



# MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY MVSKOKEMEDIA

## MVSKOKE ROYALTY CROWNS NEW 2024-2025 MISS AND JR. MISS

IN ATTENDANCE WERE EIGHT VISITING INDIAN ROYALTY TITLE HOLDERS



The newly crowned Miss and Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Royalty pose together for a picture. (Left to right) MCN National Council Speaker Randall Hicks, MCN Second Chief Del Beaver, MCN Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver, MCN Miss Janaya McIntosh and MCN Principal Chief David Hill. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

OKMULKE, Oklv. - The 2024 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship Pageant was held at the Mvskoke Dome on June 1. Out

of 11 competing contestants, two were selected for the Miss and Jr. Miss Mvskoke Royalty titles. The newly crowned Mvskoke Royalty

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**  
REPORTER

for 2024-2025 are Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Janaya McIntosh and Junior Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Olivia Beaver.

According to the Mvskoke Royalty Page, the pageant is all about supporting young Mvskoke women. It states, "The purpose of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship Pageant is to provide an educational scholarship opportunity for our young Mvskoke women. Through the MCN Scholarship Pageant, our young women develop their sense of self confidence, poise, public speaking skills, social skills, and further their cultural knowledge of Muscogee history, customs and traditions. The Miss and Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation promote our Nation as goodwill ambassadors during their year long reign through various educational,

social, cultural and public appearances as well as speaking engagements."

There were a total of 22 former MCN Jr. Miss and Miss Mvskoke Royalty that presented during the pageant. Some of the former title holders included MCN Miss 1973-1974, MCN Miss 1976-1977 and MCN Miss 1995-1996, among others. Also in attendance was MCN Tribal Leadership including Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Del Beaver and members of the National Council.

Each of the pageant's 11 contestants presented an introduction of themselves, their traditional dresses, a talent, and answered questions through an interview process.

MCN National Council Speaker Randall Hicks presented the eight visiting royalty title holders at the pageant, including Miss Indian Oklahoma, Sac and Fox Honor Guard Princess, Tulsa Pow Wow Princess, Miss and Jr. Indian Tulsa and Miss and Jr. Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

The now former 2023-2024 MCN Jr. Miss Georgia Harjo and Miss Chenoa Barnett gave their farewell addresses respectively, and announced this year's royalty winners. Now current Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver was the recipient of the \$2,500 scholarship and MCN Miss Janaya McIntosh was the

**MVSKOKE PAEGANT**  
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The 2024 Mvskoke Royalty Pageant contestants stand side by side for a group picture. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

## KIDS AND TEENS ENJOY A DAY OF FISHING IN DUCK CREEK COMPETITION

ORGANIZERS WERE SURPRISED BY THE INCREDIBLY HIGH TURNOUT



The Native American Youth Fishing Competition event provided fun for the whole family, with both kids and their families seen enjoying themselves. (Thomas Jackson/MM)

BEGGS, Oklv. - This summer started with the sound of an air horn, kicking off some friendly competition between kids and teens of the Mvskoke Nation. The Native American Youth Fishing Tournament took place on June 1. The competition took place at the Duck Creek Indian Community Center. Participants were split into two groups. The first group consisted of pre-K up to third grade students, and took place from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. The second group consisted of fourth grade students up to 12th grade students, and lasted from 9 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The event was free and open to any Native American students of any tribe that go to school within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Participants received a free fishing pole for their attendance.

The kids who attended had more than just friendly competition to look forward to during the day, as the competition had prizes for each of the winners. The student who caught the most fish received a lifetime fishing license, courtesy of the College of the Muscogee Nation. The student who caught the largest fish

received a \$25 gift card. Needless to say the competition was fierce, with dozens upon dozens of fish caught by the dozens of participants present.

Even before the fog had lifted, there were dozens gathered around the pond, with more appearing as it cleared and the sun began to shine over the landscape. The competition, though fierce, was seen enjoyed by many, with kids of all ages spread out around the pond in an effort to catch more fish.

The competition would eventually come to an end with organizers counting up the number of

by **THOMAS JACKSON**  
REPORTER

fish caught from their lists. Starting with the younger participants, the third highest was Granger De Arman, who caught 23 fish. Following this, the second highest was caught by Addison Ross, who caught 33 fish. Finally, in first place with the highest fish count was Canyon De Arman, who caught 39 fish and won one of the lifetime fishing licenses.

