deaven is the recipient of the 2023 Okmulgee Service League "Dawson Sumner Memorial" Scholarship, the 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Scholarship, the 2023 Preston Alumni Academic Achievement Scholarship as well as the 2023 MCN JOM Academic Incentive Scholarship.



Tyler Land

School: Berryhill High School
Bio: Tyler is a 2023 graduate of Berryhill High School. He plans to earn his bachelor's degree in cellular and molecular biology, then attend medical school. His overall goal is to be a doctor for the United States Navy.

Hailey Leffler

School: College of the Muscogee Nation
Bio: Hailey Leffler is a 2023 graduate of the College of the Muscogee Nation and graduated with an Associate of Science in General Studies. She maintained a 3.5 grade point average and made the honor roll. "The driven and passionate mentality will get you where you want and need to be. It is important to stay focused and not let anyone have the ability to drag you down or stop you from achieving goals. You do not have to be strong all the time. No one can stop you but yourself. Once you quit or give up, you will most likely never go back. You will always wish what could have been." Some of Hailey's favorite quotes are, "If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life.", "You cannot grow in your comfort zone.", and "If it doesn't challenge you it won't change you."



MaKayla Littlebear

School: Sapulpa High School
Bio: MaKayla Littlebear graduated from Sapulpa High School. Her parents are Martin Littlebear and Christine Lunsford. Her grandparents are Betty Watson, Grant Littlebear, Christina Lunsford and Walter Lunsford. MaKayla will attend Oklahoma University to study sports medicine. She participated in Lettered varsity fast pitch softball for four years and the Academic All Conference for four years. She holds a 3.9 GPA and was involved in Key club, NHS, and varsity fast-pitch softball. She was awarded The Chieftain Award in 2019 and 2020. She was the 2021 Offensive Player of the year, and the 2021 All District 3rd baseman. She is a recipient of the 2022 The Hustle Award, the 2022 All District 3rd baseman honorable mention, and All State runner up.

Jonas Manley

School: Weleetka High School
Bio: I am the son of Micheal and Karla Manley, and the grandson of Eugene Manley and Sarah Micco Winney. I am a member of the Creek Tribe and a member of the Wind Clan. I like playing sports, going to church, and hanging out with friends. I plan on going to the University of Central Oklahoma to major in kinesiology, then get a job as a physical therapist.



Yafke-Kolvswa Marks

School: College of the Muscogee Nation
Bio: Yafke-Kolvswa Marks is from the Deer Clan and comes from the Muddy Water Tribal Town. Her parents are Chebon Marks and Thomasene Wind. She is a mother of three children, and tries to keep them culturally and spiritually involved. She has been working with Native children grades 5th-12th in Oklahoma City for the past twelve years. She received her A.A from the College of Muscogee Nation in Native American Studies and plans to continue her education.

Corbin Marsey

School: Wagoner High School
Bio: Corbin will graduate from Wagoner High School where he played varsity basketball for the past four years and two years of varsity soccer. While in high school, he also took concurrent classes his junior and senior years. This opportunity was afforded to him through Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Employment and Training program. When he graduates high school, he will have completed 15 hours of college credit to use toward his bachelor's degree. In the fall Corbin will be attending Oklahoma State University, where he plans to major in business. Corbin is the child of Ryan and Michelle Cannon. His grandparents are David and Susan Marsey of Okemah, Jim and Janet Lane of Wagoner, and Sherry Cannon of Wagoner.



Eliza Maylen

School: Holdenville High School
Bio: Eliza Maylen is the daughter of Jeremiah and Janet Maylen. She is the granddaughter of DeWayne and Becky Maylen, and Linda Wood and the late Ashley Bear. She is wotklike and her tribal town is Eufaula-Canadian and New Tulsa. Eliza is a valedictorian with a 4.204 GPA. She is an OKMEA and OSSBDA All-Stater. She was first chair flute in the National FFA Band in the fall of 2022. Eliza was active in FFA and served as the FFA Chapter President for the last two years. She has showed pigs for five years and won the Hughes County Grand Champion Market Hog during her senior year. Her future plans are to attend the University of Oklahoma where she will double major in Business and Music Performance. She was accepted to the University of Oklahoma School of Music and intends to join the Pride of Oklahoma Marching Band in the fall.

Madison Lyn McCoy

School: Florida State University
Bio: Madison graduated Magna cum Laude from Florida State University dual majoring with a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Social Science. She will be interning with Unto, the Humanitarian Aid ministry of Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ Intl). Madison is from Orlando, Florida and is the daughter of Steven & Pam McCoy. She's the granddaughter of Jean Webb of Norman, Oklahoma and the late Frank (Coley) McCoy of Wetumka, Oklahoma. She's also the granddaughter of the late Frank and Lorraine Doroba, of Rolling Meadows, Illinois.





Emma Meek

School: Klondike High School
Bio: Emma plans to attend South Plains College and major in Commercial Music. After two years at South Plains, she plans to attend Texas Tech University to finish her degree and get a bachelor's degree in commercial music. She chose South Plains because she has heard amazing things about their commercial music program. Ever since she was in elementary school, she knew that she wanted to be a worship leader. She believes that music is an important part in bringing people closer to God. Creating a good atmosphere of worship helps open people's hearts to the word of God. In attending South Plains College, she will train her voice, guitar, sound, production, and leadership skills as well as learning how to play effectively in a band. There are very few schools that offer a commercial music program, so when she heard about this opportunity, she knew she had to take it.

