



MVSKOKE NEWS

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FREEDMEN FILE MOTION TO COMPEL IN RESPONSE TO CHIEF'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 25-05

MOTION TO COMPEL ACCUSES CHIEF AND THE MCN CITIZENSHIP BOARD OF UNLAWFUL DELAY OF CITIZENSHIP

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

TULSA – A motion to compel was filed in Muscogee (Creek) Nation Supreme Court on Tuesday Oct. 14 by Rhonda Grayson and Jeffrey Kennedy, the two plaintiffs in the Freedmen case. The motion to compel demands that MCN Principal Chief David Hill and the MCN Citizenship Board comply with the MCN Supreme Court's decision. In that ruling, it was determined that descendants of Creek Freedmen must be admitted to the MCN as citizens. Court documents accuse Chief Hill of obstructing the citizenship application process by issuing Executive Order 25-05, a directive that allowed the board to accept

Freedmen descendent applications, but not issue them citizenship cards.

According to a press release from Justice for Greenwood, it describes EO 25-05 as “unlawful” and that it defies the authority of the MCN Supreme Court. It claims that it has been almost eight weeks since Kennedy and Grayson originally applied for citizenship. Neither have been issued a citizenship card. According to lead counsel for the plaintiffs Demario Solomon-Simmons, they will continue to fight until Grayson and Kennedy officially receive citizenship.

“The Treaty of 1866 is binding, and the law is clear,” Solomon-Simmons said in the press release. “Chief Hill's executive order is unconstitutional and unlaw-

ful. The Citizenship Board admitted they could complete this process weeks ago. These continued delays are deliberate, coordinated obstruction—and they will be held accountable.”

According to the Nation, the directive was issued because new code amendments compliant with the Treaty of 1866 are in development. A time table of how long it will take to develop and implement the new code amendments has not yet been announced.

Mvskoke Media reached out to the MCN Executive Branch on the motion to compel. Press Secretary Jason Salsman made the following statement:

The Muscogee Nation is committed to implementing all

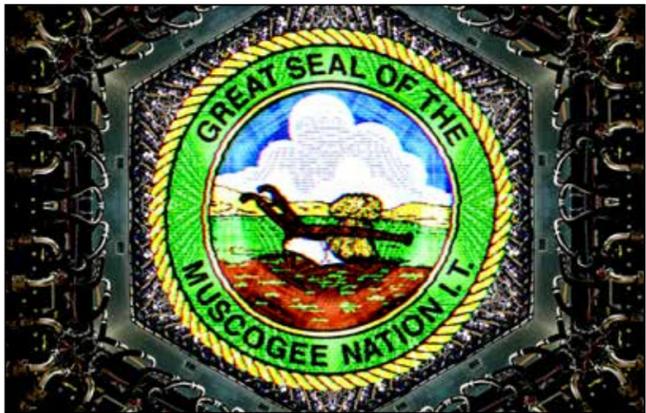


(MM)

treaty obligations in a manner that is fair, transparent, and consistent with our Nation's laws. We are developing code amendments to ensure that all individuals who may qualify under the Treaty of 1866 are treated equitably and with respect. Our government's priority is to ensure that any determinations regarding citizenship are based on careful review, sound documentation, and responsible governance. The Nation's Supreme Court has acknowledged that this process will take time, and we

are proceeding with great care to uphold both the spirit and the letter of its decision. We understand that some individuals may feel frustrated by the pace of this work. However, impatience cannot replace the careful deliberation and integrity required to carry out our Nation's sovereign responsibilities. We remain steadfast in pursuing a process that honors our treaties and our duty to future generations.

Mvskoke Media will continue to provide developments on the Freedmen case.



(Jerrad Moore/MM)

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – An official vote on NCA 25-077 that would establish a new data center complex on the Mvskoke Reservation has been postponed again. The legislation was scheduled to be voted on at the Muscogee Creek National Council Quarterly Session on Oct. 25. During the meeting, NCA 25-077 bill sponsor Patrick Freeman Jr. made a motion to postpone the legislation until the November Regular Session. According to Rep. Freeman during session, the motion to postpone was made in order to introduce a substitute bill. There was no discussion on the postponement, and comments regarding what might be in a substitute bill were not made. The bill was voted unanimously 14-0 in favor of postponing a vote until the next Regular Session.

A data center is a facility that

houses information technology infrastructure. The demand for data centers has increased due to advancements in artificial intelligence. The Cherokee Nation currently owns a 430,000-square-ft data center located at 7400 N. Lakewood Ave in Tulsa. A new proposed data center in Tulsa was approved for zoning in September: Project Clydesdale.

If adopted into law, NCA 25-077 will establish the Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park, or “Mvskoke Tech Park” in Okmulgee County. According to the bill, this complex will develop “digital infrastructure, software and technologies, including telecommunications, power robotics, cloud computing, blockchain, and manufacturing facilities to support internet connectivity and advancements in artificial intelligence.”

Benefits of the tech park outlined in the bill include long-term economic growth, data sovereignty

MVSKOKE TECH PARK DRAWS CONCERNS FROM CITIZENS

BILL NCA 25-077 WAS ON THE AGENDA FOR THE OCTOBER QUARTERLY SESSION BUT POSTPONED FOR THE NOVEMBER REGULAR SESSION

protection and overall improved technology infrastructure. The name of the company behind the data center has not been released publicly.

Establishing a data center has received criticism from Mvskoke citizens. A town hall on NCA 25-077 was held at the College of Muscogee Nation on Oct. 2. The event was organized by Indig-

“FROM MY PERSPECTIVE AS AN INDIGENOUS FEMME PERSON, WITH INDIGENOUS AND MVSKOKE VALUES, WE WOULD BE PUTTING PROFIT OVER VALUE, PROFIT OVER RESOURCES, PROFIT OVER PEOPLE. WE WOULD BE TAKING MORE THAN WE NEED. THAT'S AN INDIGENOUS VALUE THAT WE'RE RAISED WITH; WE ONLY TAKE WHAT WE NEED.” - JORDAN HARMON

enous Environmental Network Policy Analyst - Legislative Advocate Jordan Harmon (Mvskoke) and Yardeka Indian Community Vice Chair Mackenzie Roberts (Mvskoke).

Prior to the townhall, Harmon and Roberts appeared on Mvskoke Media's Live Wire to discuss their

concerns with the impacts a data center could have on the reservation. Their goal is to make their concerns known to the National Council and to create a dialogue among citizens.

“The number one thing that I've heard people concerned about is the water usage,” Harmon said. “The hyperscale generative AI data centers are using massive amounts

of water. Up to seven, eight, nine, even 12 million gallons a day. It has a huge impact on water resources as well as the overall habitat.”

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centers because of the impacts they have on the environment and mass resource consumption. Roberts said data centers can increase utility costs for residential homes in nearby areas. Additionally, the resources data centers consume can potentially lead to health problems for nearby residents.

“It's not only hurting your pocket, it's also hurting your health,” Roberts said. “In rural communities they rely on well water. With these (data centers) they are going to get contaminated. In a lot of these other rural communities they are pouring out groundwater.”

Arthur Noquisi (Mvskoke) is a student at the College of Muscogee Nation who attended the Quarterly Session. Like Harmon and Roberts, he too is concerned about the impacts the data center might have on the land zoned for it. He believes the land could be put to better use: food sovereignty.

“The effects on natural resources as well as long-term planning. How will that benefit our people, versus what the land could be used for now for agriculture. If we're not saving land for agriculture, what will we have left for food

OKMULGEE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY HELD AT MCN COUNCIL HOUSE MUSEUM

CULTURE, CREATIVITY, AND RESILIENCE CELEBRATED AS PART OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL DAY OF OBSERVATION

BY **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – On October 13, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Council House hosted celebrations for 2025's Indigenous People's Day. The event was organized by Brenda S. Golden, the day isn't just a line up on a calendar,” stated IDP Okmulgee on their Facebook page. “It's a reminder of who we are. It's about our sovereignty, our language, our arts, our

lands and waters. It was a powerful day of honoring our ancestors and moving forward. We are humbled by your presence, prayers and support.”

The day opened with a posting of the colors and opening prayer led by the MCN Honor Guard, Stephen Powell and Ben Yahola. After the welcoming, a land acknowledgement was spoken by MCN Council Representative Robyn Whitecloud and MCNNC Second Speaker

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The participants in the fashion show at the 2025 Okmulgee Indigenous People's Day. (ShaylnProctor/MM)

Thomasine Yahola Osborn.

Official OKC Thunder Artist Maddie Lamb Sanders and artist Dana Tiger spoke during the event. Contemporary music by Aryn

Ward and comedy sessions by Jordan Jayi, Kels Cooper and Will Buck were performed. There was also a powwow dancing and Creek Hymn singing.

MVSKOKE TECH PARK
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sovereignty?” Noquisi said.
Mvskoke Media reached out to the Executive Branch for details on the company that may be constructing Mvskoke Tech Park. According to Press Secretary Jason Salsman, no company has been contracted yet to construct the data center. Additionally, he clarified that there are no proposals yet for the data center because there is still work to be done on

the feasibility to build in Okmulgee County. Salsman further clarified that although no contracts have been signed, the Nation has signed non-disclosure agreements to “facilitate the exchange of preliminary ideas during this initial phase to obtain both proposals and explore utilities.”
Salsman attested that if the data center is approved, it will be the next step in protecting data sovereignty and improving the Nation’s technology infrastructure, his statement reads,

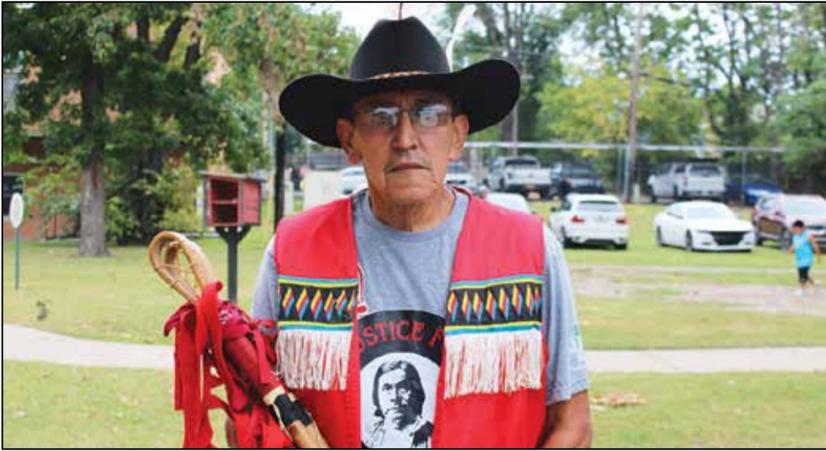
Today, others collect, manage, and profit from our data, including through our language data, census information, and cultural records — often without our consent or oversight. It is time we reclaim control of our digital future. By developing our own data center, we ensure that the Tribe governs how our information is stored, protected, and shared. Beyond its economic impact, if this land proves to be a suitable site — and if the project is

executed thoughtfully — this initiative could position our Tribe as a leader in technological innovation and digital sovereignty while upholding our commitment to environmental responsibility. The Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park will symbolize another act of self-determination which is moving from being users of technology to being owners and stewards of it. Through land leases, revenue-sharing agreements, and vendor part-

nerships, the project will generate sustainable income for the Nation while attracting outside investment under our own terms. Ultimately, the Tech Park will contribute to a diversified and resilient financial portfolio for the Nation, one that strengthens the Nation and reduces reliance on gaming and federal funding.