For the older participants, the fourth highest number of fish caught was by Kash Walters, who caught 24 fish. Following this, the third highest was Allison Ross with 29 fish, and the second highest was Braden Harrison with 35 fish. Finally, the winner of the other lifetime fishing license was Lucas Sullins, who caught a remarkable 50 fish total.

Lastly, the winner of the \$25 gift card was Logan McNack, who caught a one pound, 14 oz fish.

The event was described by organizers as an overwhelming success, with dozens of students and their families flocking to the center and its pond en masse. "We had a tremendous turnout." John John Brown of the Duck Creek Indian Community Center said to the crowd. "We hope to have this event in April or May next year."



Students cast their fishing rods to see how many fish they could reel in during the Native American Youth Fishing Competition. The grand prize winner from each respective category won a lifetime fishing license. (Thomas Jackson/MM)

## MVSKOKE CITIZEN RUNS FOR U.S. CONGRESS

DENNIS BAKER RUNS FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN OK DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY



Dennis Baker is of Mvskoke and Euchee descent and is currently running in the primary for Oklahoma's 1st Congressional District seat. (Courtesy: Dennis Baker Campaign)

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

top issue of this year's election, Baker believes it is the economy. Although economists cite that the job market is strong, consumers are still feeling the sting of inflation in everyday expenses like gas, groceries and housing. According to Baker, he believes this is especially hurting low-income families in the state.

"We have such a high poverty rate, we're one of the top ten in the country in our poverty rate. One in five Oklahoma children live in poverty," Baker said. "To me that's unforgivable, it's not something you'll hear Republicans addressing."

Additionally, Baker remarked that he believes attacks on unions have resulted in fewer high paying unionized jobs. Coupled with the rising costs of healthcare, day-care, and housing, this has put consumers in tight financial situations, and left families struggling to make ends meet.

A local issue Baker is passionate about is bringing back a high-speed passenger rail service between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, a buzz topic that has been echoed by municipal and state candidates for years. If the project comes to fruition, Oklahoma citizens could see an alternative option to using the highway system between the state's largest municipalities. The last time Oklahomans used a rail service between Tulsa and Oklahoma City was over 50 years ago.

When it comes to issues facing Native Americans, particularly in Oklahoma, Baker sees the number one issue facing these communities as attacks on tribal sov-

TVLSE, Oklv. - On this year's Democratic primary election ballot Oklahoma voters will see a Mvskoke citizen's name with a checkbox beside it. Dennis Baker (Euchee/Mvskoke) is now running for the Oklahoma 1st Congressional District, which is set for June 18. Baker is running against opponent Evelyn Rogers. If Baker wins his primary he will run against the current Republican incumbent, Kevin Hern and independent candidate Mark Sanders.

Baker is an Oklahoma native originally from Claremore and raised in Okmulgee. He has served in law enforcement, as well as an FBI Special Agent in federal offices across the United States. For Baker, the moment he knew he wanted to run for office was when he saw Congress under attack by rioters trying to stop the 2020 Presidential Election certification in early 2021.

"For me it came down to January 6 and the insurrection at the capital," Baker said. "As I watched the capital being stormed, I was pretty disheartened and dismayed. It was upsetting to see that happening."

When it comes down to the

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**MVSKOKE PAEGANT**  
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recipient of the \$5,000 scholarship award.

**Best Presentation Award:**  
Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver  
Miss Sutv Harjo

**Best Written Word Award:**  
Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver  
Miss Janaya McIntosh

**Best Communication Word Award:**  
Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver  
Miss Janaya McIntosh

**Stage Presentation Award:**  
Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver  
Miss Aholoce Deere

**Best Culture Presentation:**  
Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver  
Miss Janaya McIntosh

**Best Continuity:**  
Janaya McIntosh

**Final Results 2024-2025:**  
MCN Jr. Miss first runner up Mia Powell  
MCN Jr. Miss Olivia Beaver

MCN Miss first runner up Aholoce Deere  
MCN Miss Janaya McIntosh

**CMN WEEKLY GARDEN SERIES PROVIDES TIPS FOR ALL LEVELS OF GARDENERS (LIGHT) RAIN OR SHINE, EXTENSION PROGRAM HOPES TO RECONNECT PEOPLE TO NATURE**



CMN Extension Educator and Horticulturalist Courtney Natseyway now hosts the Mvskoke Gardening series. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - The College of the Muscogee Nation Extension Program is now hosting an in-person garden series. The new program meets weekly at the CMN Community Garden every Thursday from 11 a.m. to noon in Okmulgee and runs through the growing season.