Jacob O. Meister

School: Epic Charter Schools High School
Bio: Jacob Meister is the son of Sandra and Ryan May and James and Christine Meister. He is the grandson of Denise and Jim Chalakee. He has two siblings, an older sister, Laurin and a younger brother, Bentley. Jacob started his high school career at Sapulpa High School, then soon moved to online classes through Epic Charter Schools at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Jacob has always had infinity for electronics and working with his hands, whether he was "helping" with a printer at age three, or gaming currently. Throughout his studies, Jacob took an interest in courses such as video game development. Jacob was able to complete all graduation requirements in December 2022, leaving an entire semester to focus on work. Jacob is currently enjoying his time out of school and working at QuikTrip, while deciding what his next steps are.



Chelsey Joann Montgomery

School: Okemah High School
Bio: Chelsey is graduating from Okemah High School and is the daughter of Erik Montgomery and Kristin Carmichael.

Josie Leann Montgomery

School: Harrah High School
Bio: Josie is the daughter of Erik Montgomery and Kristin Carmichael. She plans to attend college in the fall.



Lexus Morgan

School: East Central University
Bio: Lexus Morgan grew up in Shawnee, Oklahoma and went to college at East Central University in Ada. There she obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and will be starting her teaching career this upcoming school year. She wants to thank her family and friends for the support that helped her accomplish this dream. She also wanted to say thank you to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Higher Education for helping her reach that goal as well.

Matthew Mossburg

School: Charles Page High School
Bio: Matthew is glad to be finished with high school and is excited to attend the College of Muscogee Nation in the fall where he will have new experiences.



Kysa Myers

School: Southmoore High School
Bio: Kysa is the daughter of Lucinda and Matthew Myers. Her maternal grandparents are the late Susie (Frank) Eskamire and Sylvester Eskamire. She is of the Alligator Clan (Hvlpvtvlke) and her Ceremonial Ground is New Tulsa. She attends Life Church in Moore, Oklahoma. Kysa plans to attend the University of Central Oklahoma and major in nursing. Her future plan is to be a pediatric nurse. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the Oklahoma Indian Student honor society, the Southmoore High School Social Justice and Equity Committee, Indian Ed and varsity color guard.

Kenna Najera

School: University of Oklahoma
Bio: Kenna Najera is graduating from the University of Oklahoma on May 13 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Criminology. She is a member of the Honors College and is graduating with academic distinction and Summa Cum Laude. Kenna is the president of the Theta Mu chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. at the University of Oklahoma. She was recently awarded the 2022-2023 Undergraduate Member of the Year from her sponsoring graduate chapter, the Chi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Kenna serves as the Secretary for the State of Oklahoma Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. In addition to all her achievements, Kenna was recently awarded the 2023 Sorority Chapter President of the Year for the National Pan-Hellenic Council at the University of Oklahoma. Kenna is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and a 2019 graduate of Henryetta High School.



Cassidy Nichols

School: University of Wisconsin
Bio: Cassidy Nichols is a May 2023 cum laude graduate from the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, earning her Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance degree. She is currently employed at SSI Technologies, LLC in Janesville, WI, where she also completed a finance internship after her junior year. Cassidy is the daughter of Jason and Alison Nichols of Grafton, WI. She is the granddaughter of David and Ginger Nichols of Okmulgee and Gerald and Diane Morlock of Glenpool.

Aston Noon

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Ashton Noon is graduating from Eufaula High School. He is the son of Lee Noon and Bonnie Deere. Ashton has resided at the Muscogee Nation Dormitory in Eufaula for the past five years. Ashton's grounds are the New Tulsa grounds. Ashton actually finished school earlier this year and has recently completed the fiber optics program. He is now working in the fiber optics field.



Avery Ortiz

School: Union High School
Bio: Avery is the son of Adam and Venissa Ortiz. His maternal grandparents are Elmira Harjo-Peterson and Bob and Carolyn Peterson. His paternal grandparents are Kathy Edwards and the late Tony Ortiz. He is of the Tiger Clan and his ceremonial ground is Tvlvhasse. Avery played baseball for the Union RedHawks. In 2023 he was a participant in the Area Code Games - featuring the top 200 high school players across the country. He was a Super 60 pro showcase participant, which featured only the top draft high school prospects in the nation. Avery is still currently ranked the number one player in Oklahoma and the class of 2023 along with those nationally ranked. Avery will spend the summer playing baseball in the West Coast League in Bend, Oregon with the Bend Elks. He will attend Oklahoma State University in the fall majoring in business and playing baseball.

Jacob Parker

School: Southmoore High School
Bio: Jacob graduated from Southmoore High School in Moore, Oklahoma. He is the son of Houston Story and Crystal Parker. Jacob is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and is Ecaswvlke (Beaver Clan). Jacob enjoys playing sports and played football for the majority of his school career. Jacob, along with his family are members of the Belvin Baptist church in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. He has always been determined and hard working, and even started lawn care at a very young age. Jacob has worked as an apprentice in electric and plumbing. He is planning on owning his own business and has already started a career at Tinker Air Force Base. Jacob enjoys spending time with his family and working on cars. He is thankful to all of his friends, family and church family that have encouraged him to be successful.



Colton Lane "Colt" Patterson

School: Coweta High School
Bio: Colt is the son of Stacy and Mike Patterson, brother to Chance and Dax, and grandson of the late Senora & Carl Lumpkin. Colt is of the Wotko Clan from Weogufkee Tribal Town. He has been very active playing trumpet in the state and national award-winning Coweta Tiger Pride Marching Band for the last four years and previously for the Holdenville Golden Pride Band. His future plans are to go on to get his welding certification and CDL. We are so proud of you Colt!

