



# MVSKOKE NEWS

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## LAND BACK!

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION AND THE CITY OF TULSA SIGN HISTORIC TRANSFER OF COUNCIL OAK TREE PARK AND STICKBALL PARK

BY **MEREDITH JOHNSON**  
REPORTER

TVLSE – On Nov. 1, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation held the 39th Annual Council Oak Tree Day at Stickball Park commemorating the founding of the Locv Pokv Tribal Town in 1836. This year's significant event marked the return of the 400 year-old Council Oak to the Nation with a ceremonial signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the MCN and the City of Tulsa. The MOU conveys ownership of Stickball Park and Council Oak Tree Park to the Nation with the condition the land will remain public parks.

The repatriation was attended by MCN and city leadership, including

former Principal Chiefs A.D. Ellis and James Floyd. Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Representative Galen Cloud MC'd the event and introduced the Este Cate Hoktvke Suletawv, Mvskoke Women's Honor Guard, who opened the event. Remarks by Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Beaver, and Deputy Mayor Krystal Reyes highlighted the extraordinary history of the tree and the partnership between the city and the MCN. Native actor Moses J. Brings Plenty (Ogalala Lakota) spoke to the crowd, speaking of Native connections across Indian Country. City of Tulsa Director of Tribal Policy Amanda Swope (Mvskoke) shared the commitment the city has in honoring Indigenous traditions and

cultures. Swope also read the City of Tulsa proclamation on Native History Month.

After the signing a community lunch was shared. The event also had booths from vendors, community and tribal resources, and non-profits.

The parks hold huge significance to both the Nation and the city. The site is the first Mvskoke settlement within the region that became Tulsa: the Mvskoke people Locv Pokv Tvlse placed the embers of their sacred fire, carried from the ancestral homelands in Alabama, under the oak in 1836. As referenced in the MOU, this site is where they reestablished their Etlwv (tribal town), Cuko Rakko (ceremonial ground), played stick-



Principal Chief David Hill and City of Tulsa Deputy Mayor Krystal Reyes sign the MOU transferring Council Oak Park and Stickball Park to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on Nov. 1. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

ball games, and held commerce and trade. The parks are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in the Oklahoma Landmarks inventory.

Both Council Oak Park and Stickball Park have been owned by the City of Tulsa: Stickball Park since 1946 and Council Oak Park since 1974. The MCN held the first Council Oak Day ceremony at the park on Oct. 26, 1986,

under the leadership of Principal Chief Claude Cox. As reported in the Muscogee Nation News, then 93-years old former Principal Chief W.E. Dode McIntosh shared that work with the city to save the tree from development began 20 years prior: "We began our drive to save the tree in the 60's, and we had to

**COUNCIL OAK**  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



(Braden Harper/MM)

BY **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKEMAH – An attempted break-in during the early morning hours of Monday, Nov. 3 at Thlopthlocco Tribal Town's Golden Pony Casino has led to the current closure of the casino. According to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Attorney General Geri Wisner, MCN Lighthouse Police and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials are currently involved in the ongoing investigation. There are currently no suspects in the case at this time.

This comes amid court case CJ-2025-79, a petition filed by TTT Town King Brent Brown for a temporary emergency restraining order, temporary injunction, permanent injunction and declaratory judgement against two listed

groups of individuals. The case was filed in Okfuskee County District Court on Monday, Oct. 27. According to the BIA's Tribal leadership directory, Town King Brown is listed as the current head of the TTT.

The filing lists individuals in Group 1 as Brent Smith, Tim Cheek, Cole Trickey, Tim Wolf, Miranda Kelough, David Haney, Mike Harjochee and "other unknown individuals acting in concert and joint participation with Group 1 Defendants." Individuals listed in Group 2 are Nathan Anderson, Ryan Herrod, Wesley Montemayor, Leyahna Hicks, Malinda Noon, Inda McGirt, Jason Sawyer, Joyce Noon, Summer Barnes, Leeanna Tomah and "other unknown individuals acting in concert and joint participation with Group 2 Defen-

## ATTEMPTED BREAK-IN AT GOLDEN PONY SHUTS DOWN OPERATIONS, MCN LIGHTHORSE AND BIA INVESTIGATES

CLOSURE OCCURS AMID THLOPTHLOCCO POLITICAL TURMOIL

dants." The filing alleges that individuals listed in Group 1 trespassed on TTT Tribal government offices and

gained access to certain federal government websites and prevented access of TTT Tribal officials to these websites in the pro-

cess. themselves as TTT Tribal leadership to federal agencies.

Wisner said the MCN's involvement with the ongoing Golden Pony investigation will strictly be in the interest of public safety, not politics.

"The position of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is that we are not going to get into the political mechanisms of Thlopthlocco," Wisner said. "As a sovereign government recognizing another sovereign, that's Thlopthlocco. I don't want and I don't think it's the business of Muscogee (Creek) Nation to be involved in those integral mechanisms of another government."

**Incidents within TTT**

The filing cites an incident that occurred at TTT's quarterly membership meeting held on Saturday, Oct. 18 at the TTT South Community Center. The filing alleges that

**WITH RESPECT TO THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION OUR INTEREST IS SIMPLY MAINTAINING THE PEACE, MAKING SURE PEOPLE AREN'T HARMED, MAKING SURE PROPERTY ISN'T DESTROYED, AND SUPPORTING WHATEVER HAPPENS WITH THE GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE THLOPTHLOCCO PEOPLE." - GERI WISNER**

refused to leave when asked. They also allegedly threatened TTT Tribal employees.

The filing also alleges that individuals listed in Group 2 threatened the Tribe's depository bank employees. They also allegedly

cess.

The filing illustrates a portrait of political turmoil within TTT as both defendant groups have individuals claiming to be members of TTT's Business Committee. These individuals have also presented

**BREAK-IN**  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## UNOFFICIAL TVLSE AND OKMULKE RUNOFF RESULTS

LOWE AND TIGER RETURN TO MCNNC

BY **MEREDITH JOHNSON**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Tvlse and Okmulke districts will have a change of representation for their Seat B council seats. The runoff elections both ousted incumbent representatives.

Lucian Tiger III won the Tvlse Seat B election with 57.21% of the vote compared to incumbent Leonard Gouge, who received 42.79%.

In the Seat B Okmulke election, William Lowe received 52.19% of the vote compared to incumbent

Harjo, Sr., who received 47.81%.

The results are unofficial until certified by the MCN Election Board on Friday, Nov. 14 at 5 p.m.

On Saturday evening Lowe thanked his supporters in a social media post. He shared, "Mvto for your support! I look forward to serving all citizens of the great Muscogee Nation."

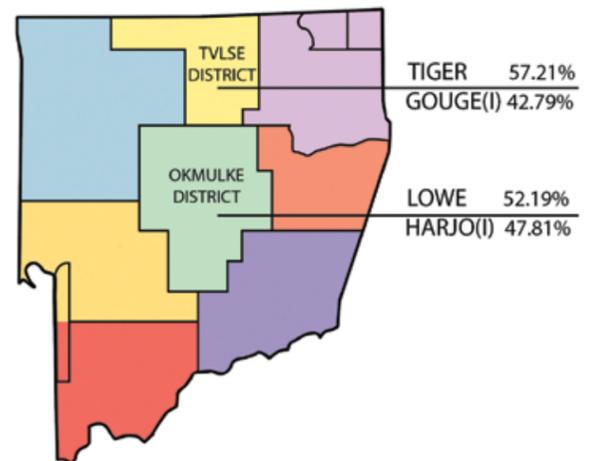
Harjo thanked his supporters and sent congratulations to Lowe. He shared, "I have already sent my congratulations to my opponent. Was an honor to have been allowed to serve this Great Nation for the past four years. I send my prayers

up, as we are faced with some difficult times ahead and I pray our creator watches over us to see us through, till we come to an end of all these matters. Mvtoi once again for all the support."

