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MVSKOKENEWS

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TRIBE HONORS THREE LIVING LEGENDS AND THREE CHIEF'S CHOICE HONOREES

EDUCATORS AND ARTISTS ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR DECADES OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRIBE



From Left: Irene Culley, Sandy Fife Wilson, Pearl Thomas, Bobby Martin, Nanette Harjo, and Richard Whitman. (Braden Harper)

BY BRADEN HARPER

TULSA - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Living Legends Ceremony honored a total of six citizens- three Living Legends and three Chief's Choice Award honorees on Thursday, June 25, at River

Spirit Casino. This year's Living Legends are Sandy Fife Wilson, Irene Culley, and Pearl Thomas. This year's Chief Choice Award honorees were presented to Bobby Martin, Richard Whitman, and Sterlin Harjo. Living Legends are enrolled

Mvskoke citizens who are 60 years old and who have "brought recognition to and/or made outstanding contributions to the quality of life and development of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on a local, national, or international interest." Candidates are

nominated by their peers and voted on by a committee.

During opening remarks at the ceremony, MCN Principal Chief David Hill said that the event honors those who deserve recognition for their contributions to the Tribe. "All the Living Legends,

I appreciate you. I can't say enough about each one of these individuals and the Chiefs' Choice Award," Principal Chief Hill said. "This is about honoring our elders,

LIVING LEGENDS
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NEW BILL WOULD REDESIGNATE OCMULGEE MOUNDS TO A U.S. NATIONAL PARK

PROPONENTS SAY THE BILL STRENGTHENS PROTECTIONS FOR THE SITE



(MM)

BY BRADEN HARPER

WASHINGTON - A new bill has been introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives that will redesignate the Ocmulgee Mounds Historical Park to the "Ocmulgee Mounds National Park." U.S. Representative Austin Scott introduced H.R. 9416, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park Redesignation Act, in the House on Wednesday, June 24. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources and, on Wednesday, July 1, to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands.

If signed into law, the Ocmulgee Mounds will fall in line with the laws applicable to the National Park System. These laws include permitting fishing and continuing to allow the

State of Georgia to regulate wildlife management.

According to the bill, it would not prevent Ocmulgee Mounds leadership from consulting with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on protecting traditional cultural and religious sites within the park. The 133.88 acres of land held in fee by the MCN would also be put in trust.

The bill has 11 cosponsors: Georgia Representatives Sanford Bishop, Earl Carl, Brian Jack, Henry Johnson, Nikema Williams, Richard McCormick, Mike Collins, Rick Allen, Clay Fuller, Barry Loudermilk, and Lucy McBath.

In remarks before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Rep. Scott said this bill is a continuation of bipartisan efforts since 1934.

"The bill before you is a straightforward next step," Rep. Scott said. "It makes no changes to the park boundary and focuses on conferring National Park status. H.R. 9416 represents a historic opportunity to safeguard a cultural landscape in

the Southeast and support stewardship of natural resources for future generations."

Rep. Bishop said the park could generate an estimated \$34M in tax revenue for the State of Georgia and support over 3,000 jobs.

"Our bill today represents a small, albeit meaningful step forward that will strengthen Ocmulgee and ensure its cultural and religious sites are protected now and into the future. It reflects key input from stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels, including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, whose sacred and revered ancestral sites are located inside the proposed boundary," Rep. Bishop said.

Visit Macon President and CEO Gary Wheat testified on the relationship between the City of Macon and the MCN. He described the redesignation as a "golden opportunity" that will open new jobs in the area. According to Wheat, the annual Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration allows 250-300 Mvskoke

citizens to visit the homelands.

"The relationship (City of Macon and MCN) only continues to grow and strengthen because we have that Ocmulgee to Okmulgee, Oklahoma relationship," Wheat said.

"We're very proud of that and very proud to see where it goes as far as culturally, economically, and being able to be a part of their Nation as well as welcome back to the ancestral homeland."

Wheat also discussed how the installation of the Mvskoke language Macon street signs further connects the area to the Nation.

This is not the first bill to establish the Ocmulgee Mounds as a National Park. H.R. 8182, The Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act, was introduced in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, November 19, 2024. Another bill of the same name, S.4216, was introduced in the Senate on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

This year's annual Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration will be held on Saturday, September 12, and Sunday, September 13, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The free event will feature cultural crafts, storytelling, live demonstrations, music, and a social Stomp Dance.

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Renovated MHAOK building offers housing and supporting services for Mvskoke boys

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Citizens over 55 years old compete in friendly sports and crafts competition

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Ocevpofv Etlwv supporters walk for justice despite wet weather conditions

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Mercedes Dunn and Navaeh Kelly are crowned Miss and Jr. Miss Muscogee Nation 2026-2027

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WALKER HALL OPENS DOORS TO AT-RISK MVSKOKE YOUTH

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OKLAHOMA AND THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION PARTNER TO PROVIDE HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES



Mental Health Association Oklahoma and Muscogee (Creek) Nation Leaders cut the ribbon on the newly-renovated Walker Hall. (Braden Harper/MM)

BY BRADEN HARPER

TULSA - Mental Health Association Oklahoma (MHAOK) leaders and Muscogee (Creek) Nation representatives cut the ribbon on the new Walker Hall redevelopment on Wednesday, June 17. Walker Hall will now be used for housing and supporting services for Native American Youth ages 16-18 years old in the Tribal juvenile justice system.

The MHAOK facility has provided housing and recovery services for adults and youth since 1991. It is now funded in part by the MCN and the Sanford and Irene Bernstein Family Foundation. According to MHAOK Chief

Programs Officer Mark Davis (Mvskoke), the redeveloped facility will provide services on education, life skills, and a pathway toward independent living. He described the partnership between MHAOK and the Tribe as an “investment in the next generation.”

The four-phase program provides 24/7 staff at Walker Hall. Residents are required to finish school and commit to a work program. MHAOK case managers are available for students and help them with every step of the process. The goal of the program is to help youth stay in school, develop a career path, and live independently.

MCN Tribal Juvenile Justice Interim Director

Texanna James remarked that this program will give at-risk Native youth a fresh start. The purpose is to make the youth self-sufficient so that they can live independently. According to James, some had no other family members to take them in.

“We’re not about punishment, we’re not about locking them up and warehousing them, we’re about actually giving them the tools and resources that they can make better decisions and become better members of society,” James said.

MHAOK CEO Carrie Blumert said MHAOK worked closely with the MCN to design the program. The partnership ensures that

youth learn life skills they can take with them into young adulthood. Additionally, each resident also has access to mental health services.

According to Blumert, when youth go through the juvenile justice system, they typically have one of two options: detention or going home with a family member.

Walker Hall provides a third option. That option is intended for youth who do not need detention, but who may not have any other stable living arrangements either.

path out of the Tribal juvenile justice system. Blumert elaborated that detention is oftentimes just a holding place that perpetuates the problem.

Mvskoke culture has a strong presence in Walker Hall.

“Muscogee (Creek) Nation principles, imagery, ideals, were really woven into the development of the program,” Blumert said. “We know that when youth, and really adults, are connected to their culture and are connected to where they come from and

“This new chapter is made possible through an extraordinary partnership between the Mental Health Association Oklahoma and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Together, we have united our strengths, resources, and our shared values to create something truly meaningful for Native youth and their families.” - Mark Davis

“In the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Youth Tribal Juvenile Justice System, that was the highest need of the youth,” Blumert said. “It’s not appropriate for you to go to detention, but it’s also not appropriate for you to go home. We need to provide you with some type of environment so that you don’t reoffend or you don’t go back to the same crowd.”