NCA 25-077 is set to appear on the agenda of the next Regular Session on Nov. 15.

2025 TULSA NATIVE AMERICAN DAY AT DREAM KEEPERS PARK



Mvskoke citizen and member of Hickory Ground Roman Powell at the Dream Keeper’s Park during Tulsa’s Native American Day, part of the greater Indigenous People’s Day celebration. Justice for Hickory Ground walked in the parade, raising awareness for the on-going struggle to protect and defend Oce Vpofv. (Braden Harper/MM)



Murrow Indian Children’s Home Executive Director Betty Martin (Cherokee) shows off handmade jewelry at her booth. Proceeds from jewelry sales goes back to the Murrow Indian Children’s Home, a residential home for Native children who are out-of-home placement. (Braden Harper/MM)



Charity Edens (Cherokee) is the owner of Happy Day Candles. She sells homemade candles in custom-made containers that are all natural and toxin free. The candles are “infused with joy.” (Braden Harper/MM)



Euchee/Mvskoke Citizen Gary McGhee looks for unique crafts at Janie Bond’s (Mvskoke) booth. The event is a place for all Tulsans to support local Native artisans and craftspeople. The Tulsa Native American Day celebration is in its ninth year and marked the first year to feature Mayor Monroe Nichols as a speaker. (Braden Harper/MM)



From Left: Shine Eppler (Pawnee) and Eddy Eppler (Pawnee) stand proudly in their regalia at Tulsa’s Indigenous People’s Day Celebration at Dream Keepers Park in downtown Tulsa. (Braden Harper/MM)



From Left: Glinda Neugin (Cherokee), Lawson Jackson (Cherokee), and Libby Neugin (Cherokee) stand together for a photo in front of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Center for Victim Services booth. Service resource booths were set up by Tribal and local groups to offer education, awareness, and support for issues important to Indian Country. (Braden Harper/MM)

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



(Braden Harper/MM)

CITIZENS TAKE PLANT ID TOUR THROUGH A FIELD OF DREAMS

CONSERVATION DISTRICT HOLDS ANNUAL EVENT TO UNDERSTAND THE VAST ECOSYSTEM OF PLANTS FOUND ON THE MVSKOKE RESERVATION

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

COWETA – Weather conditions on Thursday, Oct. 9 could not have been more perfect for a

stroll outside to learn more about the plant species found on the Mvskoke Reservation. The Muskogee (Creek) Nation Conservation District held their annual Plant ID Field Day where citizens

were invited to go on a walk in a field filled with hundreds of plant species. This year's location was at Rick's Place, a wedding venue located on the northeast corner of the reservation. The event

was hosted in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

The walk was guided by Oklahoma Conservation Commission Rangeland Specialist Blane Stacy who works in the department's soil program. Stacy leads

ries I have seen in a very long time," Stacy said. "We got the opportunity to come out here to visit, evaluate plants to identify them but also to learn about their significance for agriculture, significance for cultural or historic reasons and to look at some pretty flowers."

"EVERYBODY'S GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME AND APPRECIATE THE NATURAL WORLD. WHETHER YOU'RE A CATTLEMAN TRYING TO PRODUCE LIVESTOCK, WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONS FOR YOUR BUTTERFLY GARDEN AND EVERYTHING INBETWEEN." - BLANE STACY

nature walks for the annual event, including one held in Okmulgee in 2022. According to Stacy, the fields at Rick's Place could have contained anywhere from 150-200 different species.

"This is probably one of the most pristine, intact native prai-

Stacy's favorite part about leading nature walks is sharing knowledge and encouraging others to explore the natural world. He especially appreciates

CITIZENS TAKE PLANT
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

NO KINGS PROTESTERS MAKE VOICES HEARD ACROSS THE NATION

MVSKOKE CITIZENS AT THE DREAM KEEPERS PARK DEMONSTRATION SHARED THEIR CONCERNS ON THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES AND TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

TULSA – Pouring showers may have smeared the colorful signs of protestors at the No Kings Protest at Dream Keepers Park in Tulsa on Oct. 18, however it could not dampen their spirits nor their message: America is not a monarchy. Undeterred by the rain, hundreds of protestors lined South Boulder Avenue and West 21st Street. The demonstration was one of an estimated 2,700 organized across the United States with an estimated 7 million dem-

onstrators in attendance. Another demonstration was held at 71st and Memorial in south Tulsa. Demonstrations in municipalities across Indian Country in Oklahoma included Muskogee, Tahlequah, and Ada. At Tulsa's downtown protest, Mvskoke citizens Elise Berryhill-Taylor and her son, Thomas Taylor, were present to support the movement and express their concerns regarding tribal policies and actions made by the Trump administration.

This is not the first demonstration Berryhill-Taylor has attended. She also attended the first No Kings

Protest held on June 14. Weather conditions for last spring's protest also saw cloudy skies and showers. In spite of the wet conditions, Berryhill-Taylor described her support as a "duty" to stand up for her rights as a dual citizen.

"I'm really concerned about our (United States) constitution continuing to be diminished and destroyed. I felt like it was my duty as a United States citizen and as a Tribal citizen, Indigenous to this land to stand up and be repre-

NO KINGS PROTESTERS
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Elise Berryhill-Thomas (Mvskoke) and her son Thomas Taylor (Mvskoke) join demonstrators at the No Kings Protest at Dream Keepers Park in Downtown Tulsa. (Braden Harper/MM)

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election November 8th, 2025



ELECTION DAY VOTING SITES 7AM - 7 PM

- 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**
Intersection of Broadway Ave & Sparks Ave. / Dustin, OK
- EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
800 Birkes Rd. / Eufaula, OK
- GLENPOOL INDIAN COMMUNITY**
14023 S. Casper/ Glenpool, OK

- HANNA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
EAST OF HWY 52 on E. 1250 Rd. / Hanna, OK
- HOLDENVILLE INDIAN COMMUNITY**
224 E. Poplar. / Holdenville, OK
- KOWETA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
30925 E. 141 ST / Coweta, OK
- MUSKOGEE INDIAN COMMUNITY**
335 N. 4TH ST / Muskogee, OK
- OKEMAH INDIAN COMMUNITY**
1100 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 52. / 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

November 5th & 6th, 2025 Early Voting Sites

**7AM - 7 PM
(Each Day)**

- EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
800 BIRKES RD. EUFAULA, OK
- OKMULGEE INDIAN COMMUNITY**
2900 N OSAGE PL. OKMULGEE, OK

- OKEMAH INDIAN COMMUNITY**
1100 S. WOODY GUTHRIE. OKEMAH, OK
- TULSA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
8611 S. UNION. TULSA, OK

REINTEGRATION ON, OFF THE RESERVATION SPURS HOPE, CHALLENGES FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES



Clients gather in the medicine talking circle, taking turns holding the feather which means they have the floor. (Tabitha Hidalgo/UNT)

BY **TABITHA HILDAGO**
UNT

The following article is an original work, written and produced by student reporters from the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas. In March 2025, Mvskoke Media hosted nine students for a site specific, field reporting program with a focus on the history, culture, and people of the Mvskoke Nation. Their week-long efforts on the reservation culminated in written and visual projects, the full scope of which can be found at the project's website [Muscogeevoices.com](https://muscogeevoices.com).

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK — After serving 38 years in prison for a crime he says he did not commit, Melvin Battiest, 64, emerged into a world where the support he had long counted on was suddenly out of reach.

“When I got out, I turned to my tribe for reintegration services like they had promised,” Battiest said. “But because I wasn’t living on the reservation, I was told I didn’t qualify.”

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Center is located in Okmulgee and offers Muscogee citizens reentry services; however, citizens must be living within one of the 12 counties on the reservation.

Mark Harjo, 31, outreach specialist and fiber optic coordinator at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Center, said services for enrolled citizens range from housing, food, clothing, case management and drug treatment. The facility is equipped with 36 residential housing units that are organized by clan names.

Reintegration after incarceration poses unique challenges in tribal communities, where access to housing, employment and health-care can be limited. For native citizens like Battiest, the process is about more than just rebuilding a life — it’s about reclaiming identity and sovereignty. His story is part of a larger effort within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to reduce recidivism and restore community ties.

Frustrated but undeterred, Battiest decided to take action. Drawing on his experience, he and his wife, Tammeria Battiest, 62, co-founded Native Wings Like an Eagle, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Oklahoma City dedicated to supporting native men and women after incarceration — especially

those who, like Melvin Battiest, are rebuilding their lives outside reservation boundaries.

Native Wings officially has a commercial location and focuses on a critical transition period: the first year after incarceration. Its goal is to prevent native individuals from falling through the cracks — facing homelessness, recidivism, or even suicide.

“My whole mission is to take those coming out of prison, give them a successful reintegration process and then send them back to their reservation as an asset and not a burden,” Melvin Battiest said.

Native Wings Program Director Terri Begay, 54, uses her degree in social work to ensure clients successfully reintegrate back into society.

“When they come out, they’re in a deep survival mode and to get them out of that is really hard because they have to do a lot of work on themselves,” Begay said.

Begay said the primary barrier for individuals transitioning out of prison is trauma, followed by lack of resources.

“Quite frankly, the system is set up to have them fail,” Begay said. “So navigating that is another issue that we help them with.”

For Native Wings, success is deeply tied to culture. Upon release, many native individuals find themselves cut off from their traditions — a vital source of identity and healing. Melvin Battiest understands this loss intimately.

“The first thing I wanted to do when I got out was go to a stomp dance, or I wanted to go to a powwow or I wanted to go where natives were gathered because I missed that,” he said. “Culture is so important when you’re dealing with native people—regardless

if you’re coming out of prison or not.”

In summer 2022, Battiest convened a series of roundtable discussions with tribal leaders across Oklahoma. Despite early doubts that tribes could unite around a single reintegration effort, 25 tribes agreed there was a pressing need for services beyond reservation lines.

With their consensus, Battiest formally established Native Wings Like an Eagle. Today, the organization continues to build momentum, with several tribes offering financial and logistical support.

prisons, culminating in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections formally allowing sweat lodge ceremonies for native inmates — a small but vital victory.

According to the nonprofit, nonpartisan Prison Policy Initiative, native people are vastly over-represented in the criminal justice system at a rate of 763 per 100,000 — more than four times higher than the state and federal incarceration rate of white people.

Even after release, many native individuals struggle with a system that doesn’t recognize extended kinship ties — cousins, uncles, and

drugs and getting treatment for substance abuse disorder. He currently works as a fiber optic lineman — training he received at the reintegration center.

He said individuals must make the choice to better themselves.

“There are people who want to change but don’t want to take that chance,” Allen said.

For Battiest, Native Wings is about more than survival — it’s about thriving. His hope is to reconnect native people with their culture, identity, and communities. “Life put me where I needed to be,” he said. “Now, I’m here to



Consenna Allen, 43, reflects back on his first attempt at the Muscogee (Creek) reintegration program after successfully completing the fiber optic program. (Tabitha Hidalgo/UNT)

His vision remains ambitious: unite all 39 tribal nations in Oklahoma behind the cause.

Battiest knows from experience that incarceration poses unique challenges for native people. While Native Americans represent a small fraction of the prison population, the cultural void inside prisons cuts especially deep.

“There’s nothing there to connect us to who we are,” Battiest said.

During his incarceration, he fought to establish powwows and cultural programs in Oklahoma

nieces — central to native families but often excluded from official visitation lists.

