



THE

JAN 15, 2025 | "RVFE CUSE" WINTER'S YOUNGER BROTHER MONTH | VOL. 55, ISSUE 2

# MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY MVSKOKEMEDIA

## MCN CHIEF AND OKLAHOMA GOV. EXTEND TOBACCO COMPACT TALKS

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN TRIBAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS EXTENDED UNTIL MARCH 31, 2025



Tribal and State officials have agreed to extend their talks on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tobacco Compacts. (MM File)

by **FRANCES HERROD**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation's National Council held an emer-

gency session via teleconference on December 26, 2024 where the council unanimously approved MCN Principal Chief David Hill to execute a tobacco compact.

The council addressed the fol-

lowing legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bill:

TR 24-146 A Tribal Resolution of The Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving and authorizing the Principal Chief to execute the Tobacco Tax Compact between the State of Oklahoma and The Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The legislation was sponsored by Representative Dode Barnett of Creek District, co-sponsored by Speaker Randall Hicks of Okfuskee District and Sergeant-At-Arms Darrell Proctor of McIntosh District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 15-0.

The new compact was set to be effective January 1, 2025. The deadline for the compact was set for Dec. 31 2024. That compact was not executed by the Oklahoma governor. Instead, a negoti-

### TOBACCO COMPACTS

*Continued on Page 2*



Bacone College, an institution that has served Mvskoke families for generations, is now unaccredited. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

## BACONE COLLEGE ACCREDITATION WITHDRAWN

### ENROLLMENT CEASES WITHOUT APPEAL FOR HISTORIC NATIVE COLLEGE

by **JERRAD MOORE**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

MUSKOGEE, Okla. - The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) withdrew Bacone College's

accreditation effective July 17, 2024 according to a public disclosure notice published to the HLC website.

According to the notice,

### BACONE COLLEGE

*Continued on Page 2*



In the most recent development in the O'Brien case, the City of Tulsa appealed it to the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

## O'BRIEN CASE REINSTATED

### OKLAHOMA COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS RULES TULSA HAS JURISDICTION IN SOME INSTANCES

by **JERRAD MOORE**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

TULSA, OK - The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals (OCCA) has ruled that Tulsa has jurisdiction over misdemeanor crimes committed by Native Americans that are not Muscogee Creek Nation citizens.

On August 30, 2021, Nicholas Ryan O'Brien, an enrolled citizen of the Osage Nation, was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol, Transporting an Open Container, Expired Tag, Driving Left of Center, and Improper Use of Left Lane. These charges were classified as misdemeanors. The arrest occurred near 1300 South Denver Avenue in Tulsa, and was conducted by Tulsa police.

On October 6, 2022, O'Brien filed a motion to dismiss his case alleging that the Tulsa municipal court lacked jurisdiction over him in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. Tulsa Municipal Judge Mitchell McCune denied the

motion agreeing with Tulsa's argument that it had jurisdiction under section 14 of the Curtis Act.

On June 28, 2023, O'Brien filed another motion to dismiss in light of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in the Hooper case, which held that Tulsa could not use the Curtis Act as its justification for jurisdiction over Native Americans.

Judge McCune dismissed the case on August 17, finding that the Hooper decision had undermined Tulsa's jurisdictional argument.

Tulsa appealed this decision to the OCCA, which issued its ruling on Dec. 5, 2024. The OCCA found that Tulsa's jurisdiction derived from the State of Oklahoma's sovereign authority to prosecute crimes in its territory. The United States Supreme Court decision in the *Castro-Huerta* case established that state jurisdiction could be preempted when the exercise of that jurisdiction unlaw-

### O'BRIEN CASE

*Continued on Page 2*

## PRESIDENT CARTER'S NATIVE AMERICAN REPORT CARD

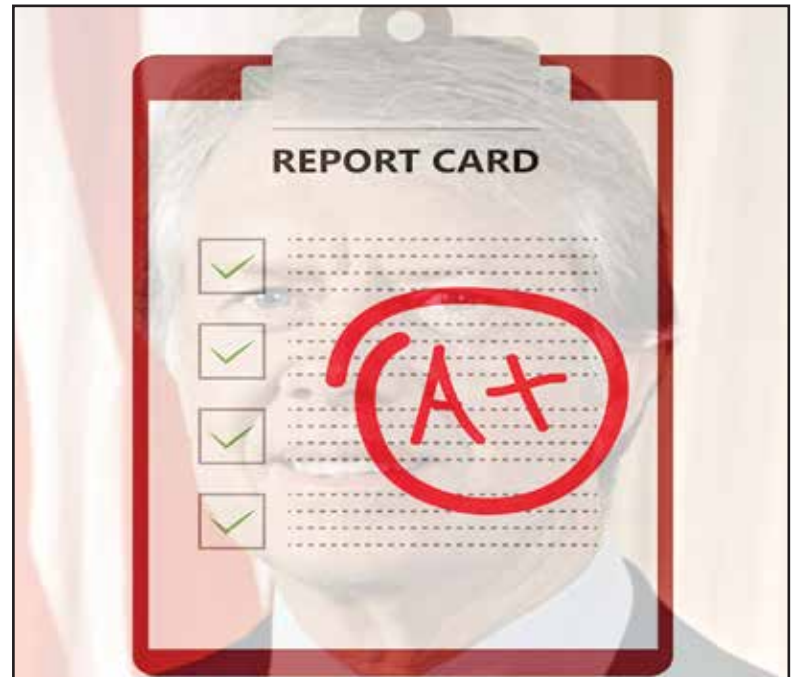
### A LOOK BACK ON THE 39TH U.S. PRESIDENT'S LEGACY AND POLICIES REGARDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

PLAINS, G.A - Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently passed away at the age of 100 at his home on December 19, 2024. Carter leaves behind a complex legacy among Americans and Indian Country alike. Elected in 1977, Carter oversaw many challenges throughout his presidency including stagflation, the Iranian Hostage crisis, and an energy crisis. Triumphs of Carter's presidency include negotiating the Camp David Accords, signing the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and many major pieces of legislation that continue to benefit Indigenous peoples today.

Born in the small town of Plains, GA, Carter was born on what was formally the homelands of the Mvskoke people. Carter was the first U.S. President born in a hospital, and remained a resident of Plains for most of his life. He served in the U.S. Senate and served a term as Georgia's governor, however one of his most well-known professions was peanut farming.

In Indian Country Carter is most well known for signing the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). The former protects Native American children by giving adoption preference to their families, then their tribe if there are no family members



Jimmy Carter holds an upstanding legacy for his work in the humanities, foreign policy and for Indigenous Peoples. (MM File)

available. The latter gave Native Americans the freedom to exercise their traditional religions by worshiping through ceremonial and traditional rites.

President Carter's legacy among Indigenous people is also known to Panamainians. In 1978 Carter successfully negotiated the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which transferred ownership of the Panama Canal to the Nation of Panama after years of tension.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Pueblo of Laguna) shared that Carter was a man of service, and left a deep impact on Indian Country.

"President Jimmy Carter exemplified what it means to live a life of faith and service to others," Secretary Haaland said.

"His love for and conservation of our shared public lands leaves a tremendous legacy, and I am grateful that the Department will continue to honor his work at the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park for generations to come. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family and the global community as we all mourn this selfless public servant."

In a public statement, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill expressed condolences for the former president's family. The statement reads,

"The Muscogee Nation is saddened to learn of the pass-

### JIMMY CARTER

*Continued on Page 2*

**TOBACCO COMPACTS**  
*Continued from Page 1*

ation extension was agreed upon by Tribal and State leadership that would give the two more time to come to terms.

The Muscogee Nation's press release stated the Nation will not license any new retail outlets during the extension period, except to renew existing licenses at sites, the negotiation of a new tobacco compact will not be contingent on motor vehicle tag compacts. All other terms will remain the same for the duration of the extension.

"These continued negotiations are important, as the Muscogee Nations remains steadfast in our resolve to reach a new tobacco compact that protects our sovereignty, our business owners, and

that is fair and equitable for both the Nation and for Oklahoma," Principal Chief David Hill said. "We look forward to having more time to engage on a true government-to-government basis to reach an agreement that does not compromise the sovereign interests of the Nation."

Mvskoke Media will continue to report on tobacco compacts as new details develop.

It bars the Oklahoma governor from making any substantive changes to the new Tobacco Compact. If substantive changes are made the National Council withdraws approval of the new Compact and authorizes the Principal Chief to resume negotiations under the terms of the current 2014 Compact.

To view the full agenda, visit: [mncnc.com](http://mncnc.com).