That third option provides youth with more than just a bed- it provides them with a

community, they are much more successful to become independent and live a life they’re proud of.”

MHAOK provides accessible housing services for Oklahomans experiencing homelessness, mental illness or substance abuse disorders. Their Tulsa office can be contacted at 918-585-1213 or at info@mhaok.org. To learn more about MHAOK services, visit mhaok.org.

CMN INDIGENOUS MEDIA CLUB CELEBRATES FIRST ART MARKET

19 NATIVE ARTISTS AND VENDORS ATTENDED THE INAUGURAL CAMPUS EVENT



The CMN Art Market was held on June 5 on campus. (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE - The College of the Muscogee Nation’s Indigenous Media Club (IMC) hosted its inaugural Art Market on June 5 in the college’s lecture hall. 19 vendors sold items such as beadwork, ribbon skirts, stickers, plants, handmade crafts, lemonade, and Indian tacos. The market also offered a silent auction. For IMC, this year’s market was a success, and the organization plans to host it annually.

The idea for the art market came about in the 2025 fall semester, when IMC members discussed plans for the academic year, including budgeting and club activities. Members expressed interest in hosting an art market at CMN, and that no such event had ever been held on campus.

“Students saw this as an opportunity to create a new community event by inviting local artists to CMN to showcase and sell their artwork, handmade goods, and other creative products. The event would also provide students, employees, and

community members with an opportunity to engage with local Indigenous artists while supporting small businesses and cultural expression,” stated IMC.

IMC President Nathan Dunson (Mvskoke/Seminole) said their overall goal was to support the community by providing vendors with an opportunity to market their merchandise.

The silent auction items were donated by the vendors. These items included a finger-woven bracelet, beaded earrings, quill earrings, a beaded wristlet keychain, ribbon skirts, a leather belt, a beaded lanyard, a heart-shaped garden bed, lye, custom-made purses, and artwork.

“It was great to see so many vendors showcase their talents and creativity on campus, as well as the community coming out to support local artists. Indigenous representation is a topic often discussed in our club meetings, whether in film, literature, or personal forms of expression. The CMN Art Market featured a wide variety of merchandise

that reflected Indigenous perspectives, providing meaningful examples of cultural representation and artistic expression,” stated IMC.

IMC was really excited to see all the unique crafts and artwork made by CMN students, employees, and the community. They also explained how they were excited to buy gifts for their family.

Dunson added that he couldn’t wait to hear the community’s feedback and that this would give IMC a chance to adjust and grow.

“The event was a great success! CMN employees, students, and community members had the opportunity to shop for unique merchandise and experience the welcoming social atmosphere of an Art Market.

In addition, the Indigenous Media Club, Unkind Artist Club, and Environmental Science Club were all able to raise funds during the event. These proceeds will help support future club activities and events, including opportunities to host community-centered gatherings like the CMN Art Market,” stated IMC.

IMC would like to thank all the vendors, volunteers, and the Unkind Artist Club for participating and for their dedication to making this event possible. “Your contributions helped make the event a success, and we are grateful for your support.”

To be more up to date with other events, you can follow CMN’s Facebook page at College of the Muscogee Nation.



Art vendors sell the crafts at the inaugural art market at CMN. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

THE

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ELDERS ENJOY FELLOWSHIP, ACTIVITIES, AND COMMUNITY

MCN ELDER SERVICES' ANNUAL ELDER GATHERING AWARDS 125 DOOR PRIZES

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elder Services hosted their annual Festival Elder Gathering this year on June 19 at the Mvskoke Dome. The event is open to elders 55 years and older. Many attendees competed in activities, entered contests, and enjoyed seeing one another. Door prizes and lunch were provided to all participants.

Activities such as basketball free throw, golf pong, dominoes, and ring toss let elders compete and have fun together. Elders were able to show their skills in contests for aprons, art, beaded jewelry, frybread, o’safke, quilts, ribbon skirts, and woodwork.

Exactly 197 Mvskoke elders signed in at the gathering event, and 123 elders placed in events. Elder services also gave away 125 door prizes. They also had other booths, and the College of the Muscogee Nation had a photo booth for elders.

MCN Adult Protection Specialist April Harley (Mvskoke) spoke about this year’s gathering and what she enjoyed most about it.

Many elders participated or enjoyed watching everyone compete. This gathering offered the opportunity to socialize, catch up with friends or family, and meet new people.

This year, Elder Services requested that EMS be on site during the gathering because there had been minor incidents involving elders in the past, and they wanted to be prepared for anything that might arise.

Harley mentioned that their department tries to showcase Mvskoke elders in any way possible. For example, the program included a ribbon skirt contest. Harley knows that many elders make ribbon skirts, and she wanted to show off competitors’ skills.

Harley enjoyed planning for this year’s event. She worked on getting better door prizes for the elders, wanting them to be good so it would be hard for the elders to choose from all the available door prizes. They had a ton of door prizes, ranging from traditional clothing to items they could use daily.

“That was successful because they went up there and it was like ‘oh this is hard, we don’t know what we want’, and I think one of the things that it showed me was the elders were wanting the ribbon vests, the yarn belts, and the ribbon skirts,” Harley said.

One of the most memorable



(Shaylyn Proctor/MM)

moments for Harley was watching the ring toss. All the elders are good at all the activities, but the ring toss, in its second year, is more challenging. Harley enjoyed seeing how hard they were really trying to win.

As for the contests, Harley liked all the categories offered by their department. This year, most of the participation was in the aprons; they had 15 entries. She knows it was really competitive in that category just by the number of entrants. Each apron came with a storyline.

Her favorite category was quilts because Harley had seen a lot of effort and time put into each one; she said some of those quilts were handmade.

For the winners, Harley sticks with medals rather than cash, and she always tries to pick the biggest ones she can find. To Harley, it’s the sentimentality—this is something that they can place in their home or show to their family and friends. Maybe later on the line, those medals can be passed down to the grandchildren to keep as a sentimental value, Harley mentions.

“So that’s why I chose medals instead of prize money, because you can spend the prize money in one day but that medal is going to last a long time,” Harley said.

She spoke of how her uncles had received ribbons for their artwork at a different event, and recently they had received medals, and she noticed how her uncles placed the medals up

to show them off.

Harley also said many of her family members came to this event, and she always tries to consider what would be best for them. Harley wanted all the elders to enjoy their time, and her uncles became a model she used to provide more activities for other elders.

“I really work hard to put on a good event and include everyone. Because before there wasn’t art, my uncles do art, there wasn’t woodwork, my uncles do woodwork. Of course, there are a lot of other Mvskoke artists and other people that do woodwork, but I’ve looked at my elders and said, ‘How do I fit this for everyone?’” Harley said.

Harley wants something that everyone can walk away with, that’s why she likes to include a lot of door prizes. She also extended the event placings so each event goes to 6th place.

One of the main benefits that Elder Services is aware of when hosting events like this is social interaction and the second one is health. She says they do exercises using the movements in these activities and also offer blood pressure checks.