“The system strips away what it means to be native,” Battiest said. “When we come out, we have to rebuild that.”

At Native Wings, cultural restoration is embedded into the reentry process. Clients participate in strong medicine talking circles, where ceremonies like smudging with cedar and sage create sacred spaces for healing.

Each circle begins with a drum song, grounding participants in tradition before sharing their struggles and triumphs.

The key, Battiest believes, is listening.

“In prison, the greatest gift I could give was a listening ear,” he said. “Sometimes people don’t need answers. They just need someone to listen until the answers come from inside.”

Consenna Allen, 44, has spent eight months in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation residential reintegration program. His first time, in 2021, resulted in his relapsing on

help others find their way back to the circle they were missing.”

As the smoke cleared out from the smudging, Melvin Battiest and Tammeria Battiest announced to the group that the nonprofit’s funding had nearly depleted for the year. “Until we get more funding, we will be closed on Fridays to save on costs,” she said, as clients listened intently. “But if you need anything, don’t hesitate to reach out.”

On April 23, Native Wings was notified that the U.S. Department of Justice had frozen all grants, funds that they were waiting on.

“We have nothing coming in right now,” Tammeria Battiest said. “Everybody is scrambling. We got this phone call at 8 last night that they terminated our grants.”

Despite that lack of cash flow for Native Wings, Melvin Battiest still remains hopeful.

“We’re gonna keep working with our native brothers and sisters that are released,” he said. “We’ve got resources we can send them to.”



Melvin Battiest starts off and ends the medicine talking circle with a drum song as a way to reconnect clients to their culture. (Tabitha Hidalgo/UNT)



Tabitha Hidalgo grew up in South Texas and is a student at the Mayborn School of Journalism. She currently serves as the editor-in-chief of the North Texas Daily and is an intern at KERA. Tabitha is set to graduate in May 2026 and is ready to amplify underrepresented voices.

MVSKOKE VETERAN RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

SECRETARY OF VETERAN AFFAIRS GROVER WIND WAS HONORED BY THE OKLAHOMA MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART FOR HIS WORK WITH NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – Muscogee (Creek) Nation Secretary of Veterans Affairs Grover Wind was honored with the Distinguished Service Award by the Oklahoma Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) on Oct. 10. The recognition ceremony

Mayor Mickey Baldwin. Wind is an Air Force veteran and has served in his current role as secretary of Veteran Affairs since 2021.

Wind repeatedly used the word “humbling” to describe his reaction to receiving the award. It was an honor Wind did not expect to receive.

“It’s very humbling from the

half years.”

Veteran Affairs has worked with the MOPH for several years now. They both have the same goal in mind: to recognize and serve Native veterans. MOPH Organizer Donald Nichols remarked that the MCN is very lucky to have Wind in charge of services for its veterans.

“Muscogee Creek Nation should be justifiably proud of how well Mr. Wind serves their Veterans— nobody does a better job of serving Veterans.” Nichols said at the recognition ceremony.

This is not the first honor Wind has received this year. In April, he was honored with a Quilt of Valor. The Quilt of Valor is a special honor that recognizes veterans with a handmade quilt.

“It’s something that is given to you to help you remember your service,” Wind said. “There are probably more veterans who deserve the recognition of that than I do.”

Native veterans are very close to Wind’s heart. Being one himself, he understands their unique needs and issues that set them apart from other service people. Wind remarked that Native veterans sometimes only feel comfortable in social environments

where other Native veterans are present. Part of his mission is to provide that comfortable space where Native vets can come together to share their stories and trauma.

“Native veterans are proud and quiet veterans. Sometimes they need somebody to speak up for them. Our office is there so they feel comfortable and trusting,” Wind said.

Some of the key issues facing Native American vets are homelessness, substance abuse and lack of benefits. Although these issues still prevail today, Wind believes progress has been made at the Tribe under the current

administration.

“I couldn’t do what I do without their (Hill Administration) help moving this office forward. I believe my staff is the best in the Nation,” Wind said.

A new issue the department is tackling is the transition from military service to civilian life. Wind said VASO is developing a sweat lodge and a PTSD roundtable service for veterans. A date has not been announced when those services will be available. Wind said his department is also working with the Quilts of Valor Foundation to honor more Mvskoke veterans with a Quilt of Valor.



(Oklahoma Military Order of the Purple Heart)

“THE WORK WE DO, WE DON’T DO IT EXPECTING GRATIFICATION. IT’S GRATIFYING TO KNOW THAT PEOPLE ARE BEING HELPED BY THE WORK THAT YOU DO.” - GROVER WIND

took place at the MOPH’s chapter in Muskogee. Those in attendance included MCN Principal Chief David Hill, MCN Second Chief Del Beaver, and Okmulgee

standpoint that people are recognizing the job that we do,” Wind said. “I couldn’t have done this without my staff. We’ve come a long way in the past four and a

OCMULGEE PARK PLANNERS PUSH FORWARD DESPITE SHUTDOWN

nization. Its staff members aren’t affiliated with the U.S. National Park Service.

In 2024, members of Georgia’s U.S. congressional delegation introduced legislation that would expand Ocmulgee Mounds and create the nation’s newest national park, the first created in more than five years. The bill would drop “historic” from the current park’s name while later granting thousands of acres of nearby land national preserve status. That land would be available for recreational activities and hunting.

The legislation didn’t advance that year, but lawmakers reintroduced the bill in both the U.S. House and Senate this year. The House version is pending before that body’s Committee on Natural Resources, and the Senate version is at the doorstep of the upper chamber’s Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Revis said members of the Georgia federal delegation are “optimistic” that the legislation can move forward. If approved by both chambers of Congress and signed by President Donald Trump, the park would be the nation’s 64th such protected area.

About two dozen interested people attended the Rosa Jackson event to ask questions and get a look at the planning process.

Kahlil English lives near Clinton Street, where designers have mentioned creating another entrance to the park. That gateway would connect downtown Macon with East Macon.

He said that element of “connectivity” is what he hopes will invigorate and bring positive attention to the neighborhoods surrounding the park.

“The last thing you want to see is a good idea fizzle out,” he said. “This could be a catalyst.”

If expanded, the park could see a million visitors — including bucket-list go-getters — over the course of 15 years, Revis said.

While the original plan was for the park and preserve to extend as far down as Hawkinsville, land acquisition costs would be too high, said Matt Chalfa, the initiative’s director of strategic planning.

John Wilson came to the meeting to monitor the project’s progress and its southward expansion. Wilson said he was one of the original advocates for preserving what’s now known as the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, which is south of the Ocmulgee Mounds.

He said a connection between the Ocmulgee Mounds and the wildlife refuge would protect another 9,000 acres while also connecting cultural sites and protecting black bear migratory patterns.

Wilson said the construction of a new data center in Twiggs County would impede the expansion of the preserve south along the river corridor. “The bigger it is, the more stable it is, the more animals can go back and forth,” he said.

September approved the data center’s construction. The multi-billion-dollar project will rezone nearly 300 acres for the center, which developers said will bring 600 jobs to the county.

Revis, formerly a Muscogee (Creek) Nation official, said the expansion process has been an “eye-opening experience” for connecting local groups with the nation.

The federally recognized Native American tribe has long been involved with the park’s expansion. The process has helped bring Macon’s Indigenous people back to their homeland, Revis said, and has offered them “reconciliation.”

Nation officials are exploring the addition of a cultural center to the park. In September, Principal Chief David Hill and other members of a tribal delegation toured the former home of East Macon’s “first citizen,” DeWitt McCrary. That structure, located near the park’s current back gate, could be renovated for such a purpose, Hill said.

“We’re looking at new opportunities for the nation to continue to be part of the economic growth of Macon,” Revis added.

Casey Choung is a general assignment reporter for the Macon Melody, covering topics ranging from city government to local business events. His work has also appeared on GBH News and the Milford Daily News. His work can be found at MaconMelody.com.



Kahlil English, right, talks with a Kimley-Horn consultant about transportation surrounding the park. More than 20 people came to the Rosa Jackson Recreation Center to share their input on the proposed Ocmulgee Mounds National Park. (Image: Casey Choung/Macon Melody)

BY CASEY CHOUNG
MACON MELODY

The following article was originally published on Oct. 3 in the Macon Melody, part of The Georgia Trust for Local News.

Although the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park is closed due to an ongoing federal government shutdown, planners are continuing efforts to ensure all voices are heard as they create a strategic plan to handle the potential expansion of the historic park into a national park and preserve.

Officials from the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative and consultants with Atlanta-based design firm Kimley-Horn displayed maps and infographics at the Rosa Jackson Recreation Center Wednesday afternoon. They also answered questions about what’s being done to prepare the region for

the park.

Tracie Revis, director of advocacy for the initiative, said after hearing feedback earlier in the year, planners are presenting their findings to see if there’s anything they missed.

Initiative staff members and consultants are focusing on zoning issues along with cultural, recreation and transportation implications for the region surrounding the 3,000-acre park.

“The goal is that everyone has this, so we are all looking at the same plan,” Revis said. “While it will be housed ... in Bibb County, all of the other surrounding counties will actually be receiving benefits from the impact of this.”

Revis didn’t comment on the park’s current closure, which started Oct. 1 after partisan disagreements led to Congress failing to pass appropriations legislation for the 2026 fiscal year. The initiative is a nonprofit orga-

“TELLING AMY’S STORY” BROUGHT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS TO THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

THE SCREENING AND PANEL WAS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN CMN AND MCN CENTER FOR VICTIM SERVICES

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Center for Victim Services and the College of the Muscogee Nation Health and Wellness hosted a special screening and discussion of “Telling Amy’s Story” for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The event took place on Oct. 16 at the CMN campus. The event was focused on the CMN campus community.

CMN Case Manager/Title IX Coordinator Lisa Bear (Mvskoke/Choctaw) spoke to Mvskoke Media about the event, partnering with CVS and the

purpose of this showing.

The collaboration between CMN and CVS was years in the making. Bear and CVS Outreach Coordinator MaCaylin Autaubo (Witchita) spoke about collaborating a few years ago. Through discussions, this year they planned a movie screening with a panel selected by CVS. Bear shared that CVS is always thinking about how to bring awareness to the students at the college.

CVS organized a panel and discussion using the film as a jumping-off point.

“This particular screening is less than an hour and it would leave time for the panel discus-

sion. My take on “Telling Amy’s story” recounts views from co-worker, friends, family, and the detectives as she lived with domestic violence,” Bear said.

“My hopes for this screening and panel discussion is to help our students understand the warning signs when they are in a relationship and also help us know who to turn to if our co-workers, friends, or loved one is in a relationship that we may suspect domestic violence.”

According to Oklahoma Attorney General Genter Drummond, “51.5% of Oklahoma women and 46.0% of men will experience sexual violence, physical violence, and /or stalking

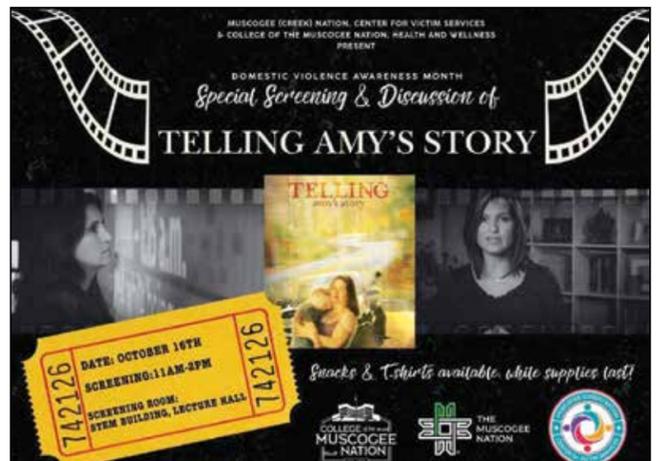
by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.”