**O'BRIEN CASE**  
*Continued from Page 1*

fully infringed on tribal self-government.

According to the OCCA decision, O'Brien was a citizen of the Osage Nation and not the Muscogee Creek Nation, so Tulsa's prosecution of him would not "infringe upon tribal self-government."

The OCCA decision reversed the dismissal of the case and remanded it back to the Tulsa municipal Court for reinstatement.

**JIMMY CARTER**  
*Continued from Page 1*

ing of President Jimmy Carter, a dedicated and selfless public servant and statesman, who lived a full life of 100 years.

President Carter signed two monumental pieces of legislation for Indian Country into law in 1978, with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. ICWA has been an enduring protection for Native families and children and the AIRF, gave our cere-

monial grounds and others the confidence to hold onto and perpetuate their traditions.

MVTO President Carter for your contributions and your compassion and commitment to the betterment of your fellow man."

A six day funeral observance is currently underway celebrating the former president's life. The observance began in Americus, Georgia where Carter was born, and made its way to his hometown in Plains, then made its way to Atlanta where he served as governor.

**LIGHTHORSE DONATES VEHICLE TO WELEETKA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

by **RICHARD PHILLIPS**  
*LIGHTHORSE CHIEF OF POLICE*

Just before Thanksgiving Muscogee Lighthorse Police Chief Richard Phillips was contacted by Weleetka Police Department Chief of Police Hub Pangle, who informed Chief Phillips that their department was in need of a patrol car. The Weleetka Police Department had three patrol cars, two were described as "in dire need of repairs". This left the department with only one usable vehicle. Chief Phillips then contacted Motor Pool Manager Buddy James to see if it would be possible if Lighthorse could donate a patrol car to the Weleetka Police Department. On December 30, 2024 Lighthorse fulfilled their need and donated



From Left: Motor Pool Manager Buddy James, Lighthorse Chief of Police Richard Phillips, Weleetka Chief of Police Hub Pangle and Weleetka City Manager Dan Parrish. (Courtesy: Richard Phillips)

a patrol car to the Weleetka Police Department. Weleetka City Manager Dan Parrish extends a sincere mvto to Chief

David Hill and to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the donation to the City of Weleetka and its citizens.

**BACONE COLLEGE**  
*Continued from Page 1*

"On June 27, 2024, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) acted to withdraw the accreditation of Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma. HLC took this action because it determined that the institution was out of compliance with HLC requirements. Withdrawal of accreditation is an adverse action that is subject to appeal prior to becoming final. The deadline for the institution to file a notice of intent to appeal the action to withdraw accreditation was July 16, 2024. The institution did not submit a notice of intent to appeal by this date. Therefore, the institution has forfeited its opportunity to appeal the action, and the action to withdraw accreditation is now final. The withdrawal of the institution's accreditation is effective as of July 17,

2024...Credits and degrees earned from the institution through this date remain accredited."

Bacone College published the following statement to its website concerning the withdrawal.

"Bacone college is not closing and plans to graduate another class of our outstanding students again this May. Like many small non-profit colleges, Bacone has experienced several difficult years. The Board of Trustees are committed to the future of this historic college, and believe that Bacone will continue to provide a quality education for our students for decades to come. The Staff and Trustees will make no further comment at this time, but will be providing a detailed revitalization plan in the near future."

As of the publishing of this article, the Bacone College website was still operational.

**A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

by **GLORIA M. MCCARTY**  
*SUBMISSION*

I was excited to read the editor's note at the beginning of the bi-lingual story published in the article, Sour Sofkee, by Fus-Yvhikv (TMN, Dec.15, 2024, Vol. 54, Issue 24). I know some nations have a regular article usually produced by their language department and, as someone who learned to read English from newspapers and dictionaries, I appreciate the potential such opportunities offer. We definitely need more of that, and it seems we'd always want to encourage any efforts, especially of and

for our youth. So I settled in to read a new story, happy to see others' work in the language.

I didn't get very far before I recognized the story as a piece of my late\* mother, Margaret McKane Mauldin's and my surviving aunt, Juanita McGirt's excellent translation of Earnest Gouge's writings for John R. Swanton. I was still happy to see the language with translation in the newspaper but, my enjoyment turned to dismay to realize there was no credit given to the Creek speakers who spent years writing; recording; translating; transcribing and creating audio recordings of these tradi-

tional tales.

The Mvskoke News reprinted story 6- Rabbit Steals Fire nearly word for word. (Gouge, E.:Martin, J.B;Translation by Mauldin, M; McGirt, J.;Forward: Womack, C., Totkv Mocvse - New Fire, Creek Folktales by Earnest Gouge, 2004, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, p.29-31)

At least three Mvskoke speakers, ancestors and elders spent years writing and translating these stories. They made difficult decisions as they worked to create side-by-side, line-for-line translations. The culmination of that work is an enduring gift of Creek language literature to the Mvskoke people.

It's inexplicable why these rare gems of Mvskoke literature remain largely unknown but, it doesn't seem helpful for our own press to disrespect the precious work of fellow citizens. Also, it is plagiarism to present someone else's work as one's own, as it appears the byline of the nom de plume Fus-Yvhikv does.

I'd like to think that this was an accident. Hopefully, the staff at The Mvskoke News understands what constitutes plagiarism and works to avoid it but, if not, The Buttry Diary offers a helpful free online quiz for reporters (Buttry, S., A quiz to teach journalists about plagiarism and attribution, 2012, WordPress, <https://stevebuttry.wordpress.com> ).



(Totkv Mocvse Official Book Cover)

To be clear, my concern here is for the language. I don't receive any financial benefit from the sale of the books and/or the available DVD of audio recordings. In a perfect world, hard copies of the book and recordings would be in every MCN home. But even in this imperfect world, our linguist friend, Jack B. Martin created accessibility in a fabulous online cultural treasure trove for anyone with access to the internet.

Interested citizens should go to the Muskogee (Seminole/Creek) Documentation Project, <https://muskogee.pages.wm.edu/>.

Find the Gouge Texts and the recordings there to hear my mother, Margaret McKane Maul-

din's beautiful voice reading these 29 stories and much, much more, for free. If there's a hymn you always wanted to learn, you might find it there.

I look forward to the next issue of The Mvskoke News and hoping you'll take this time to make the correction, but even more to promote the awareness of these excellent Creek language works to the citizens of our great nation.

Mvto,  
Mvhayuce Gloria M. McCarty  
Fus-Svhayv Ecovlke

\* See Creek Language Instructor Remembered, by Gerald Wofford, Muskogee Nation News, March 1 2014, Vol. 44, Issue 5, p.2.

**MVSKOKE CREATIVE**  
DIGITAL PRINTING & DESIGN

918.732.7720 | [CREATIVE@MVSKOKEMEDIA.COM](mailto:CREATIVE@MVSKOKEMEDIA.COM)  
M-F (8AM-5PM) | 1010 E. EUFAULA | OKMULGEE, OK

SERVING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

**THE MVSKOKE NEWS**

Angel Ellis, Director | [aellis@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:aellis@mvskokemedia.com)

Braden Harper, Managing Editor | [bharper@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:bharper@mvskokemedia.com)

Jerrad Moore, Assignment Editor | [jmoore@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:jmoore@mvskokemedia.com)

Meredith Johnson, Reporter | [mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com)

ShayIn Proctor, Reporter | [sproctor@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:sproctor@mvskokemedia.com)

Thomas Jackson, Reporter | [tjackson@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:tjackson@mvskokemedia.com)

Frances Herrod, Reporter | [therrod@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:therrod@mvskokemedia.com)



Like MM on Facebook:  
[Facebook.com/MvskokeMedia](https://www.facebook.com/MvskokeMedia)

Follow MM on Twitter:  
[@MvskokeMedia](https://twitter.com/MvskokeMedia)

Follow MM on Instagram:  
[@MvskokeMedia](https://www.instagram.com/MvskokeMedia)

Visit MM online at:  
[MvskokeMedia.com](http://MvskokeMedia.com)



Members of the Indigenous Journalists Association

The Mvskoke News is an editorially independent and constitutionally-protected publication. Its purpose is to meet the needs of the tribe and its citizens through the dissemination of information. Reprint permission is granted with credit to The Mvskoke News unless other copyrights are shown.

Editorial statements appearing in The Mvskoke News, guest columns and readers' letters reflect the opinion of the individual writer and not those of The Mvskoke News, its advisors or the tribal administration and are subject to editorial discretion. Editorials and letters must be signed by the individual writer and include a traceable address or phone number to be considered for publication. Please contact our office for deadline of submissions to be considered for inclusion.

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 Muskogee (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](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com).