In a statement posted to social media, Leonard Gouge shared, "I want to say Mvtoi to all that has supported me during this election and for the past 4 years, it's been great. Mvtoi"

As of press time, Tiger has not made a public comment.

Both Tiger and Lowe have served previously on the MCNNC. Tiger served on the council from



the council from 2020-2024, and was speaker in 2022 and 2024.

COUNCIL OAK  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



A crowd of Mvskoke citizens, Tribal and city leaders, and Tulsans gathered at Stickball Park under sunny skies for the repatriation of Council Oak Park and Stickball Park. The parks will remain open to the public. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

exchange land foot by foot. It took us five years just to get the title.”

The first ceremony incorporated a horseback procession on Riverside Parkway by members of the Creek Nation Riding Club. Mvskoke citizen and celebrated horseman Roy Roberts carried a wool-wrapped torch which was presented to Chief Cox and Chief McIntosh to light an “Eternal Flame.”

Recent work towards repatriating the parks appeared publicly in remarks during a March 2023 Tulsa City Council meeting. Chris McCabe, president of the River-view Neighborhood Association (RVNA), presented concerns about the state of the park and the health of the tree to the council, questioning the city’s lack of concern for the property. McCabe was soon con-

nected with MCN Secretary of Humanities and Culture Raelynn Butler and other community and Mvskoke stakeholders. In 2024, the RVNA and the MCN partnered for an Oklahoma Forestry Department Grant to aid in tree maintenance and preservation.

During the 2024 Council Oak Tree Day ceremony the Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum announced that the city was initiating a transfer of land between the city and the MCN. Bynum stated, “This is important for us as a community as we continue to find ways to honor our heritage and the origins of our city. Tulsa wouldn’t exist without the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and this is one way we can properly recognize that.”



MCNNC Representative Galen Cloud and Mvskoke Tribal Town and Ceremonial Leaders at the 2025 Council Oak Repatriation Ceremony. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

**“WE RECOGNIZE THE SHARED HISTORY BETWEEN THE CITY OF TULSA AND THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION. THE COUNCIL OAK CEREMONY COMMEMORATES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW MVSKOKE NATION FROM OUR ORIGINAL HOMELANDS. THE COUNCIL OAK TREE STANDS TODAY AS A LIVING LANDMARK FOR BOTH THE MVSKOKE NATION AND THE CITY OF TULSA. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THIS CEREMONY HONORS THE PERSEVERANCE OF OUR MEKKVLKE WHO CONTINUE TO SAFEGUARD OUR WAY OF LIFE. IT REPRESENTS BOTH A SACRED GATHERING PLACE AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA FOR THE MVSKOKE NATION. I URGE EVERY CITIZEN TO REFLECT AS WE HONOR OUR MVSKOKE ANCESTORS WHO SURVIVED THE FORCED REMOVAL ON THE ROAD OF MISERY (NENE ESTEMERKETV) AND REESTABLISHED OUR TRIBAL TOWNS, WHO REMAIN THE BACKBONE OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND THE LIVING HEART OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.” - MCN PROCLAMATION OF COUNCIL OAK DAY**

### MCN OPENS NEW TRAFFIC COURT AT RIVERWALK IN JENKS

CHIEF JUDGE ROGER WILEY HOPES THE COURT WILL BE CONVENIENT FOR TULSA-AREA CITIZENS

BY THOMAS JACKSON  
REPORTER

JENKS – Tribal citizens living in the Northern part of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation no longer have to travel to Okmulgee to settle traffic disputes in court, as the Nation has opened a new traffic court in Jenks.

Located at the MCN-owned Riverwalk Terrace, the court will hold traffic and DUI cases that fall under Muscogee (Creek)

Nation jurisdiction in the Tulsa area multiple times per month, beginning in November.

Judge Roger Wiley, the Chief Judge of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s District Court, commented that those who receive traffic citations, as well as Law Enforcement officers in the northern part of the Reservation will find the Jenks court a much more convenient option when compared to the prospect of traveling down to Okmulgee.

“We just think it’s a good deal. We’re so limited on space here that it helps to spread out the dockets and hearings, so that we can take care of more business all at once until our new courthouse is completed. We’re going to keep the Tulsa area court even after we get our new courthouse, but this will help alleviate some of the overflow that we’re having in the space we’re operating with right now,” Wiley said.

Wiley also pointed out that the Jenks location will operate very similarly to the Okmulgee court, with Tulsa area residents being able to pay tickets and fines at a front window in the court’s building, as well as being able to pay online.

Those needing to contact the Jenks Traffic Court may do so by calling their office at 918-938-0889. All others, including those handling traffic cases outside of the Tulsa area, may do so by calling 918-758-1400.

Traffic and DUI courts and trials will begin in November.

More information may be found on the MCN District Court’s website at <https://creek-districtcourt.com/>



A view of the doors leading into the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court, located at Riverwalk Terrace in Jenks, OK. (Thomas Jackson/MM)

### BREAK-IN CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

individuals in Group 1 remained on the property after the meeting concluded and refused to leave. Court documents state that MCN Lighthouse Police officers were called out on scene to escort individuals from Group 1 off the premises.

Wisner confirmed that she and MCN Lighthouse Police Chief Richard Phillips met with TTT officials. According to Wisner, MCN Lighthouse officers are not specifically responding to calls to enforce TTT Tribal law.

“It was reported to me there were some heated arguments that may have led to physical altercations,” Wisner said. “If there is a crime reported I can confirm and assure you that Muscogee (Creek) Nation will respond with our Lighthouse division because I don’t want to see people hurt. I don’t want to see property destroyed.”

Another incident cited in the filing occurred on Thursday, Oct. 23 at the TTT Social Services Office where individuals from Group 1 allegedly arrived at the offices and confronted TTT employees. MCN Lighthouse was called to escort the individuals from Group 1 off the premises; however, the agency never responded. The filing refers to TTT as a “no man’s land” due to insufficient law enforcement and the refusal of MCN Lighthouse to intervene.

The filing seeks a declaratory

judgement against Smith and individuals from Group 1, as well as Anderson and individuals from Group 2. A requested temporary emergency restraining order against all listed individuals listed in Group 1 was granted on Monday, Oct. 27. According to the restraining order in regards to enforcement in this case: “Thlopthlocco tribal officials may contact the Sheriff’s department for the purposes of enforcement of this order.”

Regarding the reported crimes and heated confrontations in TTT, Wisner said the MCN will do everything in its power to keep the public safe while respecting the sovereignty of fellow federally-recognized Tribal nations.

“The Muscogee (Creek) Nation with our reservation status, we have had allegations lodged at us that there are pockets of lawlessness that happen on our reservation,” Wisner said. “I am cognizant of that and I am dead set against any perception or reality of areas where lawlessness and violence rampantly occurs.”

Mvskoke Media reached out to TTT Tribal officials for comment on the Golden Pony Casino closure. As of time of publishing, TTT has not provided comment at the time. As of Wednesday, Nov. 5 the TTT website was taken down. Golden Pony casino is closed until further notice. Mvskoke Media will continue to provide coverage of this developing story.