Since October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, CVS planned out a month of different events, and Bear is very thankful that includes CMN students.

“This collaboration is to bring awareness on what to do if we encounter a friend, family

member, or fellow student that is experiencing domestic violence and hopefully, this will ensure individuals know the resources and help available to them,” Bear said.

“If we all take the time to learn about the resources the tribe has to offer then we can collaboratively help one another.”



(Image Courtesy: CMN/ CVS)



(Braden Harper/MM)

NATION BREAKS GROUND ON TRIBAL COURTHOUSE

THE NEW BUILDING WILL EXPAND FACILITIES FOR THE SUPREME COURT AND DISTRICT COURT IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY PROCESS THE INCREASED VOLUME OF CASES INTRODUCED SINCE THE MCGIRT DECISION

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – On Wednesday, Oct. 8 MCN Tribal leadership officially broke ground on the new Tribal Courthouse on the MCN Tribal Complex. The groundbreaking took place at the courthouse's new address at 1103 East Eufaula. The 43,514 square-foot structure will sit on the southeast corner of the complex where

“WE’RE HERE TO GROW. TO MAKE THIS NATION PROSPER. WE’RE GOING TO CONTINUE TO DO THAT, ESPECIALLY TO FIGHT FOR OUR SOVEREIGNTY.” - CHIEF DAVID HILL

the Mvskoke Media building was previously located. The groundbreaking comes five years after the McGirt Decision affirmed that the MCN has jurisdictional authority to prosecute Tribal citizens who commit crimes on the MCN Reservation. The project was designed

by New Fire Native Design Group and will be constructed by Candor Building Solutions.

Native New Fire Design Group President Jason Holaby (Mvskoke) said that the Executive Branch was very closely involved with the vision and planning of the Tribal courthouse. It will house both the MCN Supreme Court and District Court. The first floor will feature an expanded waiting area and two jury courtrooms that can hold up to

spaces, and seating for 150 spectators. The Supreme Court will also be outfitted with their own expanded office space, conference rooms and hearing rooms. Holaby said the expansions will more adequately serve the needs of the Tribe now that the volume of cases filed within the justice system has grown significantly since the McGirt Decision.

The courthouse's exterior will feature a large outdoor public seating area with a statue at the center that symbolizes the fires of the Ceremonial Grounds. According to New Fire Native's website, the fire motif was selected to be reminiscent of areas where council members met and deliberated on unifying decisions. Fire and other Mvskoke cultural motifs will be seen throughout the campus.

Groundbreaking Remarks

MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman remarked that this ceremony is a huge achievement for the Tribe and its fight for sover-

eignty. According to Salsman, this project is a result of many years of patience and diligent hard work from those working in the MCN judicial system.

“Such a big part of progress and prosperity is building this infrastructure, meeting our jurisdictional responsibilities and our needs in 2025 and beyond,” Salsman said. “How many know today that this is what our ancestors really saw for us at one point? They knew that we would grow, they knew that this day would come. They always believed and we had to see it through. A lot of people in our justice system worked very, very hard to make this dream possible.”

MCN Principal Chief Hill believes the court house is a step in the right direction for a justice system that has faced internal and external challenges since the McGirt Decision. In Chief Hill's words, despite opposition from other law enforcement agencies located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the MCN Reservation, the MCN will continue to serve justice to Tribal citizens.

“There are certain individuals who say we don't have a court system, it's not working. We're here to prove them wrong and we have been. I can't say enough about our court system. We're going to continue to do the best that we can with the support of the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. We appreciate it, it's a lot of hard work.”

MCN Second Chief Del Beaver echoed Chief Hill's sentiments that the project will provide much more than just adding a new structure to the complex.

“This is not just a building. Think about what this building represents. From the time we got here from the time today, this represents the true sovereignty of the Nation,” Chief Beaver said. “This building is going to house how we do justice on the reservation, it's going to house how we justify things on the reservation. This is about public safety. This is about justice. This is about those who break the law get punished. Those who are victims get restitution. This is not just a building.”

MCN Supreme Court Jus-

tice Leah Harjo-Ware delivered a speech at the groundbreaking on the history of the Tribe's sovereignty and its justice system. Harjo-Ward discussed how the reservation was established in the Treaty of 1832, was reinforced in the Treaty of 1866 after the Civil War, and was most recently affirmed in the McGirt Case of 2020. She further emphasized that the reservation has endured a lot over its 193-year existence: the allotment era, the Curtis Act and the Dawes Rolls which were all acts designed to decentralize MCN and the Five Tribes' judicial systems. Harjo-Ware noted that the Tribe's court system would not be fully recognized as a legitimate judicial system until after the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 and signing of the 1979 MCN Constitution.

“It's been a long road. Today marks the day when we are rebuilding our court system with actual brick and mortar,” Justice Harjo-Ware said. “Bricks and mortar we had in the 1800s was sold against our will. We don't have those anymore but today marks a new day. It marks a day in which we rebuild what was taken away from us. I am so glad that the National Council has appropriated funds and the Principal Chief has kept his word. We are going to have a new courthouse.”

This is not the first project Holaby has constructed for the Nation. However, in his own words, it is perhaps the most important in regards to its purpose serving Tribal citizens.

“We're here to celebrate more progress. But this one's a little bit different, perhaps even more significant because we're here to break ground on a new building that exemplifies our unwavering commitment to the continued assertion of our Tribal sovereignty,” Holaby said.

“Even as we faced continued attempts to undermine that from the state and local level. Sovereignty is not merely a privilege granted by the federal government. It's an inherent right that predates the formation of the United States. We are in control of the administration of justice for our own people.”



(MCN Communications)

The following is a press release from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

OKMULGEE, OK — The Muscogee Nation has named former Emergency Management Director Bobby Howard as Commissioner of Public Safety.

MUSCOGEE NATION NAMES BOBBY HOWARD FIRST COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SAFETY

HOWARD'S NATIONAL COUNCIL CONFIRMATION HEARING IS STILL FORTHCOMING

Howard, a Muscogee combat veteran and native of Depew, ran the Nation's Emergency Management operation for five years. Prior to his tribal service, Commissioner Howard spent 34 years in the Oklahoma Army National Guard before he was honorably discharged.

The MCN Department of Public Safety was created in August through National Council leg-

islation, and will be tasked with coordinating efforts of Muscogee Nation Lighthouse Police, Fire Services and Emergency Response.

“This is a tremendous honor that the Executive Branch and the Muscogee National Council have bestowed upon me, and I take the responsibility of this position very seriously,” Howard said. “The creation of this department is a result

of total cooperation between our Executive and Legislative branches and we'll need that to continue to effectively carry out our mission to its fullest potential.”

Commissioner Howard will convene a working group with a member from each of the Nation's Legislative Committees as well as the Executive Branch to build the parameters and structure of the

DPS.

Under Howard's direction, the MCN Emergency Management Department enjoyed several milestones and historic achievements including: the first tribal Nation to host a joint field office with FEMA during an active disaster, the first tribal Nation to write and publish a FEMA policy, the first tribal Nation to receive a community development block grant-disaster recovery funds, and currently moving forward with water and waste-water projects for communities across the Reservation totaling \$102 million.

Mr. Howard's official confirmation hearing through the Muscogee National Council is still forthcoming.

CITIZENS TAKE PLANT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

anyone who will lend an attentive ear to learn about ecology and agriculture. Stacy's department also holds workshops for grazing cattle management, restoring ecosystems, and prescribed burns.

According to MCN Conservationist Julie Norem, Rick's Place was selected due to a mutual connection between one of the MCN Conservation Commission board members and the owner. This location was located further north on the reservation compared to previous years.

Norem enjoys these events because it allows her to be outside and learn about new plants. She specifically picks flowers for bouquets that are identified along the walks. Norem said she plans to display the plants in her office for education and engagement.

“The last couple years I've collected all the ones (plant species) that we have actually looked at or talked about,” Norem said. “When we have things like that in

the office people ask about it. We can talk to them about different plants and what we learned about them as we were out here at the Plant ID.”

After guiding many different walks at different areas of the Mvskoke reservation, Stacy has concluded that its ecosystem is a unique one.

“The Creek Nation covers such a vast area with a lot of different eco types. We could run in any direction and run into a different ecological community. The location we're at today (Rick's Place) is more endemic of a native tall grass prairie. We could do the same event in a different location next year and run into a completely different plant community.”

A location for next year's Plant ID Field Day has not been announced, yet Norem hinted that a possible location in Okmulgee county has been scouted.

To stay up to date on the Conservation District's programming, visit their Facebook page, Muscogee Nation Conservation District.

NO KINGS PROTESTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

sented and counted. Rain or shine, I was not going to be deterred from it.”

Taylor has grown disillusioned with the Trump administration. He described the administration as a “dictatorship” and does not feel safe as a citizen. Taylor was drawn to protest because he felt like he could no longer stay silent on these issues.

“Trump has been known to be a pathological liar. Lying about 2020, securing our rights, staying true to the constitution. Everything he's done, everything he's said has gone against that. This is a call for action,” Taylor said.

Both Taylor-Berryhill and Taylor believe that Tribal sovereignty under the current administration is at risk. They are both members of Oce Vpofv, Hickory Ground, the Ceremonial Ground that continues to fight against injustices carried out against them by the Poarch Creek Indians.

“Sovereignty has been under attack since our very existence,” Berryhill-Taylor said. “It's harder now

to fight for sovereignty because all of our rights are being taken away. This administration does not recognize Tribal people at all. It's going to con-

tinued members of the community come together in a red state like Oklahoma. Although Taylor-Berryhill and Taylor agree that the issues

“I THINK IT'S AN IMPORTANT DUTY FOR ME AND A CONVICTION FOR ME TO BE HERE (DREAM KEEPERS PARK) TODAY. I WAS AT THE FIRST NO KINGS PROTEST IN JUNE. IT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR ME TO STAND UP AND BE PRESENT AMONG OTHER PEOPLE HERE WHO ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS AS CITIZENS.” ELISE BERRYHILL-TAYLOR

tinued to be harder to gain ground and fight for our right to exist, our lands, our right to resources, food sovereignty and every aspect of our culture. That includes our language, our DNA, and ancestral lands like Hickory Ground.”

Both the June 14 and Oct. 18 demonstrations were described as a “festive, hopeful atmosphere” by Taylor-Berryhill. She especially found it inspiring to see like-

they are protesting will not be fixed overnight, they also believe that unity inspires hope during uncertain times.

“If we can come together and be a light in these dark times it can bring some hope for a better future,” Taylor said. “We can't fix every problem but we know how to be there for each other. As long as we can speak about it, there is light at the end of the tunnel.”



(MM File)

BALLOT INITIATIVE REPLACEMENTS TO BE VOTED ON BY CITIZENS, MVSKOKE TECH PARK LEGISLATION POSTPONED FOR NOVEMBER

SPECIAL ELECTION APPROPRIATION APPROVED FOR \$343K, HOWEVER DATE NOT YET ANNOUNCED

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee (Creek) National Council held a quarterly session by teleconference and in-person at the Mound Building on Oct. 25.