Mvskoke Media Assignment Editor Jerrad Moore interviewed Rev. Mitch Randall and Alex J. Luchenistser on Live Wire where they discussed a recent lawsuit to eliminate Oklahoma State Superintendent Ryan Walters' classroom Bible mandate. (MM File)

# BATTLE OVER THE BIBLE

MVSKOKE REV. MITCH RANDALL TAKES BIBLE FIGHT TO OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT

by **FRANCES HERROD** REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - A Mvskoke Nation Reverend is a Plaintiff in the case against Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters' June 27, 2024 mandate that the Bible and the Ten Commandments be taught as foundational texts in public schools.

Rev. Mitch Randall is one of over 30 litigants in a lawsuit filed to block the mandate as well as the purchase of 55,000 King James Version Bibles that contain The United States Pledge of Allegiance, The U.S. Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution, and The U.S. Bill of Rights.

"For me to be involved in this lawsuit, it is twofold. One because of my ancestry as an Indigenous person and, secondly, as a person of faith standing up for that sacrosanct principle of separation of church and state," said Rev. Ran-

dall. According to Rev. Randall, whose Great Great Grandmother and her sister were both forced to attend the Chilocco Federal Indian Boarding School under the United States assimilation "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" policy, it's this Mvskoke heritage that is one of the drivers of his opposition of the Bible mandate.

"They went under extreme duress and immediately when they arrived on the campus...their hair was cut, which is sacred to Indigenous people," Randall said. "Their clothes were stripped of them, they were forced to wear military style uniforms. They were not permitted to speak their native language of Mvskoke."

"Instead they were forced to learn and speak English. In addition to that they were forced to worship and learn from the Bible.

**BIBLE LAWSUIT**  
Continued on Page 8

# TTT V MCN JUDGES CASE DISMISSED

APPEALS COURT RULES CASE IS CONSTITUTIONALLY MOOT AFTER 16 YEARS OF LITIGATION

by **JERRAD MOORE** ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

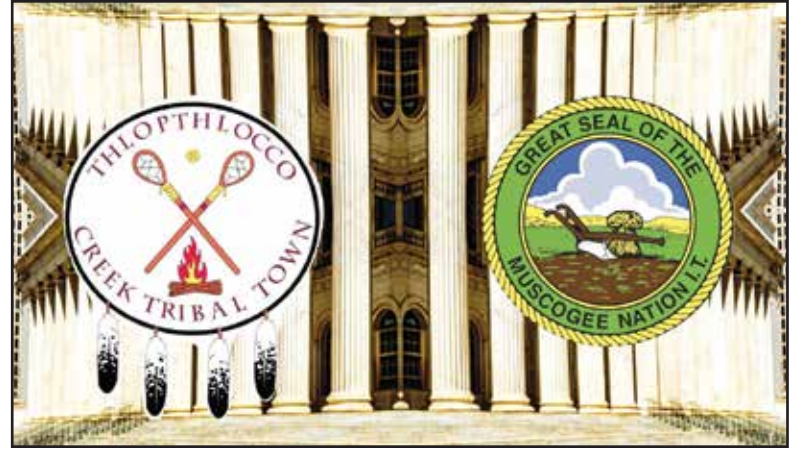
DENVER, Co. - On Dec. 10 the United States Court of Appeals issued its decision in Thlopthlocco Tribal Town v. Wiley, et al., appellants. The Tenth Circuit vacated the district court's ruling and dismissed the case as constitutionally moot.

This case is the result of litigation spanning 16 years between the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town (TTT) and judicial officers of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Before being formed into a centralized government, the MCN was comprised of several traditional tribal towns or etlww. While TTT was one of these etlww, after the 1936 Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act passed, TTT formed its own constitution and became a separate federally recognized tribe in 1939. TTT vests its power to govern in a 10 member Business Committee made up of five elected town officers and five advisors appointed by the elected officials. The town officers consist of a Town King, two Warriors, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

According to the TTT website, the duty of the Town King is to preside over meetings and carry out the orders of the Business Committee.

In June 2007 Nathan Anderson was elected TTT Town King. Anderson then declared himself the only legitimately elected official and deemed all other offices of the TTT Business Committee vacant.



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session in person in the Mound Building. (MM File)

Because the TTT does not have its own tribal court system, TTT then filed an action in MCN District Court against Anderson for declaratory and injunctive relief. TTT is a separate federally recognized tribe, and as such was required to adopt a limited waiver of sovereign immunity in order to get the case heard in MCN court. This waiver excluded any election disputes.

The MCN District Court determined that it lacked jurisdiction to hear the case. This decision was reversed by the MCN Supreme Court which found TTT was traditionally a tribal town, so MCN courts had jurisdiction.

Anderson then filed a cross-claim against the Business Committee members claiming election fraud and violation of the TTT constitution. The TTT Business Committee removed Anderson from office and filed a motion to withdraw the waiver of sovereign immunity in the cross-claim case. MCN District Court denied the motion and held that

it had jurisdiction even though TTT had withdrawn the waiver.

TTT then filed an appeal of that decision with the MCN Supreme Court. The MCN Supreme Court ruled that under tribal law, TTT was part of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and denied the appeal.

In 2011, TTT held new elections, and Anderson and other individuals were excluded from the ballot. Anderson filed another crossclaim against the TTT Business Committee in MCN District Court. The Business Committee filed a motion to dismiss for a lack of jurisdiction in this new crossclaim, which the court denied. The MCN District Court ordered the election be held and that TTT include Anderson and the others placed on the ballot.

TTT then filed a lawsuit against the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's judicial officers in the United States District Court

**TTT LAWSUIT**  
Continued on Page 2

# NEW ALLEGATION EMERGES AGAINST MCN ASSOCIATE TRIBAL LIAISON

LIGHTHORSE POLICE INVESTIGATING SEXUAL, PHYSICAL ASSAULT REPORTS REGARDING MICHAEL BERRYHILL

by **FRANCES HERROD** REPORTER

\*Editors note: this story contains descriptions of acts of physical violence

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Mvskoke Media has confirmed that two police reports were filed with Mvskoke Nation Lighthorse Police by Joe Anderson and Summer Wesley on Sunday, Dec 29, 2024, regarding allegations of physical and sexual assault by Mvskoke Nation Associate Tribal Liaison Michael Berryhill in 2019.

Joe Anderson's Lighthorse report alleges a physical assault by Berryhill. The assault purportedly occurred Saturday, March 30, 2019. An eye witness to the attack alleges Michael Berryhill launched an unprovoked physical attack on Anderson, punching him multiple times in the side of the head while Anderson was asleep on the couch.

Summer Wesley's Lighthorse report detailed the same account she provided for Mvskoke Media's previous coverage. Since that coverage Wesley has faced backlash from community members and both current and former employees of Mvskoke Nation.

Wesley has also been put in the crosshairs at her place of employment.

After her public disclosure as a survivor of alleged sexual assault, an anonymous complaint was filed with Wesley's superiors and an investigation launched at her place of employment.

"I was informed that a complaint had been made to my place of employment and escalated to executive leadership. While they will not disclose the origin of that report, or if they are aware of it, it is an absolute travesty that any person should have to fear for their job simply for speaking the truth."

Wesley's experience filing a report with Lighthorse came with obstacles as well. According to Wesley she was told to file the report in person. When she completed the report she was advised to email it.

"Why did I have to drive to get a piece of paper that could have been emailed to me that would have saved me time and frustration," Wesley said. "Officer Theresa Davis also questioned the long gap between the incident and my filing a report. They are proving my point of why I didn't file this in the first place."

Wesley and Anderson both addressed the time gap in an email obtained by Mvskoke Media:

"Assaults like these are not something that are prosecuted. It seemed pointless, however, given the fact that the public was made aware of the assaults and many are demanding an investigation, we are making these statements in order to be as cooperative as possible with the investigation."

Attorney and University of Kansas Professor Sarah Deer, who does not know any of the parties involved in this story, is a Survivors Advocate who has testified

before Congress on issues affecting Native women regarding physical and sexual violence and whose work was instrumental in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 2013 spoke broadly about the all too familiar experiences survivors have when they disclose either voluntarily or, as in Wesley's case, under threat of an investigation.

"There are impediments to people disclosing. Victim blaming. The fear of being judged for being a victim. There's shame and embarrassment as well. Even though the victim isn't responsible for the crime, there still can be a sense of embarrassment and shame and guilt."