The series is presented by CMN Horticulturalist and Extension Educator Courtney Natseyway (Mvskoke) who also manages the college's garden and greenhouse. A CMN alum, Natseyway earned a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University and has experience working at the Tulsa Botanical Garden and in the medical cannabis industry.

Each week Natseyway and her team will cover a new topic and offer tips and insights for all levels of gardening. Topics already covered in the series include managing pests, fertilizing, and transplanting. Upcoming topics include native pollinators, herbs, and seed starting.

The series is open to all, anyone wanting to learn and share gardening tips can participate in the extension program regardless of tribal citizenship. The meeting

will be canceled for severe weather, but CMN Extension Coordinator Chris Azbell related the series will persevere throughout Oklahoma's notoriously moody weather. "A few sprinkles will not deter us," Azbell said.

The program is in the stages of cultivating an heirloom seed collection, and currently gives out seeds to participants as well as a limited number of plants, which are available for Mvskoke citizens.

In addition to the weekly in-person garden talks, a web-based series is in the works for the program. "Mvskoke Gardening" is a collaboration with Mvskoke Media and will provide garden-

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**  
REPORTER

ing guidance by Natseyway and the team. It will also feature Extension Educator Ben Yahola, who highlights traditional Mvskoke cultural connections in the garden.

The video programming was an idea of Azbell's, who saw an opportunity to align cultural programming with the Extension program's mission statement. Azbell related, "I actually thought of the idea after watching Oklahoma Gardening. I thought it would be nice to have our own gardening show intertwined with the Mvskoke culture and the Mvskoke language."

Azbell, whose background is in environmental science, does not consider himself a gardener but more of an enthusiast. He explained that his wife is the gardener in his family, while he provides the labor and some good ideas. He also takes the same path in his role at CMN and stated, "I take the same approach in my role as extension coordinator. Come up with good ideas and then get good people to carry out the mission."

The first episode of "Mvskoke Gardening" will debut on the Mvskoke Media's Youtube Channel on Saturday, June 15 at 10 a.m. (CT). The in-person gardening series will be hosted during the growing season every Thursday from now until Sept. 26 at the CMN Community Garden.



Courtney Natseyway shows off some of the peppers in the garden at the College of the Muscogee Nation. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

challenging McGirt in court. It's costing the city millions, it's costing the tribes millions to defend. McGirt is the supreme law of the land and instead of challenging it, I would challenge our leaders at the state level and the city level to work with our tribal leaders and cooperate in a manner that benefits everyone."

To learn more about Baker's platform, visit his campaign website, dennislbaker.com.

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*Continued from Page 1*

eighty. As a result, these attacks have come at a great cost to the tribes and taxpayers. Baker's solution to the issue is cooperation over division.

"It's the millions of dollars that are being spent at the state level by a governor, who appears to me to be anti-tribal sovereignty," Baker said. "We have the City of Tulsa

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**THE MVSKOKE NEWS**  
Angel Ellis, Director | [aellis@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:aellis@mvskokemedia.com)  
Braden Harper, Managing Editor | [bharper@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:bharper@mvskokemedia.com)  
Jerrad Moore, Assignment Editor | [jmoore@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:jmoore@mvskokemedia.com)  
Meredith Johnson, Reporter | [mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com)  
ShayIn Proctor, Reporter | [sproctor@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:sproctor@mvskokemedia.com)  
Thomas Jackson, Reporter | [tw.jackson@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:tw.jackson@mvskokemedia.com)  
Daniel Roberts, Ad Sales | [wroberts@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:wroberts@mvskokemedia.com)

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# PBS WEB SERIES HIGHLIGHTS INDIGENOUS CREATIVITY AND DESIGN

“SOVEREIGN INNOVATIONS” HOST CHEYENNE BEARFOOT VISITS WITH MVSKOKE MEDIA



Cheyenne Bearfoot, host of “Sovereign Innovations,” speaks with Chef Crystal Wahpepah (Kickapoo), owner of Wahpepah’s Kitchen about bison and traditional food ways. (Courtesy: Sovereign Innovations)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON REPORTER

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. - A new web series called “Sovereign Innovations” explores the everyday innovation of Indigenous people. The show’s host and video producer, Cheyenne Bearfoot (Chiricahua Apache), spoke with Mvskoke Media about the show’s concept, production, and reach.