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

Veto Message:

NCA 25-090 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending Article VI Section 2 (a) of the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to establish term limits for National Council Representatives. The law was returned as a veto on Oct. 6. The veto was upheld 13-0.

The legislation would have limited National Council members to three terms, consecutively or non-consecutively. If the legislation had not been vetoed, it would have appeared as a constitutional amendment question on the ballot. The amendment would then have needed a two-thirds vote from voters to become adopted into law. NCA 25-105 is an identical bill that was voted on in the quarterly session. The only difference is that 25-105 does not contain a specific date of when the law would take effect.

Order of Business:

NCR 25-003 A resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) National Council confirming Rebecca Landsberry-Baker to serve on the Mvskoke Media Editorial Board. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 9-4. Representative Sandra Golden, Representative Anna Marshall, Representative Galen Cloud and Representative Darrell Proctor voted against the legislation.

Landsberry-Baker's term will begin on Oct. 30 and will end on October 30, 2028.

TR 25-091 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Dean Hughes to serve on the College of the Muscogee Nation Board of Regents. The bill was sponsored by Anna Marshall, which was adopted 13-0.

Hughes' term will expire on September 30, 2030.

TR 25-092 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Housing Service, Section 533 Housing Preservation Grant for the benefit of the Department of Housing. Representative Robyn Whitecloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

If the Nation receives the \$200,000 grant it will be leveraged with \$391,363 from the Nation. According to the bill, the funds will be used to assist in low and very-low income American Indian/Alaskan Native homes.

TR 25-093 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to

execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the interment of cultural objects and ancestral remains. Representative Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the bill, the MOU will allow the Nation to inter human remains in a location that is protected and preserved.

TR 25-094 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of agreement among the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the Alabama Historical Commission, The Chickasaw Nation, The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the University of Alabama, and concurring parties regarding the repair of Moundville Archeological Park, Moundville, Alabama. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

The memorandum of agreement will allow FEMA to use Public Assistance funds to repair damages to Moundville Archeological Park. The damages were incurred from storms in 2020.

TR 25-097 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute the Professional Services Agreement with Travois, Inc., Travois Architecture Services, LLC, and Travois Asset Management, LLC for the 2025 Okemah Low Income Housing Tax Credit Project. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the bill, the agreement will provide a "dispute resolution process" and possibly binding arbitration that would be conducted in Okmulgee.

TR 25-098 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the formation of the Okemah Rental Property II Limited Partnership, Execution of the Initial Limited Partnership Agreement, Agreement to lease, and all other application materials for the submission of a Low Income Housing Tax Credit Application to the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency for the benefit of Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the partnership will allow the Nation to become a sole partner with Travois Initial LLC. Both will oversee the construction of the Okemah Rental Property II Project that will use funds from TR 25-059, which was adopted on July 26.

TR 25-099 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation allowing the principal chief to execute grant awards and cooperative agreements with general terms and conditions for Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted unanimously 13-0.

According to the legislation all federally-funded awards must

adhere to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements. The federal government may take legal remedies for failure to comply with federal statutes, regulation or the terms and conditions of a federal award.

TR 25-100 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the executive branch to prepare and submit grant applications to federal and state governmental agencies and private foundations for both FY 2026 and FY 2027 and authorizing the principal chief to execute all necessary grant documents. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, federal and state agencies require the executive branch to apply grant funding as part of the application process that requires a tribal resolution passed by the council. However this will expedite the process for certain grant applications and funds.

TR 25-101 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the tribal software/technical standards regulations submitted by the Muscogee (Creek) nation public gaming commission. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the bill, software/technical standards regulations by a tribal resolution are required in accordance with MCNCA Title 21 2-101 (J). That law established the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Public Gaming Commission to perform regulatory oversight to comply with Tribal, federal and applicable state regulations.

TR 25-102 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Timothy Harjo to serve as the Secretary of Commerce for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was adopted 12-1. Rep. Barnett voted against the legislation.

Harjo's term will end concurrently with Chief Hill's term.

TR 25-103 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute a memorandum of understanding between the Eastern Oklahoma Veterans Affairs Health Care System and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Veterans Affairs Department to use facility space and support services for homeless veterans. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

The MOA will allow the Nation and EOVAHS to utilize facility space and support services for homeless veterans. The programs will provide office space, and resources for veterans.

TR 25-104 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the transfer of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation DME, LLC under Muscogee Nation Businesses, LLC. Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation DME, LLC provides medical supplies and durable medical equipment to citizens of the Nation and other health care consumers.

Representative Joyce Deere joined the meeting via teleconference call.

TR 25-105 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute final loan documents with BOK Financial Public Finance, Inc. outlining the terms and conditions for a loan made for healthcare construction and renovation projects. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, this will be in reliance with TR 25-076, a bill that secured a credit facility in the principal amount of \$185,000 to finance construction of new health clinics in Sapulpa and Holdenville.

TR 25-106 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute an engagement agreement for professional legal services with the Tax Law Firm of Kutak Rock LLP for legal services on behalf

of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the Department of Health is seeking a tax opinion from Kutak Rock to secure a tax-free loan from Bank of Oklahoma.

TR 25-107 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing Tribal membership in the National Congress of American Indians. Rep. Hufft sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, \$30,000 will be due in membership fees once the Nation joins in membership with NCAI.

NCA 24-077 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing the Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park ("Mvskoke Tech Park"). The bill was sponsored by Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. and cosponsored by Rep. Hufft. The bill was voted to be postponed until the November Regular Session 14-0.

If adopted into law, it will designate part of the reservation as a hub for data centers. There was no discussion on the bill.

NCA 25-093 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 Center for Victim Services. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$2,331,370 grant will be used for the Center for Victim Services to conduct programs and activities for the Nation's first domestic violence shelter and provide advocacy for victims and their families.

NCA 25-094 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the benefit of the Department of Education and Training. Rep. Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$150,000 grant will be used to focus on literacy training to support the larger community and staff development. The two-year project will provide literacy and technology resources at the 25 community center library sites throughout the Muscogee Reservation. It will engage families, children, adults and elders.

NCA 25-095 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending Title 37, Chapter 2, Subchapter 2, entitled "Funds and Accounts" to establish the Muscogee Nation Department of Culture and Humanities Revolving Fund. Rep. Proctor sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, this will allow the Department of Culture and Humanities to accept donations and honorariums offered to the department for language and cultural preservation purposes. The funds will be used for future culture and humanities-based projects.

NCA 25-096 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of Agriculture for the benefit of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$55,555 grant will be used to improve the management of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in wild cervids and increase CWD surveillance and hunter participation in CWD management actions.

NCA 25-097 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of FY 23 Section 5311(c)(1) Tribal Formula Grant Operating Funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program. Rep. Whitecloud sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, this will allow the Nation to enter into an agreement with the Travois Enti-

ties to undertake the 2025 Okemah Low Income Housing Tax Credit Project.

NCA 25-098 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the benefit of the Office of Environmental Services. Rep. Whitecloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$639,880 grant will be used to replace a main waterline in Beggs, Oklahoma.

NCA 25-099 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 24-151 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds for the Alternative Housing Program FY 2025 budget.) Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The \$2,461,580 appropriation will come from the Gaming Funding Account. The Alternative Housing Program helps citizens whose homes are not repairable.

NCA 25-101 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 23-153 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. environmental protection agency for the benefit of the Office of Environmental Services) Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$654,090 grant will be expended in addition to any supplemental grant funds received by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Fiscal Year 2024.

NCA 25-102 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 25-086 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 11, Chapter 3 entitled "Annual Funds for Building Costs, Economic Development, and Development of Chartered Communities") Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

A total of \$750,000 will be used to increase annual funding for the chartered communities.

NCA 25-103 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office. Rep. Gouge sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, the \$770,795 grant will be used for providing housing vouchers to eligible veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

NCA 25-104 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the chief to expend Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health Third Party and 105L Lease Account Funds for payment of debt service relating to the credit agreement with an aggregate principal amount of up to \$185,000,000 with BOK Financial Public Finance Inc., as administrative agent, to finance healthcare facility construction. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The principal amount was related to the financing and construction of new health clinics in Sapulpa and Holdenville and renovations of existing facilities.

NCA 25-105 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending article VI Section 2 (a) of the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to establish term limits for National Council Representatives. Rep. Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

An identical bill, NCA 25-090, was vetoed by Chief Hill. This amendment will appear in a special election as a ballot initiative. It will become effective February 1, 2026 if it is ratified by a two-thirds vote. A date for a special election has not yet been announced.

NCA 25-107 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the election board to conduct a special election during Fiscal Year

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2026. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0. The funding source for the \$345,943 appropriation was identified as the Gaming Funding Account. According to the bill, the appropriation will cover the costs of wages, precinct worker stipends, supplies, mileage, background checks, postage/shipping and legal services.

NCA 25-108 A law of the Mus-

cogee (Creek) Nation repealing NCA 25-087, entitled "A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by replacing "Muscogee" with the traditional spelling of "Mvskoke" and deleting the word "Creek" throughout the Constitution." Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

According to the bill, time is needed to revise the statutory language restoring the traditional name "Mvskoke" with-

out the expenditure of extensive cost, interfering with existing contractual rights or requiring federal approval.

NCA 25-109 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by replacing "Muscogee" with the traditional spelling of "Mvskoke" and deleting the word "Creek" throughout the Constitution. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-0.

The ballot form language appearing on NCA 25-109 that dif-

fers from NCA 25-087, which was repealed by NCA 25-109, reads in part "...including in the illustrated official Seal in Section 3 of Article 1 of the Constitution..." This language, changing "Muscogee" to "Mvskoke" on the seal, is the only difference between the two bills.

NCA 25-109 will appear as a ballot initiative during a special election and will need to be ratified by two-thirds of the vote. A special election has not yet been announced. If it is ratified, it will be effected into law January 1, 2028.

Other Business:

A proposed amendment to rules of procedures was approved 14-0. This amendment states that the council's attorney must be present at all meetings and applicable committee meetings.

The November planning session was moved from Nov. 11 to Nov. 12. The November Regular Meeting is still scheduled for Nov. 15.

To view the full agenda, visit mcnnc.com.

MCNNC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Emergency Session October 1
TR 25-095 passed 13-2. Representative Robyn Whitecloud and Representative Anna Marshall voted no.
TR 25-096 was passed with a vote of 12. Rep. Whitecloud, Representative Joyce Deere, and Rep. Anna Marshall voted no.

Health, Education and Welfare October 14
Fire Department Applications: Olive Volunteer Fire Department - \$2,000.00
TR 25-091 passed with a vote of 4-0.
NCA 25-085 postponed indefinitely with a vote of 4-0.
NCA 25-093 passed with a vote of 4-0.
NCA 25-094 passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Yahola Osborn sponsored the legislation.
NCA 25-102 passed with a vote of 3-1. Rep. Deere opposed.

Business, Justice, and Finance October 16
NCR 25-003 passed with a vote of 3-1. Representative Sandra Golden voted no.
NCR 25-004 postponed with a vote of 4-0. The legislation is postponed until November.
TR 25-099 passed with a vote of 3-1. Rep. Golden voted no.
TR 25-100 passed with a vote of 3-0.
TR 25-101 postponed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation. The legislation is postponed until before the Planning Session.
TR 25-102 passed with a vote of 4-0.

Health, Education, and Welfare October 21
NCA 25-107 passed with a vote of 3-0.