William Blake Thompson Post oak

School: Berryhill High School
Bio: Blake has attended Berryhill Public Schools since pre-k. Throughout his high school years he has been involved with N8V club as a junior, and the vice president as a senior, as well as a treasurer. He played varsity football, and became a district champ for two of those years. He was involved in varsity wrestling, and was a two-time state qualifier. In 2023 he was part of the Tulsa 7 conference champions, the 2023 district champion, among many other wins against opponents. He is a part of the Big Brother/Big Sister program and FCA. He will be attending Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College to continue his wrestling career and pursue studies in agricultural business.





Jack Proctor

School: Broken Arrow High School
Bio: Jack Proctor is a Muscogee (Creek) citizen from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He has attended the Broken Arrow school district from pre-k to his senior year. He attended school virtually from his sophomore to senior year due to the pandemic. He plans to attend the College of Muscogee Nation for his associate degree. Mwto to both of my parents, Elaine and Richard Proctor and to all of my teachers for their support and encouragement.

Callie Jo Ramsey

School: Wewoka High School
Bio: Callie Jo Ramsey is a 2023 graduate of Wewoka High School. She is the salutatorian of her senior class, president of her senior class, JOM vice president, a three-year member of the National Honor society, and a member of Interact Club. She also played softball, football, and baseball. Callie completed 12 hours of college classes her senior year of high school. This fall Callie will be attending Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and will be working toward her Bachelor's degree in nursing.



Jayley Ray

School: Tahlequah High School
Bio: Jayley Ray is the daughter of Beverly (Mvskoke) and Chris Ray (Mvskoke). She is the granddaughter of Patsy (Mvskoke) and Willie Pigeon (Cherokee), and Sherry Ray (Mvskoke) and the late Mike Ray (Citizen Band Potawatomi). She graduated from Tahlequah High School on May 19, 2023. Her extracurricular activities include fast pitch softball, slow pitch softball, and basketball. High school organizations she was involved in include the National Honor Society, and the Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society. She is the award recipient of the 2022 Oklahoma Fast Pitch Softball Coaches Association All Stater, and the 2022 National Fast Pitch Coaches' Association Region II 1st Team Third Baseman. Jayley signed a National Letter of Intent with NEO A&M College in Miami, OK to play Softball. Jayley will complete her associate degree, then will transfer to a four-year college. Jayley plans to obtain her bachelor's degree and become an athletic trainer.

Misty Reece

School: University of Texas at Arlington
Bio: Misty M. Reece is a former graduate of Graham-Weleetka High School and a 2000 graduate of Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Devin and Beverly Chancey of Henryetta, Oklahoma. She has been serving children in grades first through eight in her 22-year career as a teacher. Today, she currently teaches middle school English language arts in North Texas where she resides with her husband, Anthony. Misty recently graduated and completed her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Texas at Arlington. With this degree, Misty will continue to serve in public education in hopes of pursuing a new role as a future campus administrator.



Courtney Reeder

School: Baylor University
Bio: Courtney Reeder graduated from Baylor University with a Master of Public Health, majoring in Community Health Sciences. She started her graduate journey in 2020 and completed the program in December, 2022. She is a member of the Tiger clan and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. Courtney is the daughter of Sonya (Reeder) Orange of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and is the granddaughter of Elizabeth (Long) Reeder and the late Clifford Reeder of Oklahoma City. In 2015, Courtney was a recipient of the Rueben & Fannie Mae (Cook) Turner Medical Field Scholarship. She would like to thank the sponsors of this scholarship as well as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Higher Education Department for their support throughout her educational journey. Courtney is also a Gates Millennium Scholar. Courtney is continuing her career in healthcare at the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic working in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department, serving the Oklahoma City area.

Kitsu L. Rice

School: Westmoore High School
Bio: Kitsu comes from the Mvskoke (Wind Clan), Seminole, and Kiowa Tribes. She is the daughter of Veronica Wolf, the granddaughter of Peggy Wolf, the great granddaughter of Josephine Billy Wolf and Palmer Wolf, and the great-great granddaughter of Melissa (Harjo) Tiger, Jimmy Wolf, Pilot Billy and Lena Knight. She is also the great-great-great granddaughter of Tulsa Harjo, Mollie Yahola, Nehayaholage and Leah, Jackson Knight and Diaiah Jackson. Kitsu plans on attending Southwest University after graduation.



Chiree Rice-Coplin

School: University of California Riverside School of Business
Bio: Chiree is 26 years old and is from California. She is graduating with her Master's Degree in Marketing from UCR. She plans to pursue business consulting and digital marketing positions after she graduates.

Mason Daniel Richards

School: Rock Hill High School
Bio: Mason Richards is a member of the Prosper Engineering - Solar Car team and the Rock Hill Varsity Bowling team. He has worked as a lifeguard for the past three years. He has also volunteered as a counselor in training and served as a leadership intern for Camp Invention. This summer he will be competing in the National Solar Car Challenge. With his teammates he will drive the solar-powered car they built from Dallas, TX to Palmdale, CA. Mason was recognized by the College Board as a National Indigenous Recognition Scholar, and has earned 21 college credits during high school. Mason will be attending the Colorado School of Mines in the fall and plans to study mechanical engineering.



Connor Ridgeway

School: Glenpool High School
Bio: During his high school career Connor has attended three different schools and participated with the football team, the academic club, the debate club and other various programs. His future plans include attending Tulsa Community College and attending a nursing program. He is looking forward to contributing to his tribal community by working in the healthcare field. Connor is a kind-hearted, hard-working, helpful young man with a heart of gold. We are very proud of how hard he has worked, and look forward to seeing what life has in store for him.