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# TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY HOSTS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PROGRAMMING

PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN THE CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND FOLKTALES OF LOCAL OKLAHOMA TRIBES

BY **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

TULSA – The Tulsa City County Library American Indian Resource Center is recognizing Native American Heritage Month with a full slate of programs. Although the center provides year-round programming, November is packed with events that honor the Tribal nations in Tulsa County. The Tribal cultures featured in this month's programming are the Mvskoke Nation, the Euchee Tribe, the Osage Nation, the Cherokee Nation and the Pawnee Nation.

Mvskoke storyteller Will Hill will share Native American stories at the Duno-Logah: Exciting Folktales From Native Americans event. Audience members will experience Hill's stories with

the accompaniment of a buffalo hide drum, Native flute and turtle shell rattle.

Euchee culture will be shared through the Native Culture Make and Take: Making Traditional Ball Sticks and the Native Stickball Throw Around with the ZOyaha Nation events. Mike Deo (Euchee) and Tony Shepard (Euchee) will teach ball stick making and share about the traditional game of stickball.

Three language classes will be offered throughout the month. Native Hand Talk for Families is led by Mike Pahsetopah (Osage/Mvskoke/Euchee), a fourth generation hand talker. In this class participants will learn to sign simple phrases and stories. Two Osage Language Classes will be held and led by Osage Nation Language Department teacher



Zarrow Library (Braden Harper/MM)

Jacqueline Delong. Participants will learn commonly used words and simple phrases.

Other make and takes include: Cherokee Pottery, Beaded Medallion Earrings, Pony Bead Creations and Plains-Style Mini Moccasins. Each class will teach

### The American Indian Resource Center

In 1991 a proposal was written to establish a Native American Collection. This contained all books in the TCCL digital system pertaining to Native American

community, she also works with Tulsa Public Schools Indian Education Department. According to Runnels, there are over 60 tribes represented within the student body at Tulsa Public Schools. For TCCL, cultural programming provides a connection for Tribal

**Celebrate**  
**Native American Heritage Month 2025**

Join Tulsa City-County Library's American Indian Resource Center to celebrate the history, culture and traditions of Native Americans. Programs are for all ages unless otherwise noted. To register for an event or more details, visit [www.tulsalibrary.org/events](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/events).

**Osage Language Class**  
Tuesdays, Nov. 4, 18 • 6-7 p.m. • Skiatook Library • 316 E. Rogers  
Join Jacqueline Delong, Osage Nation Language Department teacher, to learn commonly used words and simple sentences.

**Native Culture Make and Take: Making Traditional Ball Sticks**  
Saturday, Nov. 8 • 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Jenks Library • 523 W. 6 St.  
Join Mike Deo and Tony Shepard from the ZOyaha Nation to learn how to make ball sticks and learn the traditional game of stickball and its amazing history. Class size is limited. Registration is required.

**Native Stickball Throw Around With the ZOyaha Nation**  
Saturday, Nov. 8 • 2-3 p.m. • Veterans Park • 305 S. Birch St., Jenks  
Learn about the ancient game of stickball that Native people used to settle challenges. Audience participation is encouraged.

**Native Hand Talk for Families**  
Monday, Nov. 10 • 4-5 p.m. • Broken Arrow Library • 300 W. Broadway  
Join Mike Pahsetopah as he teaches simple sign language phrases and stories for families from the Hand Talk that the Native peoples of this land once used.

**Duno-Logah: Exciting Folktales From Native America**  
Thursday, Nov. 13 • 6-9 p.m. • Charles Page Library • 531 E. Fourth St., Sand Springs  
Join Native America's greatest raconteur Will Hill as he regales us with the stories of ancient America. Hear the serenade of the buffalo hide drum, Native flute and turtle shell rattle.

**Native Culture Make and Take: Cherokee Pottery**  
Friday, Nov. 14 • 9-4 p.m. • Skiatook Library  
Join potter Crystal Harna for Native stories and hands-on pottery workshop. Class size is limited. Registration is required. For adults and teens.

**Native Culture Make and Take: Beaded Medallion Earrings**  
Monday, Nov. 17 • 4-5 p.m. • Branson Brookside Library • 4507 S. Madison Place  
Join Robin Tiger and learn how to make beaded medallion earrings. Class size is limited. Registration is required. For adults and teens.

**Adult Craft Night: Pony Bead Creations Make and Take**  
Monday, Nov. 17 • 6-7:30 p.m. • Zarrow Regional Library • 2224 W. 51st St.  
Join Stella Foster as she brings pony beads to life with fun, colorful key chains and other creations. For adults.

**Native Culture Make and Take: Plains-Style Mini Moccasins**  
Tuesday, Nov. 25 • 2-4 p.m. • Maxwell Park Library • 1333 N. Canton  
Join J. Prall to learn the basic steps of making the Plains-style mini moccasins. Please bring sharp scissors. Class size is limited. Registration is required. For adults.

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**“IT’S MY DREAM JOB. I LOVE GETTING TO WORK WITH MY CULTURE AND TO HAVE A SMALL PART IN BRINGING THE CULTURE ALIVE. WE’RE STILL HERE, IT’S STILL GOING. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS THAT WAY.”**  
**-TERESA RUNNELS**

a particular craft and allow participants to take it home. Make and take classes are open to all ages. However, the Pony Bead Creations and Plains-Style Mini Moccasins classes are recommended for adults.

TCCL American Indian Resource Center Coordinator Teresa Runnels is a Sac and Fox citizen and has Mvskoke, Shawnee, Caddo, and Delaware heritage. It is her mission to inspire others to learn about different Native cultures so that it will be passed on.

“We always strive to create an interest in one of these cultural arts and seek further training for their learning so that they can carry that on with them in their lifetime.” Runnels said.

culture. In 2000 the Native American Collection was officially established. In 2003 the collection found a physical home at the Zarrow Regional Library in West Tulsa. The collection was renamed as the American Indian Resource Center. The center has been headed by three coordinators during its 25 year history.

In addition to overseeing the Native American resource database, the American Indian Resource Center provides programming and outreach year round. The database is available to all card-carrying TCCL members.

Runnels has worked for TCCL in her current position since 2004. In addition to planning and overseeing Native American programming for the com-

citizens within Tulsa County. Runnels' goal is to provide a class at every TCCL location.

“There are so many (cultures). It's not like there's one tribe, even though we are in the Mvskoke Nation we have so many tribes represented here,” Runnels said. “A lot of times if we don't offer it (cultural programming) here at the library, they (Tribal citizens) may not be able to travel back to their Tribal nation to participate. We keep that stuff in mind. We want everyone to feel a part of the culture.”

Registration is required for most programs and classes offered during Native American Heritage month. To register, visit [www.tulsalibrary.org/events](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/events).

# OKLAHOMA AG DRUMMOND SIDES WITH TRIBES

CLARIFIED STATE STANCE ON NATIVE AMERICANS HUNTING AND FISHING ON TRIBAL LAND FOLLOWING TRIBAL LAW

BY **THOMAS JACKSON**  
REPORTER

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gentner Drummond, the Attorney General of Oklahoma, announced in a statement on Oct. 30 that he will be dismissing charges related to Indigenous hunting and fishing within Indian Country without a state license. According to Drummond, he will not prosecute Indigenous people who are hunting and fishing within Indian Country as long as they are abid-

ing by tribal law.

This comes after his office decided to take over the case of Shawn Robertson, a Choctaw citizen who was charged with hunting without a license in Pushmataha County the previous week, and decided to dismiss the charges against Robertson.