Health, Education, and Welfare Language, Natural Resources, and Culture October 21
TR 25-103 passed with a vote of 8-0. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored this legislation.
NCA 25-103 passed with a vote of 8-0. Rep. Gouge sponsored this legislation.

Business, Justice, and Finance Health, Education, and Welfare October 21
TR 25-104 was passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-105 passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-106 passed with a vote of 7-0. Rep. NCA 25-104 passed with a vote of 7-0.

Business, Justice, and Finance October 21
TR 25-104 passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-105 passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-106 passed with a vote of 7-0. Rep. Marshall sponsored the legislation.

Business, Justice, and Finance Health, Education, and Welfare October 21
TR 25-104 passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-105 passed with a vote of 7-0.
TR 25-106 passed with a vote of 7-0.
NCA 25-104 passed with a vote of 7-0.

MCN OBSERVES ORANGE SHIRT DAY

THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE SUPPORTS THE MANY SURVIVORS WHO CARRY ON THE STORIES TO TELL THE REAL TRUTH

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- On September 30, employees from departments across the Muscogee (Creek) Nation wore orange for Orange Shirt Day-Every Child Matters. This day is also known as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation or National Day of Remembrance and is an annual observance held throughout the United States and Canada to remember and reflect on the experiences of Indigenous children at residential schools. Many survivors remembered and carried on their stories, while others never made it back home.

About Orange Shirt Day

Back in 1973 Phyllis (Jack) Webstad was a young Indigenous girl living on the Dog Creek reservation; she was six years old at the time. She lived with her grandmother who paid for an orange shirt that Phyllis picked out to wear on her first day of school. However, when she went to the residential school the shirt was taken away from her.

Residential schools put young Indigenous children through a variety of domestic, sexual and emotional trauma. These schools were meant to take away their true identity.

According to Indigenous right's advocacy group Cultural Survival, the day is one for open discussions on the reality of history, "Orange Shirt Day initiated, and continues to allow for, conversations about residential schools on an international scale, and allows for meaningful discussions of the impacts and legacies of residential schools."

Residential schools in Canada and in the U.S. were for Indigenous children, this was to take away everything that was anything tied to their culture and how they grew up in their own ways. The term, "Kill the Indian, Save the man" came from this time period to describe the assimilation process which tried to destroy anything that distinguished Tribal people- changing the children's clothing, cutting their hair, changing their tribal name, prohibiting students from speaking their language. Anything that represented their true, Indigenous identity was taken away.

According to the Cultural Survival source, "from the 1880s, upwards of 150,000 Indigenous children went to over 130 residential schools across Canada, the last

of which closed in 1996. It is estimated that between four and six thousand children died at these residential schools. Between 1819 and 1969, the U.S. operated or supported 408 boarding schools. At the time of a 1969 report, 34,605 children were enrolled in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding schools and 15,450 enrolled in BIA day schools. Since its start in June 2021, the Federal Indian Boarding School initiative has identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 of these schools."

"That's what they were trying to do to us, not just us but to all the other tribes because in their mind the 'Indians were the problem' and they were trying to get rid of our language, our culture ways, and they couldn't practice that, they couldn't do that," Cloud said.

"Then the language; now that survivors of those, like the kids you'll hear a lot of stories of them saying 'I wish I would have learned the language', 'I wish my mom and dad would have taught me', but during the board-

"WE STILL HAVE PEOPLE, WE STILL HAVE MVSKOKE PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT STILL SPEAK THE MVSKOKE LANGUAGE FLUENTLY AND SO IN THEIR EFFORTS TO TRY TO KILL US, BASICALLY TO KILL EVERYTHING THAT WE WANTED BUT THEY DIDN'T SUCCEED BECAUSE OUR LANGUAGE IS STILL GOING, OUR CULTURE IS STILL GOING, OUR GROUNDS ARE STILL GOING AND OUR SONGS ARE STILL SUNG." - GALEN CLOUD

MCN statements

Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Representative Galen Cloud spoke to Mvskoke Media about Orange Shirt Day. Last year, Cloud recalled, the MCNNC wore orange in support of the day and boarding school survivors were honored during the council session. They spoke about the history of "why orange" and went back to the origin story. "It's important, it's just like with all of the tribes and along with the Muscogee Nation, it's a sad story. It's a story that should be told that everybody should know about the boarding schools just as our forced removal. That's a dark thing in history that happened, but it happened to us," Cloud said.

Cloud spoke about the inhumane treatment experienced by students and viewed it as rounding children up like cattle, like animals.

"That's a dark history and I think people need to realize that happened to us. It wasn't a school that they wanted to send their kids to, that was something that they rounded them up and forced them to go."

Cloud was emotional while speaking and thinking about all of the horrible things done to young Indigenous children.

ing schools that's were they lost because they were mistreated, they were beaten for speaking their language."

Cloud sees that this history is becoming recognized on a national level through news and social media outlets. He also reflected on survivor stories. "It's getting out there more and more, that's something people don't want to hear but they have to hear it because it is history, it's a dark history but it is history and it's sad that it is part of ours," Cloud said.

Employees in departments across the MCN observed the day, posting support to social media. MCN Education and Training, Head Start, and the Reintegration Program wore orange and shared statements in remembrance and solidarity. MCN DET wrote, "We stand together to remember and honor the children impacted by residential and boarding schools, and to reaffirm our commitment to education, healing and cultural preservation."

The MCN DETraining wrote out a statement on their page on behalf of the MCN Reintegration Program staff, "As a department, we honor the children affected by residential and boarding schools and stand united in support of healing, education and cultural preservation."

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT



DARRELL G. HILLIARD

The Muscogee Nation Veterans Services Office is proud to honor tribal veteran Darrell G. Hilliard for his dedicated service to the U.S. Army, the United States and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Darrell honorably served nineteen years from 1967 to 1986 and is a recipient of several honors: Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (4 awards), Army Commendation Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, Army of Occupation Medal (Berlin), National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal (4 battle stars), Vietnam Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon. Mvto Mr. Hilliard for your selfless service to your country and your community.



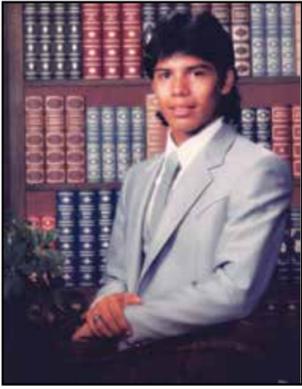
CHARLES E. MELTON

Sergeant Charles E. Melton for his dedicated service to the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, the United States, Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Honor Guard. Charles honorably served a combined 24 years from 1966 to 1990 and is a recipient of several honors from both branches of his service: Combat Action Ribbon (Vietnam), Presidential Unit Citation w/1 bronze star, Marine Good Conduct Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal w/2 bronze stars, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Medal Color with Palm), Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Civil Actions Medal First Class Color with Palm) Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Alaska Commendation Medal. Mvto 1st Sgt. Melton for your selfless service to your country and your community.



The MCN Head Start Preschool wore orange on Sep. 30, posting their support to social media. "Today the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Preschool staff wear orange to honor the children who were taken from their families and communities through residential and boarding schools. We remember. We stand in solidarity. We teach with love. Our classrooms are places of healing, culture and hope-where every child truly matters." (Photo Courtesy: MCN Department of Education and Training)

IN MEMORIAM



(Integrity Funeral Service)

EDWARD "EDDIE" LEE LOWE

Edward "Eddie" Lee Lowe, 57, beloved Son, Brother, Dad and Nephew passed away September 09, 2025 in Okmulgee, OK. He was born Sunday, September 24, 1967 in Tulsa, OK to Jonas R. "Rusty" Lowe and Sharon Whitecloud. Eddie had a kind heart and would give you the shirt off his back. He was very artistic and creative, making picture frames and flowers out of newspapers, straws or anything laying around. He made beadwork and loved to draw, sketch and paint. Eddie loved to play basketball, softball and baseball, and his basketball team, the

Preston Pirates won State in 1986. He was an avid OU Sooners football fan and some of his favorite times were watching the game with his family at his Uncle Rick's. Eddie was a cabinet maker by trade working for Cherokee Nation and Creek Nation until his health failed. Eddie loved going to yard sales, flea markets and working on his motorcycle. He accepted the Lord and was baptized February 23, 2025. Eddie enjoyed dressing up for church and special occasions, proud of the fact that he could purchase an entire suit for \$7 at the local thrift store.

He is preceded in death by his father, Rusty Lowe; sister, Kimberly Lowe; uncles, Freeman "Bunky" Lowe, Rick "Bubba" Powell and Rusty Powell.

Eddie is survived by daughters, Talisha Walton of Tulsa, OK, and Kenna Lowe of Okmulgee, OK; sons, Darius Lowe of Okmulgee, OK and Marley Lowe of Dallas TX; his mother, Sharon Whitecloud of Okmulgee, OK; his siblings, brothers Barry & Vincent Lowe both of Tulsa, OK, James Whitecloud and Will Lowe both of Okmulgee, OK; sisters, Robyn Whitecloud (Shawn) of Okmulgee, OK and Amber Proctor of Wewoka, OK. He leaves behind his four grandchildren as well as a host of relatives and friends.



(Courtesy: Debbie Greever)

SONJA HERRON KECK

During the harvest full moon, our beloved Mema, Sonja "Mema" Herron Keck, made her journey home. She loved laughter and music, and above all, her family and friends. The daughter of Verda and Woodrow Wilson Herron, she was born on April 29, 1941 in Council Hill, Oklahoma, and entered her everlasting home at midnight on October 8, 2025, at the age of 84. She was one in a million and beloved by all.

In her childhood years, her family relocated to the state of Washington. Mema often referred to her family as "The Grapes of Wrath", and said they relocated in hopes of earning a better living picking apples. After four years, the family returned to Tulsa where she grew up with one brother, Charles, and two sisters, Karen and Jeri. She attended East Central High School as a member of the class of 1959 and became the Basketball Queen of East Central High School her senior year.

After graduating, Mema waitressed at the Italian Pepe's Villa Capri, and Shadow Mountain Inn Country Club. She graduated from Northeastern State University in 1979 with a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management. She was always the bell of the ball, so tourism fit nicely with her personality, as she so loved sharing with people and visiting. In 1986 she opened her first business Gift Away Travel, and oh how she loved sending people on amazing trips!

Mema was loved in life and had good relationships with three wonderful men who shared her love of music and dancing.

She first married Billy Ray Jackson, the father of Christopher and Robin Jackson.

Then with Glen Wheeler Keck, had two sons, Eric and Richard Keck, and in 1976 they relocated to Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and she would remain at her house in the Woodall community for 50 years. In 1985, she met the love of her life Mackie "Wayne" Gourley at the Osiyo Club dancing. She would spend 37 years along his side dancing, hitting garage sales, attending music shows. Together they created a home filled

with treasures, and became master gardeners. They are now dancing together again, twirling across the universe.

She hosted amazing events for her family including full contact Easter Egg hunts with a tradition of funny hats, open-door Thanksgiving gatherings, where all were welcomed with open arms, and maybe most loved of all, her yearly reading of a Night Before Christmas. During her years of waitressing she discovered the secret to the most amazing Sonja's Lasagna meal that she was proud to share with loved ones at family celebrations.

She loved blessing her family and community. There was nothing more thrilling than celebrating her birthday during the Red Fern Festival. She was a lover of books and Elvis Presley. She was a voracious reader, even reading with her eyes closed.