Ariela M. Rodriguez

School: Edison Preparatory High School
Bio: Ariela has been an active member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Youth Services since December 2020, where she has served two terms as treasurer. She is also a member of the Tulsa Native Youth Board for the Tulsa Public Schools Indian Education program. Recently, they talked to legislators about topics that affect Native youth. At Edison high school she is the treasurer for the senior class board. She is also an active member of the Urban Native Youth Council organized by the Indian Health Care Resource Center where she will be volunteering for The Restoring Resilience Pow Wow. Her plans for the future include going to the College of the Muscogee Nation in the fall, keeping her tribal language alive, studying law, and returning to support her community as much as they have supported her growing up.



Brendan Rolland

School: University of Tulsa
Bio: Brendan Rolland graduated with honors from the University Of Tulsa College Of Law on May 5, 2023. During his last semester, Brendan was recognized as the Diversity Day Student Trailblazer by the Student Bar Association. The award was given in recognition of his outstanding achievements as a TU law student and his dedication to uplifting marginalized communities. Brendan was the Vice President of TU's Chapter of the Native American Law Student Association and he participated in the National NALSA Moot Court Competition. While in law school, he completed internships with the American Civil Liberties Union's Voting Rights Project, the Department of the Interior's Tulsa Field Solicitor's Office, and the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals. Brendan's ceremonial ground is Polecat and he is of the Deer clan. His parents are Geoff Rolland & Tammie Goodell-Rolland. His grandmother is Judy Haumpy and his grandfather is the late Al Rolland, Jr.

Gavriella Ross

School: Eleanor Roosevelt High School
Bio: Gavriella Ross is graduating from Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt, Maryland in the Science and Tech Program with a 4.27 GPA. Gavriella was involved with many extracurricular activities throughout her high school career. She received the highest award, the Gold Award in Girl Scouts. She was a member of Girls Who Code, We r Stem, Baking Club, and Women in Stem. Gavriella held a leadership position as historian in Students Against Destructive Decisions. She also held a leadership position as treasurer in the National Honor Society. She is pursuing an environmental and architectural engineering major this fall at Pennsylvania State University with the intent of earning a master's degree. Upon earning her degree, she plans on becoming a successful engineer and business owner contributing to society by designing and building affordable and sustainable projects. Gavriella enjoys traveling, playing board and card games and spending quality time with family.



Cooper Jay Rouk

School: Beggs High School
Bio: Cooper Rouk is graduating from Beggs High School as a distinguished graduate with a GPA of 4.14 and 15 college hours. He has been a member of the National Honor Society, Indian Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, FFA, high school band, and jazz band. Cooper will attend the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in the fall, pursuing an engineering graphics & design drafting technologies degree. He is the son of Rachel (Bruner) & Chris Creason and Jay & Kaitlin Rouk. He is the grandson of Quinton (Butch) Bruner, Reed & Valerie Watson, Janice Rouk and the late Kenneth Rouk.

Desiree Rull

School: Florida Atlantic University
Bio: Desiree Rull graduated from Florida Atlantic University (FAU) with her Bachelors of Science in Nursing. She was in FAU's Freshman Direct Nursing Program, where she started taking nursing courses her first semester of college. Desiree graduated Magna Cum Laude (a grade point average between 3.7-3.9). She was part of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society and the Student Nurse Association. Desiree is the daughter of Alejandro and Shrea Rull, the granddaughter of Robert and Delores Wind Lopez and Eduardo Rull, as well as the late Palmira Rull. Her great-grandparents are the late Daniel and Wanda Wind and Ana Hernandez and the late Antonio Hernandez.





Carter Sands
School: Glenpool High School
Bio: Carter is of the Wind Clan and is Mvskoke, Kiowa and Cherokee. He is the son of Misty and Owen Sands of Glenpool, and the grandson of Jeannie Sands of Okemah and the late LaRue Hall of Wetumka. He plans to finish his associate degree at Tulsa Community College, then will transfer to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater as an undecided major while concentrating on the pre-veterinary program.

Michael Luther Scott
School: Putnam City North High School
Bio: Michael will be attending Oklahoma City University in the fall, majoring in music with a minor in exercise science. He is a recipient of the OCU American Indian Scholarship, as well as an OCU talent scholarship for bass. At Putnam City North Michael maintained a 3.0 GPA, while being involved in several school activities. He was a four-year member of the philharmonic orchestra, a three-year member of the varsity football team, a three-year member of the varsity wrestling and varsity track and field teams. He has received numerous superior ratings at the OSSAA-sanctioned music contest as a double bassist. Outside of school, he is a volunteer coach for youth football and baseball. He also spends time in his community helping his Mvskoke elders with house and yard work.



Cameron Severs
School: Okemah High School
Bio: Cameron Severs lives in Okemah, Oklahoma and is graduating from Okemah High School. He is the grandson of Lizzie and Junior Severs and the late Shirley Harjo. He is of the raccoon clan. Cameron loves basketball, football and fishing.

Kaylee Michelle Shipman
School: Glenpool High School
Bio: Kaylee is the daughter of Amanda Shipman from Glenpool. She is a four-year member of the Glenpool High School Varsity Basketball team and will be attending Oklahoma State University in Stillwater this upcoming fall, where she will major in physical therapy and sports medicine. Kaylee will be graduating from Glenpool with honors and a 4.0 GPA. In her spare time Kaylee enjoys spending time with family and dog Storm, riding horses, taking her Jeep out for a drive and basketball.



Zachary Show
School: University of Michigan Law School
Bio: Ramona Harjo, a native of Okemah, OK now living in California has announced with great pride the graduation of her grandson, Zak Show, from the University of Michigan Law School with a Juris Doctor (JD). While at UOM, Zak was actively involved in numerous Native American law student groups and attended many conferences relating to Federal Indian Law and Tribal Law. He wishes to express his thanks and gratefulness to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the assistance with his education. Zak will be initially practicing law in California with the law offices of Wison Sonsini.