“The main thing is social, because not everyone can get on the court. That’s also why the contests are there because they are allowed to bring anything that they’ve made during their lifetime. You don’t have to make something new just for this event,” Harley said.

Harley feels great that their

department hosts this event for the elders. It also gives the staff a chance to gauge how the elders are doing. They notice who shows and who doesn’t. This year, Harley noted that some of the elders who regularly attend their events didn’t come. This gives the department an idea of who to check up on.

From this year’s feedback, Harley understands that the elders like the Indian tacos for lunch and the door prizes.

Brenda Coon (Mvskoke) shared that this was her first year attending an elder gathering. Coon is currently 63 years old, her Tribal town is New Tulsa, and she is from the Beaver clan.

“Since I’m retired now, this has given me the opportunity to participate in these. I just love coming in and fellowshiping with all the elders here and visiting and talking. It’s really just fun to participate,” Coon said.

Coon enjoyed the activities and contests. She also thinks the event gives elders an opportunity to get out and move, while having fun together. Coon says it’s an enjoyable competition.

Coon herself entered different contests and placed; she won first place in beaded earrings, first place in frybread, and 3rd place in ribbon skirts. She also got second place in the women’s golf pong in teams of two.

Coon spoke of how she enjoyed making all three items she entered into the contest, as well as the food she made in each category. But her favorite

one was the ribbon skirt. “I made it for my oldest girl. She requested what color she wanted, how she wanted it made, and so I did my best to do it exactly how she liked it,” Coon said.

“She’s really proud and happy of the outcome of it, and so am I.”

Her late mother taught her how to sew, bead, and make frybread.

“My mother did the beadwork years ago until she passed away, and then I started the beadwork up from a JOM conference I attended that the Choctaw Nation hosted. I started picking it up there. From there, I taught my two girls, and they also do beadwork. For the sewing, not only do I do the ribbon skirts, but I also do the traditional Mvskoke dress wear sets for young girls, and I do vests,” Coon said.

During her time at the Elder Gathering, she was able to see several of her family members from the Okfuskee Indian Community Center, but she has also seen relatives outside of the community center.

She is grateful that MCN Elder Services organized this event for the elders and appreciates the giveaways and services they provided. Coon also appreciates all who attended.

“It’s just exciting to see all the people that win something, how excited they are about the gifts they received, and then I just want to say Mvto to the elder program that puts on all these activities for us,” Coon said.



Above and Below: Elders enjoy fellowship and visiting during the 2026 gathering. (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)



FIRST FESTIVAL FISHING DERBY IS OFF THE HOOK!

KIDS BREAK OUT THE POLES AND LURES TO SEE WHO CAN REEL IN THE BIGGEST CATCH



(Braden Harper/MM)

BY BRADEN HARPER

MOUNDS - Families gathered to see who could find the biggest catch at the inaugural Muscogee Nation Festival Fishing Derby at Rocking Z Ranch on Saturday, June 20. The derby was open to kids under 12. Weather conditions provided a cool, overcast morning for fishers.

The idea for a fishing derby came from MCN Recreation Director Mike Sands (Mvskoke). He found Rocking Z Ranch to be a suitable venue for fishing, with its ponds big enough for a derby. According to College of the Muscogee Nation Extension Coordinator Chris Azbell, the derby contained a total of 300 tagged fish.

Sands enjoys fishing but admitted he no longer gets to break out his poles often. He enjoys providing opportunities for youth to engage in constructive activities and get acquainted with the outdoors.

“A lot of times it gets kids off

the streets. There’s a lot of kids that grow up in an environment where that’s all they know,” Sands said. “We try to make it safe. They have to do hunter safety classes.”

When it comes to fishing, Sands has taught kids with varying levels of experience. He’s taught kids as young as five or six years old. For some, it takes a while to get acquainted with handling live bait and catches.

Steve Price and his son, Lakota (Mvskoke), brought their poles and hooks to see what they could reel in. Price said his family enjoys attending MCN events. They allow his family to be active in the community. Lakota and his mother are members of Arbeka Ceremonial Ground and also attend Peach Ceremonial Ground.

“We try to participate in everything every year with Lakota, just being around the community,” Price said. “We live on 10 acres in Beggs, and we have a big pond. He (Lakota) fishes there at the house a lot.”



Lakota keeps his focus. (Braden Harper/MM)

Lakota has been fishing since he was two or three years old; he typically catches bass, crappie, and catfish. Two of his biggest catches include a 15-pound catfish and a seven-pound bass.

The fishing derby is just one of the many activities that can be enjoyed outside. Sands and his department are looking to host the derby at next year’s Festival.

“They get used to it, they like it. The outdoors are big. You have a lot of stuff to do outdoors and the kids, I’d rather see them go this way than the other way,” Sands said.



L-R: Former MCN Principal Chief George Tiger, Hickory Ground's Mekko George Thomas, Green Leaf's Mekko Bill Proctor, Apekv's Mekko Arnold Taylor, Ambassador of the MCN Jonodev Chaudhuri. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

THROUGH THE RAIN, 7TH ANNUAL HONOR WALK BRINGS AWARENESS OF SACRED SITES AND HOMELANDS

THE MCN CULTURE AND HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT ENGAGED THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE FIGHT FOR PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Culture and Humanities Department held its 7th Annual Honor Walk on June 24 at the MCN Cultural Cuko. The department served lunch and gave out t-shirts. The event is hosted to bring awareness about protecting and preserving sacred sites, cultural landscapes, and ancestral homelands. Many who attended were ceremonial ground members and citizens. This year's MC was MCN Representative Galen Cloud (Mvskoke).

MCN Director of Historic and Cultural Preservation Robin Soweka Junior (Mvskoke) told Mvskoke Media that his department began hosting the event to raise awareness of the protection and preservation of sacred places and sites.

"The department wanted to also bring attention to the Justice for Hickory Ground movement, which involves the desecration of a sacred site, Ocevpopfv Etlwv or Hickory Ground, and the exhumation of approximately 57 ancestors from the site," Soweka said.

"The event is supposed to happen on the first day of the Summer Solstice; however, this year the Summer Solstice started on June 21st, but we decided to push the event back closer to the Muscogee Nation festival."

Many spoke at this year's event, such as the ceremonial ground members, Hickory Ground Mekko George Thompson, MCN Chief David Hill, Former MCN Chief

George Tiger, Soweka, MCN Secretary of Culture and Humanities RaeLynn Butler (Mvskoke), MCN Deputy Secretary of Culture and Humanities Anthony Beaver, MCN Language Liaison Director Jay Fife (Mvskoke), MCN attorney for Hickory Ground Mary Kathryn Nagel (Cherokee), and Ambassador of the MCN Jonodev Chaudhuri.

This year, it was hosted at the MCN Cultural Cuko, where many departments are located: the Department of Culture and Humanities, the Mvskoke Language Liaison Program, and Historic and Cultural Preservation.

The walk had previously been hosted at the Claude Cox Omnplex. They decided to move it to their location because all of the departments have hosted different types of cultural events, such as stickball stick, ball making classes, and guest speakers speaking about the Mvskoke clan systems, along with other events that were held.

Soweka mentioned that they laid gravel for this year's Honor Walk walking trail and hope to turn it into a concrete trail one day.