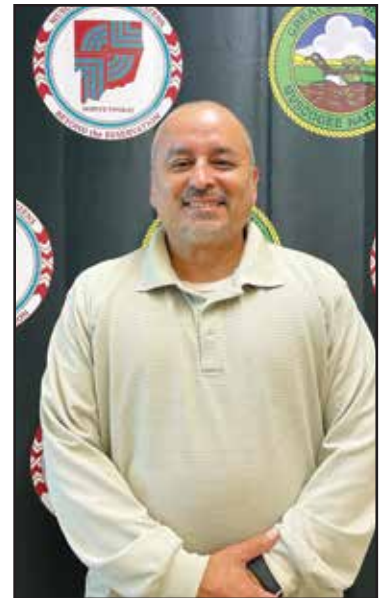
"People can lose their jobs, people can be harassed, people can be gaslighted, all of those kinds of things when you do disclose sometimes. The blowback is more intense than I think survivors realize. It can be a kind of a re-victimization when people are discussing what happened to them," stated Deer.

"Depending on who comes forward and who supports [the survivor] versus who aligns with the perpetrator, there's just a lot of fear that comes along with that," Deer added. "That's why we have things like the Violence Against Women Act in place. It's because we need those sorts of protections."

Lighthorse Police Investigator Les Vaughn stated that several reports had been filed but due to the ongoing nature of the investigation could not comment further. Mvskoke Media did confirm

that Michael Berryhill attended the December 7, 2024 Florida Outreach trip the MCN Tribal Liaison Office took to Tampa, FL. This trip took place prior to the publication of coverage of the sexual assault allegation against Berryhill, but after the investigation by Cabinet Secretary of Community & Human Services Carmin Tecumseh-Williams had commenced Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

Mvskoke Media reached out to MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman for comment on the mounting claims regarding Berryhill's alleged conduct and any confirmation that may have been made by Chief Hill. Salsman responded, "Any allegation of a criminal nature is turned over to Lighthorse. Due to privacy laws, respect for victims and their rights, as well as the integrity of any and all investigations, no comment will be made."



(Michael Berryhill Official Photo)

If you or someone you know is the survivor of sexual assault there is help available. The Mvskoke Nation Victims Service 24 Hour Crisis Line is (918) 732-7979. You do not have to be Native to call.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE MVSKOKE NEWS IS FREE! FOR ALL ENROLLED MUSCOGEE (CREEK) CITIZENS!

MUST PROVIDE NAME, VALID MAILING ADDRESS, MCN ROLL NUMBER, BIRTHDATE & LAST 4 DIGITS OF SSN

NOT AN MCN CITIZEN? NOT A PROBLEM! NON-MCN CITIZENS CAN SUBSCRIBE FOR JUST \$24 A YEAR!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

To SUBSCRIBE OR UPDATE YOUR INFO, CALL 918.732.7720 EMAIL INFO@MVSKOKEMEDIA.COM OR VISIT MVSKOKEMEDIA.COM



Pictured is the cover of the "Nokose's Adventurous Saturday," by Muscogee (Creek) citizen Micah McDermott. (Photo Provided)

## MICAH MCDERMOTT INTRODUCES NOKOSE CHILDREN'S BOOK SERIES

"NOKOSE'S ADVENTUROUS SATURDAY" WAS INSPIRED BY HIS SON AND ENCOURAGED BY HIS FATHER

by MEREDITH JOHNSON  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - On Dec. 16, MCN citizen Micah McDermott was featured on LiveWire about his recent children's book publication "Nokose's Adventurous Saturday." McDermott shared the inspiration behind the story, his experience publishing his first book, and future plans for a series.

McDermott wrote the story

the evening his first son was born 23 years ago and never had plans on publishing it. "I wanted to share what I thought his life and my life would be as a dad and a son and him growing up," McDermott said.

"But the inspiration was him, his name is Jesse, and you know he was kind of a big boy when

### NOKOSE BOOK

Continued on Page 6

## THRONE TIES THE KNOT

MVSKOKE ARTIST YVHIKV FROM THE DUO, THRONE, SHARES ON INDIGENOUS.TV NOMINATIONS, HER CAREER AND MARRYING HER BEST FRIEND

by BRADEN HARPER  
MANAGING EDITOR

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - It has been a packed holiday season for the music duo THRONE. On top of touring and releasing new music, the duo recently got married. River Watson (Mvskoke), who also goes by Yvhikv, married music partner Taylor Mendelsohn in a private ceremony on December 14, 2024. Additionally, the duo's 2024 album, "Singing Bear Speaks" was also nominated for Indigenous.tv's Album of the Year, marking their first nomination in the category.

Watson has been performing music since she was in high school. According to Watson, her professional relationship with her husband is strong because they both get to exhibit their strengths as musicians.

"I think we just complement each other really well," Watson said. "I've always been very confident in my voice, he (Mendelsohn) has always been very confident in his writing. We would always kind of inspire each other with those different things."

Although the couple performs at shows together, they choose to not perform live at their own wedding ceremony in order to focus on nuptials. However the couple did record a music video for their new single, "our wedding song", a track recorded in honor of their big day. Watson described the song's sound as "cutesy, but not your typical love song".

Watson and Mendelsohn wanted their wedding to encompass Indigenous traditions. This



"Singing Bear Speaks" is one of THRONE's latest albums released in 2024. (Courtesy: Yvhikv of THRONE)

included a blanket ceremony, and a Pueblo wedding vase ceremony.

Watson's stage name Yvhikv means singer or to sing in traditional Mvskoke. She is the former 2014-15 Junior Miss Muscogee Nation. Watson's inspiration to become a musician came from her dad, Julian B. For Watson singing is something that comes out from within.

"I started to notice that there was a very free thread, a single very thin thread between when I would sing and my spirit inside," Watson said. "It was like I wasn't even singing. It was as if I did not have any conscious realization that this voice that I was hearing was my own."

Regardless of where her music takes her, Watson's music is immersed in her Indigenous cul-

ture, which can be heard in her songwriting, melodies and how she sings. She writes about things that are sacred and familiar, like medicine. Call and response melodies are used in Watson's music, which can also be found in traditional Mvskoke songs. When describing how she sings, Watson said her inspiration came from how she was taught to speak the Mvskoke language.

"I try to sing from my gut. This is how I grew up understanding how you speak Mvskoke, which is from the gut," Watson said. "You speak it with your whole being. You speak it from the root of yourself."

THRONE's discography can be found on a variety of social media and music streaming platforms.

## PASSING DOWN THE TORCH; MVSKOKE MUSIC ARTISTS REPRESENT IN IOWA

RAPPER STEN JODDI AND DAUGHTER HARMONY RECENTLY WON THE MIC CHECK IOWA AWARD FOR THEIR MUSIC VIDEO, YVHIKETV HAYV, WHICH EXHIBITS THE MVSKOKE LANGUAGE



Sten Joddi and daughter Harmony Grace have had a busy year touring and winning the Mic Check Award at the Iowa Music Awards. (Courtesy: Sten Joddi)

by BRADEN HARPER  
MANAGING EDITOR

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa - The apple does not fall far from the tree in Sten Joddi's family. Sten Joddi, and his daughter Harmony Grace were recent winners of the Mic Check category at the Iowa Music Awards for their music video Yvhiketv Hayv. The video was produced by Lyrikal Tmg and

features Sten Joddi and Harmony singing and showcasing their shared Mvskoke culture. Initially released in June, the video won its accolades in October. The video was particularly special because it was the debut collaboration for the father-daughter duo.

In addition to singing, Harmony also plays the flute, an instrument she spends a lot of time practicing. According to Harmony, playing the flute is a talent passed

down from her mother, singing from her father. She can currently play "Jingle Bells," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Happy Birthday to You".

Yvhiketv Hayv is not only special because it features Mvskoke culture, it also features a dad passing down culture to the next generation. Sten Joddi remarked that it was special debuting his daughter's musical talent in their music video.

"This is her first time to shine as a solo artist as a singer," Sten Joddi said. "It's definitely fun to bring her into the studio, bring her into the music and have fun with it. It was awesome as a father to see it happen."

For Harmony music plays an important role in her life.

"Music is important to me because all these songs represent what I really want to do, and in my heart that feels like what I want to do," Harmony said. "If I give up on it, I don't think I'm going to be good at it again, which is why I keep going at it to sing to people in different states that me and my dad go to to sing about our culture."

Not only does Harmony play an instrument and sing, she also performs with her dad on the road. For the young musician, embarking on the journey first took a lot of courage.

"When we did the first show I was just standing there being nervous and seeing all the faces look-

ing at me," Harmony said. "I was just looking at my dad thinking 'this is crazy'. As I started going around the next few months I started to feel the confidence of getting used to all the people staring at me, waving at me."