Mema was so full of life, she was beautiful, eccentric, kind, magical, and fun, and she was loved like no other.

Some of her greatest pleasures in life were her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She loved taking them to the Dollar General, going to the picnic rock, celebrating their birthdays, and never missing a ball game. She was truly the matriarch of her family. Those welcoming her into glory are her beloved Wayne, her mom and dad, her brother Charles Wilson Herron, and son Chris Jackson.

There are so many that will cherish her life and memory. Those who will continue her story are her beloved daughter Robin Jackson with partner Steve Kirkpatrick, her grandchildren Trae Ratliff and spouse Magen Ratliff, with great grandchildren Maddie, Ryker, Aislyn, and Asher; Sonja Ratliff and Kyle, with great grandchildren Alma and Ace; her son Richard Keck with spouse Tamara Keck, and their sons Sean and Damien; her son Eric Keck; Sister Karen and John Rushing with their children Cheri, Chris, Jana and Amanda; her sister Jeri Wood and partner Harvey Tipton, with her children Jeff Keene and Mundi Keene, and her brother Charles' children, Kimberly and Debbie Herron.

Her extended loving family included numerous cousins, other relatives, cherished friends, and her red dirt sisters. To know Mema was to love Mema, no matter how long you were in her presence, and the family would like to thank you all for being a part of her journey, as she is irreplaceable in so many hearts. Mema would want her friends and family to continue to live life as she did with her spirit and humor. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that you send donations to www.kidney.org.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENTS

Council Oak Tree Ceremony

Culture and Humanities
Nov. 1
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Creek Council Oak Park
1750 S. Cheyenne
Ave. Tulsa, Okla
RSVP at 918-549-2958

Fall Arts & Crafts Market

Holdenville Creek Indian
Community Center
Nov. 1
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
224 E. Poplar, Holdenville, Okla

Elder's Meeting

Okmulgee Elder Nutrition
Center
Nov. 5
9:30 a.m.
2900 N. Osage Pl.
Okmulgee, Okla

Native Comedy Show

College of Muscogee Nation
Free to the public, seating is first come first serve
May contain adult humor, recommended 18+
Doors open at 6:15 p.m., show starts at 7 p.m.
Nov. 7
Lecture Hall
2170 Raven Circle,
Okmulgee, Okla
For questions call 918-549-2817

Belvin Baptist Church

50th Anniversary
Nov. 8
10 A.M.
Lunch in Fellowship Hall
320 N Mission LN,
Okmulgee, Okla.

Coats, Blankets & Socks Drive

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program/Veterans Affairs Services Office
Deadline for donations Nov. 3
Event set for Nov. 14
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Holdenville Indian Community Center
224 E. Poplar St., Holdenville, Okla
For questions, contact 918-304-3239

Coffee and Donuts

Veterans Affairs Services Office
Nov. 13
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
1006 Bear Ln, Okmulgee, Okla
For questions, contact 918-732-7739.

Hymn Singing

College of the Muscogee Nation
Nov. 13
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Lecture Hall
2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee, Okla

The Walk of Tears Play

Blue Eagle Solutions
Nov. 15
4:00 p.m.
Admission is free, donations are accepted
14248 Hectorville Road,
Mounds, Okla

Motorcycle Toy Run

Toy Drive for Muscogee Veterans
Nov. 22
Run starts at Tulsa Creek Indian Community and will end at the Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs building on the main tribal complex. Open to all riders.
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
8611 S. Union Ave., Tulsa, Okla
To register, contact 918-490-1142

Improv Show

Route 66 Kicks
Free to the public on a first come first serve basis.
May contain adult humor, recommended 18+
Dec. 4
7:00 p.m. - 8:20 p.m.
CMN Lecture Hall
2170 Raven Circle,
Okmulgee, Okla

Beekeeping 101

CMN Extension
Dec. 6
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Natural Resources Building
2107 Raven Circle,
Okmulgee, Okla
To register, contact 918-549-2861

Elders' Holiday Luncheon

MCN Elder Services
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. or 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
River Spirit Casino Ballroom
8330 Riverside Parkway
Pre registration deadline is Nov. 24. Elders are asked to only attend one session. Must be enrolled Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen and be 55 years old. Elders may bring a guest who is a spouse or elder. To pre register call 918-732-7765

Health Shelf Donation Drive

College of Muscogee Nation Health & Wellness is seeking hygiene products, laundry detergent, and gently used blankets and pillows for students in need. Every five items donated will enter donors into a drawing. Donations can be dropped off at 2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee, OK. For more information, contact 918-549-2800.

HEALTH PRESENTATION INSPIRES DONATIONS AT EUFAULA DORMITORY

TALIA KING WANTED TO SHOW THE STUDENTS "LOVE AND SUPPORT"



Eufaula Dormitory students received donations organized by MCN Public Health Nurse Talia King. (Photo Courtesy: Micco Cummings)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

EUFAULA – On September 18 the Eufaula Dormitory students received tips about hygiene. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health Public Health Registered Nurse Talia King (Mvskoke) did a presentation about the health necessities and how to upkeep hygiene. However, King wanted to give back to the students by providing extra basic essentials.

After visiting with the students, King asked for donations from anyone able to provide them and she gave those donations to the dormitory on October 8.

During the discussion, King spoke to the students about how to upkeep their hygiene. "Such as bathing, washing hair correctly, brushing your hair, brushing teeth, washing hands correctly, feminine hygiene and cleanliness," King shared. "Towards the end of last semester, I was invited by another MCN program to come out and speak to them about hygiene. After my presentation one of the counselors asked if I would come back this semester and present to them again and I said I would."

The initial spark for rounding up donations was knowing that she wanted to help and seeing how the students are grateful for anything that was given. Since it

was a last minute presentation she didn't have much time to prepare to have more options. However, she did bring towels from her department's Heat Awareness bags, sunglasses, and small bottles of face wash and dental floss that were donated by MCN Clinic in Okmulgee.

She was glad to hear that they loved the products that she brought. "They are some of the most respectful children to be around. When they looked in their bags they were like 'YES! She gave us this good face wash and our own hand towel!' 'Thank you for thinking of us.' 'I really appreciate you coming out and talking to us,'" King said.

King wanted to offer more, so she asked students what they may need for the hygiene items.

"After I spoke to them, I told them they could all grab a bag, and I apologized for it not being much. To see their smiles and hear their excitement over a small gesture and getting a big 'THANK YOU' from them touched my heart. So that led me to ask their counselors if there was anything that I could do or try to get for them that would help them out. They gave me a few suggestions and then I asked the students. Surprisingly, the boys' list was a lot longer than the girls," King said.

The list that King provided is for 1st-12th grade. There are 13 boys in 1st-6th grade, 17 boys in

7th-12th grade, 6 girls in 1st-6th grade and 15 girls in 7th-12th grade.

King's list that she gathered from the students include wipes, pimple patches, pads, tampons, CeraVe facial wash and moisturizer, facial exfoliation wash, Qtips, large bottles of shampoo and conditioner, Dandruff shampoo, foot powder, Old spice clay or pomade, Hair gel (eco style, LA looks extreme sport, Got 2B glued), dental floss, Antiperspirant/deodorant, Sasquatch bar soap, Loofahs, wash cloths, Cologne for guys (don't mind if it's used), perfume for girls, Chapstick and lotion.

King felt that it is impactful to provide these items for the students. "It's heartwarming knowing that something so small can really change someone's day," King said. "Also knowing that with donations and support from my Public Health department we are able to take the burden off of their parents and their counselors that do their best to make sure all their needs are met."

King added, "The staff and parents/ family that are there for these kids are great! They do a great job with them. I hope they know they are loved and supported by many. I hope with the donations collected that they could feel the love and support they have out here, and that we don't mind giving them the small things to make their day better."



BIM STEPHEN "STEVE" BRUNER

Branch: Army

Bio: Steve Bruner graduated from Broken Arrow High School in May of 1967 and attended the University of Oklahoma the next year. The Vietnam war was going on and Steve volunteered for the draft and left OU after only one year and enlisted in the U.S. Army. Steve completed basic training and Advanced Infantry training at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. He volunteered for jump school and went to Airborne training at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He was delighted that he was paid an additional \$55 per month for being a Paratrooper. After graduating from Airborne, he went to Ft. Lee, Virginia to Rigger School to learn how to pack parachutes. He returned to Ft. Benning as a Jump Master and likes to tell how he was in charge of ordering high ranking officers to jump out of helicopters. He spent the rest of his tour at Ft. Benning. Steve's brother, Danny, saw combat in Vietnam, and Steve believes that is why he was allowed to stay stateside. In 1970, after being honorably discharged from the Army, he returned to the Tulsa area and joined the Tulsa Police Department. He worked for TPD for ten years, first in the patrol division, then the traffic division, and spent the remainder of his career in the K9 unit as an officer and trainer. Tulsa's first narcotics dog, Sam, was assigned to Steve. Steve was attached to the vice squad/narcotics squad and participated in serving drug warrants, searching for illegal drugs and manhunts. In October 1980, Steve was shot and wounded while serving a drug warrant and, as a result of his injuries, retired in 1981. Steve served on the Muscogee Creek National Council as both Speaker and Second Speaker. Like so many other Muscogee Creek citizens, the Bruner family has answered the call to military service time and again. Steve's father, Bim Bruner, served in both WWII and Korea, his brother, Danny Bruner, served in Vietnam and his son, James "Bo" Bruner, served in Desert Storm.



CHARLES WOOD

Branch: Navy

Bio: Charles Wood served as a Navy Surface Warfare Officer for 23 years. He was commissioned as an Ensign upon graduation from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis MD. Charles is married to Marcia Wood. He is the son of Charles and Irena Wood. His tribal membership comes from his being the grandson of RB and Myra Olive and great grandson of Peter and Susan (nee McCombs) Ewing. One of his great Aunts is Ethel Ewing.

In his most significant tour, Charles was the Commanding Officer of Naval Communications, London overseeing a team of 235 military and civilian personnel. He and his command were formally recognized with the coveted Type Commanders' Retention Award. This is awarded for having the best re-enlistment rate among units of comparable size.

Charles' career consisted of a series of progressively responsible roles, each demanding unique expertise and unwavering dedication. Among these positions, Charles has served as: Missile Fire Control Officer, Gun Liaison Officer, Landing Signal Officer, Officer of the Deck (Underway and Ashore), Command Duty Officer, Combat Systems Officer, Missile Officer, Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer, Damage Control Assistant, Weapons Officer, Chief Engineer, Executive Officer (Afloat), Staff Officer at Commander- Naval Telecommunications Command, and Staff Officer at Defense Information Systems Agency.

The initial ship he served on was the USS Oklahoma City (CLG-5). He and his shipmates were awarded a Combat Action Ribbon for action off the coast of North Vietnam. He also received other awards such as the Navy Achievement Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

He attended Davis Elementary School and Southeast Junior and Senior High School in Oklahoma City. He obtained a Master of Science in Telecommunication Systems Management, from the Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, CA, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Naval Science (Financial Management), from the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD



ALICESON MARTZ

Branch: Navy

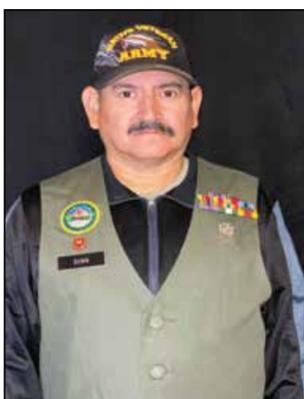
Bio: Aliceson Martz, from Weleetka, served in Sasebo, Japan. This picture shows me shooting a shotline during a replenishment at sea, during which supplies would be transferred to the ship I was on while on deployment. This was an all hands call, where everyone helped to transfer the supplies as quickly as possible. This was in the ocean near Australia. I served from 2016-2021.