They had planned other activities after the walk, but due to the weather, they weren't able to continue. However, these activities were organized so that families and children could enjoy the day before the MCN Festival began.

For this year's T-shirt design, they collaborated with MCN Marketing and Tourism's Jake Wilson to help create

it. According to Butler, this shirt represents all of Etlwv's past, present, and future. This featured traditional Mvskoke elements.

"The Kettle represents the women/hokvtke, the Arbor represents the Mekko/warriors and traditional structure of the tribal towns, the Fire represents the strength, religion, and survival of our people and culture (paying homage to those who have passed and to our ancestors in Homelands) and the Ball pole represents the unity of the members/visitors who participate during the social games," Butler said.

The food was prepared by the Hickory Ground women members. Soweka also added that they had butchered a hog that was served for lunch.

Soweka spoke about how he feels about raising awareness among citizens.

"For me, my Tribal Town is Ocevpopfv Etlwv, so I got into this field and department to ensure that there will be no other desecration to any other sites located in the homelands and here in Oklahoma," Soweka said.

"Now, I want to ensure the preservation and protection of not only sacred sites and sacred places, but the protection of Mvskoke graves and ancestors, preservation of Mvskoke lifeways such as the Language, our songs and dances, our foods, and everything else that makes us Mvskoke. I believe everyone in the Department of Culture and Humanities all have this same goal."



L-R: Citizens on the newly-laid gravel path at the Cultural Cuko. The "Save Ocevpopfv" tshirt. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

TRADITIONAL GAMES BROUGHT IN LAUGHTER AND FUN

by SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – This year, during the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s 50th Festival, the annual Traditional Games were held at the Claude Cox Omniplex on June 20. During the event, they served lunch, played stickball, heard Mvskoke storytelling, competed in the turtle races, and demonstrated the game Chunkey. 80 citizens attended the event, and MCN Principal Chief David Hill even participated in the games himself.

Traditional Games Coordinator Johnnie Sue Wesley (Mvskoke/Sac and Fox) spoke about this year’s event, her first to coordinate.

According to Wesley, a time crunch meant sticking with four activities, but she was very happy with the turnout. She said they had at least 80 people come by because they were able to give away all their boxed lunches. In the future, she hopes to see this expand, with a clearer timeframe for planning more activities.

She thinks the kids had a really fun time and even noticed the MCN Chief participated in everything. She said she also thinks the citizens enjoyed seeing him interact at the event.

“It went really good, and I did hear from the kids. They really loved the turtle race. One little boy made sure to come and tell me that he liked throwing that atlatl,” Wesley said.

Wesley’s favorite event was the turtle racing because, she said, laughing, she saw everyone yelling and trying to get those turtles out of the circle.



ABOVE and BELOW: Participants enjoyed the turtle races during the traditional games (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)



PETS AT FEST

CITIZENS AND ATTENDEES BRING OUT THEIR FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS AND SHARE THEIR FESTIVAL FAVORITES



The Baker family and their Yorkie, Petie, sitting in the basket. (Braden Harper/MM)

by BRADEN HARPER

OKMULGEE – Milling around events at the Muscogee Nation Festival, it is not hard to find just about every demographic: kids, teens, adults, elders, and dogs. This year’s Festival saw many four-legged friends accompany their owners for the two-day event.

Janie Bear’s (Mvskoke) dog is named Lucky, a Chihuahua mix. Lucky and Bear enjoy going on walks and traveling together. This year marked Lucky’s first time to Festival. Bear admitted that she never thought that she would be a dog owner.

“He’s a lucky dog. Somebody thought I needed a dog, and I don’t like dogs. I’ve said that all my life. And now I have a dog. He’s a rez dog,” Bear said.

This year’s social Stomp Dance was notably held in the Mvskoke Dome due to the weather. She said she and Lucky looked forward to watching others stomp and shake shells together. In addition to the social Stomp Dance, Bear explained that she looks forward to the drawings and the Saturday night fireworks every year.

Sharon Baker (Seminole/Choctaw) and her husband, Duke Baker, brought their silverback Yorkshire terrier, Petie, sitting in the basket, to the Festival 5k Run. Petie is named after Oklahoma State University’s mascot, Pistol Pete.

Petie enjoys going for walks and looking for other dogs. The

Bakers went to support their son, Steven Baker (Seminole), who ran in the 5k. Steven Baker, who ran this year’s Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, won the MCN Festival 5k men’s division with a time of 15:28.

Sharon Baker shared that she enjoys the variety the festival offers for attendees.

“I enjoy the concerts and the food. And the crafts and the booths, everything about it. I love festivals, all the Native festivals. I’ve been to the Choctaw Festival and the Seminole Festival over the years,” Sharon Baker said.

When discussing music tastes, Duke Baker said he is a Kiss fan and was looking forward to Gene Simmons’ performance. Sharon Baker enjoys live music; she is more of a country music fan.

Terrie Billie (Mvskoke) and her Labradoodle, Benjamin, were also spotted at the Festival 5k. Billie and Benjamin enjoy running together. She also finds it comforting to take him along with her to the clinic for appointments. According to Billie, when Benjamin goes missing, he usually has a favorite hangout spot.

“On his time he likes to go to Eagles Corner in Morris. He’s Facebook famous. Everyone’s like, ‘Who’s dog is this?’ And of course he always gets delivered back to us because everyone knows him now,” Billie said.

PETS AT FEST
CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Janie Bear and her chihuahua, Lucky. (Braden Harper/MM)



Terrie Billie and her labradoodle, Benjamin. (Braden Harper/MM)

THIS YEAR'S 5K BREAKS PARTICIPATION RECORDS



Runners at the midway point. (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – The MCN Festival held its annual 5k and Fun Run on June 27. Despite the early 7:30 a.m. start time, the race saw its largest number of participants. The 5k started at the MCN Food Distribution, circled the Okmulgee Regional Airport, and ended back at the MCN Food Distribution. Everyone was able to run and walk in the 5k and get their daily dose of exercise early in the morning.

MCN 5k Coordinator Kathryn Sunny (Mvskoke) spoke about this year’s event. She said that 419 out of 606 participants were Native American. Sunny said that 299 were repeat participants and 307 were new runners. 606 pre-registered, but only 438 attended the event. Sunny said this still broke records for participation.

Participants came from over 20 Tribal Nations: Absentee Shawnee, Apache, Arapaho, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Comanche, Dine, Keetowah, Kiowa, Laguna Pueblo, Mississippi Band of Choctaw, Mvskoke, Navajo, Osage, Otoe-Missouria, Pawnee, Quapaw, Sac & Fox, Salt River Pima, Seminole of Oklahoma, Seminole of Florida, and Shawnee.

The age group ranged from under 20 to 81 and over. Most were from Oklahoma, and other participants came from different states, including California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, New Jersey, Florida, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Missouri.

Sunny felt privileged to coordinate this year’s 5k and Fun Run; she took over this position after serving as an understudy for two years for Shawn Patridge and Tania Bardin. She said their guidance helped her prepare for this year’s opportunity, and she wants to continue building on the strong foundation they had created.

Sunny is grateful for every volunteer, participant, sponsor, and supporter who helped make this year’s race a success. She hopes this event continues to grow and becomes a tradition for generations to look forward to every year.