Yosel Lee Silvan
School: Will Rogers College High School/Tulsa Tech in Owasso
Bio: Yosel is the son of Monica E., and Guadalupe S. and is the eldest of six children. Yosel attended Will Rogers College Middle and High School. During his junior year of high school, Yosel was the vice president for the student council. As a sophomore he helped design the school's yearbook. On that year he remarked, "There are not many pictures of me because I am behind the camera." During his senior year he attended Tulsa Tech in Owasso, and the Oklahoma for Restaurant Hotel & Lodging where he obtained an internship and employment at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Catoosa, Oklahoma. Upon completion, he plans to continue working and return to enroll in culinary arts. Yosel's goal in life is to establish his own business. We are so very proud of him and all his accomplishments. Best of luck son/son. We love you!



Gavin Smith
School: Chico High School
Bio: Gavin is the son of Glenn and Kelly Smith. He is the youngest of four children. His siblings include Elana, Christopher and Sydney. Gavin will be graduating from Chico High School on Friday June 2, 2023. Gavin is very passionate about wrestling. He began wrestling when he was three years old. He has continued to grow in the sport over the years. Gavin is a two-time NSCIF Masters Champion. On May 11, 2023 he signed his National Letter of Intent to continue his wrestling career at the next level by attending Doane University in Crete, Nebraska in the fall of 2023. They are a four-year university that competes at the NAIA level in the GPAC conference of College Wrestling. Gavin has been awarded partial wrestling and academic scholarships. He plans to earn his degree in the field of exercise science. Good luck on your next chapter! MIH!

Jonas Martin Smith
School: Jenks High School
Bio: Jonas has attended Jenks High School for four years and has been active in organizations including Native American Education, Computer Science, National Honor Society, NewSpring VOX Youth Group, the Jenks Trojan Football Team, and the Jenks Varsity Wrestling Team. In the Fall, Jonas will attend Oklahoma State University, majoring in computer engineering and will eventually apply to a master's program. Jonas is the son of Seneca and Pamela Smith. He has two siblings, Kaya and Makenna.



Alyssa sÂgînE Spencer
School: Kellyville High School
Bio: Alyssa has attended Kellyville for nine years. She is from the Polecat Ceremonial Ground and a member of NAC Yuchi chapter. Alyssa did football cheerleading, and basketball cheerleading for three years. Alyssa is the daughter of Janette and Yoney Spencer and has two sisters, Ta'ya'yûnE and Shafa. Alyssa plans to take it easy over the summer, then explore her options after that.

Taygann Sequiora Ta'ya'yûnE Spencer
School: Kellyville High School
Bio: Taygann has attended Kellyville schools from grades K-12. She is from the Polecat Ceremonial Ground and a member of NAC Yuchi Chapter. Taygann has played a variety of sports throughout her life to date, but softball has taken her top spot. Taygann is the daughter of Janette and Yoney Spencer, she also has two sisters, sÂngEnE and Shafa. Taygann is set to attend Ft. Scott Community College to pursue her studies in the health field and play softball.



Renee Stephens
School: Seaman High School
Bio: Renee is of the Nokose Clan and Cheyaha Tribal Town. She is the daughter of Kelly and Christina Stephens. She is the granddaughter of Judy Allen, the late Bob and Helena (Chalakee) Allen, David and Rita Stephens and the great-granddaughter of the late Reuben and Peggy Chalakee, the late Rev. Kring and Edith Allen. Renee has participated in basketball, band, FFA, GSA, Job's Daughters International and has also been a volunteer for DoorStep in Topeka, Kansas. She has been a SHARP Student (Seaman High Academics Reward Program) all four years, lettered in band twice and was the recipient of the director's choice award in band. Renee plans to start her college education at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas where she will focus on social work. Her future hopes include obtaining a degree in psychology.

Lena Isaura Still
School: Bristow High School
Bio: Lena is the daughter of Carmen Bruner and Robert Still. She is the granddaughter of Lewis and Rachel Bruner. Lena's curriculum included theatre arts, speech, vocal music, and pre-AP classes. She was a member of the Bristow Lion's club as a Leo. Lena plans to attend Central Votech to pursue her certification in diesel technology. She belongs to the Wind clan.



Timothy Michael Syfert
School: Highland Park High School
Bio: Timothy Syfert is the great-grandson of Mary Lee Scott Hoag, and is a part of the 100th graduating class of Highland Park High School in Dallas. During his career as a student he had a storied history in the arts, beginning with tuba, then transitioning to choir and theater during his senior year. As a senior, he performed in Beauty and the Beast and placed in the top audition choir, Park Version. Timothy excelled in math and science as well as the arts, and currently plans to attend Lincoln Technical School in the fall for welding. He hopes to use his intelligence and artistic skills as a welder in the future.

Leah Tapia
School: Las Cruces High School
Bio: Leah is the great-grand-daughter of the late Carl and Oneda Gordon of Weleetka, OK. She is graduating in the top 10% of her class. She participated in varsity soccer and varsity track and field. She is a three-time All-District soccer team award recipient and a school record holder in the 4x100 relay. She is a member of student government, National Honor Society, and volunteers with several local charities. Leah has been recognized for her strong athletic and academic achievements and will be continuing her soccer career at OLLU, in San Antonio, TX in the fall.





Darius A. Thompson

School: Archbishop Curley High School
Bio: Darius Alexander Thompson graduated from Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore, Maryland on May 26, 2023. Darius is looking forward to attending Neumann University in Aston, Pennsylvania in the fall where he will major in sports management and play on the men's lacrosse team. Darius enjoys hanging out with his family and playing video games with his friends. He is a people person, and a leader in his own right. While at Curley, Darius played lacrosse for four years. He participated in Model UN, Black Student Union and Chess club. Additionally, Darius works in the Media Ministry at the Conquerors Church where his Dad serves as a pastor. Darius lives by the slogan, "Get up and go harder than you did yesterday".