For Sten Joddi as a father, he believes it's important for his children to have a spark inside of them, regardless if it is for music. In addition to music, Sten Joddi is grateful his children have an interest in learning about the Mvskoke culture, something he learns more and more about every day.

### MMIP Awareness

At the Iowa Music Awards Sten Joddi and Harmony both sported red hand prints on their face, the symbol of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People movement. Both artists wanted to bring attention to the nationwide epidemic of missing Indigenous brothers and sisters.

"I'm a father of three daughters. I couldn't imagine having to wake up to any news like that," Sten Joddi said. "Being from Oklahoma we have so many sisters and people that get looked over. We took it upon ourselves that day (Iowa Music Awards) to really stand for that cause and use our platform to say it really should be something talked about"

Although Harmony is young, she is aware of the MMIP movement's efforts to bring awareness

to the issue and provide justice for the families. She knows the effects it has on women and girls like her.

"When our sisters go missing by people trying to unalive these girls and trying to hurt them, we don't want that," Harmony said. "Those sisters really mean a lot to us. When these men take these girls from their parents, they don't get to see them anymore because the men do something bad to them. It's not good because the men hurt them and take them away from their families."

On the horizon Sten Joddi has his sights set on Hollywood. It was announced in November that the hip hop artist will star in the upcoming film "Brave". The film boasts an all-star Indigenous cast, including Graham Greene, Wes Studi, Amber Midthunder and Dallas Goldtooth. Although Sten Joddi was not at liberty to talk in depth about the project, he did remark that it is "going to be an amazing film".

Sten Joddi's Spotify Wrapped, or report of how many users listened to his music on the Spotify app, was recently published. The report shared that Sten Joddi was listened to by 53,000 users, for a total of 498,000 streams across 124 countries.

To stay up to date on Sten Joddi's new music, tours dates and appearances, visit his website, stenjoddimerch.com. He can also be found on all major social media platforms.



Harmony Grace smiles big at the Iowa Music Awards. (Courtesy: Sten Joddi)



ANONYMOUS  
TIP LINE

918-304-6204



# COUNCIL APPROVES \$47 MILLION ARPA RELIEF BILL

THE BFJ COMMITTEE PASSED LEGISLATION FOR MULTIPLE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SPENDING BILLS IN AN EMERGENCY SESSION ON DEC. 30

by **THOMAS JACKSON**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Council held an emergency session at the Mound Building on Dec. 30.

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

NCA 24-168 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-152 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Year Recovery Funds, to the amount of \$2,562,816.41, to purchase radio equipment for various departments) was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn of the Tukvpytce District. It was approved with a vote of 10-1, with Representative Sandra Golden of the Okfuskee District voting against it.

This law will provide funding to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Lighthouse Police, Health, Transit, and its 911 call center for a new communication system.

NCA 24-169 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 23-140 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of

the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury, to the amount of \$1,720,000.00, for the purchase of property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma), as amended by NCA 24-057, was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 11-0.

This law will allow the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to purchase land for the purpose of government programs, services, functions, and activities.

NCA 24-170 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 24-025 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Relief Funding, to the amount of \$270,000.00, for the purchase of real property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma) was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 10-0.

This law will allow the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to purchase land for the purpose of government programs, services, functions, and activities.

NCA 24-171 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-064 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek)

Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Funding, to the amount of \$1,398,415.07, for the purchase of real property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma) was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 10-0.

This law will allow the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to purchase land for the purpose of government programs, services, functions, and activities.

NCA 24-172 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 24-080 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Relief Funding and Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing program income funds, to the amount of \$840,000.00, to be used toward the purchase of property in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma) was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 10-0.

This law will allow the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to purchase land for the purpose of government programs, services, functions, and activities.

NCA 24-173 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation



The MCNNC held an emergency session via teleconference in the Mound Building on Dec. 30 (MM File).

amending NCA 22-077 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Funding, to the amount of \$3,646,359.76, for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Police Department for the CAD System replacement and health and safety monitors to staff the closed-circuit television center), as amended by NCA 24-039, was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 9-1 with Rep. Golden voting against it.

This law will allow Lighthouse Police to continue using CCTV monitoring in their facilities through 2026, with additional funds being used to continue paying for both equipment and staff.

NCA 24-174 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 23-041 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury, to the amount of \$901,598.00, for the Fiscal Relief Funding for the Mvskoke Loan Fund), as amended by NCA 24-044, was approved by

the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 10-0.

This law will allow the Mvskoke Loan Fund to continue providing funding to small businesses within the Muscogee Nation through 2026.

NCA 24-175 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Relief Funding, to the amount of \$47,885,131.57, from the United States Department of the Treasury to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Treasury for eligible public safety, public health, health care, social and human services payroll and covered benefits for the years 2021 and 2022 was approved by the National Council. The law was sponsored by Rep. Osborn. It was approved with a vote of 10-0.

This law will allow the Muscogee Nation to be reimbursed for certain payments made to public safety, public health, health care, human and social services, and other employees who helped respond to COVID-19 in 2021 and 2022.

To view the full agenda, visit: mcnn.com.

## TRICIA FIELDS ALEXANDER REFLECTS ON MCN LEGACY AND WHAT'S COMING NEXT

MVSKOKE BUSINESS OWNER DISCUSSES HER 13 YEARS AT THE TRIBE AND HOW SHE CONTRIBUTES TO KEEPING THE MVSKOKE CULTURE ACTIVE

by **RACHAEL SCHUIT**  
VERIFIED NEWS NETWORK



Tricia Fields Alexander (middle) is a business owner, chef and a facilitator of the Mvskoke culture. (Verified News Network).

MUSCOGEE NATION - Tricia Fields Alexander has worn many hats: business owner, youth wellness program director, chef, organizer, facilitator, storyteller, mom and grandmother. A dedicated member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation community, Fields Alexander has built a remarkable career through her passion for uplifting others and preserving Native culture.

Many know her for her 13 years of service with the Nation where she worked as the youth wellness program director and facilitated the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program. Others may recognize her as the owner of Autumn Star Catering or as the organizer of the Native American Christmas Market.

Fields Alexander recently left her role with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She reflected on her time there with Verified News Network Oklahoma.

"I'm most proud of my time at Muscogee (Creek) Nation for, of course, my work with the youth, building relationships over years with the kids and their families," Fields Alexander said. "Being trusted with the kids, whether it was through our cultural camps, our field trips, our bonding time—and just teaching the kids that it's okay to express yourself."

Alongside her work with the Nation, she also managed her catering business, Autumn Star Catering, and launched the Native American Christmas Market.

"I did always juggle my full time job, school, and all my kids—but it was always fun," Alexander

Fields said. "And my kids were always my fuel for that (work) and I have always tried to incorporate my kids."

### Honoring Native Culture

Though her efforts might seem very different, Fields Alexander said she approaches each task with a shared purpose: honoring and elevating Native culture. In her work with Muscogee youth, she incorporated traditional storytelling, passing down the lessons and values her grandparents instilled in her.

"I always just tried to show these kids that the things their families are teaching them are important, and that they are history," she said. "The art that they're learning, the songs that they're singing, the food that they're eating—they might not think that it's a big deal, but it is, and those are the things that connect people and make them feel included."

The Native American Christmas Market is another example of her commitment to cultural preservation. Every December, this market provides a platform for

**FIELDS ALEXANDER**  
Continued on Page 8

## SOUR SOFKEE



(Courtesy: Fus Yvhikv)

by **FUS YVHIKV**  
COLUMNIST

### "The Native Calendar"

"Welcome to the first day of the new year," Yahola says to a stunned class of students at Tulsa University. Yahola is a guest lecturer for the Native American studies class.

"Do you mean today is the first day of the new year, Mr. Yahola?" a student meekly asks.

"Yes."

"But it is July 12th."

"We Mvskokes, or Creeks if you prefer, would say today is Hiy'uce Palen-Hokkolohkaken," Yahola replies as he surveys the classroom and holds the rapt attention of the students. "July 12th. But since today coincides with the Green Corn Ceremony at my ceremonial dance ground, it is also New Year's Day."

The students lean back in their chairs and exchange quizzical looks. Many sit with nervous smiles. Yahola builds the tension by ignoring the class while unhurriedly shuffling a sheaf of papers. Students begin to slightly fidget. Yahola turns his focus upon the students and slowly gazes from one side of the room to the other. His smile releases the students from the captivity of their anxiety, and they relax their

posture.

"Who would like for me to explain?"

"Me!" the undergraduates eagerly respond in unison.