With a roughly 10 minute runtime and educational format, “Sovereign Innovations” aims to not only showcase Native innovation, but also correct misinformation and misrepresentation about Native communities. Bearfoot explains, “We try to uplift and highlight Native people today and showcase really what they’re doing. I’ve spoken with Native fashion designers, filmmakers, artisans, chefs, just a whole wide array of different Native folks from different Native tribes.”

Bearfoot noted that each episode tries to hit several goals. She explained, “It’s got a little bit of history, it has a little bit of science, it’s got some contemporary pop culture musings in there, lots

of humor, and lots of educational payoff.”

### Production Process and Research

The entire production for the show is undertaken with a spirit of collaboration. While there are three main writers, everyone on the team takes part in writing, researching, and fact checking. Bearfoot explained that the rigorous fact-checking process ensures the show is accurate and it also gives the team plenty of room for learning.

The process also enables the production to weave Indigenous ways of knowing into the research process and the structure of the show. Bearfoot said, “We really try to uphold and value traditional Indigenous knowledge ways versus grabbing a scholarly article or pointing people to that direction... there’s so much oral history that doesn’t necessarily get translated into larger pieces of academia.”

Bearfoot explained that this process enables lots of learning on the job. While researching the

show’s third episode, “Celebrating the Diversity of Native Homes,” she was blown away by the technological advances in architecture and irrigation techniques in Chaco Canyon, often left out of history books. “It’s just really fascinating how that gets ignored or subverted in history but in this show we’re really taking that back and we’re reclaiming some of this knowledge and these histories and we’re spreading it out to the world.”

### Tackling Identity and Connection

From the beginning, working on “Sovereign Innovations” has also been a personal undertaking for the production team and has led to an understanding of Native community connections. The very first episode, “What does ‘authentically’ Indigenous look like?”, delves into misconceptions and misrepresentations on what it means to “look” Native. With a discussion over the ideas of “authentic”, the episode had personal connections for Bearfoot and others on the production team.

It was also important for Bearfoot, she explained, to tackle that question head on. “There’s no one way to look like a Native, there’s no one way to look Indigenous. I look very white passing, but I’m half Chiricahua and I’m half white. It was really important for the first episode to talk about that and really just upheave all of those misconceptions of what it means to look Native.”

Because the research process for the show uses Indigenous knowledge as its primary source, it’s important to connect to Native communities. Either through personal contacts or networking, Bearfoot shared that Native communities really show up.

She stated, “That’s the part I treasure so much about interviewing. This show has actually been really healing for me and really affirming as well. Even though it

hasn’t been easy, it’s been so great to be in community and talk to different Native folks and especially Native women... We’ve never met each other before in our lives, no from the same tribe, have had different lives, but have had similar shared experiences. It’s so

affirming.”

While there is no news yet on a season two for the show, the current seven episodes can be found on the PBS Voices Youtube page and at PBS Digital Studios, which features original education web-based content.

**Mvskoke Gardening Series**

**CMN Extension is hosting a weekly gardening series featuring Horticulturalist Courtney Natseway. Come out and experience the fun:**

- Gardening Tip of the Week: Insect Management - Are they pests or are they beneficial?
- Open Q & A Session
- Develop Community and Friendship

**Where: CMN Community Garden and Gazebo**

**When: Each Thursday until Sept. 26**

**Time: 11:00am to 12:00pm**

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**MVSKOKEMEDIA**

# INDIAN CITIZENSHIP ACT TURNS 100 THIS YEAR

ALSO KNOWN AS THE SNYDER ACT, ITS PASSAGE INTO LAW OFFICIALLY GRANTED CITIZENSHIP TO NATIVE AMERICANS



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Indian Country recently celebrated the 100 year anniversary of American citizenship for Native Americans. (Shutterstock)

by THOMAS JACKSON REPORTER

MVSKOKE NATION - Indian Country just reached an important milestone in Native Americans’ struggle for rights and sovereignty. It has been 100 years almost to the day since the Indian Citizenship Act, also known as the Snyder Act, was passed into law. A century ago, on June 2, 1924, Native Americans born within the territory of the United States of America were granted full citizenship.

