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MVSKOKE NEWS

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NATIONAL COUNCIL VOTES TO GIVE RAISES TO REPRESENTATIVES AND SPEAKERS

EACH REPRESENTATIVE WILL RECEIVE A \$28K RAISE, SPEAKER A \$15K RAISE, SECOND SPEAKER A \$33K RAISE

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE - The Muscogee Creek National Council voted to adopt an amended substitute NCA 25-125 into law after rigorous debate and four separate votes on the legislation during the Regular Session at the Mound Building on Saturday, Dec. 20. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-1. The lone dissent vote was made by Representative Dode Barnett. The law will go into effect in 2028.

The \$459,154 appropriation will increase each council representative's salary from \$47,000 to \$75,000 per year. The speaker's salary will increase from \$70,000 to \$85,000 per year. The second speaker's salary will increase from \$47,000 to \$80,000 per year. An added amendment states that mileage will not be reimbursed for council members who travel to regular sessions, emergency sessions, special sessions or committee meetings.

According to the bill, the salary increases are necessary due to cost of living increases and increased responsibilities consistent with the growth of the Nation. The last time the National Council representatives and speakers received a salary increase was 2014. Since then, the amount of enrolled citizens has increased by 30,000.

When the floor was open to discussion from council mem-



The official 23rd Session MCNNC. In front from left to right: Thomasene Yahola Osborn, Robyn Whitecloud, Dode Barnett, Mary Crawford, Joyce Deere, Sandra Golden, and Anna Marshall. Standing left to right: Galen Cloud, Darrell Proctor, Randall Hicks, Charles McHenry, Mark Randolph, Leonard Gouge, Robert Huft, Patrick Freeman Jr., and Nelson Harjo Sr. (MCNNC)

bers, Rep. Harjo opened with his reasoning for bringing the bill to a vote. He argued that the raises will attract younger citizens to run for council positions. He claimed the current \$40,000 salary for each council representative is not viable to live off of, or to support a family.

"This is to attract a broader group of people that are younger to come in," Rep. Harjo said. "Our people are educated now, younger people are educated. We'd like to invite them to the table."

A Rigorous Debate

Representative Sandra Golden gave remarks that concurred with Rep. Harjo. She expressed initially being conflicted on the bill because she did not believe the raise was necessary for herself and colleagues in the current session. However, Rep. Golden

argued that when she thought about future sessions of the National Council, a raise would be necessary to encourage a more diverse age range of candidates to run for office.

"We want to attract young people forward thinking to move our Nation forward," Rep. Golden said. "If we pay them what we pay our personnel, we have to do that (increase salaries), look forward."

Rep. Golden stated that MCN personnel receive a four percent pay increase every year, however the council has not received a raise in over a decade. She argued that the council's salary has not kept pace with the rise in cost of living expenses. She also argued that the amount of citizens the council represents has increased as well, now sitting at over 100,000.

Representative Leonard Gouge argued the bill needed

more work on it before it was ready for a vote. Particularly, if the pay increases are intended to provide a full-time salary, Rep. Gouge questioned the definition of what "full time" means. Likewise, he noted that the Tribe needs to consider salary raises for all personnel, not just elected officials.

"What does 'full time' mean? Do they quit their jobs now, or quit a second job and do this full time? Are they here 80 hours every two weeks? We have employees now who clock in and clock out. We don't do that. We have the issue now where \$47,000 is good money to other employees of the tribe. We need to consider everyone," Gouge said.

Representative Mark Randolph said that he is not opposed to raises because they offer incentives for individuals to perform well in their positions. How-

ever, Rep. Randolph agreed with Rep. Gouge that the legislation to increase council member salaries needed more work. Rep. Randolph said he was in favor of salary increases on an individual basis, not as a collective body.

"A pay raise is based on a person's job performance," Rep. Randolph said. "If you look at us collectively, what have we done to deserve a \$28,000 pay jump?"

Representative Robyn Whitecloud argued that the base salary for each council member does not include the fringe benefits that come with each position. She claimed that currently each representative makes closer to \$69,000 with fringe benefits, the speaker makes closer to \$100,000. Rep. Whitecloud concurred with Rep. Randolph that more input is needed from citizens before a salary increase is voted on.

"I believe this is being rushed and I do believe we need more input from citizens. I think an increase is warranted, but not at this time," Rep. Whitecloud said.

Representative Anna Marshall said that it is hard to put a price on the work that is performed by council representatives that work off hours and weekends. She remarked that she performs social work for her representatives, like connecting citizens with Tribal services.

"Each one of us knows there's a value based on our time that

RAISES

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CITIZENSHIP BOARD DELIVERS FIRST GRAYSON/KENNEDY STATUS REPORT

BOARD AWAITS LEGISLATIVE ACTION FROM MCNNC AND PRINCIPAL CHIEF



MCN Citizenship Board to deliver monthly reports to the MCN Supreme Court. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

BY JERRAD MOORE
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE - On Friday, Dec 5 the Muscogee Creek Nation Citizenship Board delivered its first monthly status report to the MCN Supreme Court. Previously, the court ordered the Citizenship Board to grant citizenship to Freedmen descendents Rhonda Grayson and Jeffery Kennedy on July 23. When the board had not complied with the order a month later, Grayson and Kennedy filed a motion for contempt with the MCN Supreme Court. The court denied the motion, finding that the Ci-

zenship Board was trying to comply, but on Oct 27, the motion for contempt was renewed. The MCN SC then ordered the Citizenship Board to deliver monthly status reports on Nov. 13.

According to the report, the board was given proposed code amendments by Counsel for the Executive Branch and the Attorney General's Office on Oct 24. The board then returned comments on the proposed changes on Oct 29. The report states that after this date the Board was unaware what action had been taken.

The report further states that

letters were sent to both the MCN National Council and Principal Chief's office requesting information. These letters were included as exhibits within the report.

While the Citizenship Board did not receive a response from the National Council, Principal Chief David Hill responded with a letter that is also included as an exhibit in the board's report. The letter reads:

As a general matter, I, as Principal Chief, do not want to be uncooperative and do not want to impede the ability of the Board to provide an appropriate response to the Court as the Board sees fit. However, I am not a party in the Grayson case, and, as a matter of separation of powers, information about the implementation of the Constitutional duties and responsibilities of the Executive Branch departments and officials, including communication with the National Council on proposed legislation, falls under the exclusive province of the Principal Chief and is not

STATUS REPORT

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Yield Giving was established by MacKenzie Scott to share a financial fortune created through the effort of countless people (Jerrad Moore/MM)

CMN RECEIVED \$8 MILLION GIFT FROM YIELD GIVING

THE UNRESTRICTED AWARD WILL GO TOWARDS PROGRAMS, STUDENTS SUPPORT, AND CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE - On Friday, Nov 28, the College of the Muscogee Nation announced it was the recipient of an \$8 million gift from Yield Giving, a foundation founded by philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.

CMN President Dr. Monte Randall (Mvskoke) shared with Mvskoke Media that the college received news of the gift on Oct. 22 through a phone call with the organization. Randall was overwhelmed, and the news was very encouraging.

"They acknowledged the work that we're doing with the

Mvskoke Language Revitalization. They acknowledged our graduation rates, our retention rates and it was just uplifting, not only having them say that they were going to give us money but then tell us why they were giving that money because they know who we are," Randall said.

"We do this for the Nation, for our people."

Other Oklahoma institutions received gifts in 2025 from Yield Giving, including Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Northeastern State University in

GIFT

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New name honors Mvskoke history

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Mvskoke citizen authors history of betrayal

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CMN produced "Chitto Harjo" documentray

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TRADITIONAL ARTS:
Native baskets exhibition at Philbrook

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ELECTION CONNECTION:
MCN Election Board publishes district map

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LAKE EUFAULA CASINO HOTEL OPENS JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

MNGE'S \$69.8M INVESTMENT WILL ADD 100 FULL-TIME POSITIONS TO THE EUFAULA ECONOMY

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises cut the ribbon on the Lake Eufaula Casino Hotel on Monday, Dec. 15. The 20,500 square-foot casino will offer guests 500 gaming machines and Player's Club. The hotel features 46 rooms with premier suites and a fitness center. The casino's 90-seat North Fork Bar & Grill will provide a full-service menu along with a 25-seat private dining room. The construction project began in June 2024 and took just under two years to complete.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill helped cut the ribbon during the opening ceremony. Principal Chief Hill remarked that this location will make a fine addition to the Nation's collection of gaming properties. It will also expand Eufaula's tourism economy.