This decision deepens the rift that has grown between the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, which has been siding with Indigenous tribes, and Oklahoma Gov-

ernor Kevin Stitt.

Drummond directly called out Stitt for damaging the relationship between the state and its 38 tribes: “I will not permit a petulant, lame duck governor to further injure the State's relationship with our valuable tribal partners simply because he is unwilling to compromise. This is another senseless attempt to ignore the sovereignty of the tribal nations in Oklahoma, and it cannot be tolerated.”



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# HISTORY COMES ALIVE IN MVSKOKE COUNCIL HOUSE

BY EMMA WALLS  
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.

OKMULGEE, OK — Smack in the middle of downtown Okmulgee stands a landmark of Muscogee history. Old wood floors, a steep staircase and rooms filled with significant pieces that are a blast from the past fill the house in the center of town, which holds memories and history that helped shape the native nation today.

Once the original government building for the Mvskoke (Muscogee) Nation, the original house was a log cabin built in 1868 and rebuilt into the current stone structure in 1878. The house is now a museum open for the public to visit.

“We tried to build it back to the original materials,” Mvskoke Principal Chief David Hill said. “There is just a lot of history in there. I’m really grateful for the cultural preservation and archives department. They try to keep everything in.”

Few original pieces remain from the house when it was serving as a tribal complex. These pieces are displayed in the Council House and include the original

cil house, and in 1919, the city of Okmulgee bought it. In 2010, the tribal government bought the building back and is now able to showcase the value it holds

“When Oklahoma became a state, they took that away from us,” Rae Lynn Butler, Mvskoke secretary of culture and humanities, said. “Every government building. Our court systems. They abolished all of that. Only in the last couple of decades have we been able to regain that property and that building that was always ours.”

The reconstruction of the Council House started in 2015 and was completed in 2018. When rebuilding, the nation wanted to make the house match the original as much as possible, such as the thick wooden floors, vibrant lighting on the light-colored walls, replica chairs and decorations that tell a story about the tribe.

When the renovations were finished in 2018, the council held its meeting in the Council House to acknowledge the reopening of the space. The council typically meets



Beadwork of Mvskoke Seal. (Emma Walls/UNT)

The building contains numerous pieces that tell the nation's story. Artwork consists of items from Mvskoke paintings to statues and beadwork.

“Some of my family’s art is in there,” Joy Harjo, the 23rd U.S. Poet Laureate and a Mvskoke Citizen, said. “It’s like a repository of stories, and that’s about connection.”

The house has stories to tell. Several people who visit tend to ask about a hanging tree on the front lawn of the Council House. Beaver said there is no current proof that these events occurred, but when the Council House was the government building, there were often ways of punishment through the Mvskoke justice system because there were no jails or prisons.

“I get lots of questions about the hanging tree,” Beaver said. “We can say, pretty much, to a fact, none of the trees that you see here today were standing or alive during the original construction of the two-story log cabin or the stone structure you see today

Today, the Council House is open to the public to visit. Meetings sometimes take place in the building, school groups come through and other events are also held at the Council House. Such events help to preserve the tribe’s history, including the original language.

“Recently, we held a speaker gathering in there where we had over 50 fluent Mvskoke speakers sitting in the chambers of the Council House,” Butler said. “We just thought, ‘Wow, the walls have heard so much, and to hear our

language spoken again in here with this many speakers in one place.’ It was really a beautiful time.”

For some, the Council House is just a building. For citizens of the Mvskoke Nation, the Council

the former chiefs, former council reps. You can just feel the presence when you’re in that building. So, it means a lot to everyone here. That’s the original National Council House, you know.”



Mvskoke Nation Curatorial Manager John Beaver standing outside of the Council House in downtown Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on March 10, 2025. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

dark wooden chief’s desk, wooden chief’s chair with crossed patterns woven into the seat, an old sheet of plaster from the wall of the school room and three light-colored wooden chairs from the council meetings.

In 1907, at the arrival of Oklahoma statehood, the Mvskoke Nation was forced out of the coun-

in the building at least once a year.

“While the Council House today certainly has the look and feel of a museum space, we are a functioning tribal government building,” Mvskoke Nation Curatorial Manager John Beaver said. “That’s not just important, but a pretty powerful educational statement.”



The Trail of Tears sign is located outside the Mvskoke Council House. (Emma Walls/UNT)

House is a building of stories and honors the ancestors of the nation. The council house preserves the memories of past chiefs, citizens and the ways the tribe has functioned over time.

“A lot of spirits there too,” Hill said. “The ancestors are still there,

The Council House is located at 100 W 6th St., Okmulgee, OK 74447. The museum is open Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to visit the Council House is free.



Emma Walls is a Mayborn School of Journalism student majoring in print and digital media with a minor in criminal justice. She works as a copyeditor for the North Texas Daily and hopes to become an investigative journalist after she graduates in 2027.

# SHAWNEE LANGUAGE ARIA, KO'KOOMFENA, WORLD PREMIER

THE PERFORMANCE FEATURED MVSKOKE SOPRANO KIRSTEN KUNKLE AND CHICKASAW COMPOSER JEROD IMPICHCHAACHAAHA' TATE

BY THOMAS JACKSON  
REPORTER

CLEVELAND – Soprano vocalist Dr. Kirsten Kunkle (Mvskoke) and composer Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate (Chickasaw) are working together once again on a project and performance known as Ko'koomfena, Our Grandmother, held at the Suzanne and Paul Westlake Performing Arts Center in Cleveland from Oct. 16-19.

Kunkle and Tate recently sat down with Live Wire, to discuss the performance which was sponsored by CityMusic Cleveland.

Ko'koomfena is sung in the Shawnee language- a first for Kunkle.

Kunkle, who has sung in Chickasaw and once performed in 6 different languages for the American Indian Symphony (Apache, Cheyenne, Chickasaw, Modoc, Potawatomi, Wichita), pointed out how important this performance is to her and how groundbreaking it is.

“This may be the first time that anyone’s sung classically in Shawnee,” Kunkle said. “I don’t say that lightly. I think that the



Dr. Kirsten Kunkle (Mvskoke) and conductor John McLaughlin Williams after the performance of Ko'koomfena in Cleveland, OH. (Photo Courtesy: Yzabella Estaco)

things that we’re doing, especially the work I’m doing with Jerod, is exceptionally groundbreaking.”

Tate praised Kunkle for the work she has done, especially given how there is no set translation for Indigenous languages via the International Phonetic Alphabet.

“It’s really cool, because she’s kind of leading the way on all of this, and so now, hopefully,

people will be calling her for her insights about how she’s doing languages and everything,” Tate said.

When asked about how the performances went in Cleveland, Kunkle stated that all four performances were very well received by audiences, and that she was very grateful for the opportunity.

“The joy of bringing the Shawnee language to audiences in the

original homeland of the Shawnee tribe, singing this incredible score by the leading Native symphonic composer Jerod Tate, and having my debut with the amazing CityMusic Cleveland, in my home state, was such a pleasure and true highlight,” Kunkle said.

The learning process for Kunkle was, as always, a collaboration with Indigenous knowledge bearers. “Joel Barnes of the

Shawnee Nation was able to give me a very detailed audio file to help me in navigating the language, for which I am very grateful.”

When asked why they create performances like this, Kunkle stated that this has been another chance for her to not only expand her knowledge on Indigenous languages, but also to keep showing off the languages and cultures of various tribes to a wider audience. For Kunkle and Tate, performances like this also give Tribes more attention and work to keep their stories alive.