Although the rights of Native Americans, including Muscogee (Creek) citizens, would take decades to be fully recognized, it still marks a momentous occasion. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill shared a statement on his Facebook page regarding the centennial.

“Our people have been key figures throughout the history of the United States from influencing the principles of American democracy, to defending the nation through our exemplary history of military service. The long overdue granting of citizenship to the original inhabitants of this land was merely one more step on the road to equity for Native people.” Chief Hill said in a post on Facebook commemorating the event.

Chief Hill continued to elaborate on this, as he explained that in some ways, the fight for Indigenous sovereignty and freedom still is not over, even 100 years later. “Yet, this was not the end of our fight for our place here as we would not have the right to vote for another 38 years after the Act passed and still today, we have to fight for our sovereignty and the promise of our territories and the

jurisdiction over them with a Governor that looks to suppress us at every turn.” Chief Hill said.

Although Native Americans received the right to American citizenship in 1924, it would take, as Chief Hill stated, another 38 years for Muscogee (Creek) citizens to fully receive the right to vote in 1962. This road was not an easy one, with numerous challenges appearing along the way to voting rights guaranteed to all tribal citizens.

It has taken decades for Native Americans to enjoy the rights and privileges they enjoy today. Although the Snyder Act passed over a century ago, many tribal leaders like Chief Hill agree that June 2 is a date worth commemorating.

Principal Chief Hill’s full statement on the centennial anniversary can be found on Facebook.

# STITT’S ONE OKLAHOMA TASK FORCE RELEASES FINAL REPORT

CHIEF HILL ENCOURAGED BY RECOMMENDATIONS



Governor Stitt’s One Oklahoma Task Force conducted its final report recently on May 29, which investigated memoranda of understanding between the state and the tribal nations that reside within it. (Shutterstock)

OKLVHOMV CITY, Oklv. - The One Oklahoma Task Force created by Governor Kevin Stitt released its final report on May 29. Among the nine recommen-

dations put forth in the report is a legislative interim study to review relevant laws for updates, governmental reviews of the 2005 memoranda of understanding for compliance, and the adoption of data

sharing agreements among state, local and tribal agencies.

The task force met five times throughout the spring without tribal representatives in attendance. Two seats on the 13-person

by MEREDITH JOHNSON REPORTER

panel were slated for representatives from the 39 Tribal Nations that reside in Oklahoma, none chose to participate. However, according to statements made during the meetings, tribal authorities were in contact and updated by certain individuals on the panel.

The task force was created days after a dispute between Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse officers and Okmulgee County Jail Authority employees. Executive Order 2023-32 gave the panel the responsibility to advise state leadership on jurisdictional issues between state, local, and tribal authorities. The panel was responsible for submitting a report addressing what Governor Stitt outlined in the order as “the McGirt decision’s negative effects.”

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill made the following statement upon release of the final report, “We are encouraged by the Taskforce’s recommendations to cooperate and

collaborate with tribes to identify and solve issues, while respecting tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction. That’s exactly what we have been asking for since day one, but Governor Stitt has refused. We hope the Governor will heed the Taskforce’s repudiation of his anti-tribe approach and begin to work with us. Our first priority has always been public safety and we remain ready and willing to work with any agency that shares that goal.”



Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt’s One Oklahoma Task Force has officially concluded its final meeting since its inception in December 2023. (Courtesy: Oklahoma.gov)

## MVSKOKE EDUCATOR COMPETES IN READER'S DIGEST AMERICA'S FAVORITE TEACHER COMPETITION

RAMONA ROBERTS WANTS TO SPREAD POSITIVITY AND GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS



Ramona "Lynelle" Roberts is pictured with her family. (Courtesy: Lynelle Roberts)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

JENKS, Oklv.- America's Favorite Teacher is an annual competition where educators from across the country compete to be recognized for their contributions to the classroom. This year's prize includes \$25,000, a trip to Hawaii and a published story in Reader's Digest. This year saw a local educator from Jenks Public Schools (JPS) compete and finish in third place.

Ramona "Lynelle" Roberts is a transition coordinator with JPS and a Mvskoke citizen. Her parents are Mona "Koko" Lowe and the late Terry "Skipper" Roberts. She has four children, Jimsey, Rim,

Michael and Trever Fish. Roberts has been a district transition coordinator for eight years, however she has taught for a total of 32 years.