"I realize there is a lot to unpack in my rather cryptic introduction this morning," Yahola says. "So let us start with today's date. You know the month as July. For the Mvskoke-Creek people, however, it is called Hiy'uce which translates as little harvest time. It is in reference to the ripening of the first summer crops."

"You mean like okra, Mr. Yahola? I love me some fried okra," a student says as the class erupts into gleeful laughter.

"Yes, and lettuce, watermelons, squash, and green beans. These are among the first of the summer crops to be harvested. Thus, Hiy'uce, or Little Harvest Month."

"So what is August called, Mr. Yahola?"

"Hiyo-rakko, or Big Harvest Month," Yahola says. "Those of you who have helped your parents or grandparents tend to a vegetable garden know that August, or Hiyo-rakko, is the time of the big harvest."

One of the students, Mark Nuttle, raises his hand. Yahola acknowledges him.

"Mr. Yahola, I am sensing a pattern to the Mvskoke calendar. It appears to me that the Mvskoke calendar manifests an intimate relationship with nature and phenomena that occurs during the same period annually."

"That is true, Mark."

"So instead of Little Harvest Month, and Big Harvest Month, we have July and August?"

"And do you know where those names come from, Mark?"

Mark scratches his head and shrugs his shoulders. Another student comes to his rescue.

"July is named for Julius

Caesar and August for Augustus Caesar. I guess it takes establishing the Roman Empire to get a month named after you."

"Or be a Caesar who gets assassinated," another student jokes.

"So the Western calendar is entirely alienated from natural occurrences. I mean we have the likes of September, October, November, and December. These monthly names are based upon Roman numerals. They are entirely devoid of meaning and any connection to nature."

"Yes, and they are entirely out of order," Yahola says. "December, from the Roman decem, or tenth, isn't the tenth month but the twelfth!"

"No wonder I've been celebrating Christmas in October," another student jokes. "But wait, since October is derived from the Latin Octo, meaning eight, shouldn't October be the 8th month, not the 10th? This is so confusing! I vote that we adopt the Mvskoke-Creek calendar. It makes way more sense. What are the names of the other months of the Mvskoke calendar and what do they mean?"

"Well since you just mentioned December, let's start there," Yahola replies. "December is Rvfo-rakko, or Big Winter; January is Rvfo-cuse, or Winter's Younger Brother; February is Hotvle-hvse, or Wind Month; March is Tashacuce, or Little Spring Month; April is Tashacurakko, or Big Spring Month; May is Kvhvse, or mulberry month; June is Kvco-hvse or blackberry month; September is Otowoskuce or Little Chestnut month, October is Otowoskv-rakko, or big chestnut month, and November is Ehole or frost month."

"I love how the Mvskoke calendar has months named for naturally recurring events throughout the year. It is pleasingly cyclical or circular. It makes me feel more connected to the

**SOUR SOFKEE**  
Continued on Page 6

JUMPS

TTT V. MCN

Continued from Page 3

Northern District of Oklahoma. TTT sought to stop MCN Judges from exercising jurisdiction over its elections and procedures. The Northern District Court dismissed the suit for lack of subject matter jurisdiction on the grounds that MCN judicial officials were entitled to sovereign immunity and TTT had failed to exhaust its tribal court remedies.

This decision was appealed by TTT to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, which reversed the Northern District Court's decision. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that the Northern District Court had jurisdiction under federal common law, and that the case should have additional proceedings after TTT had exhausted its tribal court remedies.

The case went back to the MCN District Court which found that Anderson was no longer a "credible threat" to the TTT government making the case no longer justiciable, or able to be heard in a court of law. The MCN District Court held that TTT could not rely on sovereign immunity to remove Anderson and others from election ballots.

This decision was appealed to the MCN Supreme Court, which

held that TTT was entitled to sovereign immunity in MCN courts and affirmed the MCN District Court's decision and execution of jurisdiction.

The MCN Supreme Court, however, reversed the District Court's finding on the balloting issue. The MCN Supreme Court decision pointed out that the original TTT waiver of sovereign immunity excluded election disputes, so the lower court did not have jurisdiction over that issue.

The case then returned to the Northern District of Oklahoma Court. TTT sought a declaratory judgment that it enjoys sovereign immunity and can waive or withdraw the waiver under appropriate circumstances. The MCN judges argued that the case was moot and that any opinion of the Northern District Court would be advisory.

On Dec. 20, 2023, The Northern District of Oklahoma Court ordered that TTT enjoys sovereign immunity in MCN courts, and it can withdraw its waiver when appropriate.

MCN again appealed this decision to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and oral argument was held on Nov. 20, 2024.

On Dec. 10, the Tenth Circuit issued its order and judgement, vacating the lower courts judgement and dismissing the case as moot.

SOUR SOFKEE

Continued from Page 5

earth and nature. So different from the antiseptic Western calendar," Mark says.

All the students nod in agreement. One student in the back of the room stands and raises his hand. He is tall and slender, brown skinned with long straight black hair that falls to mid chest. With his rimless eyeglasses he manifests a studious look. By his look, and his surname, Yahola recognizes him as Mvskoke-Creek.

"Yes, Mr. Tarpalechee," Yahola says. "Do you wish to comment?"

"I do, Mvhayv ("teacher")," Tarpalechee replies. "I have an observation to share."

"Mecares ("do it")," Yahola says.

"Well, like you, I am Mvskoke. I am very familiar with the Mvskoke calendar. My grandparents taught me. But in my University studies I have learned quite a bit about the Western calendar."

"Heremahe ("very good")," Yahola says. "This sounds interesting. Please continue."

"Well, I think this discussion invites an examination of the origin of the word calendar."

"Again, please continue," Yahola says with a knowing smile.

"The word 'calendar' derives from the Latin word calendarium meaning 'interest register' or 'account book,'" Tarpalechee says.

"Interest register," Mark says. "Sounds like something you'd get in the mail from a credit card company."

"Close. It could be said that the western calendar was created so that lenders could compute interest payments," Tarpalechee says.

An audible gasp rolls across

the classroom. The students sit in disbelief. Mark is the first to break the silence.

"So the calendar, arguably the foundation of western society, was created so lenders could compute interest?"

"Well," Yahola responds, "The term calendar is derived from the word calends, the word for the first day of the month in the Roman calendar. Calends, in turn, is related to the verb calare meaning 'to call out.' This refers to the announcement of the arrival of the new moon. The arrival of the new moon, the first day of the month, was when lenders collected their debts. Having a calendar was necessary for lenders to be able to compute interest due."

"It is still so hard to believe," Mark says, "That the calendar, one of the pillars of western society, was created so that lenders could calculate interest and establish due dates for loan payments. Where did we go wrong?"

Another student chimes in. "I don't know about you all but I'm adopting the Creek calendar. That way the bank won't be able to bill me for my student loans!"

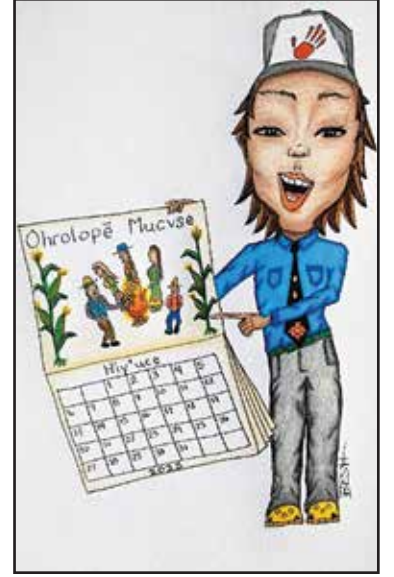
The classroom erupts in riotous laughter as the students nod their heads in agreement.

"I like your plan," Yahola says. "But you'll probably have to be a citizen of the Creek Nation for your scheme to have a chance at success."

"Ah, man!" the disappointed student says.

"To be fair there is a vestige or remnant of the concept of circular time that somehow survives in the western calendar. That is the month of May. So named in honor of the Greek goddess Maia, the guardian of nature and growing plants. Have any of you heard of this Greek goddess?" Yahola asks.

"It's all Creek to me," Tar-



(Art by Artist BESH)

palechee jokes. The students chortle at his pun.

"The Mvskoke Creek and the Indigenous approach to systems of time keeping and organizing days are very much Earth centered. These Indigenous calendars are constructed upon a framework of the concept of time being circular. This approach is in stark contrast to Western culture which is organized upon the notion that time is linear. This concept is deeply embedded into western religions.

"God's creation of the world marks the beginning of time. There is a prophetic end time. I would argue that these radically contrasting orientations to time greatly informs how various societies live upon, and relate to, one another and Mother Earth. I would challenge each of you students to give deep thought to how these contrasting orientations manifest themselves in contemporary America. Please be prepared to share your thoughts at class next week."