“Jerod and I both are extremely driven to retain and advance Native culture, and bridging the gap between language and classical music is one of the most important parts of our legacy as musicians,” Kunkle said.

“Hopefully, the story of Ko'koom'feena will extend far beyond these performances, and Jerod’s music will continue to reach new audiences while expanding upon the cultural heritage of the Shawnee people. I am honored to be a part of this important musical and cultural storytelling.”

SUBMISSION



MVSKOKE CITIZENS PARTICIPATE IN OKEMAH HIGH SCHOOL HOMECOMING ROYALTY

Nikki Deere (Mvskoke) and Aaden Dunson (Mvskoke) were named Homecoming Royalty at Okemah High School on Friday, Sept. 19. Taran Dunson was named a runner up.

Nikki is the daughter of Rob and Danielle Deere and the granddaughter of Mary and the late Gordon Baldwin and Dean Deere and the late Christine Wind. She is a Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen. She plays softball and is the senior class vice president, a member of the Beta Club, Academic Team, National Honor Society, Oklahoma Honor Soci-

ety, FFA, and Student Council. In her free time, she enjoys painting and spending time with her family and friends. After high school, Nikki plans to attend the University of Oklahoma and major in marketing.

Aaden and Taran are the son and daughter of Tara Dunson and the grandson of Mike and Randi Dunson and Donna Watson. Aaden is a four-year member of the football and baseball teams and a two-year member of the basketball and powerlifting teams. In his free time, he enjoys hanging out with his friends,

watching Hudl with his teammates, and talking with his sisters and mom. After high school, Aaden plans to go to college and study biotechnology or biology. Taran is a four-year member of Okemah Cheer and the Este Cate Club and a two-year member of the track team and softball team. Taran enjoys hanging out with her family, especially her brother Aaden, and cheering on the sidelines with Jada. After high school, Taran plans to attend OSU-IT and become a nurse.



SOUR SOFKEE

By FUS YVHIKV  
COLUMNIST

The following column is a fictionalized satirical story written in the genre of 'Creek Dialect Writings'. The events and characters depicted are fictitious.

I was relaxing at home as the TV played in the background. The 5 o'clock local news was showing. Fixico is onscreen.

"Naget? What the?" I say to myself.

Fixico is adorned in a fur Viking hat with curved ram's horns attached to the sides. A small American flag is duct taped to one of the horns. The right side of his face is painted red, the left side blue, and the area between his eyes and down across his nose is colored white.

Fixico is shirtless. A badly drawn tattoo across his chest reads "Chef" although I'm sure it is supposed to read "Chief". He is wearing a squash blossom necklace with the price tag still affixed. I can see "Made in China" on the tag. Fixico resembles a poor man's version of the QAnon Shaman.

A microphone is in Fixico's face as he talks excitedly. I turn up the volume. A crawler identifies Fixico as the Chief of the Pretendian Tribe. A gaggle of pale-faces stands behind Fixico. They are dressed in faux leather outfits and decorated with enough fake beads and feathers to stock the entire Hobby Lobby chain.

"We are at this site that is so very sacred to the tribe," Fixico says as he stands in front of the Pretendian smoke shop. "We

are here to protest the government's failure to give our tribe federal recognition as called for by the treaty of...the treaty of...uh, yeah, the treaty," Fixico says as he turns to a furry white man standing next to him. "What's the name of that treaty again?"

The furry white man identifies himself as Thunder Dancer. He is holding what is supposed to be an eagle staff, but it looks like the hooked rod of Moses. Holding the rod up high, Thunder Dancer resembles Charlton Heston as Moses parting the Red Sea.

"It's the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, Chef, I mean, Chief," Thunder Dancer intones.

"Dancing Rabbit!" Chief Fixico yells.

A white tribal member steps forward. He is wearing a red bandana across his forehead and a garish, paper mâché rabbit as a hat.

"You called, Chief?" the rabbit asks.

"No, Dancing Rabbit. I'm talking about the treaty, not you." Chief Fixico says.

Dancing Rabbit does a backwards two-step, his arms making a raise the roof motion, as he merges into the thong of white pretendians.

"What is the first thing that your tribe will do if granted federal recognition?" a reporter asks.

"Build a casino," Fixico says. "And a big one too. Thousands of slot machines, table games, high dollar poker rooms, lots of restaurants, a spa, and a swimming pool bigger than the Red Sea."

"That's what I'm talking about!" Moses, uh, Thunder Dancer gleefully interrupts.

"So this is all about the money?" the reporter asks.

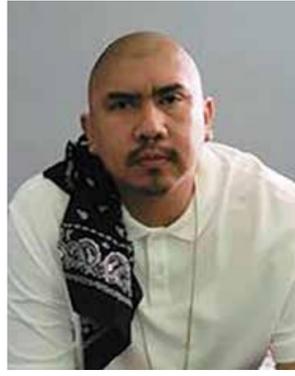
"We prefer to talk about economic development, job creation, and the impact to the local economy. Of course, as Chief, I'll bear the burden of being the highest-paid employee, just above my family members. But it's a job that consumes me 24/7." Fixico says.

The reporter holds up his cell phone.

"Chief Fixico," it says here that you are a citizen of Mvskoke Creek Nation. How can you claim citizenship in another tribe?"

"What?" Fixico says. "How

IN MEMORIAM



TEODORO OLEA JR.

Teodoro Olea, Jr., passed from this life on October 22, 2025. He was born December 5, 1981, in Dallas, Texas

Teodoro (Theodore) Olea was affectionately known by friends and family as Teddy.

Teddy was preceded in death by his father, Theodore Olea Sr.

He is survived by his daughter; Mia Olea currently with the

United States Army, his wife; Zoe Lynn Olea of Morris Ok, children; Chasity Tiger, Ayleah Powell, Topley Powel and wife Emily, Jess Waterdown Jr., and wife Courtney, grandchildren; Maya, Alaina, Sierra, Tahlee, Hazel. His parents; Emma Tecumseh Dominguez and Joe Dominguez of Dallas, Texas, brothers; Joseph Dominguez and wife Savannah Mena of Dallas, Texas, Quinton Tecumseh Dominguez of Dallas, Texas, Jabaica Tecumseh Sr., of Morris, Ok, sister; Tysie Tecumseh of Irving, Texas, several aunts and uncles and a host of cousins.

Wake Service was held 7pm Friday, October 31, 2025, at Concharty Church, 19040 Garfield Rd, Okmulgee, Ok, 74447. Funeral Services were at 2pm Saturday, November 1, 2025, also at the church. Burial was at Tecumseh Family Cemetery 1449 n 320 Rd, Haskell, Ok



MARY JO BARNETT

Mary Jo Barnett passed away on November 4th, 2025 in Holdenville, Oklahoma. She was born on September 18th, 1963 in Lawton, Oklahoma to Walter and Josephine Wise.

Mary was raised in Konawa, Oklahoma but lived in Holdenville for adult life. She graduated with her Bachelor's degree from Bacon College. Mary was a Head Start teacher for 24 years for the Muscogee Creek Nation. Over the years, Mary had won multiple Language Bowls. She enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren, going to church, watch-

ing OU Football and going to yard sales with her daughter on Saturdays. Mary married Legus Barnett on June 10th 1996 in Seminole, Oklahoma.