"Today marks an important milestone for our Nation as we open a destination that reflects both our heritage and our vision for the future," Principal Chief Hill said. "The Lake Eufaula Casino Hotel strengthens our economic foundation, expands tourism and supports continued

growth of this vibrant region, and as guests tour the property for the first time, this opening reflects our long-term commitment to expanding world-class entertainment options across our Nation's reservation."

MCN Second Chief Beaver echoed this sentiment that the facility will provide new opportunities for Mvskoke citizens and residents in Eufaula. Second Chief Beaver remarked that the facility will showcase some of the Mvskokvke's greatest strengths.

"Our people have always been known for their hospitality, and this property gives us another opportunity to share that spirit with guests from near and far," Second Chief Beaver said. "The Lake Eufaula Casino Hotel reflects both innovation and tradition—creating a space that celebrates who we are while supporting a strong future for this community and seeing the first guests interact with the space brings to life our commitment to cultural representation and design excellence."

MNGE Chief Executive Officer Pat Crofts said that the Nation is excited to offer state-of-the-art entertainment for residents living in the southern region. According to Crofts those traveling to the lake will find exciting new



Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises and MCN Tribal Leadership cut the ribbon opening the Lake Eufaula Casino Hotel. (Tom Gilbert)

dining and gaming options.

"This addition reflects our ongoing commitment to making Lake Eufaula a complete destination for entertainment, dining and recreation. As the area continues to thrive, we are creating new opportunities for residents to enjoy world-class amenities close to home, while welcoming visitors who come to experience the beauty and excitement of Lake Eufaula," Crofts said. "This venue is designed to bring people

together—locals and travelers alike—to enjoy the best of what this remarkable community has to offer."

The hotel lobby features an original large-scale wooden art installation by Mvskoke artist Bobby Martin. The installation consists of eight panels measuring six feet by twenty two feet total. The piece incorporates a 1933 USDA soil map of McIntosh County layered with archival imagery, historical references

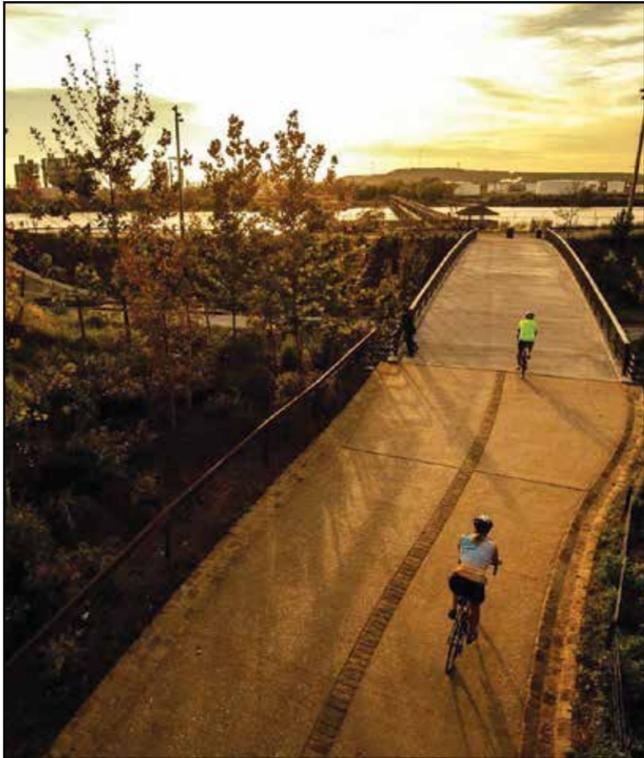
and Muscogee design patterns.

The new facility is located at 1045 Birkes Rd and replaces the old casino formerly located at 806 Forrest Ave. According to MNGE, all 60 full time employees from the previous property have transitioned to the new facility. The new facility has created 100 new full-time positions bringing the total full-time workforce to 164 employees.

MIDLAND VALLEY TRAIL RENAMED AFTER MVSKOKE ALLOTMENT OWNER

THE TUCKABACHE TRAIL NOW HONORS THE LEGACY OF THE MAN WHO USED TO OWN THE PROPERTY WHERE THE GATHERING PLACE SITS TODAY

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR



The newly renamed Tuckabache Trail winds through the Gathering Place on land previously owned by Mvskoke allottee Tuckabache. (Photo courtesy of Gathering Place)

TULSA - The Midland Valley Trail has a new name that honors a Mvskoke allotment owner. The trail now bears the name Tuckabache, a Mvskoke man whose original allotment is now a Tulsa park, the Gathering Place. The trail was officially renamed at a Tulsa Parks and Rec-

reation Board Meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 9 in a unanimous 3-0 vote. The 3.3 mile trail stretches from E. 3rd & Madison Ave. to the Riverparks West Bank at the Arkansas River.

Tuckabache was born in the Southeast homelands before the Indian Removals in the 1800s. He was forced to walk the Trail of Tears

where he settled on his homestead in Creek Nation, Indian Territory.

Tatianna Duncan (Mvskoke) is a direct descendant of Tuckabache. She is also a strong advocate for allotment history research in Tulsa. Duncan recently authored the book, "INDIAN TERRITORY: Surviving 160 Acres of Betrayal." The historical memoir details the story of a Mvskoke family who loses their allotment and wealth to outside guardians. When Duncan first heard about the campaign to rename the trail, she knew she wanted to be a part of the effort. According to Duncan, she is pleased to see Tulsa acknowledging its history before the oil boom.

"It's been an ongoing effort from different people along the way," Duncan said. "People were ready for the change, Tulsa is ready to acknowledge the history of Native Americans."

Duncan was at the Tulsa Parks and Recreation Board meeting when the board voted to rename the trail. Duncan's mother, Sallie Keblish (Mvskoke), was also present at the board meeting. According to Duncan, Keblish is the oldest living descendent of Tuckabache. Duncan described the renaming as a "reclamation" that meant a lot to her family.

Descriptions of Tuckabache passed down in Duncan's family describe him as a traditional Mvskoke man. Duncan said not many stories about Tuckabache were passed down likely due to boarding schools and assimilation.

City of Tulsa Director of Tribal

Policy and Partnership Amanda Swope (Mvskoke) said in a statement that the City was pleased with the Park and Recreation Board's decision. According to Swope, the renaming is another step in the right direction for honoring the Reservation the city is located on.

"We appreciate the Tulsa Parks and Recreation Board's action to advance the recommendation to rename the Midland Valley Trail to the Tuckabache Trail. This is an appropriate step for our city and reflects respect for the sovereignty of the land on which Tulsa stands. I look forward to

"I've said and I know some other Indigenous people have said that maybe to start to talk about that trail that follows that old MKT (Missouri-Kansas-Texas) Railroad line," Cobb said. "It's now called the Midland Valley Trail. It's a wonderful resource. A lot of people walk their dogs and ride their bikes on it. Maybe we should call that Tuckabache Trail?"

Duncan said there is still a lot of work to be done in researching Tulsa's allotment era. Research can involve a lot of time and energy spent combing through hundreds of docu-

"I thought he was some long figure from way back, but he's my third great-grandfather, mom's great-great grandfather. He's pretty close in relation to us." - Tatianna Duncan

continued collaboration in the weeks and months ahead as we work to move this renaming effort forward."

Historian and author Dr. Russell Cobb was interviewed by Mvskoke Media on September 6, 2018 to discuss the history of the Tuckabache's land and the, then, newly opened Gathering Place. One of Cobb's research interests has been the history of Indigenous land disposition in Tulsa. During the interview, Cobb proposed an idea of renaming the Midland Valley Trail to Tuckabache Trail.

ments, however Duncan argues the work is important to honor those who have come before us.