“I lean heavily on the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to making this event possible. This truly is a team effort, and I’ve been fortunate to work with the best Festival 5K and Fun Run crew. Knowing that 438 participants came out this year is incredibly rewarding and a testament to everyone’s hard work,” Sunny said.

“Seeing families, first-time participants, and seasoned runners enjoying the event together reminds me that this race is about more than crossing the finish line—it’s about bringing our community together.”

This year’s winners: in the women’s category, 20-year-old Carrington Hessen with a time of 18:56; and in the men’s category, 35-year-old Steven Baker (Seminole) with a time of 15:28.

This was Baker’s second year competing in the MCN Festival. He liked seeing everyone race in the morning, and to him, it felt like they were all really trying to achieve their running goals, whether it was to set a personal best or run their first 5k.

Baker graduated in 2009 and started running again in 2020, and it’s something he’s never stopped enjoying.

“This was my 2nd year doing the MCN 5k. I have been enjoying coming here to run this race. It felt good. I ran well. Just some parts of the course were a bit challenging, but I had to keep my pace. It’s a great event for the citizens, for all ages. I can see it being bigger and bigger each year,” Baker said.

2026 FESTIVAL RESULTS

TRADITIONAL GAME
TURTLE RACING RESULTS
Age Group 0-6:
1st - Luke Sand & “Luke”
2nd - Presley Agee & “Michael Jackson”

Age Group 7-13:
1st - Paden & “Franklin”
2nd - Harper & “Taco”
3rd - Lakota Price and Deacon & “Donatello”

Adults:
1st - Melissa Beaver & “Franklin”
2nd Chief Hill & “Okfuskee Fvmbe”
3rd - Pam David & “Luke”

MVSKOKE ROYALTY
SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT
Best Self Presentation-
Miss- Mercedes Dunn
Jr. Miss-Nevaeh Kelly
Best Written Word-
Miss- Alina Harjo
Jr Miss-Nevaeh Kelly
Best Communication-
Miss- Myra Deerinwater
Jr. Miss- Madison Gifford
Best Stage Presence-
Miss- Mercedes Dunn
Jr. Miss-Jayleigh Harjo
Best Cultural Presentation-
Miss-Mercedes Dunn
Jr. Miss-Jayleigh Harjo
Miss Congeniality-
Miss-Mercedes Dunn

INTERTRIBAL CHAIR
VOLLEYBALL
1st - Broken Bow Wellness (Choctaw Nation Team)
2nd - C & C Misfits (Choctaw and Creek Team)
3rd - Smoke Signals (Choctaw Team)

YOUTH BASKETBALL
7/8th Grade Boys Champions
Buzzer Beaters
7/8th Grade Boys Runnerup
Fuscates
5/6th Grade Girls MVP
Lexi Coiner
5/6th Grade Girls Champions
Cold Hearts
5/6th Grade Girls Runnerup
OK Dreamcatchers
7/8th Grade Girls MVP
Gabby Davenport
7/8th Grade Girls Runnerup
We Know Ball
7/8th Grade Girls Champions
Native Ballerz

SOFTBALL RESULTS
PROVIDED BY MCN
RECREATION
Women’s Slowpitch Champions
Mafia
Women’s Slowpitch Runner-up
Them Ones
Men’s SlowPitch Runner Up
Legendary
Men’s SlowPitch Champions
Top shelf/BC/Icon
Men’s Slowpitch Tournament 3rd
WTN
Women’s Slowpitch
Tournament 3rd
2NO

2026 ELDER GATHERING GAMES RESULTS
Ring Toss
Men 70 & up:
1st - James Bender
2nd - Tim Harley Jr.
3rd - Charlie Proctor
4th - Speedy Harley
5th - Jon Tiger
6th - Merle Berryhill

Ring Toss
Men 55-69:
1st : Justin Barnett
2nd - Stanley Birdcreek
3rd - Timothy Coon
4th - Mitchell Barnett
5th - Gary Harley
6th - Billy Hill

Ring Toss
Women 70 & up:
1st - Emma Louse
2nd - Debra Ridge
3rd - Janine Wind

RESULTS
CONTINUES ON PAGE 8





FESTIVAL CARS REV IN THE RAIN

DESPITE A HEAVY DOWNPOUR, THE FESTIVAL CAR SHOW SEES A TURNOUT OF CLASSIC AND MODERN VEHICLES, MOTORCYCLES AND MORE



Steve Perry and Kim Perry (Cherokee) stand next to their 1930 Ford Coupe. (Braden Harper/MM)

BY BRADEN HARPER

OKMULGEE – Oskē could not stop the inaugural Festival Car Show from featuring an array of classic and modern cars, motorcycles, and trucks. The show took place at the Safe Space Facility parking lot on Saturday, June 6. The top-voted vehicles in each category took home cash prizes.

The family-friendly event featured food trucks and vehicles from Tribal departments. MCN Lighthouse brought their tactical armored vehicle, Terradyne, along with parade motorcycles. MCN Emergency Management brought their drone truck. A kids’ choice tent allowed kids to vote for their favorite vehicles. Each voter received a prize.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Fleet Operations Supervisor Derek Powell (Mvskoke) served as the car show coordinator. Powell enjoys car shows; one of his favorites is the Sapulpa

Route 66 Blowout. He remarked that this year’s show saw a good range of older and newer vehicles. He particularly enjoys the atmosphere found at car shows.

“I’ve made friends where some of us will get together, and we’ll go to car shows together. Everybody gets along well and helps one another. They’ll help you find parts and stuff for your car. That’s a pretty cool deal.” - Steve Perry

“Everything’s upbeat and going,” Powell said. “Everybody is just out looking at cars and enjoying nice vehicles. Usually, we see a lot of families out there. Kids enjoying vehicles, it’s nice having younger generations enjoy vehicles as well.”

CAR SHOW WINNERS

Cars:
1st - Dennis Bible – 1985 Chevrolet Camaro IROC Z28
2nd - Dee Russell – 1957 Ford Thunderbird
3rd - Shane Holuby – 1989 Ford Mustang

Trucks/4x4:
1st - Keith Barnett – 1967 Chevrolet Pickup
2nd - Brad & Penny Neal – 1970 Ford Bronco Sport
3rd - Billy Farned – 2017 Ram 2500

Motorcycles:
1st - Mark & Tamera Hale – 2018 Harley Softtail
2nd - Jon Deere – 2024 Kawasaki KLX300
3rd - Iyla Jean Bowles – 2025 Indian Tike

Steve Perry and Kim Perry (Cherokee) were two of the registrants at this year’s car show. The couple has been married for 40 years and is now retired.

and two 750 Holly carburetors, and it puts about 850 horsepower to the back tire. It runs pretty good. It’s a lot of fun,” Steve Perry said.

Kim Perry showed a 1969 Chevrolet Camaro, a car that was hard to miss in blue with white stripes. According to Kim Perry, her car just had new parts installed. It features 500 horsepower at the rear wheels.

“I have a 454 Big Block in it. I just redid my trunk. It’s Leman’s Blue,” Kim Perry said.

Powell remarked that organizing the car show took a lot of hard work. Despite the stress, Powell said it was an honor to host the first car show during a major anniversary.

“It’s been a lot of work, but being the first, it’s been a joy to do. It’s been fun, it’s been stressful, but being able to do the first car show at the 50th Festival anniversary means a lot,” Powell said.

SIT. SET. SPIKE!