Mary is preceded in death by her husband Legus Barnett, grandson Zayden, parents, Josephine and Walter Wise, siblings Leo Wise, Walter Wise Jr., Maxine Clifford and Constance Thlocco. She is survived by Taylor Barnett of the home, Tyler Barnett and Ahnie of Seminole, Seth Barnett of Catoosa, Tim and Alisia Cully of Konawa, Jacob Wise and Elesheba of Konawa, siblings; Vincent Wise and wife Jamie of Konawa, Kenny Wise of Konawa, Linda Wise of Konawa, and Sheila Hooper and husband Tim of Maud. Mary is survived by a host of grandkids and numerous family and friends.

Pallbearers were Polo Gonzalez, Jeremy Wright, Clint King, Jason Tiger Jr., Bennie Tiger Jr., and Houston Tiger III. Honorary pallbearers are Houston Tiger Jr., Austin Tiger, Donald Jim, Vincent Wise and Tim Cully.

Funeral service was Saturday, November 8, 2025 at Sand Creek Eufaula Baptist Church in Wewoka, Oklahoma with Reverend Eric Thlocco officiating and assisted by Reverend Newman Crowley.

Interment followed at Johnson Family Cemetery.

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(Image Courtesy: FAM)

## "WINIKO: REUNION" SCREENING AT CMN

DOCUMENTARY CONNECTS TRIBAL DESCENDANTS TO THEIR ANCESTORS' ITEMS, LONG HELD IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – On Sep. 27 The American Museum (FAM) hosted a free screening of the film "WINIKO: Reunions" at the College of the Muscogee Nation Lecture Hall. The documentary, filmed by the Tulsa area Native production team Pursuit Films, highlights the stories of seven Native descendant groups and the items that belonged to their ancestors, long held by the Smithsonian Institution. Of those seven, the Muscogee (Creek) McIntosh family is highlighted, reuniting the descendants of Principal Chief William McIntosh with a finger-woven sash made by his daughter Jane in the early 19th century.

The items featured in "WINIKO: Reunions" are part of the FAM exhibit "WINIKO: Life of an Object, Selections from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian currently on display. The exhibit contains 72 items on loan from the NMAI that FAM connected to 32 living descendant communities and families in Oklahoma.

**"THIS IS JUST A MATURATION, NOT A REPATRIATION, WHERE WE COULDN'T GIVE THE ITEM BACK, BUT AS A MUSEUM, A NATIVE BASED MUSEUM, WE WANTED TO AT LEAST LET THESE FAMILY MEMBERS KNOW THAT THESE ITEMS ONCE BELONGED TO THEIR ANCESTOR." JOHN HAMILTON**

FAM's current Assistant Curator John Hamilton (Kiowa/Caddo/Cheyenne/Wichita) and previous project curator and NAGPRA specialist Welana Queton (Mvskoke/Osage/Cherokee) spoke to Mvskoke Media about the exhibit, the documentary process, and working with tribal communities to reunite family histories.

### Family names and hidden histories

While overseeing a 2019 loan transfer of items for display from the Smithsonian to FAM in preparation of the museum's opening, Director of Curatorial Affairs of FAM Heather Ahtone (Chickasaw) and Queton were tasked with tribal consultation that included obtain-

**"OUR OK TRIBAL PEOPLE WOULD SEE THEIR MATERIAL CULTURE FOR THE FIRST TIME, FAMILIES WOULD SEE A PIECE OF MATERIAL CULTURE THAT WAS ONCE WORN OR USED BY THEIR ANCESTOR, BUT IT STILL REMAINS BEHIND GLASS AND NOT IN THAT TRIBE'S OR FAMILY'S POSSESSION." - WELANA QUETON**

ing information on each object. Items came with notes from the Smithsonian and original field-notes taken by the collectors, but FAM wanted more background on the objects.

"All these items were collected around the early 1900s, around 1905 to 1912 or so, and these items originally belonged to tribal families and tribes within the early 1900s era and with these items came along these notes from the Smithsonian," Hamilton explained. "While looking at the notes and information of each item, the person who collected these items around the 1900s period took field notes of what tribe he was visiting, what tribe he was purchasing items from and also names of individuals who he was buying these items from."

Most of the items were collected by Mark Raymond Harrington on behalf of George Gustav Heye (1874-1957), a prolific collector of Indigenous American artifacts. Heye, a Standard Oil Company heir, founded the Museum of the American Indian in 1922 in New York from his sizable personal collection. In 1989 its collection

was transferred to the Smithsonian and became part of the NMAI.

During preparation work for the FAM official opening, Queton began recognizing names that were associated with the items. "What stood out to me was the surnames listed for every tribe. They are still names within our tribal communities. They are names of my friends & relatives. The Harrington field notes are so extensive that I bet each native person in Oklahoma can find a relative listed in the archives," said Queton.

"And I had a feeling most people today do not know their family's material culture lives in NMAI collections."

According to Hamilton, that recognition sparked an idea, "So it was just the idea of 'could we maybe connect these items back to these original families that these items belong to?' and this is well over 110 years later here in Oklahoma City."

### Life stories, connections and reunions

When the FAM opened in 2021 the reunion project hadn't officially begun due to funding, although the items on loan were displayed on the museum's second floor. In 2023, Ahtone was able to expand the department and the project could begin. The team could then start the consultation process-identifying families mentioned in the notes to make connections between items and people.

For Queton, these connections were made in everyday life, "If a certain name or object was of interest to me, I started asking around when I'd go to a tribal function such as a dance, feast, or NAC ceremony. So that's really where the

connections started to be made. And sometimes I would simply ask on FB and friends would say that's my great-great grandmother/grandfather or give me another tidbit of information," she shared.

Archival collections from the Oklahoma Historical Society and the University of Oklahoma's Western Heritage Collections, as well as obituaries, burial records, historical photos and even google searches were utilized to connect stories, objects, and families.

Queton was involved in every aspect of the project from concept and narrative. With the collaboration of Hallie Winter (Osage), Gena Timberman (Choctaw), Zach Rice (Pawnee) and Rance Weryackwe (Comanche), Queton says that the development came to life.

When the consultation process for the exhibit began it included a history of the object and its use, their origin/creation stories, ancestral land bases, removal history, and correct spellings for Tribal names.

The process also included fieldwork and, like the exhibit itself, relied on family connection for Queton. "Once I found a descendant(s) for a certain object I con-

tacted them and set up a date for the photo. I hired my dad, Tom Fields (Mvskoke and Cherokee) and professional photographer, since I could count on him for a quick turnaround to take some of the photos," Queton said.

"Together we traveled across the state and captured the descendants that you see on the labels," Queton said. "When available I would also use a historical photo



Queton's father, Tom Fields, takes a photo during research fieldwork for the exhibit documented in the film "WINIKO: Reunions" produced by FAM. (Photo Courtesy: Welana Queton)

of the object's original owner noted by Harrington then put that next to the descendant so a viewer could see the continuity of the family's existence."

From 2023 to 2024, FAM was able to connect with 33 of the 39 Tribes affiliated with the items. According to Hamilton, out of the 33 tribes half of those had family members that were able to connect back to those items. The team didn't want descendants and families to view the items through the display case or have to pay to see their ancestors' items at the museum.

In the fall of 2024 they planned two months of reunions, bringing families in one at a time to view items out of their display cases. The team brought family members to a private classroom to view the items up close and personal- that's when families were able to give FAM the history of the item. This is the focus of the film, "WINIKO: Reunions."

"It was emotional for families when they were reunited with an object. They remembered those ancestors who once owned or used that object. And that became another story in the life of that object. It begins to function, once again, as a continuum of lineage that is disrupted by its purchase, collection and life on a museum shelf. If you think about it, it really parallels our history as Native people. The initial reunions happened right before the exhibitions opened and at the very end of my time at FAM," Queton said.