"I look forward to it," the debt-ridden students says. "And I hope to bring my Mvskoke citizenship card."

"Class dismissed," Yahola says with a grin.

NOKOSE BOOK

Continued from Page 4

he was born, he was over eight pounds, and so I think part of that came as being a bear."

The story about a bear and his adventures in the woods with friends then sat on a shelf for years until encouragement from friends and family led to the book's publications. McDermott has intentionally incorporated Mvskoke language in his

book using character names and basic numbers. He shared that as the series expands he plans to incorporate more Mvskoke language and cultural practices and introduce more characters in the series.

McDermott plans on getting copies of "Nokose's Adventurous Saturday" to sell in January during an official book launch but copies of the book can be purchased online at amazon.com.



MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
HAF PROGRAM

The HAF Program is providing funding assistance for the following homeowner expenses:

- \* Mortgage Assistance (Must be delinquent)
- \* Homeowner Utility Assistance (Internet not included)
- \* Homeowner Fees (Homeowner Association, Cooperative Maintenance)
- \* Property Taxes
- \* Homeowner Insurance
- \* Flood Insurance

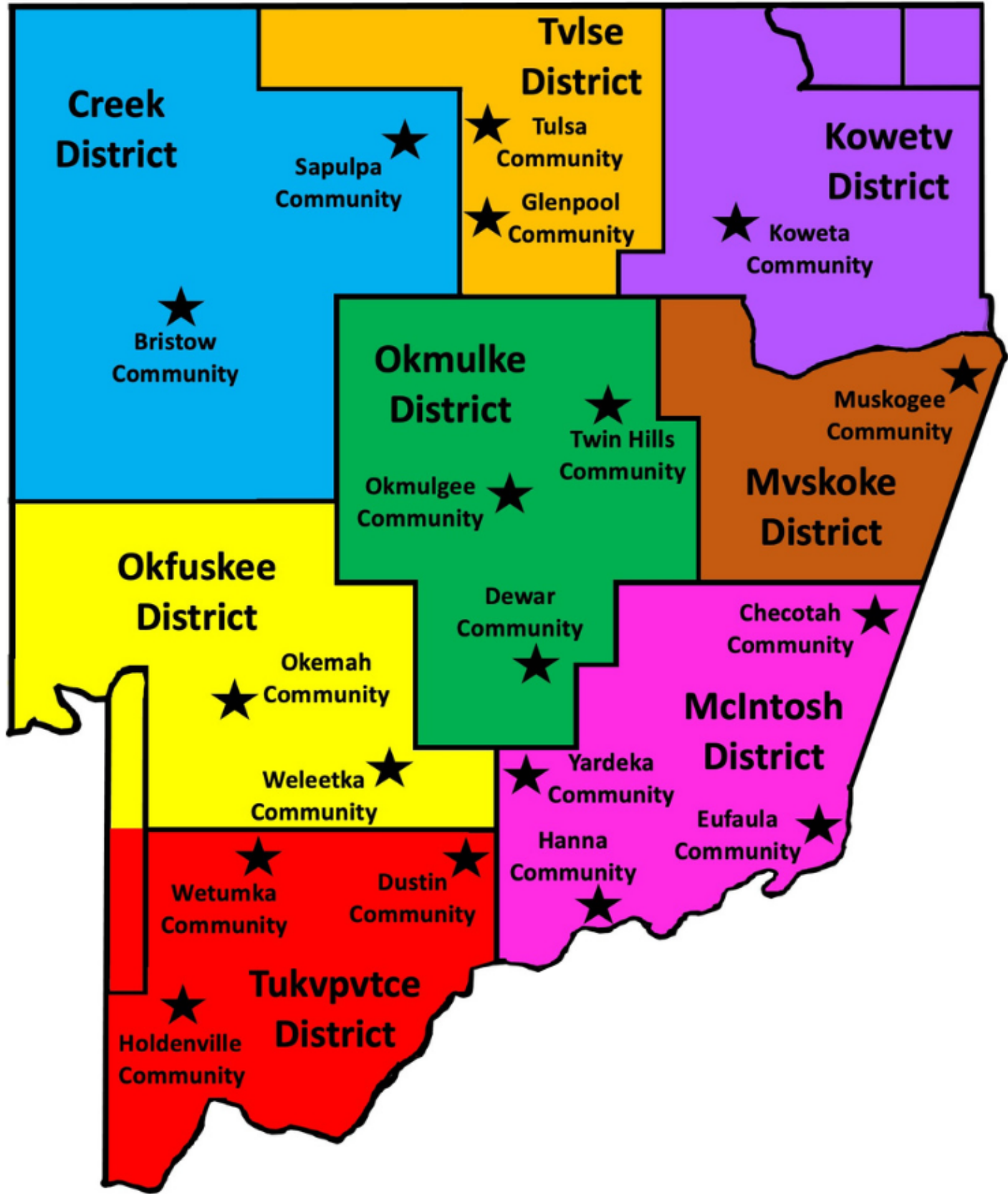
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An "eligible household" is defined as a HAF household in which at least one or more individuals meets the following criteria:

- \* An enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- \* Financial hardship due to a reduction in income or material increase in living expenses associated with the Corona Virus Pan demic that has created or increased a risk of mortgage delinquency of 30 days or more, mortgage default, foreclosure, loss of utilities or home energy services, or displacement of a homeowner; and
- \* Household income is below 100 percent of the area median or household income between 101 percent to 150 percent of the area median income as defined by HUD in accordance with U.S.C. 1437 a(b)(2) for purposes of the HAF; MCN, in its sole decision, can adjust the order in which applicants are served to ensure that not less than 60% of the funding made available is used from homeowners having incomes equal to or less than 100% of the area median income or equal to or less than 100% of the median income for the United States, whichever is greater.
- \* Dwelling must be homeowner's primary place of residency.

- \* Eligible mortgages must be secured by an instrument of government or government sponsored entity or finance by a non-profit, bank, credit union or mortgage company that adheres to the widely accepted mortgage lending and mortgage servicing practices monitored by the Consumer Federal Protection Bureau. Seller financed transactions, rent-to-own transactions, and family-financed transactions are excluded.
- \* The homeowner must be ready, willing, and able to meet all obligations of participating in the program.
- \* Any applicant who is receiving or has already received other federal assistance may receive HAF program assistance so long as they are not duplicating or overlapping the same expenses.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS  
Call the HAF call center 918.549.2890  
Fax documents to 918.304.3256  
APPLY ONLINE ON THE CAMPHOUSE PORTAL  
You can find the portal at Muscogeenation.com  
Forgot your password?  
Call 918.549.2760 for IT assistance



## Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Boundaries & Voting Location

**Bristow Indian Community**  
710 S. Main/ Bristow, OK

**Checotah Indian Community**  
500 Owens Ave./ Checotah, OK

**Dewar Indian Community**  
903 E. 6th/ Dewar, OK

**Dustin Indian Community**  
140 N. Broadway/ Dustin, OK

**Eufaula Indian Community**  
800 Birkes Rd./ Eufaula, OK

**Glenpool Indian Community**  
14023 S. Casper/ Glenpool, OK

**Hanna Indian Community**  
402692 E. 1250 RD/ Hanna, OK

**Holdenville Indian Community**  
224 E. Poplar./ Holdenville, OK

**Koweta Indian Community**  
30925 E. 141st/ Coweta, OK

**Muskogee Indian Community**  
335 N. 4h St/ Muskogee, OK

**Okemah Indian Community**  
1112 S. Woody Guthrie/ Okemah, OK

**Okmulgee Indian Community**  
2900 N. Osage Pl./ Okmulgee, OK

**Sapulpa Indian Community**  
1020 N. Brown/ Sapulpa, OK

**Tulsa Indian Community**  
8611 S. Union/ Tulsa, OK

**Twin Hills Indian Community**  
8110 N. HWY 62/ Okmulgee, OK

**Weleetka Indian Community**  
602 S. Chickasaw/ Weleetka, OK

**Wetumka Indian Community**  
608 N. Creek/ Wetumka, OK

**Yardeka Indian Community**  
114089 S, 3980 RD./ Henryetta, OK

OBITUARIES/JUMP/NOTICES

TERI GARNER

2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Teri Madelynne Garner, 72, was born June 21, 1952 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. She was the daughter of Frank Warren Lake and Sandra Madelynne (Wofford) Lake. She passed away on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at her home in Porum, Oklahoma where she resided for 50 years.