INTERTRIBAL ELDERS COMPETE IN THE INAUGURAL FESTIVAL INTERTRIBAL VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT



(Braden Harper/MM)

BY BRADEN HARPER

OKMULGEE - Colorful beach balls flew back and forth overhead at the Mvskoke Dome during the first Festival Intertribal Volleyball Tournament on Saturday, June 13. Teams composed of players 55 years of age or older competed in pool play and single-elimination. A total of 20 teams from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Choctaw Nation, and the Cherokee Nation competed to see which Tribe produced the toughest chair volleyball players.

Recreation Director Mike

Sands (Mvskoke) explained that the concept behind chair volleyball is simple and is accessible for elders. Instead of a volleyball, it uses a beachball. Each team seats six players in chairs on each side of a volleyball net. Like volleyball, teams volley the ball until it hits the ground.

“It’s something for the elders, they can do it, and they like it. It’s starting to blow up pretty big,” Sands said. “I don’t know if it will get like Pickleball or anything like that, but everybody likes it.”

The MCN Recreation Department stays busy during Festival Season. They are

responsible for hosting the golf tournament, the slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball tournaments, and the rodeo. Sands said their goal is to provide Festival sports

fielded two teams in the tournament. Cantrell remarked that the teams practice twice a week and get a little better each day. The community’s practices are

“Choctaws say they’re the best at Chair Volleyball, Muscogee Creek say they’re the best. Cherokee say they’re the best. So we decided we’re going to have Intertribal Chair Volleyball to see which Tribe is the best,” - David Pascale

for all ages.

Brenda Battise (Choctaw) plays for the Smoke Signals from Wright City. They regularly compete in Tribal chair volleyball tournaments. Their next tournament is the Teddy Ward Tournament. Battise said she looks forward to getting out and doing a fun activity with others.

“Coming together and meeting new people and playing together and having a wonderful time being out, especially when you’re older,” Battise said. “It’s a great game to get out and exercise a bit.”

Billy Cantrell (Mvskoke) plays for the Tulsa Creek Indian Community. The community

open to visitors.

“We all bring in something to eat, and we welcome visitors to come play,” Cantrell said. “We’ve had Lighthouse come play with us and several other people. It’s fun, we have a blast. We laugh hard.”

Recreation Facilities Manager David Pascale (Mvskoke) said his favorite part of the Festival tournaments is the people. He enjoys hosting and making sure everyone has an enjoyable experience. He also remarked that the games can be fierce.

“It’s competitive amongst those communities, like Okfuske. They’re competitive, they want to see who’s the best,” Pascale said.



David Pascale and J.R. Wind discuss logistics before the tournament begins. (Braden Harper/MM)



Tulsa Creek Indian Community team member Billy Cantrell stays focused on the game. (Braden Harper/MM)

RESULTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

4th - Nancy Conley
5th - Lillie Hill
6th - Ellen Hawziptz

Ring Toss
Women 55-69:
1st - Sandra Harley
2nd - Joyce Anglin
3rd - Regina Revis
4th - Anna Simmers
5th - Connie Buck
6th - Yvonne McIntosh

Men’s Golf Pong (teams of 2)
1st - Mitchell Barnett & Billy Hill
2nd - James Bender & Tony Roberts
3rd - Stanley Birdcreek & Justin Barnett
4th - William Fixico & Scott Lamb
5th - Jon Tiger & Timothy Coon
6th - Merle Berryhill & Martin Fleming

Women’s Golf Pong (teams of 2)
1st - Mary Jones & Pam Harjo
2nd - Brenda Coon & Lavern Tiger
3rd - Mary Narcamy & Anna Simmers
4th - Yvonne McIntosh & Lois Davis
5th - Sherri Freeman & Nellie Powell
6th - Lahoma Schultz & Rosie Fields

Basketball Free Throw Men 70 & up:
1st - Charlie Proctor
2nd - Jon Tiger
3rd - Speedy Harley
4th - Merle Berryhill
5th - Leon Yahola

Basketball Free Throw Men 55-69:
1st - Billy Hill
2nd - Mitchell Barnett
3rd - Justin Barnett
4th - Billy Harley
5th - William Fixico
6th - Stanley Birdcreek

Basketball Free Throw Women 70 & up:
1st - Pat Factor
2nd - Judy Williams
3rd - Debra Ridge
4th - Lillian Thomas
5th - Rosalee Fields
6th - Lillie Hill

Basketball Free Throw Women 55-69:
1st - Penny Harjo
2nd - Janice Birdcreek
3rd - Lois Davis
4th - Sherri Freeman
5th - Tammy McFalls
6th - Yvonne McIntosh

Dominoes (teams of 2)
1st - Annette Hicks & Lillie Hill
2nd - Yvonne McIntosh & Lois Davis
3rd - Tim Harley Jr. & Gary Harley
4th - Rosalee Fields & Jon Tiger
5th - Speedy Harley & Sandra Harley
6th - Esther Gee & Lillian Thomas

Apron contest:
1st - Carol Harley
2nd - Pearl Thomas
3rd - Lahoma Schultz
4th - Joyce Reynolds
5th - Sandy Denny
6th - Jean Marshall

Art contest:
1st - Henry Harley
2nd - Sherri Freeman
3rd - Sandy Denny
4th - Lahoma Schultz
5th - Rosalee Fields
6th - Tim Harley Jr.

Beaded Jewelry contest:
1st - Brenda Coon
2nd - Barbara West
3rd - Yvonne McIntosh
4th - Sherri Bear Freeman

Frybread contest:
1st - Brenda Coon

RESULTS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

THE 2026-2027 WINNERS ARE MISS MCN MERCEDES DUNN AND JR. MISS NEVAEH KELLY

ALL SEVEN CONTESTANTS DEMONSTRATED THEIR HARD WORK
AND DEDICATION ON STAGE



Miss MCN Mercedes Dunn and Jr. Miss MCN Nevaeh Kelly with MCNNC Speaker Randall Hicks and Principal Chief David Hill. (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

TULSA – The 2026-2027 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship pageant was held at the Tulsa River Spirit Casino Resort on June 7. This year’s theme was “A Crown Through the Decades.” This year’s winner for Miss was Mercedes Dunn, and Junior Miss was Nevaeh Kelly. Runner-up for Miss was Alina Harjo, and for Junior Miss was Jayleigh Harjo. Seven contestants competed for this year’s royalty- three Junior Miss contestants and four Miss contestants.

According to the scholarship pageant, “A Crown Through the Decades honors the Mvskoke women who came before us, the Mvskoke women who stand beside us today, and the young Mvskoke girls who will one day carry these traditions forward. As Mvskoke women, we are deeply rooted in the teachings of those before us, and through every generation, our crowns continue to shine with resilience, culture, and pride.”

During the pageant, there was a welcome and introduction from the former 2025-2026 Miss MCN Aholoce Deere, followed by the Presentation of Colors by Este Cate Hoktvyke Suletawv and Mvskoke Hymns that were sung by the College of the Muscogee Nation Apprentice Cohort.

Throughout the afternoon, each contestant performed a self-intro, a traditional dress presentation, and an impromptu. Many former Misses and Junior

Misses MCN were presenters throughout the competitions and announced the winners in each category.