Hamilton was able to witness the expressions on the faces of descendants while seeing the items up close. Some had known the item existed, others did not, and the experience was moving and fulfilling for him.

"Museums don't always have the greatest positive response from the Native communities, of course with museums there's always been mistrust between museums and tribal communities because museums have always made money off of displaying cultural items and kind of distorting tribal history without consulting first and letting the tribes know what the museums want to do in the first place," Hamilton said.

"So there's always been a mistrust with museums, but knowing that as a Native American museum, we're trying to do the right thing." While working with Tribal Nations on the project, including the MCN, Hamilton had a positive experience. However, it took time to get to know tribal representatives and it also took time for representatives to be on board with the concept and with the project. Any reluctance that he received was understood, and the whole team worked to make assurances that respect for the communities and descendants came first and foremost.

"Working with the tribes, it wasn't easy at first and that's expected but we wanted to just gradually continue and pursue this project because we knew it would be something good for the community and not just good for the museum," Hamilton said. "I was very happy to work with the Muscogee Nation and just do something good for them, and not just for this museum," Hamilton said.

### The McIntosh sash

Respecting Tribal sovereignty was always carefully considered by the team, who went to Tribal lead-

ership to get their blessings. For the MCN, Hamilton presented the project to Principal Chief David Hill, and from there the team connected with MCN Historic and Cultural Preservation Department Director Robin Soweka, Jr.

Soweka was able to determine three items in the collection were Mvskoke, but only one item had a family connection- a sash belt belonging to Principal Chief William McIntosh.

When selecting pieces to include in the exhibit, the belt had stood out. "The McIntosh belt was chosen because it remains one of the most beautiful pieces in NMAI's Muscogee collection. In my opinion, its artistry and skill level is still unmatched amongst fingerweavers today. Being Osage too, I'm very familiar with fingerweaving," Queton shared.

Soweka then connected the team with a Chief McIntosh descendant working within his department, MCN Oral Historian Midge Dellinger (Mvskoke). Dellinger, along with former MCN Principal Chief James Floyd, worked with Hamilton to get the reunion going.

"McIntosh's belt is created in a style that many people today think of as only belonging to a woodland fingerweaving style. I wanted to show that this style was also used by many Southeast tribes & even by other tribes located along the furthest Eastern Seaboard. As we know, Chief McIntosh is still very controversial for Muscogee people, but it's about the artistry of the belt," Queton said.

Dellinger shared that while she viewed the project as groundbreaking it brought up mixed emotions. "I believe that the staff at First Americans Museum, those



Chief William McIntosh's sash belt on display at the FAM. (Photo Courtesy: Carol Floyd)

involved in this specific project, have done a fantastic job by doing something unprecedented in the museum world, which is to allow lost connections between Indigenous artifacts kept in bondage, some for centuries, and away from the families from which they originated, to be found," Dellinger wrote. "As a McIntosh descendant, discovering that the Smithsonian has kept since the 1960s a beautiful finger-woven sash belt, over two-hundred years old, worn by Chief William McIntosh, Jr., and made by his oldest daughter, Jane, was exciting, but also very upsetting."

"To be a part of FAM's 'Winiko: Reunions' project has been a life-changing experience," Dellinger shared. "As patrons of museum spaces, we expect to view artifacts through glass enclosures, but to have the opportunity to spend private family time with the sash and to be able to touch it, and closely observe the fine intricacies of its beautiful design, and through this process to feel not only a physical, but spiritual connection to my ancestors William and Jane, is an experience I will never forget."

"I can't put into words the emotional and spiritual impact this experience has had on me."

Hamilton hopes that after Mvskoke citizens watch "WINIKO: Reunions" they will appreciate that MCN was involved, and he hopes they have a positive experience. Hamilton stresses that moving forward with anything that Tribal citizens want done or displayed on behalf of the MCN, FAM will always go to them and never go

**WINIKO**  
CONTINUED PAGE 7

WINIKO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



ABOVE: A close-up of Chief McIntosh's sash made by his daughter Jane. The finger-woven sash was made from wool and glass beads. It has been in the collections at the NMAI-Smithsonian since the 1960s. (Photo Courtesy: National Museum of the American Indian)

BELOW: Welana Queton and Hallie Winter opening up the first crate of NMAI objects that were received for the WINIKO exhibition. The objects from the NMAI were originally borrowed for the planned 2020 FAM opening that was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (Photo Courtesy: Welana Queton)



**"I HOPE THAT OTHER MUSEUMS AND REPOSITORIES WHO KEEP INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FROM THINGS THAT ARE INHERENTLY OURS, INCLUDING ANCESTRAL REMAINS, FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF FIRST AMERICANS MUSEUM AND ALLOW THE RECLAMATION AND HEALING MUCH NEEDED AND DESERVED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE." - MCN ORAL HISTORIAN MIDGE DELLINGER**

behind the Nation's back.

"We will always try to get the Nations blessing and that we want to be as transparent with everything that we do and it's always community first before it's a museum first," Hamilton said.

Queton echoes the sentiment, "Please know that every step, meeting, etc. along the way was guided by prayer, as I'm taught to do by my family, ancestors and people."

There are plans to show the documentary at FAM, but their efforts are focused on the Tribes. The team wants to make sure that every tribe that was represented in the film will be able to watch it at their own tribal headquarters.

The First Americans Museum is located in Oklahoma City, with visiting hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is closed on Tuesdays. There are tours for the "WINIKO: Life of an Object" exhibit at 1:00 p.m. To learn more about the museum, visit FAM.

*This article has been updated since the date of its original web publication on Sept. 20, 2025.*



Descendants of Chief William McIntosh were filmed while viewing his sash belt. (Photo Courtesy: Carol Floyd)

# DAY OF GIVING PROVIDES NECESSITIES FOR STUDENTS

ANNUAL EVENT HOSTED BY CMN GAVE AWAY TOILETRIES, SNACKS AND CLOTHES

BY BRADEN HARPER  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – The timer was set at five minutes for each student group to browse through essential items at the College of Muscogee Nation's fourth annual Day of Giving event on Wednesday, Oct. 22. The event gives away free essential items for students who live in the dorms. This year's event was hosted in the STEM Building auditorium and featured long tables of toiletries, snacks, and other everyday essential items. Brand new clothes like hoodies, shirts, and hats were offered as well. The event was hosted by Este Emetv, the Giving to People committee, a group of CMN staff members that seek ways to give back to the student body.

CMN Health and Wellness Administrative Assistant Tevin Phillips (Mvskoke) said the event has grown exponentially since 2021. The first Day of Giving event was held when CMN Security officers identified a need for household items among students. That event saw donations of pillows, food and lamps. In 2024, Hompetva Torketv, Raven's Pantry, was established to provide students



College of Muscogee Nation students show off their new clothes picked up from the CMN Day of Giving. (Braden Harper/MM)

with free food. This allows students to have snacks and meals on hand in the dorms during evenings and weekends when the campus cafeteria is closed. The Day of Giving event now gives out hygiene products.

"We have some students who are scared because they have hygiene insecurity," Phillips said. "We encourage them to come here and get whatever they need. And in the last two hours they can come up and get whatever else they need that's left over."

Due to the event's popularity, students were placed in groups

depending on the time they arrived. They were then given five minutes to pick up a tote bag and fill it with whatever essential items they needed. Once it got down to the last two hours of the event, students were invited to come back and pick up whatever items were left over.