SSG MICHELLE N. DUNN

Branch: Army

Bio: SSG Dunn enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard in March 2018 as an E88M (Motor Transport Operator) with H700 in McAlester, Ok. She graduated from Morris High School in 2015 and later earned an Associate in Liberal Arts in 2018, followed by a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2021 from Haskell Indian Nations University. Following her academic accomplishments, she reported for basic training on May 22, 2018, at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. She successfully completed basic training in August and Advanced Individual Training in September. In April 2023, she had the honor of deploying to Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom - Horn of Africa, during which she also chose to reenlist for an additional four years. She has earned several awards while serving. Her family takes great pride in her commitment to service and her notable representation of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.



SGT. GEORGE C. DUNN SR.

Branch: Army

Bio: While a Junior at Morris High School (MHS), George C. Dunn Sr. enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard HHC 120th Engineer Combat Heavy Battalion in 1981. The enlistment contract was under the split training option program. In Summer 1981, he began basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina for eight weeks. He came back to graduate from MHS in 1982. He left for Advanced Individual Training the Summer of 1982 for eight weeks at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In 1984, he started his full-time career with the U.S. Army-Oklmulgee Armory. He served two tours to Jamaica and one to Panama. He received several awards during his military career and retired October 31, 2003 with 22 years 8 months of service. Wife-Barbara Dunn and 3 children, George II, Holly and Michelle Dunn and five grandchildren Destiny Dunn, Mercedes Dunn, Giorgio Dunn, GiAnah Munds and Bishop Bert.



KENNETH GENE HARJO

Branch: Air Force

Bio: Kenneth was born July 11, 1945 in Henryetta, Oklahoma to Eugene and Suzanna (Tiger) Harjo. His Blood Quantum is 4/4ths Creek. He graduated from Henryetta High School in 1963 and enlisted in the United States Air Force in October, 1963. He did a tour of duty in England. Kenneth was Honorably Discharged in March, 1967. He attended Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He graduated in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science Degree, majoring in Accounting and Business Administration. Kenneth married Marsha Ryals in 1968 while both of them were attending Northeastern State College. They have two sons, Jeff and Ryan and one granddaughter, Finley. After graduating from Northeastern he worked as an accountant for several organizations in Kansas. He worked as Auditor and Accountant for the tribe from 2011 until his retirement in 2024.



NORMAN ALEX HARJO

Branch: Marine Corp

Bio: Norman was born on October 1, 1946 to Eugene and Suzanna (Tiger) Harjo in Henryetta, Oklahoma. His blood quantum was 4/4ths Creek. Norman graduated from Henryetta High School in 1964. He graduated from Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 1969 with Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. In 1980 he earned a Master's of Science Degree in Adult Education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Norman enlisted in the Marine Corp in 1969 and served a tour of duty in Vietnam. He was Honorably Discharged in 1971. In 1973 he began working for the Creek Nation in the Adult Education Department. He also worked for the Summer Youth Program and Adult Vocational Services. Norman retired in 1998 due to a physical disability. Norman went home to Jesus on September 5, 2012.



PAUL MICHAEL HARJO

Branch: Marine Corp

Bio: Paul was born on June 21, 1954 to Eugene and Suzanna (Tiger) Harjo in Okemah, Oklahoma. His Blood Quantum is 4/4ths Creek. He graduated from Sequoyah Indian School in May, 1973. Paul graduated from East Central State University in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation and Physical Education. Paul enlisted in the Marine Corp. in 1973 and was Honorably Discharged in 1975. He worked for the Tulsa Community College as a test monitor, recruiter and tutor until he retired from the college in 2012. Paul married Darlene Meeks on November 28, 2009. They lived in Sapulpa, Oklahoma until he went home to meet his Lord and Savior on December 17, 2020.



EUGENE M. HARJO

Branch: Army

Bio: Eugene was born March 3, 1918 to Alex and Nancy Harjo in Okemah, Oklahoma. He was 4/4ths degree Creek. He graduated from Chilocco Indian School in Newkirk, Oklahoma. Eugene met Suzanna Tiger of Henryetta, Oklahoma while they both were students at Chilocco. They were married in October, 1943 and became the parents of seven children. Eugene enlisted in the Army in September, 1940. He earned the rank of Staff Sargent and was in the Military Police. He did a tour of duty in Naples and Sicily during June, 1943 to July, 1944. Eugene was Honorably Discharged in September, 1945. He earned the EAME Service Ribbon with two Bronze Service Stars, Silver Star Medal, American Defense Service Ribbon and the Good Conduct Medal. He was killed in a construction accident in 1954.



JOHN HENRY MORGAN JR.

Branch: Marine Corps

Bio: John Morgan Jr., born in Okmulgee, OK, to the late Johnny Morgan Sr., joined the Marine Corps in 2009 and was stationed at Camp Pendleton in California. Prior to his first deployment, Morgan was a Saw Gunner. In addition to his role within the infantry platoon, he trained in defensive and offensive operations, patrolling, close quarters battle, and personal security. He was first deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan from 10/01/2010-09/21/2011 with 3rd Battalion 5th Marines India CO. He was a part of Operation Enduring Freedom for the Battle of Sangin. During this deployment, he provided quick reaction force for the company as a Mat-V gunner. Morgan was then deployed to Nowzad & Musa Qala Afghanistan from 03/03/2012 - 09/21/2012 with 2nd Battalion 5th Marines Weapons CO. During his second deployment, Morgan assumed responsibility for the training and well-being of the Marines under his charge. He assisted in the execution of multiple outer cordons during company and battalion level clearing operations and conducted clearing operations to clear enemy strong holds and to search for high value targets. Morgan provided high ranking individuals with safe transportation to and from different company and battalion forward operation bases. For his service, Morgan received the Combat Action Ribbon for Afghanistan, the Navy Unity Commendation, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the national Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 2 stars, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. After active duty, Morgan contracted with IDS and Triple Canopy and was placed with the Task Order 9-First Line of Protection and Quick Reaction Force in Kabul, Afghanistan. He provided movement security, specialized emergency services, conducted security sweeps, and provided guard services for diplomatic missions in high-threat areas that provided the protection of life, property, and information of the Department of State. In the total life of deployments with the USMC and IDL/Triple Canopy, Morgan completed 7 tours to Afghanistan.



CHRISTOPHER WINTERS

Branch: Army

Bio: During periods of Service, Christopher Winters supported El Salvador Operations, Operation Just Cause - Panama, and served with the 1st Infantry Division in Operations Desert Shield/Storm "ODS 90-91" Taskforce Dreadnought. Christopher served as Infantry, Scout, Armored Crewman and after re-enlisting trained / served as a Designated Marksman - Instructor as well as duties assigned. His awards include but are not limited to:

Bronze Star Medal
Army Commendation Medal
Army Achievement Medal (4th award)
National Defense Medal
Good Conduct Medal (3rd award)
Overseas Medal
Joint Services Medal
Valorous Unit Citation
Presidential Unit Citation
Master Drivers badge (Wheel & Track)
Expert Marksmanship badge (rifle, pistol & grenade)



PAGE ARTHUR JAMES

Branch: Army
Bio: December 5, 1941 – January 3, 2000
 Active Service Dates:
 US Army: August 2, 1960 – August 1, 1963
 US Army Reserves: August 1963 – August 1966
 Rank: SP4
 Decorations: SS (rifle) MM (Pistol)
 Married January 27, 1966 to Glenda Fay James (January 7, 1950 – March 21, 2020)
 3 children – James, Paula, Julie
 5 grandchildren – Brittini, Cody, Adam, Hannah, Natalie and Garrett
 5 great grandchildren – Nora, Aurora, Aidyn, Harley, Lily



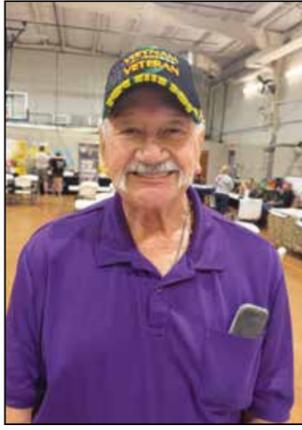
CHARLES PERRY

Branch: Marine Corps
Bio: 1975-1979
 I went to boot camp in San Diego, CA. Then to 29 Palms for radio school. From there I went to Okinawa and was assigned to HQ Battalion, 12th Marines. The remainder of my time was with Communications Support Company, 9th Communications Battalion back in 29 Palms.



RILEY BURGESS

Branch: Navy
Bio: Riley S. Burgess, Fire Control Technician First Class Served in the US Navy from 1971 to 1981.
 1972-73 Vietnam service on board the USS Henry B. Wilson DDG-7.
 1974-79 stationed on USS Parsons DDG-33 home ported in Yokosuka, Japan.
 1979-81 assigned to the Naval Weapons Center China Lake, California.
 Riley is the recipient of the Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award), National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.



MELVIN MITCHELL

Branch: Army
Bio: Melvin Mitchell is a Muscogee citizen who served in the Army. He was with the 23rd Americal Infantry Division, and was stationed in Vietnam from 1969-1971. He's a proud Veteran and often finds himself serving other veterans in need. He's also a member of the Tulsa Veterans Colorguard.



NATALIE DAGENET (BARNETT)

Branch: Navy
Bio: Natalie Dagenet (Barnett) served aboard the USS Arcadia supporting UN Operations in Mogadishu for Operation Restore Hope. She is a "shellback" and was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.



ROBERT DAGENET

Branch: Air Force
Bio: Robert Dagenet is the former Game Warden for the Muscogee Nation. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1961-1965 protecting the interests of the United States at Osan Air Base during the Vietnam War.



WHITNEY DAGENET

Branch: Navy
Bio: Whitney Dagenet served in the U.S. Navy from 1988-1992. She served in Operation Desert Storm and was a truck driver in the Navy Sea Bees.

Office of Environmental Services

CURBSIDE RECYCLING EVENT

Friday, Nov. 14, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

DOCUMENT SHREDDING WILL BE AVAILABLE

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

(OR UNTIL THE TRUCK IS FULL)

FREE CURBSIDE DOCUMENT SHREDDING PROVIDED BY SHREDDERS INC.

* **NO** books, magazines, 3-ring binders or large clips

FREE CURBSIDE ELECTRONIC RECYCLING

* TVs, monitors, cell phones, small appliances, and other electronics for safe and responsible recycling

OTHER ITEMS ACCEPTED

White goods (washer, dryer, etc.) (**MUST BE EMPTY & DOORS REMOVED**), automobile and alkaline batteries (**NO LITHIUM BATTERIES**), tires, cardboard, paper, plastic bottles #1 & #2, and aluminum cans

DO NOT BRING ANY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

* Hazardous waste includes items such as paint, medications, glues, lithium batteries, fluorescent bulbs and chemicals such as pesticides, cleaners, and insect repellants. These items will **NOT** be accepted at this event.

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION RECYCLE CENTER

12675 GUN CLUB ROAD
OKMULGEE, OK 74447

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: 918-549-2580 OR FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Office of Environmental Services