"To know their names, to understand our ancestors' struggles, that's very important to our lives. It's important to pass that down to your children," Duncan said.

The Gathering Place previously honored the legacy of Tuckabache with a land acknowledgement in 2024. Although it has been over a century since Tuckabache's passing, his name continues to be shared across the city.

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RAISES

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we spend with our citizens and the value of the time it takes to be a council representative,” Rep. Marshall said. “All of us come from different districts. Each district has its own unique qualities and personalities. Every council representative is going to be doing something different.”

MCN Controller Patricia Kilian was questioned whether the salary increases would take away from existing programs or future programs. She said that it will increase the National Council's budget, and it would be a possibility that it could affect other programs. However, she said that she would not absolutely know if other programs were affected until it is time to draft a new budget for the next fiscal year.

Rep. Barnett noted that not all council members attend every meeting and training they are expected to attend. She argued it would be a more transparent process for the people if the raises would go into effect on October 1 during the year so that the raises pass through the Tribe's annual budget hearings. She argued the bill needs stronger accountability protocols for council representatives who do not carry out all of their responsibilities.

“There needs to be specific consequences if we don't show up to these expected events,” Rep. Barnett said. “The bill could be better if you're going to give

yourself a raise.”

Votes on the Legislation

A total of four votes were made on the legislation. Rep. Whitecloud first made a motion to postpone the bill indefinitely. That vote was split 7-7 and was broken by Speaker Randall Hicks, who voted against postponement.

Representative Charles McHenry made a motion to vote on the substitute. The vote was split 7-7, broken by Speaker Hicks, who voted in favor of the substitute. Representative Dode Barnett changed her vote in favor of the substitute. She explained that the reason she changed her vote was to call for a motion to vote to reconsider the legislation. A motion to reconsider the vote can only be made by a member of the majority vote. The vote to reconsider passed in favor 9-5.

Rep. Randolph made a motion to amend the substitute bill to take effect in 2028- the initial date the salary increases would start was Jan. 1, 2026. The amendment passed in favor of the amendment to the substitute bill 13-1. Rep. Marshall was the lone dissent.

The final vote for the substitute bill with the amendment was adopted 13-1. A specific date for when the raises will take effect has not been announced yet.

GIFT

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Tablequah, East Central University in Ada, and Seminole State University in Seminole. Scott also gave to several other Tribal Colleges, including Bay Mills Community in Michigan, Blackfeet Community College in Montana, Little Priest Tribal College in Nebraska, and Menominee Nation in Wisconsin.

In 2019, Scott pledged to give away half of her wealth, estimated to be \$40B, in her lifetime. Writing in her pledge on the Giving Pledge, “In addition to whatever assets life has nurtured in me, I have a disproportionate amount of money to share. My approach to philanthropy will continue to be thoughtful. It will take time and effort and care. But I won't wait. And I will keep at it until the safe is empty.” In 2022 she established Yield Giving, the organization that manages her philanthropic giving.

“I just want to highlight how much of an honor it is to be selected to be placed among all of those other institutions and organizations across the United States that have been selected by MacKenzie Scott.”

“They knew exactly who they were giving it to and they acknowledged all of this work,” Randall explained, “We're actually going to invest this for the future.”

Before news of the grant came, CMN was already in the process of setting up an investment policy beginning in 2024, work-

ing on it throughout the summer and fall of 2025.

CMN will also be creating a long term planning opportunity for the college to help support Mvskoke Creek and Tribal citizens for years to come. “So that's the main portion of the investment, but we're also going to utilize some of the gift for some of our capital projects, the construction projects on campus and faculty development,” Randall said.

As the campus grows, they will be adding more courses and programs in addition to hiring quality faculty. CMN will also continue with their plans in establishing bachelor's degree programs and growing the Mvskoke Language Revitalization program.

For students specifically, CMN will continue to assist students on campus with support services and other opportunities for curricular activities. “I could see the increase in those opportunities for the students and student life campus,” Randall said.

Randall would like to thank his faculty and staff, and for Yield Giving for the donation.

“This is just a great accolade to the College of the Muscogee Nation, again faculty, staff, students, alumni, we can't do this without all of them.”

For information on CMN and their programs/courses contact 918-549-2800 and online at CMN.edu. For updates on campus happenings, you can follow their Facebook page at The College of the Muscogee Nation.

posed amendments to Title 7. These proposed amendments were shared with the Board, and I have received some initial comments from the Board. I have also updated the Speaker of the National Council on the status of these proposed amendments, and we have been discussing the need for scheduling a possible joint committee meeting between the Health, Education, and Welfare Committee and the Business, Finance, and Justice Committee to consider the proposed Title 7 amendments. I am not involved in the decision-making process of scheduling Committee meetings of the National Council, so I cannot provide information on when any meeting will be set to consider proposed Code amendments.



FIRST MVSKOKE-OWNED AND OPERATED ART GALLERY OPENS IN JENKS

THE MVSKOKE WATERS GALLERY OPENED ON DEC. 13

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

JENKS – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation just accomplished another historic first: the first Mvskoke-owned and Mvskoke-operated art gallery in the Greater Tulsa area, as the Mvskoke Waters Gallery opened in Jenks on Dec. 13.

Tucked away on the 500 block of Jenks's Riverwalk Crossing, the art gallery opened with its first art installation, “Mvskokvke: Road of Strength,” which strives to show the resilience, strength, and courage of the Mvskoke people, and features almost two dozen artists from all over the country.

The artists include George Alexander, Dan Beaver, Dianna Beaver, Harry Beaver, Gary Colbert, Leslie Deer, Johnnie Diacon, Phyllis Fife, Jimmie Carole Fife Stewart, Starr Hardridge, Kristi Holland, Kenneth Johnson, Robin Jenkins, Randy Kemp, Bobby C. Martin, Scott Roberts, John Tiger, Dana Tiger, and Sandy Fife Wilson. In addition, there were pieces by poet Joy Harjo and filmmaker Sterlin Harjo. There

was also an art piece featuring a tribute to Mary Edward Smith, an artist and Mvskoke citizen who passed away in April of 2025.

Curated by Mvskoke artists Bobby C. Martin and Carly Treece, the installation is, as the placard inside describes, a celebration of the Mvskoke people's ability to survive and endure.

“As the inaugural event of the new Muscogee (Creek) Nation fine art gallery, this exhibition marks a significant moment for the Muscogee Nation and Muscogee artists,” the placard reads.

“It provides a platform to share our stories through art, honoring our past while shaping our future. This gathering of artists is not just an exhibition — it is a statement of presence, creativity, and strength that will continue to inspire generations to come.”

Carly Treece, one of the co-curators of the exhibit, is very proud of the work that they have done for the gal-

lery's first exhibition, and is hopeful that it will potentially inspire more artists in the future.

“The exhibit is all legacy artists, which means that these artists have been doing this work for decades, and they have, kind of, paved the way for younger artists, and so, I feel like the exhibit is essentially showing their work and showing what they've done, and honoring how far they and their tribes have come,” Treece said.