During the event, New Beginnings church provided hotdogs, popcorn and caramel apples for students to enjoy while they waited for their group to start browsing through items. The church routinely partners with the college to serve students at the Day of Giving.

CMN Student Ethan Battiest (Mvskoke) is a casino gaming major who attended the Day of Giving. Battiest was able to pick up Tide pods, sweat shirts, socks, and towels. He is currently in his fourth semester at the college and enjoys seeing his friends at the Day of Giving.

"It means a lot. I feel like it brings the community together and it helps people out," Battiest said. "This is a great environment. Since this is a small college, you get to know everybody."

CMN student Madeline Sanders (Mvskoke) is in the Mvskoke Language Apprenticeship program. She stopped by the Day of Giving and found plenty of useful items including a jacket, toilet paper, shaving cream, and snacks. Sanders admitted she had just learned about the event shortly before she arrived. Nevertheless, she was grateful for the opportunity to replenish items for her dorm.

"I didn't know they had this event until maybe five minutes ago," Sanders said. "It was really cool to know they want to help support the students, especially this time of year. We're all just being students in school. Some-

times we need a refresh of these items. It's really nice that they were here to support us and provide those things for us."

CMN also provides the health shelf, a program that provides hygiene and health products to students year round. According to Phillips, the items that run out of stock the fastest are toilet paper and feminine hygiene products. Phillips and his team take in suggestions to ensure the shelves are stocked with items that students can use.

"Seeing the students' faces, getting to know them, encouraging them to come in and get what they need. They're really happy at the end," Phillips said. "It feels like a big community here at the college. We take care of one another."

Raven's Pantry and the Health Shelf accept donations year round. Every five items donated will enter the donor into a drawing. Prizes for the drawing have included ribbon skirts, ribbon shirts and beaded items made by CMN Health and Wellness Case Manager Lisa Bear. Donations may be dropped off at the college, located at 2170 Raven Circle in Okmulgee. For more information, call 918-549-2800.

# HALLOWEEN FRIGHTS, SIGHTS, AND DELIGHTS

ACROSS THE RESERVATION, COMMUNITIES AND MCN DEPARTMENTS HOSTED SOME TRICKS AND A LOT OF TREATS

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- Halloween was celebrated across the Mvskoke Reservation. Community centers and MCN depart-



A carnival goer at the MCN Head Start Spooktacular Carnival that featured family fun games at the Mvskoke Dome. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

ments hosted a number of family-oriented celebrations.

Halloween costumes, lots of candy, carnival games, and tiny tots filled the Mvskoke Dome on Oct. 24 at the MCN Head Start Spooktacular Carnival. MCN Head Start Preschool Parent Family Community Engagement Specialist Tina Ward (Mvskoke) was very appreciative to all the departments that were able to join and put on activities for each of the children during the Spooktacular Carnival. She enjoyed seeing it come together and seeing the families have a great time.

"As family involvement is a huge part of Head Start Preschool, we decided to host a Family Fun Day Spooktacular Carnival focus-

ing on family involvement in making it a memorable occasion for the children and families," said Ward. "We had 295 family members (parents, guardians, grandparents) and a total of 64 fathers or male role models in attendance."

On Oct. 25 the MCN Mvskoke Language Program held their third Honkv Onvkuce ghost storytelling event. MLP Project/Media Coordinator Jordan Squire (Mvskoke)

Squire has enjoyed watching the event grow from year to year. seeing this event get bigger each year at the Honkv Onvkuce ghost storytelling event. "We grew from having 50-75 come the first year to 100-120 attending the second year and this year had more than 150 people attend," Squire related.

The idea came about several years ago when she wanted to hear ghost stories. It turned into a big event for their program. Each year their program learns from previous years how to make it better and bigger for citizens.

"This year we wanted to be interactive and involve the language as much as possible. A lot of things got shifted once we had to move inside of the dome due to the weather but we tried to be positive," Squire said.



Above: A spooky site at the Ghost Story Event. (Shayln Proctor/MM) Below: MCN Elder Services winners of the costume contest that was hosted by MCN Head Start Preschool. (Photo Courtesy: Tina Ward)



LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: J.D.G., A MINOR CHILD.

DISTRICT COURT FILED Case No. AD-2025-17 2025 NOV -3 P 4: 18 CYNTHIA FREEMAN COURT CLERK

ORDER RESETTING & NOTICE OF HEARING ON APPLICATION FOR ORDER TERMINATING PARENTAL RIGHTS OF NATURAL FATHER

To: Waylon Dean Gourd

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Kyle Grummert has filed a Petition for Stepparent Adoption and an Application for Order Terminating Parental Rights of Natural Father concerning J.D.G. (hereinafter "Minor Child") an Indian Child, eligible to enroll or enrolled in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, born to Alexis Grummert on August 10, 2017, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, of whom you are the Natural Father

A hearing on the Application for Order Terminating Parental Rights of Natural Father is set for the 13th day of January, 2026, at 9:00 o'clock a.m./p.m. in room 1 of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Courthouse, 2501 Lvmhvlke, Okmulgee, OK 74447.

It is alleged that your consent to this adoption is not necessary pursuant to MCNC Title 6 §§ 1-1007(B), 1-901 and 1-902, for abandonment of the Minor Child, for failure to maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the Minor Child consecutively for six (6) out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately preceding the filing of the Application in this matter, for willfully failing to pay or to contribute any support to the Minor Child and for failure to establish to take any steps to establish paternity toward the Minor Child or exercise any parental rights or duties toward the Minor Child.

YOU ARE THEREFORE NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE, WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AT SUCH TIME AND PLACE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE ADOPTION OF SAID CHILD. YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT THE HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF INTEREST IN THE CHILD WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDING, IN THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE TRANSFER OF THE CHILD'S CARE, CUSTODY, OR GUARDIANSHIP OR IN THE CHILD'S ADOPTION. THE ADOPTION MAY BE ORDERED IF THE YOU, THE PARENT, DO NOT APPEAR AT THE HEARING AND SHOW CAUSE WHY YOUR CONSENT IS NOT NECESSARY.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Submitted by: M. Jordan Berglund, OBA #32596, MCN #1205 Natalie K. Reid, OBA #30226, MCN #1259 BELOVED LAW, PLLC 5014 East 101st Street, Suite 200 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74137 (918) 973-2188 Jordan@belovedlaw.com Natalie@belovedlaw.com Attorneys for Petitioner

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

IN THE MATTER OF: C.T.; DOB: 06/18/2015; R.S.; DOB: 08/06/2010; Alleged Deprived Child.

DISTRICT COURT FILED Case No. JV-2024-15 MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION CYNTHIA FREEMAN COURT CLERK

NOTICE OF HEARING TO:

NATURAL FATHER, FRANKIE DALE TWYMAN, JR., as to C.T.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Motion to Terminate Parental Rights has been filed against you in the above-styled and numbered cause and will be heard in the District Courtroom of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma on January 08, 2026 @ 9:00 o'clock A.M. YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED that it is sought by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that the child remain a ward of the Court and custody be continued in the Children and Family Services Administration for continued foster placement of possible pre-adoptive placement. YOU ARE FURTHER INFORMED that you have the right to be represented by legal counsel at this hearing.

FURTHERMORE, failure to appear at the hearing shall constitute a denial of interest in the child, which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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

IN THE MATTER OF: C.T.; DOB: 06/18/2015; R.S.; DOB: 08/06/2010; Alleged Deprived Child.

DISTRICT COURT FILED Case No. JV-2024-15 MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION CYNTHIA FREEMAN COURT CLERK

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JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

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.