Christian John-Coleman Tiger

School: Oklahoma State University
Bio: Christian is the son of Chebon and Carla Tiger of Round Rock, Texas. He is the paternal grandson of the late Marcy Tiger of Lorton, VA and Thelma Jean Stand of Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He is also the maternal grandson of Chuck Girty of Garland, Texas and Mary Girty of Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Christian graduated from Oklahoma State University with honors, earning an honors college degree and a Bachelor's of Science in Biological Sciences. He balanced his talents in sciences and arts with athletics at OSU. He was an active member of the MMA and karate club. He is also an artist, specializing in drawing. In his free time he volunteers at the Great Promise for American Indians in Austin, Texas. Christian is planning to further his education and is applying to medical schools.



Ticara Turner

School: Northeastern State University
Bio: Ticara recently received her degree in fine arts with graphic design as her major from Northeastern State University. As far as her post-graduation plans go, she is planning to relax and enjoy the summer before heading into a career as a freelance designer focused on branding and print.

Isabel Eve Vega

School: Elsinore High School
Bio: Isabel played soccer, track and cross-country all four years of high school, winning League Champions, and CIF championships. She received the Coach's Award twice for cross-country, making the First Team and All-League soccer team. She was recognized as Scholar Athlete, Student of the Month twice, Student of the Year her senior year, Top 25 of her class all four years, AP Scholar with Honors, and ranked number five in her graduating class. She was selected as the 2022 ALA Girls' State Representative, member of FFA, CSF, NHS and Level 7 Certificate of Merit and Senior award pianist. Isabel will be attending California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, majoring in mechanical engineering. Isabel's proud family includes her parents, Gerardo and Kara (Creek/Cherokee) Vega, grandparents Danny (Creek/Cherokee) and Linda Scott of California, as well as her great-grandparents Rev. Kenneth (Creek) and Effie (Cherokee) Scott who resided in Tulsa and Locust Grove.



Mirayah Olivama Vega

School: Desert Learning Academy
Bio: Mirayah is graduating high school from Desert Learning Academy in Palm Springs, California. Mirayah will be starting at College of the Desert in the fall and will see where her college journey takes her. We are so proud of her and all her hard work!

Courtney Wallace

School: Morris High School
Bio: Courtney Wallace is graduating from Morris High School. She is a member of NHS, varsity cheer, fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball. Courtney will be continuing her education at The College of Muscogee Nation and the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology to pursue education in dental hygiene. We are so proud of you!



Junior Walls

School: Morris High School
Bio: Junior Walls graduated from Morris High School. He is the son of Jason Walls. He is the grandson of Jerry and Joyce Wilson of Stone Bluff, Oklahoma and Alvin and Khogie Walls of Memphis, Tennessee. Walls is of the Wind Clan and a member of Concharty. Junior enjoyed competing in football, baseball, powerlifting, and archery. He plans to continue his love for baseball in college.

Abigail Blanche Warner

School: Wagoner High School
Bio: Abigail Blanche Warner is graduating from Wagoner High School with honors. Her parents are Jeff and Amy Warner. She is the senior class secretary of her graduating class, a member of the National Honor Society, and is on the superintendent's honor roll. Abigail has been a varsity cheerleader for the past four years. She has also played on the varsity tennis and volleyball teams for the past four years. Abigail is currently enrolled at Connors State College taking concurrent classes. She plans to attend Oklahoma State University in the fall of 2023. Abigail is the granddaughter of Jerry and Hettie Charboneau.



Shawnee Washington

School: United Education Institute College
Bio: Shawnee (Shawn) Washington is a graduate of UEI College in Phoenix, Arizona. She graduated April 14, 2023. Shawn completed her studies and earned a certificate in medical, billing, and insurance coding. Shawn is an enrolled citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She is the granddaughter of Charlesetta Pitre and the great-granddaughter of Betty McNack. Congratulations!

Pepper Watashe

School: Kiefer High School
Bio: Watashe is the daughter of Curtis and Amy Watashe. She graduated with honors from Kiefer High School on May 12. She is a four-year letterman in basketball and track. She is a member of the National Honor Society, and attends Praise Center Ministries where she is on the worship team. Her ceremonial ground is Polecat. Her future plans are undecided.



BreAnna L. Watkins

School: Hanna High School
Bio: BreAnna is the daughter of Dale and Deborah Watkins and the late Joy (Goble) Watkins. Her grandparents are Dale and Eva Watkins of Hanna, the late Ted and Marlene Bennett of McAllister, and the late James and Kathy Gobel of Sand Springs. BreAnna attends Hanna Assembly Church, where she is one of the congregational song leaders. BreAnna was salutatorian of her eighth-grade class, and was selected to be on the superintendents' honor roll for her high school years. She also played basketball and attended Wes Watkins Vocational School, where she completed the course for a veterinary assistant. She plans to attend college in the fall to further her career and take courses to become a veterinarian technician. All throughout school, BreAnna was an avid reader. She enjoys listening to, and singing several different genres of music.

Grace L. Watts

School: Epic Charter School
Bio: Grace L. Watts will be graduating from Epic Charter School with a 3.55 GPA and will be awarded a White Honors Cord for making the Principal's Honor Roll. Grace has been accepted into 15 universities across the United States and has been awarded seven different merit scholarships. She chose to pursue criminal justice at the University of Indianapolis in Indiana this upcoming fall.