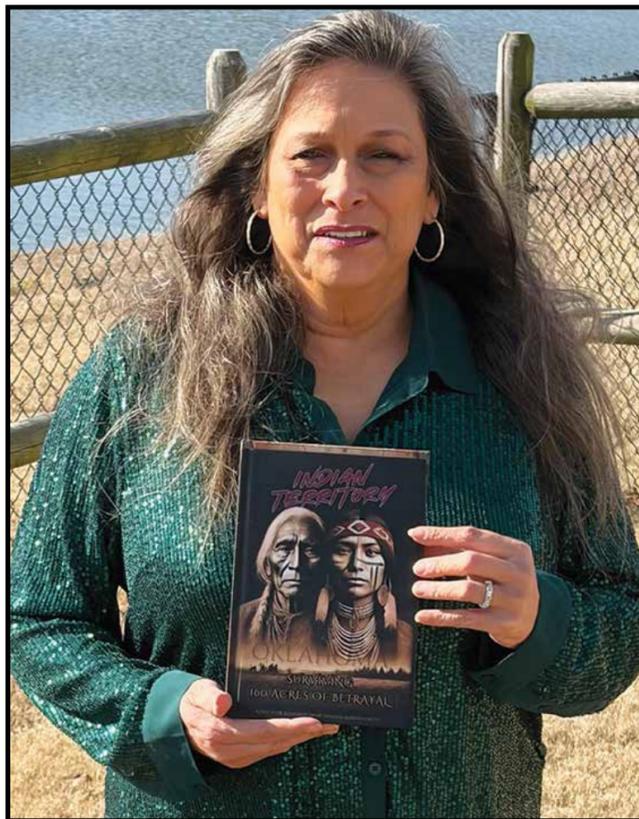
The Mvskoke Waters Gallery is located at 500 Riverwalk Terrace, Suite 115 in Jenks, OK. Its normal operating hours will begin on Jan. 6, 2026, where it will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Tuesday through Saturday.

Those interested in contacting the Mvskoke Waters Gallery can do so by email at mvskoke-waters@gmail.com

For those interested in the work of the curators, their work can be found at their websites, located at <https://www.tvlvestudios.com/> and <https://www.bobbycmartin.com/>

OKLAHOMA'S DARK HISTORY EXPOSED

MVSKOKE CITIZEN'S BOOK SHINES A LIGHT ON THE ALLOTMENT ERA



Tatianna Duncan released her new book on Dec. 13. (Photo Courtesy: Tatianna K. Duncan)

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

TULSA – Tatianna K. Duncan (Mvskoke) released “Indian Territory: Surviving 160 Acres of Betrayal,” on Dec. 13. The book illuminates the dark origins of the City of Tulsa through the telling of her own family's story. The book was originally a research project about her family that evolved into a massive investigation culminating in the book.

Described online as “both an

intimate family history and an unflinching indictment of the laws and institutions that turned survival itself into a legal battleground,” the plot revolves around two Mvskoke girls forced into guardianships and stripped of their land.

According to Duncan, the story is based on real events, but once she started her research it quickly became apparent that there was more to her family's

story than she had been told.

“It started off with oral history, and then it was confirmed through probate records, guardian files, documents, BIA correspondence, etc... I feel like it is a very similar story to many Indian families across Indian Country,” Duncan said.

Duncan's work uncovering the disturbing history of Oklahoma's Allotment Era also culminated in the Lucinda Hickory Research Institute, started in 2020, and named after her ancestor. Hickory died under mysterious circumstances at the age of just 13 after reports came out that her land held millions of dollars in natural resources. According to Duncan, given the string of mysterious deaths that happened to Indigenous people who became wealthy during the Allotment Era, her death is suspicious.

Duncan, by her own admission, isn't writing from a scholarly point of view. She's telling the story of what her family and what many other Indigenous families went through during the Allotment Era.

“I feel like my technique is raw, and I am a bit abrasive. I'm not writing from an academic perspective, but I do have a lot of documentation in my book to back up what I'm saying,” Duncan said.

“I wanted this story told, and I wanted it told with respect, not exploited by someone else.”

For an exclusive excerpt from Duncan's book, see page 5.

STATUS REPORT

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generally subject to disclosure except as required by Nation law.

Notwithstanding those objections, I can provide the following general responses:

1. Executive departments continue to review internal policies and procedures to determine the amendments that may be necessary; however, it is difficult for departments to be able to modify internal policies and procedures adequately and completely until final amendments to Title 7 (Citizenship Code) have been approved by National Council and enacted into law.

2. Executive branch officials and legal counsel continue to have discussions with the Office of the Attorney General on pro-

"CHITTO HARJO" SHARES THE STORY OF THE MVSKOKE LEADER

THE CMN/PURSUIT FILMS PRODUCTION IS THE FIRST IN THE LEGACY GIVING SERIES

By SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – On November 19, the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) premiered "Chitto Harjo," a short documentary about the Mvskoke leader. The film covers Harjo's life and story to further public Mvskoke History education. After the showing, CMN held a panel discussion featuring some of the team behind the film.

CMN President Dr. Monte Randall (Mvskoke) began this project from a desire to engage learners across generations through different platforms, like multimedia outlets. The inspiration for the project came from Randall's son, who watches U.S. history videos on YouTube. When Randall noticed the lack of educational resources on the platform about Mvskoke History, he came up with a plan to start a history channel with videos for everyone to watch.

Randall's goal is to have as many Mvskoke History videos as possible told by experts- he hopes that the audience learns about Mvskoke History. Randall wanted to start with Chitto Harjo's legacy. "Chitto Harjo has always been an inspiration to me through the stories of his defiance of the US government and even the early Muscogee Nation government that was pushing for assimilation," Randall said.

"His stories and the images of him stood as a symbol of what a modern-day warrior would have looked like in that time, and that resonated with me as we are all called to be warriors for our people today."

Randall chose the team for the project, which include MCN Secretary of Culture and Humanities RaeLynn Butler (Mvskoke) who provided historical and cultural context, Oce Vpofv (Hickory Ground) member Mike Harjo (Mvskoke) who provided the knowledge of Chitto Harjo's stories, and Danny Roberts (Mvskoke) who played Chitto Harjo.

"I wanted to show that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation can produce a high-quality video about our history, told by our experts from our perspective," Randall said. The college partnered with Pursuit Films, an Indigenous-led Tulsa based film development and production company.

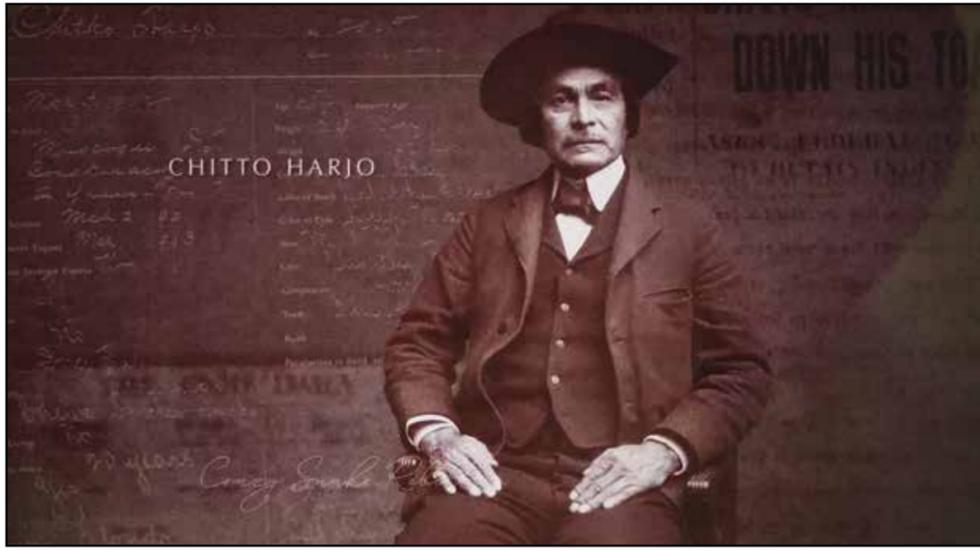
Mike Harjo and Danny Roberts also spoke to Mvskoke Media about their experience of being part of the film and how grateful they were to be speaking about Chitto Harjo's legacy.

Mike Harjo recounted that Randall came up to him during Hickory Ground's last dance, when the men were gathering around to play stickball. Randall was looking for oral history and spoke about this specific documentary; he wanted Mike to speak about any kind of oral history on Chitto Harjo.

"I've been here all my life, being an active member at Hickory Ground. I heard quite a bit of stories from the elders, so I had told him I knew some stories. That's basically what he was looking for, something that wasn't in the book that was oral history passed down and I said I would help him in any way," Mike Harjo shared.

Randall later told Mike Harjo that the project would be a video production, which made him nervous but also humbled. Mike shared that he had grown up listening to these stories, and even though others know oral history about Chitto Harjo he was humbled to be chosen. Initially, Randall asked Mike to play the role of Chitto Harjo, but he knew Chitto Harjo would have been older than himself during the period the film takes place.