Teri was preceded in death by her grandparents Otto and Lillian (Weddle) Lake and Harry and Daisy (Taylor) Wofford; her parents Frank and Sandra, and her older brother Mark Alan Lake.

Teri is survived by her children, son Dustin Cody Tidwell and wife Jamie Tidwell, her daughter, Brandie Brashier

and husband Loren Dale Brashier, her grandchildren, Jadie Schmidt and Nathan Schmidt, Weston Tidwell and Kadie Jo Tidwell, great-grand-daughter, Madelynne Sue Schmidt, numerous nieces and nephews, who each think they were her favorite, and her sister, Kristi Gross and family, step-father, Earnest Brown and his children Blake Brown and Mendee Perry, and her dear friends Bobbie Pound and Susie Waters. Teri went to Sally Brown School and Alice Robertson Jr. High in Muskogee and graduated from Muskogee Central High School in 1970. She worked during college at the Warner Nursing Home and graduated from Bacone College School of Nursing in the early 80s and got her OB-GYN Nurse Practitioner degree in Oklahoma City through Oklahoma Univer-

sity. After nursing school Teri went to work for the Oklahoma Department of Health in the Muskogee Clinic, then later in the McIntosh, Pittsburg, Haskell, Latimer, Muskogee and Okmulgee Counties clinics. She concluded her Nurse Practitioner career at the Okmulgee Creek Nation Indian Clinic in 2019, where she spearheaded their Breast Cancer Awareness and Survivors Support program for many years, arranging vendors, speakers and chairing the events. After retirement she worked with her granddaughters at Carlton Landing in Eufaula, OK and also took on house cleaning for her special people whom she loved. Her patients and clients became family to her and she did not have an hourly clock that stopped her from caring for and about them. Teri was a childhood member of

Shiloh Baptist Church in Muskogee, OK and was a member at Little Coweta Indian Baptist Church, Stidham, Oklahoma where she was the 'kitchen wrangler', always making sure church members had plenty of what they liked to eat and then some for later as well. "A cookie for each hand and one in your mouth." She was well known by everyone to be an excellent cook, nephews especially loved her cake balls and Ding Dong cake. If you stopped by the house, she would feed you and send you home with a little something for later. She volunteered in food distribution networks at Porum and Webber Falls. Teri was an avid dog lover and supporter of many animal rescue organizations. She was a life-long cattle rancher. Teri was a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Teri could out-



(Mallory-Martin Funeral Home & Crematory)

work you and just about anyone you know and leave you all wondering what happened. She ran her race, up hill, both ways, full bore to the finish.

NORA FACTOR



(Courtesy: Integrity Funeral Service)

Nora Factor, a resident of Henryetta, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully in her home on Thursday, January 2, 2025 with her daughter by her side. Nora was born on November 24, 1928 in Sapulpa, Oklahoma to Dave Tulsa and Sallie (King) Tulsa.

Nora is preceded in death by her late husband, Edmond Factor, daughter, Alice Mitchell, son, Jim Factor, sister, Katie Tulsa, brothers, Walter Tulsa and Kenneth Sourjohn.

Nora attended Prairie Bell School until she needed to stay home to care for her siblings due to her mother's ill health. Nora was well on her way to becoming a homemaker as she learned to cook at the age of eight years.

Nora's hobbies included beadwork, making yarnbelts, as well as leatherwork, quilting, turtle and can shells. Nora was the eldest member of the Arbeka Ceremonial Grounds, there she was also the family

cook at her camp as well as head cook for squirrel soup dinners until her health no longer permitted. Nora was baptized January 27, 1985 by the Rev. Barney Walker at Hickory Ground #2.

Recently, Nora moved into her new home. When friends and family gathered around to celebrate with her, she was asked what she felt was the secret to a long life...her reply was "drink a lot of water and dip alot of snuff!" Indeed

Nora lived a long and full life, blessed and offered blessing to all those that she met. She was well loved and will be greatly missed.

Those left to cherish Nora's memory are her daughter, Sallie Ortiz of Morris, Oklahoma, son, Joe Tulsa of Morris, Oklahoma, eight grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, seven great-great-grandchildren and a host of other relatives and dear friends.

FIELDS ALEXANDER

Continued from Page 5  
talented Native artisans whose work might otherwise go unnoticed. "I try to highlight people that might not normally be highlighted, just normal people that might be your receptionist at the clinic, and they're an extraordinary beadwork artist," Fields

Alexander said. Fields Alexander also organizes the Sweetheart Market, held annually before Valentine's Day. Both of these markets are family-centered, with her children contributing ideas to ensure the events are enjoyable for all ages.

Looking Ahead

Although Fields Alexander

has left her role at MCN, she has no plans to slow down. She's preparing for the upcoming Sweetheart Market at the Glenpool Conference Center on Jan 18.

And beyond her current ventures, she's also developing new projects, including a 'Native Home Economics' class.

"My passion is being at home and celebrating home, and that's what I want for other people,"

Fields Alexander said. "I'm working on designing a 'Native Home Ec' class. Each class will teach different things, hands-on and primarily taught by me. Occasionally, I'll have other people coming in and teaching things that I don't know how to do."

Drawing from her experience as Head Chalet in the Rolex Room at the PGA, she plans to incorporate lessons on table set-

ting and serving, too.

"It's the little details that make people feel special," Fields Alexander said. "And that's what I treasure."

Whatever comes next, Fields Alexander said she will remain steadfast in her mission to keep Native culture at the heart of her work, passing on the knowledge and traditions she learned from her elders.

SAND CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sand Creek Baptist Church  
Wetumka, Oklahoma, 74883

- NOTICE -

Dut to limited space Sand Creek Baptist Church, Wetumka, Oklahoma reserves the SCBC Cemetery, Church Building, and Fellowship Hall for active members only.

Respectfully,

Harry Harje 11-24-2024  
Harry Harje,  
Sand Creek Baptist Church Chairman

Augusta Anderson  
Augusta Anderson,  
Sand Creek Baptist Church Secretary

BIBLE BATTLE

Continued from Page 3

All of this was funded by the federal government but it was also run by Christian missionaries."

On November 14, 2024 Walters announced the purchase of more than 500 Bibles to be implemented in AP Government classes. This purchase is outside of the 55,000 Bibles originally announced in the Request for Proposals (RFP). "Oklahoma is leading the

country on a path toward greater focus on academic excellence by providing critical historical, cultural, and literary context for our students," Walters stated in a press release. "We are not going to change our history, and the Bible is a major part of that."

When it comes to the Bible and Oklahoma history on this point Walters and Rev. Randall agree, though not for the same reasons.

"Oklahoma has a history and we should know better when we try to force a religion upon any

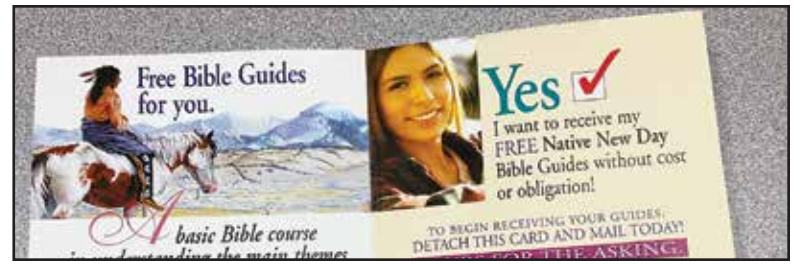
people," Randall said. "And as a citizen of the Mvskoke Nation, I find it appalling and offensive that Superintendent Walters would go to this extreme to once again force his extreme religious beliefs upon people," stated Rev. Randall.

On November 15, 2024 Justice Dana Kuehn recused herself from the case due to her involvement in the representation of members of the Oklahoma State Board of Education on November 12.

The RFP for the Bibles was subsequently cancelled.

NATIVE NEW DAY BIBLE GUIDES

Discover Bible is offering Native New Day Bible Studies. This is a 30 lesson series that is done by correspondence. The guides are beautifully illustrated and are written for Native people, by Native people. If you are interested, contact us at Discover Bible School PO Box 14208 Tulsa, OK. 74159-1208.



Celebrate your loved ones achievements with

GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS!



5" x 7" Announcements with matching envelopes

- Announcements are ONE SIZE ONLY
- Must choose from one of the nine provided template
- A 10% discount is issued for Muskogee (Creek) Citizens

PRICING:

- 25 Announcements - \$30
  - 50 Announcements - \$55
  - 75 Announcements - \$75
  - 100 Announcements - \$90
- \*PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE TAXES

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO REQUEST AN ORDER FORM • CREATIVE@MVSKOKEMEDIA.COM • 918.732.7640 • MVSKOKECREATIVE