Raigen Wegener

School: Berryhill High School
Bio: Raigen is graduating from Berryhill High School as valedictorian. She is also the student council president, a member of NHS, a member of Native Club and a cheerleader. Raigen will be attending the University of Oklahoma in the fall majoring in occupational therapy.

Cholakocee Werito

School: Oklahoma State University
Bio: Cholakocee is from the Deer Clan, Weogufkee Tribal Town, and is half Navajo. Her parents are Charlena Wind Werito and Clifford Bobby Werito. She has a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science from Oklahoma State University. Currently, Cho is a kindergarten teacher in Oklahoma City and was awarded the Oklahoma Council of Indian Education Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023. Cholakocee is graduating from Oklahoma State University with a Master of Art in Social Foundations of Education. Her work and research interests throughout her program have included Indigenous children's literature and urban students. For her creative component to graduate, Cho wrote a contemporary children's book. She dedicates her degree to the elders that have supported and guided her to this chapter of her life.





Robert Fitzgerald Wesley Jr.

School: Haskell Indian Nations University
Bio: Robert graduated with a degree in health science, exercise science recreation and fitness management. Robert is the Grandson of Wilber Bruner and the late Earlene Bruner. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Wesley Sr. and Celeste M. Wesley. We are so proud of you, and honored to celebrate your graduation with you. May God continue to bless you. The sky's the limit!

Laila Emmalee West

School: Morris High School
Bio: Laila was born on July 27th, 2005 to Amber Rutledge. She is the great-granddaughter of Jessina Brown and the granddaughter of Lisa Tiger. Laila loves animals, and has a passion for art. She plans on applying her passion to becoming an independent nail technician. She hopes to one day own her own business. We are so proud of you Laila and we will be behind you every step of the way! May God Bless You always. Stay humble and remember anything is possible!



Lillian Whitlow

School: Weleetka High School
Bio: Lillian is a co-salutatorian of the Weleetka High School graduating class. She is graduating with a 4.19 GPA and 30 college credits. She has been a member of the Native American Honor Society and National and Oklahoma Honor Societies. She is the student representative for Title VI Program. She is an employee of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Summer Youth Employment Program. She has been a member of NYCP, STEP, FCA, the academic team, the basketball team, the fast and slow pitch softball teams, the track team, and the cheer team. She has been an all-conference player in basketball and softball, and served as FFA Vice President and participated in Speech Teams. She plans to complete her associate degree in science and continue on to Oklahoma State University for her bachelor's degree in the medical field. Her parents are Wendell and Dorinda Whitlow.

Sierah Williams

School: Jenks High School
Bio: Sierah is a part of many clubs like the Black Student Union (BSU), where she is the vice president, Native American Education (NAE), and Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Her high school achievements are the principal's honor roll and superintendent's honor roll for all four years of high school. She is undecided where she is going to college or what she will be majoring in. One of her favorite quotes that will get her through this next journey is "if you get tired, learn to rest not quit".



Hannah Wilson

School: Campus High School
Bio: Hannah is graduating from Campus High School with four years of Avid Honors along with being a very successful varsity swimmer. Hannah was given the Creek name, Letkus Ow, Running Water, by her late great-grandpa Hill. Hannah is the daughter of Rustin and Holly Wilson, as well as the sister of Talan, Jensen & Averie. She is the granddaughter of Richard & Toni Wilson, the great granddaughter of the late Billy & Pansy Hill, the great-great granddaughter of Jackson & Lizzie Hill and the great-great-great granddaughter of the late Rev. Louis & Lillie Miller who walked the Trail of Tears. Hannah is proud of her heritage and with a thankful and grateful heart to God, we say "Congratulations on your 2023 High School graduation". We love you so much!

Heath Lane Wilson

School: Southwestern College
Bio: Heath Wilson was born and raised in the Tulsa area, and was a graduate of Wagoner High School in 2012. He was fortunate enough to study and play football at Pittsburg State University and graduated with his Bachelor's in Education in 2016. Since then, with the help of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation he was able to obtain his master's degree, and most recently, a Doctorate Degree in Education. Currently he works as a school administrator and lives in the Kansas City area with his wife and two dogs. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has enabled him to see no limitations and to achieve goals that would not have been possible without their support. He is forever indebted to, and is incredibly proud to be a part of Muscogee (Creek) Nation.



Jessica Marie Wilson

School: Morris High School/OSUIT
Bio: Jessica Wilson is the daughter of Jeremiah and Jennifer Wilson Jr. She is also the granddaughter of Jeremiah and Joyce Wilson of Haskell and Dan and Linda Boydston of Morris. Jessica has been a student at Morris Schools from pre-k through 12th grade. She attended Green Country Vo-tech for one year and Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology for one year. She is a member of NHS and was active in basketball, fast pitch and slow pitch softball. She has received a scholarship to play softball at Eastern Oklahoma State College and her plan of study will involve life science.

NaTaiya Wilson

School: The University of Oklahoma
Bio: NaTaiya Wilson was raised in Okemah, Oklahoma where she graduated as the Valedictorian in 2019. She is now a 2023 graduate of the University of Oklahoma in Norman with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science. After a tragic ACL tear injury that cut her senior year short, she underwent surgery and physical therapy for recovery. After her recovery, NaTaiya decided that she would pursue a career in physical therapy. NaTaiya has plans to continue her education to achieve a doctorate degree in physical therapy. She plans to work in a clinical setting with an emphasis on athletic training.



Adriana Yahola

School: Eufaula High School
Bio: Adriana Yahola is a 2023 graduate of Eufaula High School. After graduation, Adriana plans to enter the workforce prior to attending college. She is interested in radiology. One of Adriana's favorite memories at the Eufaula Dormitory was going to Silver Dollar City with friends. She also greatly enjoyed having her sisters reside at the dormitory with her.