Mike Harjo soon messaged Danny Roberts, a coworker at MCN Facilities who Mike felt was a better fit, and mentioned Rob-



"I will never stop asking for this treaty! The old treaty. That our Fathers made with the government which promised us this land forever! As long as the grass grows and the water flows and the sun rises! Mvto."
Chitto Harjo



TOP: Opening credit's of "Chitto Harjo" features a portrait of the Mvskoke leader (Image Courtesy: CMN/Pursuit Films) MIDDLE: Danny Roberts as the title character in "Chitto Harjo." His resemblance to the historical figure prompted Mike Harjo to reach out about involvement in the production. (Image Courtesy: Pursuit Films) LEFT: Roberts at the CMN premier of the documentary, speaking about this experience. (Shayln Proctor/MM) RIGHT: Mike Harjo appears in the documentary and shares Mvskoke History. (Image Courtesy: CMN/Pursuit Films)

ert's strong resemblance to legendary leader.

Roberts has never acted or done anything like this before, and while he was nervous throughout the filming it was a great experience for him. He had been reluctant to accept the role but thought about the educational purposes of what this documentary would do for the people.

At first, Roberts thought the film would be non-speaking reenactments, however he later received news he would be giving Chitto Harjo's famous speech to the 59th United States Congress. Even though he was nervous, he was happy to do it.

"Because to me it reflected what all Stecates feel as far as things that were done wrong, things that were unjust," Roberts said.

"We could all kind of relate to that and so I enjoyed that too, it's humbling. I enjoyed being able to express that and be part of that."

Roberts also enjoyed dressing similar to Chitto Harjo, being able to handle the pistols, and riding the horse. He took pride in portraying the historic figure and is glad that this will be here for a long time for young Mvskoke people.

"Especially young Stecate to be able to pull up any documentary to see and learn about their history, so I felt good about being able to assist with that and be a part of that. I did the best I could but that's what I enjoyed about it," Roberts said.

For Mike Harjo, his favorite part was speaking about Ste-

cate and Mvskoke history. Chitto Harjo is one of Mike's favorite subjects; he's heard a lot of stories growing up and they stuck with him. He always enjoyed re-telling them to his friends, cousins, or sitting at the ground speaking about it.

"Hopefully we can do some more, keep our youth informed about these stories, our Mvskoke History and oral stories too. I think that's something that we need to work on and maybe do more," Mike Harjo said.

Roberts feels that the project is great for the college and that this history needs to be shown- the more that's out there, the better.

"I think it's great, this history, the bad and good needs to be documented, needs to be put out there. When I was growing up, we read about history such as World History, US History and read a little about the Indian Tribes but the bad part, a lot of things are left out," Roberts said.

"A lot of people need to really understand what the Stecates went through. So if more of it can be put out there, more people can see it. It's just great for all tribes, not just Mvskoke. Because they went through afflictions and problems too, just like Mvskoke did."

Roberts explained that history can't be changed, but it needs to be shared.

"These documentaries that are put out, it isn't something that's just made up, it's history and we can't change history. But we sure need to remember the history of where we came from.

So I think it's a good reflection on CMN to put that out there and for the tribe to be able to do that. I think it's a good thing, I really do."

Mike Harjo agreed, "We had to overcome a lot of obstacles, and some of the stories, there's some good stories that came out too so it's not all bad, but it all needs to be told. I'm sure there's other people that know stories but if they don't share them and one day we'll be gone and those stories will be gone along with them."

"So we need to hold on to every bit of history that we have."

Mike Harjo thinks of Chitto Harjo as a true warrior- he was not afraid, he rose up to fight for what is right for the people, he cared about the traditional ways, ceremonial grounds, his faith, and the creator.

"This man came out of nothing but heart and fearlessness, ready to make a stand for the people, and the old ways and everything he believed in. That to me is something that is good that came out," Mike Harjo said. He also sees Chitto Harjo as having deep faith in the old Stecate ways, enough to put his whole life on the line.

Roberts hopes that young Stecate people grow a greater appreciation for Chitto Harjo's actions. "His words became action and he took it, kept going as far as he could. I hope it gives them strength, when they see this, the young people, and even the elders whoever sees this. We're Indigenous, we're here," Roberts said.

From Mike Harjo's point of

view, he wants people to be proud of being Mvskoke. "Stand up to people, don't let anybody run you over, you have your ancestors behind you. Because Mvskoke people, we've always stood up for ourselves along with other tribes. When the government was forcing us out of our homelands, some of them just moved but the Mvskoke people didn't. Maybe we're outnumbered and out-gunned again, but it's gonna take a fight to move us," Mike Harjo said.

It wasn't just the fight that inspired Mike Harjo, but also Chitto Harjo's support for traditional ways. "I know he was really pushing to go back to the old ways and other tribes too. I know he was a big supporter of the Cvlakke/Cherokee over there when they were trying to get their ceremonial grounds going. I know he was a big supporter of them, that's what he advocated for these tribes to return back to the old ways and I hope they can take something from that, from him, to see that part of what he was advocating for, the old ways, hopefully they can dig deeper into our old ways," Mike said.

Mike has noticed throughout his life that some ceremonial grounds have gone dormant, but he wants the grounds to keep going because he knows Chitto Harjo was all about returning back to the old ways.

"Maybe we will be doing a lot better and our ceremonial grounds would be a lot stronger. To me it's like our old ways: they don't get lost, the people get lost," Mike said. "Hopefully they could take that away from when they study more about Chitto Harjo and what he was about. If they want to dig deeper into our ceremonial ways, or if they haven't been raised that way, maybe they can study more and find out what the ceremonial ways or religious ceremonies are."

"Maybe this will get them motivated to learn and help carry those on so they'll never be lost."

Roberts' thoughts turned to Mvskoke ancestors, "Our ancestors that fought the wars, that were killed, that died on the trail, that same blood is in all of us. We need to take pride in that because they fought. Our ancestors came from the hardships, we struggle today," he said. "We still have issues and we still have struggles in the government. Things like that they try to push against the tribes. There's struggles still going on, not wars but governmental things that they try to push on us. We still have to stand up to that and realize they are trying to impede our sovereignty."

Mike Harjo agreed with Roberts' sentiments. "We've been fighting ever since the Stehvtke men got here, we've been fighting. Just making it through all the obstacles, and our sovereignty we have to protect and it just seems like the fight never stops," he said.

Mike Harjo reflected on his ground, Oce Vpofv (Hickory Ground), and their Coosa Mekko who are in the midst of fighting, as well as other Tribal leaders like MCN Principal Chief David Hill.

"Those guys are doing the best they can and whatever kind of obstacles that we face, and we have faith in those guys. I just think as long as we just keep on fighting to exist, and protect our own, protect our ways and our people. We just gotta keep on fighting because this is unfortunately how this country is. It almost seems like they're always trying to keep our people down. But you can't, it's proven you can't keep Mvskoke people down. We always rise back up and we have that in us, integrity, heart and courage and all that within our people," Mike Harjo said.

"Our history tells us that."

"Chitto Harjo" can be viewed at: <https://cmn.edu/nak-embv-vtelokes/>



"Interwoven: Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), & Yuchi Baskets" at Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa runs through Feb. 8, 2026. (Photo Courtesy: Welana Queton)

NATIVE BASKETS AT PHILBROOK

WELANA QUETON CURATES INTERWOVEN HISTORY AND ARTISTRY OF LOCAL TRIBES

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

TULSA – “Interwoven: Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek) and Yuchi Baskets” at Tulsa’s Philbrook Museum of Art is currently on display through Feb. 8. The exhibition highlights the shared history and artistry of basketmakers from the ancestral Homelands of the southeast. Welana Queton (Osage/Mvskoke/Cherokee), the Mellon Fellow for Native Art, curated the exhibition and spoke to Mvskoke Media about the inspiration and process behind her exhibition.

“Interwoven is a historical and contemporary basket from the Cherokee, Mvskoke and Yuchi people who share the ancestral homeland of Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. They also share the classical art of basketmaking,” Queton said.