The Junior Miss contestants were Jayleigh Harjo, Madison Gifford, and Nevaeh Kelly. The Miss contestants were Alina Harjo, Myra Deerinwater, Kiahna Croy, and Mercedes Dunn.

This year’s judges were Better Way Foundation Associate Program Officer Isabel Coronado (Mvskoke), Apehkv Fellowship Church and Vesse-Lanvpe (Green Leaf) Ceremonial Ground member Franklin Coachman, 2026 Miss Indian Oklahoma Janaya McIntosh (Mvskoke), Public School Educator Esther Morgan (Mvskoke/ Cherokee), Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Director of the Language and Historic Preservation Jeremy Fultz (Mvskoke/ Seminole), and Former Junior Miss Cherokee Coordinator and former Miss Cherokee Reba Bruner.

This year’s 2026-2027 Miss MCN is Mercedes Dunn (Mvskoke). Her parents are Darweshi and Lisa Spencer. Dunn is Bear Clan, her tribal town is Hitchita, and she attends Mt. Zion Baptist. Dunn is a student at Tulsa Community College, and her platform is to promote and educate Tribal Sovereignty. For her cultural talent, Dunn played the flute.

This year’s 2026-2027 Junior Miss MCN is Nevaeh Kelly (Mvskoke). Her parents are Erika Harjo and Paul Kelly. Kelly is Deer Clan, her tribal town is

Thlopthlocco, and she attends Randall Indian Baptist. Kelly is a student at Preston High School, and her platform is cultural revitalization. For her cultural talent, Kelly played the flute

This year’s runner-up in the Miss category is Alina Harjo. Her mother is Annee Harjo. She is Wind Clan, her tribal town is Kialegee, and she attends Randall Indian Baptist. Harjo is a student at Glenpool High School, and her platform is cultural, mental, and physical health for Native youth. For her cultural talent, Harjo taught how to make grape dumplings.

The Junior Miss runner-up is Jayleigh Harjo. Her parents are Jamie and Mark Hill. Harjo is Bird Clan, her tribal town is Broken Arrow, and she attends Broken Arrow Indian Methodist. Harjo is a student at Glenpool High School, and her platform focuses on disabilities, kindness, and inclusion. For her cultural talent, Harjo sang a Mvskoke Creek lullaby.

This year’s theme celebrated the sacred strength and enduring legacy of Mvskoke women who have carried the culture, traditions, and communities through generations.

“In many tribal nations, women have always held powerful roles as life-givers, caretakers, leaders, storytellers, and protectors of our people. Through matrilineal teachings, knowledge, identity, and values are passed down from mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and elders to the next generation. These teachings create

an unbreakable connection between our past, present, and future,” stated the MCN Scholarship Pageant Committee.

As the pageant drew to a close, the outgoing Miss MCN, Aholoce Deere, gave a farewell. During her speech, she spoke about her chauffeur, Dominic Reeves Williams, who took her everywhere she needed to go.

“Without him, I would not be here today, like, actually, he drove me to my pageant and here. He drove me everywhere. Whether it be at the grounds, the city, the store for snacks, for three hours, or 30 minutes,” Deere said. “I thank him for always being there, in the car, the parking lot, high school, band, and in my life (except that one time at Green Corn when he forgot me).”

She wrote in her speech about her pageant journey, “Remember I’m growING not growN. To my royalty committee, Gabby Noriega and the lovely committee members alongside her. I thank you for supporting me even BEFORE I won. I couldn’t have made it through without Amy’s forward thinking, Johnnie Sue’s lighthearted attitude, Nate Wilson’s loving nature, LuAnn’s ability to make it happen (even if she gets cryptic), and Gabby’s willingness to succeed. So for the last time, Hesci stoken ares Aholoce Deere cvhocefkvtos. I am your 2025-2026 Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Aholoce Deere, thank you. Epofvnlkv mvto cekacitos. Mvto Cehecares. Mvte kossen maket mvto. That is all I have to say, thank you.”

RESULTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

2nd - Robin Jimboy Barnes
3rd - Pearl Thomas
4th - Pam Harjo
5th - Lou Crowfoot

O’safke contest:

1st - Connie Buck
2nd - Anita Freeman
3rd - Abbie Larney
4th - Pearl Thomas
5th - Dee Yargee

Quilt contest:

1st - Sandy Denney
2nd - Mary Ruic
3rd - Sharon Bulter
4th - Irene Boatwright
5th - Donna Frikken
6th - Lillian Fixico

Ribbon Skirt contest:

1st - Irene Boatwright
2nd - Susanne Doty
3rd - Brenda Coon
4th - Sherri Bear Freeman
5th - Lahoma Schultz
6th - Pearl Thomas

Wood Work contest:

1st - Sherri Bear Freeman
2nd - Tim Harley Jr.

VOLLEYBALL

1st - Fish
2nd - Stormbreakerz

JR. OLYMPICS

Team Winners

1st Glenpool with 139 points
2nd Beggs with 114 points
3rd Muskogee with 80 points
For individual placing, go to <https://awards.tf/meet/75066/events>

PICKLEBALL

Men’s Novice:

Gold- Jaylen Zackery and Braxton Kennedy
Silver- Pepper Gallup and Karson Herbert
Bronze- Kenneth Hilliary and Aydin Edwards

Mixed Novice:

Gold- Khloe Sanders and Alec Ganote
Silver- Aubri Kizzia and Hayden Pickering
Bronze- Jennifer Payne and Levi Payne

Women’s Novice:

Gold- Macy Pryor and Megan Knight
Silver- Marsha Wilbanks and Amy Hudson
Bronze- Marlo Jordan and Susan Moore

Men’s/Mixed Advanced:

Gold- Adam Jones III and Amanda Jones
Silver- Fred Kerr and Grayson Ingram
Bronze- Stephen Knight and Brett DeTurk

TENNIS

Men’s Open Singles:
Champion-Cayden Williams
Finalist-----Rob Stevenson
Consolation Champion-Rodney Todd

Men’s Open Doubles:

Champions- Paul Bemore/ Rob Stevenson
Finalists- Brian Pitts/ Rodney Todd
Consolation Champions/ Sam Battiest/ Cayden Williams
Men’s 60+ Doubles:
Champions- Jerry Bales/ Floyd Bales
Finalists-----Loy Thomas/ Buddy King

Mixed Open Doubles:

Champions- Rob Stevenson/ Theresa Lee
Finalists- Kasey Bales/ Wylie Bales
Consolation Champions- Paul Bemore/ Debbie Thomas

Women’s Open Singles:

Champion- Geri Wisner
Finalist- Theresa Lee
Consolation Champion- Debbie Thomas

RESULTS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



The newly crowned MCN royalty with other Oklahoma Tribal and Indigenous royalty. (Shaylyn Proctor/MM)



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QUESTIONS?



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IN MEMORIAM

The year was 1990 when Josiah was conceived. Early in your life, in the tummy of your mom, you were miscarried. When your dad and your mom received the news confirming your mom had miscarried, they were saddened. They watched the movie, “The Outlaw Josey Wales.” One month later, your mother went back to the hospital, claiming, “I still feel pregnant.” God had resurrected you, Josiah (Josey).

Josiah Benjamin Dorsey was born to Dale and Margaret Dorsey at Claremore Indian Hospital.

Josiah grew up in Glenpool, Oklahoma. Josiah was loved and nurtured by his mom and dad and attended church with his parents at Victory Christian Center.