Aspen Danielle Yahola

School: Watertown High School
Bio: Aspen is the daughter of Cindy Yahola and lives in Lebanon, TN. She is the granddaughter of the late Donald Daniel Yahola, Jr. (Catherine), and great-granddaughter of the late Donald Daniel Yahola, Sr. (Margaret). Aspen participated in FFA for four years and was on the cheer team for three years. Aspen will be attending Tennessee Technological University where she has been accepted in the pre-veterinary program.



Isaac Yazzie

School: Bixby High School
Bio: Isaac is the son of Rebecca Ferrell and the late Warren Yazzie. He is the grandson of Margie and Das Yazzie. He is the feature twirler for the Pride of Bixby Band, along with being a member of the color guard and winter guard. He also plays the bass clarinet, sings in the choir and is a member of the Tri-M club. In his spare time he attends Soul II Sole Performing Arts where he does competitive dance. He recently returned from Ireland with the Bixby Band where they performed in Dublin's St. Patty's Day parade and became grand champions in the 51st Limerick International Band Championship. He will be attending Tulsa Community College in the fall under the Tulsa Achieves Scholarship program where he will be working toward his degree in American Sign Language interpretation.

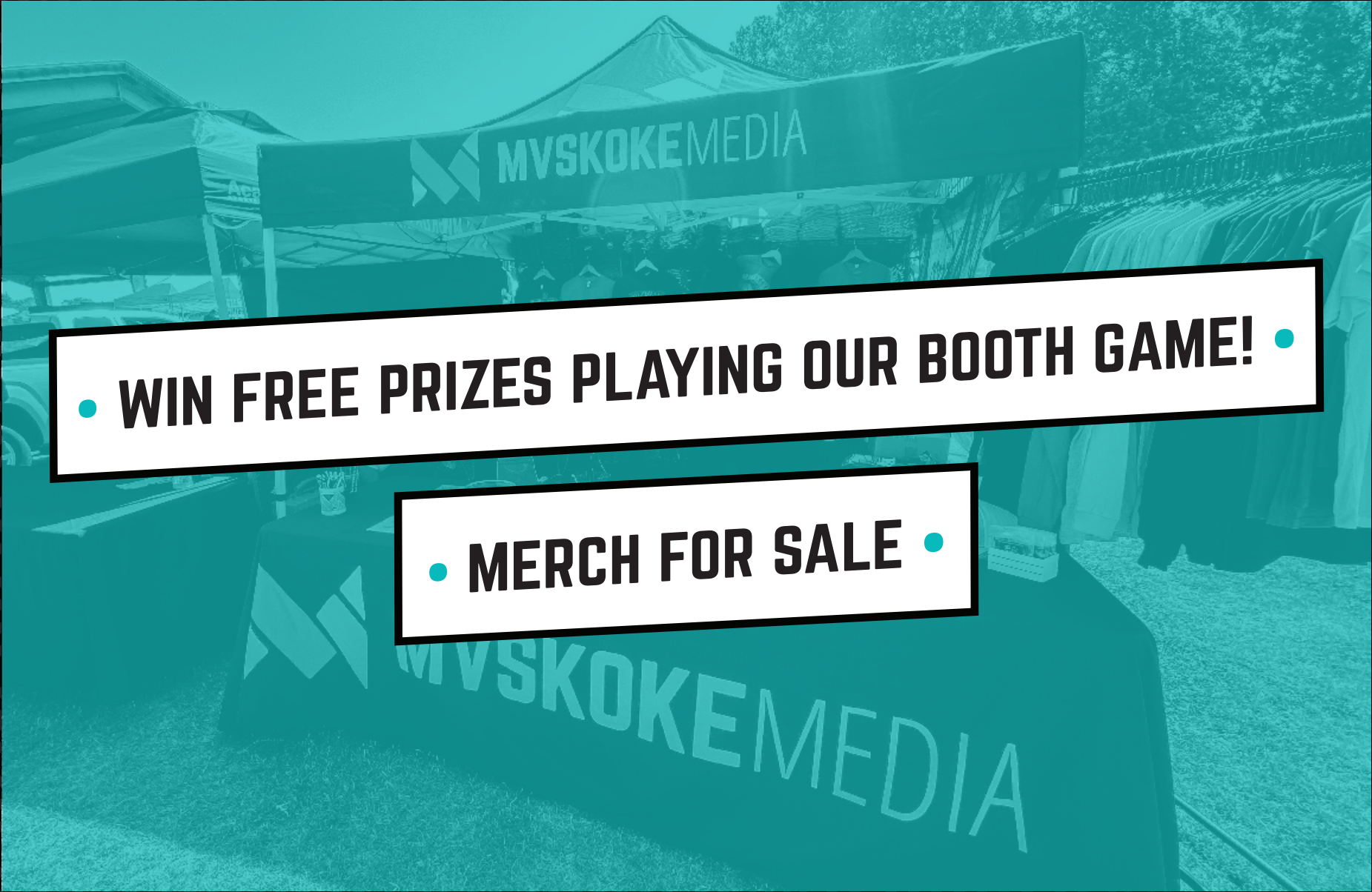
Joseph Youmans

School: College of the Muscogee Nation
Bio: Joseph Youmans is graduating from the College of the Muscogee Nation with an Associate in General Science. He is of the Beaver Clan and New Tulsy Tribal Town. Joseph is the son of Sharon Youmans of Holdenville and the grandson of the late Rechinta Youmans (Gooden) of Holdenville. He enjoys spending time with his family and animals. He also enjoys martial arts training, being outdoors, fishing, gardening, and growing very hot peppers. He plans to continue his education and pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology.



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