“I titled this “Interwoven” with several meanings there, saying that Tulsa is an interwoven community in the Cherokee, Mvskoke and Yuchi peoples, we all share this community of Tulsa.”

The baskets are from the museum’s permanent collection and Queton was given three months to create the exhibit, which required following rules regulated to the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). To comply with NAGPRA confirmation needs to be attained from the source Tribes.

“People have to give approval to show their material cultural items in museums and so that was part of the work, and also

consulting with all of the tribes,” said Queton. “Philbrook has a really large collection of baskets. It’s probably one of the top 5 in the United States, a lot of them come from California and other tribes.”

Queton was grateful to be able to work with Tribes, including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She got quick approval from all the Tribes, and the MCN was also able to do an on-site consultation, the rest were over email.

During the process, she was able to consult with two Yuchi consultants for the exhibition. For Queton, the inclusion of Yuchi basketry was stirring—she’s been working in museums and collections for over 25 years and doesn’t see many Yuchi materials in collections.

“I was very excited about these, seeing these here and seeing these baskets. They were made by a husband and wife, George (Yuchi) b.c. 1853 and Fannie (Yuchi) b.c. 1865 Fulsom. The years are circa 1875 and they’re actually the oldest baskets in the whole exhibition. One is repaired heavily with a cotton strip, just showing the heavy use of it,” Queton shared.

Queton is filled with excitement to bring these baskets out for the Yuchi people because she knows that they don’t get to see a whole lot of items anywhere. Also she is happy to be able to bring these baskets out for the Mvskoke people and have their items placed there at the museum too.

Queton explained that baskets aren’t able to be brought out often because they’re made of

organic material, which means they don’t last in a lot of collections very long or they’re often part of unexhibited archaeological collections.

“So to have these in that period, represented here at the museum, was special as well. I just wanted to bring that out for all of our people here because this is our homelands now and this is our home. I think we should be represented in the exhibitions around here, so I was able to do that,” Queton said.

It’s important that the collection highlights history and the cultural value of the objects and why they were made, not just the materials that were used to make them.

“I was able to say something like green corn ceremony in relation to these baskets. I’m talking about corn, what it was and it still is. There’s a sacred element to Mvskoke and Yuchi people, it’s traditional processing,” said Queton.

“Its processing is fundamental to the annual green corn ceremony. The little things like that, I’m able to bring out, able to talk about some history, some values that we may see in these things that non-native people might not see.”

Queton is also proud of the public outreach her job allows her to do. “If we can help in some little way, provide another narrative or another way of understanding to a non-native person that makes me feel good. Like I’ve accomplished something, like I’m helping them see a different way and there are different ways of belief, there are other different ways of putting more visibility within these colonial spaces,” Queton said.

Queton encourages everyone to Philbrook to come see the baskets—visitors can request a tour with Queton herself, Monday-Friday.

“Interwoven: Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), & Yuchi Baskets” runs through Feb 8 at Philbrook Museum of Art, located at 2727 S Rockford Road in Tulsa. Philbrook is open Wednesday and Thursday from 9am-5pm, Friday through Sunday from 9am-4pm. Special holiday hours Monday, Tuesday, and Friday-Sunday from 5:30-9:30pm. The museum is closed Mondays & Tuesdays during the day.



Queton explained, “Important to Yuchi food ways, husband and wife, George and Fannie Fulsom wove these two sifter baskets for their family’s food processing. Fannie’s basket shows multiple repairs with torn cotton strips indicating its frequent use in her household. Collector Clark Field acquired these baskets from their grandson, Johnson Tiger.” (Photo Courtesy: Welana Queton)

Editor’s note: The following is an excerpt from “INDIAN TERRITORY: Surviving 160 Acres of Betrayal,” by Tatiana Duncan. For Duncan, “I chose Chapter 17 because it summarizes much of what the Hickory’s experienced — and many other Creek families — endured during the Allotment Era.” Duncan’s book is available for purchase on Amazon.com

Chapter 17

They Were Not Silent — They Were Silenced

As the battle rages on...

The court cases and ongoing legal battles over the land have been complex and deeply unsettling to unravel. They were bullied, coerced, and forced into poverty through illegal and exploitative means. In my heart of hearts, I will always believe that many of my ancestors were murdered, though I know I’ll never be able to prove it. That’s why I call these events “red flags.” At best, the speculators preyed on the family’s grief, the youth of the children, and the language barrier faced by the father. At worst, they enacted a systematic and ruthless campaign of theft, manipulation, and murder.

The stress of this relentless battle must have taken a heavy toll on the children’s education and well-being, forcing them to constantly worry about their father’s treatment and the fate of their home.

Relocating was not as straightforward as it might seem. Like many other Native American families during the Allotment Era, the Hickorys discovered that their guardian had mismanaged their business affairs and spent their money, leaving them in debt. Although they unwillingly sold their property, they knew they had to decide to move on, but not without getting a fair price.

Campbell’s initial attempts to acquire the Hickory family’s land were driven by plans to develop what began as an average middle-class neighborhood. However, as the fight for the land stretched over the years, its value skyrocketed, transforming it into prime, wealthy real estate.

Despite this, Campbell sought to shortchange the Hickory family, paying them only a fraction of its true worth—a drop in the bucket compared to what had already been taken from them.

The Hickory children, like so many Native allottees, helped build Tulsa—not just by hand, but by checkbook, and not by choice, but through fraud.

Their inherited wealth paved roads, funded development, and lined the pockets of powerful men. Meanwhile, the children were thrown into poverty. The education they received from their inheritance wasn’t one of privilege or higher learning. It was a masterclass in betrayal and survival. They learned, firsthand, how dark and deceptive the colonized world could be. And yet, they forged ahead with incredible tenacity.

My grandmother and her siblings weren’t allowed to nurture their talents—neither in the colonized world nor in their Creek culture. Their past was destroyed, their present was hell, and their future was stolen.

How could they prepare the next generation for a world they did not know and could not trust?

I think of something as simple as piano lessons. That kind of privilege wasn’t even a consideration—not for them, not for me. We didn’t ask, “Can we afford lessons?” We asked, “How will we pay the bills?” “How do I best help my family?”

And maybe that would’ve been just fine if they had been immigrants who arrived with nothing. But they were not immigrants, they had land, they had money. And they were surrounded by opportunists, always ready to take. Their futures were hijacked—their birthright was stolen—

And the thieves got away with it.

As a society, we shrug it off. “Well, nothing can be done about that now.”

Why not? If you’ve never experienced this kind of injustice, you might not understand how deeply it still lives inside us.

So, before you say, “That didn’t happen to me,” let me be clear: oh yes it did. It’s still happening. And before

you tell me about your uncle or your cousin and how they lost land too—remember this:

WE ARE INDIGENOUS.

This land was entrusted to our care. We thrived when we were allowed to care for it. Today, we survive. But so many of us have been denied the chance to truly thrive.

The Allotment Era absolutely shaped my life. And once I began researching it through my own lens, not through the lens of outsiders. When I did this, I could finally see that the story we’d always been told, was true.

One of the hardest truths to face was reading how my great-grandfather, Thomas Hickory, and his children were kept from the very home he built with his own hands.

They weren’t just locked out—they were run off. Forced to leave the home they built, on the land they owned, treated like intruders in their own story.

How would you feel? I already know.

My family lived it.