At an early age, while watching movies with his mom and dad, Josiah would mimic lines and act out movie lines with his dad, like “Back Draft” and “You Go, We Go.” Josiah was perceptive to the things of the Holy Spirit. If one paid attention, Josiah could size up a person, a situation, or a room. Josiah was homeschooled up to the 7th grade by his mom and dad. Josiah attended Glenpool Public Schools from 8th to 12th grade. Josiah played sports with Glenpool, played baseball, football, and wrestling. Josiah learned karate at Apollo’s Karate and enjoyed all that he learned there. He used those moves throughout his life.

Josiah and his mom graduated from the Clown College Program so they could minister with the Tent



JOSIAH DORSEY

Crusade Outreach teams of Victory Christian Center. Shortly thereafter, Josiah attended Victory Bible College Children’s Ministry Program in 2000. In 2000, Josiah trained with the kids in Missions teams to be in the troupe of children who ministered the gospel in Guatemala.

Josiah became an uncle at an early age and spent a lot of time with his nieces and nephews (Chelsea, Alicia, and Kyle).

In 2008, Josiah and a few friends of his formed a band, “Violent Crime.” Josiah was the lead singer/vocalist of the band. The band played at many venues in the Tulsa area and out-of-town venues. Those were the straight edge years of his life (no drinking, no drugs).

In 2010, Josiah was diagnosed with a congenital Chiari malformation of his brain and had decompression surgery done. Being young, Josiah resumed an active lifestyle.

Josiah enjoyed cooking and worked at the Blue Stone Steakhouse, then later at

the Flying Tee, and then at George’s Pub. Josiah enjoyed working out and running the trails at Turkey Mountain until a friend of his saw a snake and pushed Josiah, and Josiah fell off a cliff.

Josiah was baptized at Native Stone Baptist Church by Pastor Gary Hawkins and became a member of Native Stone.

Josiah was gifted a kitty in 2012 and named him Kato. Kato was Josiah’s guard cat and is in charge when at home alone. Kato now guards Josiah’s mom and dad.

Josiah spent the last days of his life keeping his focus on the LORD and fighting the good fight of faith all through the day and night. Josiah was tough. In the face of every negative comment, Josiah believed God’s report. Josiah remained fearless, strong, and faithful to the end.

Josiah was a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and was also Choctaw, Kiowa, and Cheyenne-Arapaho. Josiah is survived by his dad, Dale Dorsey; his mom, Margaret Dorsey; his cat, Kato; his sister, Rainelle Wolfe, and her children, Chelsea, Alicia, and Kyle; his brother, Dale Dorsey Jr., and his wife, Rachel, and their children, Chaboney, Emily, John, and Megan. Uncles, the late Quentin Keah-tigh, Robert Keah-tigh, Frank Keah-tigh, Paul Keah-tigh, Gary Dorsey, the late Kenny Dorsey, and Clay Dorsey. Aunts, Charlene Keah-tigh, Denise Sellers, Lilly Tyner, Susie Keah-tigh, and Norma Dorsey, along with many nieces, nephews, pastors, and church family.

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT



The Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office is proud to honor Clint Yaholar for his dedicated service to the Muscogee Nation, the U.S. Air Force, and the United States. Clint was a Vietnam-era veteran and honorably served for eight years.

Mvto Clint for your selfless service to your country and your community.

The Veterans Spotlight is submitted by the MCN VASO.

MVTO FOR YOUR SELFLESS SERVICE!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mvskoke Matriarchy Exhibit
Mvskoke Waters Gallery
Curated by Carly Treece
and Shelley Patrick
Tuesday, April 7 to
Saturday, Aug. 1
500 Riverwalk Terrace,
Suite 115, Jenks

Take Out Tuesday
Fife Indian United
Methodist Church
Tuesday, July 21, 11:00
a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$7/plate
1011 S. Utah Street, Muskogee
For more info, contact
918-478-9227

**Community Board
Election Filing**
Checotah Indian Community
Monday, July 20 to
Friday, July 24

Elder’s Meeting
Okmulgee Elder
Nutrition Center
Wednesday, Aug. 5, 9:30 a.m.
1021 N. Seminole
Ave., Okmulgee

**Indigenous Independence:
America at 250**
Gilcrease Museum
Helmerich Center for
American Research
Items from the collection
that highlight the

Indigenous influences
leading up to and during
the American Revolution
Now- August 7
Monday-Friday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.
guided tours from 10
a.m. to 2 p.m.

Coffee and Donuts
Veteran Affairs Services Office
Thursday, Aug. 13,
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
1006 Bear Lane, Okmulgee

**Southern California Outreach
Beyond the Reservation**
Saturday, Aug. 22,
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Hilton Orange County/
Costa Mesa Hotel Ballroom
3050 Bristol Street,
Costa Mesa, CA
For more information,
call 918-732-7613

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notice of Intent to Repatriate

The National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution plans to repatriate the human remains of 59 individuals and 22 funerary objects originally from Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

The human remains and funerary objects were excavated during a series of federally funded excavations led by Arthur Kelly and James A. Ford that ran from approximately 1933 to 1942. Specific contexts from which these remains and objects were collected include Mound D, Mound C, and McDougal Mound. The human remains and funerary objects are found to be culturally affiliated with the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Kialegee Tribal Town, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, The Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma, the Poarch Creek Indians, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town of the Creek Nation.

For more information, please contact Kevin Pierce Wright (202-633-0816) by August 13, 2026. Repatriation Office, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, NMNH, MRC 138, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012.

WARRIOR NATION WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AT NATIVE AMERICAN JUNIOR



WEWOKA — Warrior Nation, a 3rd and 4th grade boys basketball team from Wewoka, Oklahoma, brought home a national championship after competing in the 7th Annual Native American Junior Nationals 3rd and 4th Grade Boys Diamond Bracket Division at the Arizona Athletic Grounds in Mesa, Arizona.

The team, made up primarily of Mvskoke Creek Nation citizens and Seminole Nation citizens, along with one Osage Nation citizen, was the only Oklahoma team competing in its division. Pool play began Friday, June 26, 2026, followed by bracket play on Saturday.

Warrior Nation opened the tournament with a 38-22

win over Native Elite from Tuba City, Arizona, before defeating War Party from Coulee Dam, Washington, 30-15. The team continued its strong run in the semifinals with a 30-18 victory over Unconquered 4th from Ochopee, Florida, advancing to the championship game against Too Tough Elite from Mandan, North Dakota.

In the finals, Warrior Nation capped off its undefeated tournament performance with a 41-22 win over Too Tough Elite to claim the national title.

With the championship win, Warrior Nation earned an automatic berth from Tribal Athletics to the 808 INDGNS HUI Classic event in May 2027 in Honolulu, Hawai’i. The team hopes to represent its tribal communities from home at the upcoming event, and players’ families plan to begin fundraising efforts soon to support the trip.

PROPERTY INQUERY

Hesci, I am a Mvskoke Citizen currently living in TX and would like to return to live on the Muscogee Reservation. I am looking for land of at least 3 acres, up to 40 acres or more, to settle back home. I am a private Creek individual, not an agent or company, and would love to hear from owners directly. Please email land address or coordinates or offers to donnishaspicer@yahoo.com or text to (713) 478-2278

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