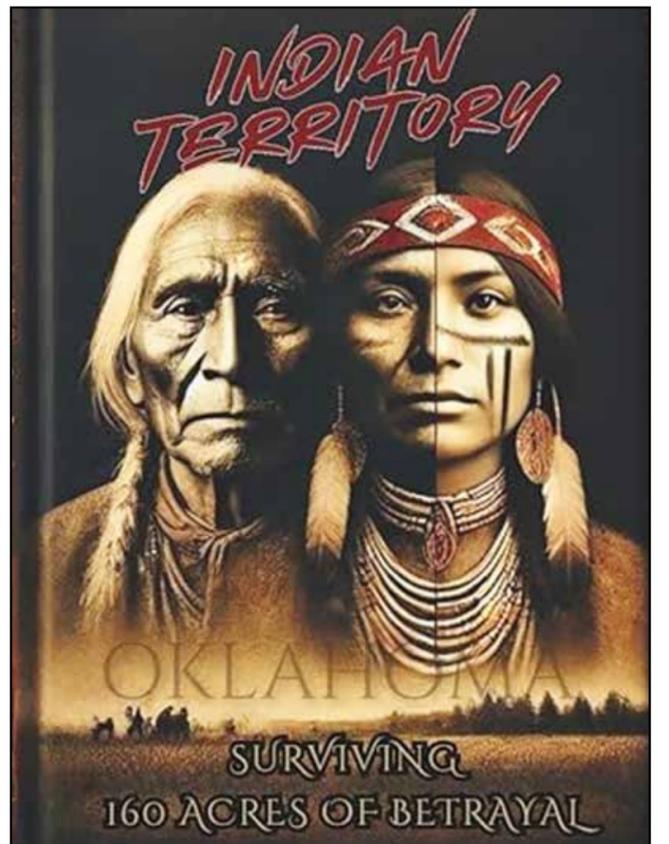
My family carries it still.

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HOUSING APPROVED FOR \$2M TO BUILD OKEMAH RENTAL UNITS

COUNCIL PASSES \$28K RAISES FOR REPRESENTATIVES

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a Regular Session in person on Saturday, Dec. 20 at the Mound Building.

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

TR 25-119 A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a plan of management and apply for grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services and commit a tribal match. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The \$13,627,324 in funds will provide \$120 per eligible school-age child on the summer Electronic Benefits Program (EBT) to buy food. The Nation will commit \$1,027,324 as a match for 2026.

TR 25-120 A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development Indian Community Development Block Grant Program for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages for the construction of rental units in Okemah. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The \$2 million grant will fund the construction of rental units in Okemah, Oklahoma. The tribe will provide \$400,000 in matching funds.

TR 25-121 A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Agreement and to apply for federal funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Transportation Bridge Program to fund bridge constructions with Wagoner, Tulsa, Creek, Okmulgee, Muskogee, and McIntosh Counties, and Bixby and Tulsa cities, for ten (10) bridge replacement projects. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The Transportation Department has identified bridges in these counties as being “structurally deficient and a hazard to the travelling public.” According to the law, the Nation will acquire all necessary temporary construction easements and will be responsible for all utility relocations necessary for the projects.

TR 25-122 A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance FY 2025 Body-Worn Camera policy and implementation program to support law enforcement agencies application for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police Department. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the law, body-worn cameras will enhance public safety, and improve interactions between Lighthorse officers and the public. The grant requires 1:1 matching funds over the course of a three-year period. The Nation will provide \$190,212

in matching funds.

NCA 25-121 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Child Care. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the law, the \$307,655 grant will be used for administrative costs for direct services to childcare providers and families.

NCA 25-123 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Internal Revenue Service Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program for the benefit of the Office of the Secretary of the Nation. Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the law, the \$15,000 grant will be used to provide assistance in preparing income tax returns for individuals who are age 59 and younger.

NCA 25-124 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Internal Revenue Service for the benefit of the Office of the Secretary of the Nation. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the law, the \$2,300 grant will be used for the Office of the Secretary of the Nation to provide assistance in preparing income tax returns for individuals who are 60 or older.

NCA 25-125 A law of the Mus-

cogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 30, Chapter 4, entitled “Compensation of National Council” and authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the National Council FY 26 Budget. Rep. Harjo sponsored the bill, which was adopted as substitute as amended 13-1. Rep. Barnett voted against the legislation.

The amended substitute will go into effect in 2028. The law gives each council representative a \$28,000 raise. The council speaker position will receive a \$15,000 raise. The council second speaker position will receive a \$33,000 raise. Rep. Harjo Sr., the bill’s sponsor, made a motion to adopt a substitute. The law received vigorous discussion from Council members. Rep. Harjo said that there is a need for the raises for council members in order to support themselves and their families. Representative Sandra Golden concurred, stating “We want to attract young people, forward thinking for the Nation.”

Rep. Randolph voiced his opposition, stating “What have we done to deserve a \$28,000 pay jump?” Representative Leonard Gouge remarked that more work needed to be done on the bill. Particularly, to define what it means for a council member to work “full time”. Representative Robyn Whitecloud made a motion to postpone the vote on the bill indefinitely. The vote was split 7-7. Speaker Randall Hicks broke the tie and voted against the postponement. The motion

to adopt a substitute was tied 7-7. Speaker Hicks broke the tie and voted in favor of the substitute.

Rep. Barnett initially voted against the substitute but changed her vote in favor in order to make a motion to reconsider the bill. Only council members within the majority vote can make a motion to reconsider a bill. Rep. Barnett said more rules need to be in place, like mandatory attendance for meetings, before the bill is adopted. The council voted in favor of reconsidering 9-5. Rep. Randolph made a motion to move the amendment to 2028. The council voted in favor of the amendment 13-1.

NCA 25-127 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security FY 2025 Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program for the benefit of the Lighthorse Police Department and the Office of Emergency Management. Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-1. Rep. Marshall voted against the legislation.

According to the law, the \$817,375 grant will allow the Lighthorse Police Department to provide training, purchase four drones, one explosive portable detector, drone tracking software and drone supplies. For the Emergency Management Department it will allow them to provide training, purchase a counter drone, drone scout tags, six metal detectors, three x-ray systems, four light towers, and two rapid deployment vehicle barricades.

MCNNC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

HEW, Dec 9

TR 25-119 Representative Thomasine Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, which passed 3-0.

NCA 25-121 Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill, which passed 3-0.

LCN, Dec. 9

TR 25-120 Representative Mark Randolph sponsored this legislation which passed with a vote of 2-0.

TR 25-121 Representative Galen Cloud sponsored this legislation, which passed with a vote of 3-0.

BFJ, Dec 11

TR 25-122 Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.

NCA 25-116 Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.

NCA 25-122 Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.

NCA 25-123 Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.

NCA 25-124 Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.

NCA 25-125 Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-2. Rep. Barnett and Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. voted no. Representative Robert Hufft was the tie vote.

Joint HEW/BFJ, Dec 16
NCA 25-126 Rep. Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was postponed indefinitely 8-0.

NCA 25-127 Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which passed 8-0.



TOP: Former Chief A.D. Ellis is pictured with his sister, Susie Burke. BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: Chief Ellis celebrate his 90th birthday with cake. Former Chief Ellis and Second Chief Del Beaver at the Dec. 9 dinner. (Images Submitted by Gail Ellis)

BY GAIL ELLIS
SUBMISSION

Former Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief A.D. Ellis celebrated his 90th birthday on Saturday, Dec. 13 at the Twin Hills Community Center Christmas Dinner. Happy Birthday Chief Ellis!

DEWAR INDIAN COMMUNITY HOSTED A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EVENT

THE COMMUNITY IS GLAD TO HELP OUT DURING THE HOLIDAYS

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

DEWAR – On Dec. 14 the Dewar Indian Community held a “Christmas at Wal-mart” for the children in their community between the ages of 0-19 years old. Each child that signed up was able to get funds to spend at Wal-Mart, and they were able to get whatever items that they were

wanting.

Dewar Indian Community Treasurer Jennifer Jones said that this was their second year hosting this event for their community. They had a good turnout this year with about 30 children participating.

Jones acknowledges that sometimes it can be hard for fam-

ilies during the Christmas season and their community knew that this would be a good opportunity to help out by doing a shopping spree at Wal-Mart.

Jones enjoys giving back and seeing the smiles on children’s faces. “We’re a small community, but we have a big heart and we’re willing to help our citizens,” Jones said.

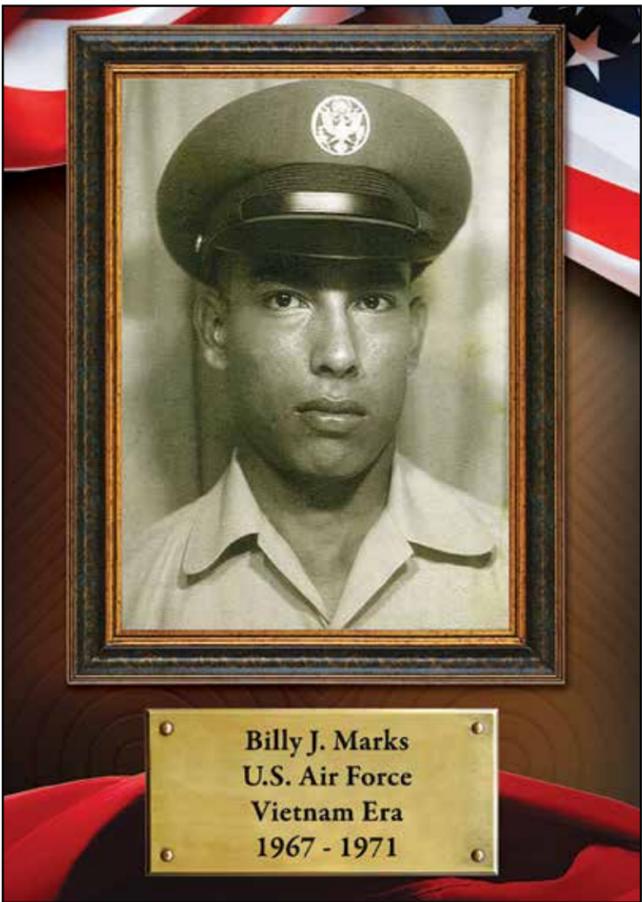


A young child with the items she got on December 14th. (Photo Courtesy: Dewar Indian Community Center)



A family day of fun Christmas shopping on December 14. (Photo Courtesy: Dewar Indian Community Center)

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT



The Muskogee Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office is proud to honor tribal veteran Billy J. Marks for his dedicated service to the U.S. Air Force, the United States, and the Muskogee (Creek) Nation.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Elder's Meeting Jan. 7 Okmulgee Elder Nutrition Center 9:30 a.m. 2900 N. Osage Pl. Okmulgee

Coffee and Donuts Jan. 8 Veterans Affairs Services Office 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. 1006 Bear Ln, Okmulgee, Okla For questions, contact 918-732-7739

Campus Police Launch Ceremony Jan. 8 College of Muskogee Nation CMN will announce, recognize, and honor new CMN

Campus Police Department and it's officers. 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. 2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee

Health Shelf Donation Drive College of Muskogee Nation Health & Wellness is seeking hygiene products, laundry detergent, and gently used blankets and pillows for students in need.

IN MEMORIAM



SANDRA ELAINE PARISH

Sandra Elaine (Parnosky) Parish, 62, of Muskogee, Oklahoma, passed away on December 7, 2025. She was born on August 24, 1962, in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, to Willie Parnosky and Nancy Sue Parnosky Fields.

Sandra dedicated her life to service and community. She worked proudly as a Correction Officer at Eddie Warrior Correctional Facility. She also served as a Council Representative for the Muskogee (Creek) Nation from 2002 to 2005 and held the role of Director for the Muskogee Indian Community.

member of the Butler Creek Baptist Church, where she was active in church functions and community activities.

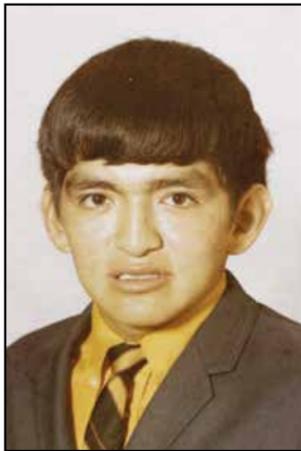
She is survived by her children, Wesley Parish and wife Cassidy, Joshua Parish, Cheyanna Fields and Laranda Parish; her grandchildren, Emry Fields, Dontez Fields, Minco Fields, Da'Koda Parish, Kinsley Parish, Daxton Parish, Kyler Parish, Zoe Parish, Paislee Parish, Kael Parish, Laylen Parish; and her nieces, Karey Jane, Kayla Figueroa, Nichole Jackson, CaSandra Bonham, Bobbie Sue Joslin, Norma Lynn Smith, Katie Stafford Andgelise Poole, Tristen Farrow, Sydney West, Rachel Baxter and Heidi Zimmerman; nephews, Kevin Parnosky and wife Cheslea, Cody Tucker, Nicholas Poole and Jason Poole; brother, Junior Parnosky and wife Carol; great-nieces and great-nephews, Tiffany, Brittany, Jacob and Jeremy Parnosky; and many other family members and friends.

Sandra was preceded in death by her mother, Nancy Sue Parnosky; father, Willie Parnosky; her siblings, Billie Poole, Karlata Jackson, Curtis Parnosky, Jimmy "Sonny" Parnosky, Norma Cawrse and Betty Hampton; great-nephews, Seth Joslin and Trenton Stafford.

Sandra will be remembered

for her unwavering dedication to her family, her tribal community, and her church. Her compassion, strength, and generosity touched the lives of all who knew her, and her legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of those she loved.

She was a mother whose strength, tenderness, and love shaped everyone who knew her. She spent her life giving -through her laughter, her guidance, her presence, and the devotion she had to her children. She knew who she was and left an impact everyone she encountered. She instilled this sense of community within others. She talked with purpose and genuinely believed supporting them. She had a passion for helping people, knew how to communicate and exactly who to talk to when it came to those experiencing hardship. Her life was defined by resilience, kindness, and a love that made her children feel safe in a world that often isn't. She faced her final days with courage, grace, and peace with family by her side. There is comfort knowing she is at rest, free of pain from this physical body, and will continue to live through each one of us with the same love she carried in life. She will always remain within us all, individually, and together.



TOMMY JOE CHECOTAH

Tommy Joe Checotah fell asleep in death Saturday, December 6, at St Francis Hospital in Muskogee. He was 73

years old.

He graduated from Oklahoma School for the Deaf in 1973 where he was a member of the Indian Football Team with honors. Tommy worked and lived in Tulsa before returning home to Muskogee where he worked for American Foundry for years.

Up until his illness, Tommy loved to swim, run and watch football. He participated in the Tulsa Run. Football was always the highlight of his life.

He loved attending Muskogee High School Games.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Clinton Checotah and Annie Barnoski Checotah, Grandmother, Charlotte Yahola Bell, Sister, Bonnie Adeline Barnoski, brother, Raymond Checotah and Nephew Benjamin

Ray Checotah and great nephew Samuel Checotah.

He is survived by his brothers, Clarence and Clinton Checotah Jr, sister, Joann Checotah, of the home. Great nieces, Kylie Michelle, Gabriella and Charlotte Ann Checotah and nephew's wife, Christan Checotah who was dear to him.

As Tommy's illness progressed through years of dialysis and heart problems, he always had a smile on his face and greeted others with a smile. He got to know his true loving father Jehovah and knew that one day he would live once again in the paradise earth.

Due to Tommy and his family wishes, a private service at the cemetery will be held at a later date.

LEGALS

Legal document: NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN. MUSKOGEE (CREEK) NATION, TO: Helea Skye Factor and All Persons Interested In The Person and Estate Of E.M.R., minor child.

Legal document: SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN SAID PETITION BEING GRANTED AND ORDERED WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT AS WELLAS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE MINOR CHILD. Signed and Ordered this 10 day of December, 2025.

Legal document: ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL GUARDIAN. Notice is hereby given that HALONA DUTCHY has filed in the District Court of the Muskogee Creek Nation, a petition requesting the appointment of a guardian of the person and property of A.D., date of birth March 1, 2012.

Legal document: IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF OKMULGEE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA. IN RE THE ADOPTION OF: D.D.M.; DOB: 08/03/2011; A Minor Child. NOTICE OF HEARING. THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA TO: TAMMY MAE PITTMAN, Natural Mother.

Legal document: YOU ARE, THEREFORE, NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE PETITION TO TERMINATE PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE BIRTH MOTHER OF D.D.M. AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD.



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 W. 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