The America's Favorite Teacher website states, "Teachers are the unsung heroes who instill a love for learning, cultivate critical thinking skills, and nurture the potential of each student. Their dedication goes far beyond the classroom, influencing the character and values of the next generation. America's Favorite Teacher reveres these mentors for holding the key to unlocking the full potential of individuals, creating leaders who will foster a brighter future for all."

Roberts first heard about the America's Favorite Teacher com-

petition when she received an email questionnaire that asked basic questions pertaining to her favorite aspects of teaching. Although she did not realize it at the time, her email responses would officially enter her into the competition. When she found out she was in the running to be America's favorite teacher she was filled with excitement.

Although the grand prize winner was not restricted by what they could spend their winnings on, Roberts initially had big plans if she had won the top prize. "I would improve some of our transition areas. I would love to buy new dresses and suits for our donation closet. I would love to spend some time with my family somewhere," Roberts said.

The multi-week online competition saw Roberts hold strong in the top category within her group.

Although this was Roberts' first time competing and placing within this competition, it is far from her first accolade. Roberts is the recipient of the 2023 Division on Career Development and Transition Educator of the Year, Who's Who Among America's Teachers (Sixth and Ninth edition), and the 2024 Oklahoma Family Network Professional of the Year.

Just last month Roberts was also the winner of a giveaway provided by The Chubbs & Kacy Show of 106.9 K-Hits. Roberts received teaching supplies and a \$500 Amazon gift card.

### A Love for Education

Reflecting back on her career, Roberts shared that she enjoys being an educator because she helps provide brighter futures for her students.

"I love my job, I love what I do, I love working with students and I love working with parents. I made a resource guide for Jenks school with different resources in our area. Resources help them instead of looking for it for themselves,"

Roberts said. "I have always wanted to be a teacher. When I was young I taught the little children's Sunday school class at my church so I could teach."

Roberts tries to prepare students for life after graduating through teaching community skills, life skills and employment skills. At Jenks High School educators developed different stores, rooms and areas to teach them all of those skills to help prepare them for when they leave high school. These different activities include participating in mock interviews, making food, vacuuming, making beds, sorting out mail and pulling orders.

"I love seeing students grow. Small steps or huge steps, progress is progress and deserves to be celebrated. We have a thrift store, mock grocery store, greeting card lab, kitchen area, laundry area, PAES lab, living lab, mock mailroom, recycling area and garden area. We try to have a job every student can learn from," Roberts said. "We just try to make them as independent as possible whenever they leave here and whether they're college bound or they're going to a New Leaf or Bridges or Pathways or going straight to work or a technical school. I want to give them the skills they need to be successful to reach their goal in life."

Although Roberts will not be in each students' life forever, she remarked that it fills her with pride to see them take the next step after high school, whether it's going straight into the workforce, or enrolling in higher education. She even stays in touch with students and makes herself available to answer questions that arise about life.

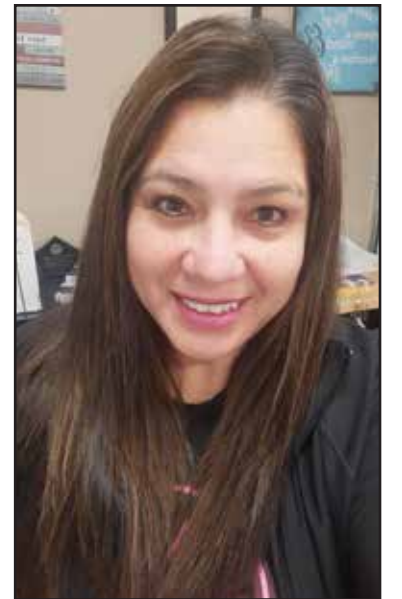
Throughout her educational career Roberts received advice to never give up on what she sets her mind on. For Roberts, that is providing for students and being creative. In each lesson she teaches, she strives for them to be fun

but useful at the same time. That indelible spirit of never giving up on what one sets their mind on is advice that Roberts passes down to her own students. She believes that anyone can reach their goal with hard work

Roberts remarked on the teaching shortage the state of Oklahoma is currently facing. Although times like these can be trying, positive strides like seeing students graduate and become productive members of society make it all worthwhile for educators like Roberts.

"The kids are our future. Us being there for them, supporting them, guiding and directing them in the correct way to go," Roberts said.

Roberts believes that each child needs a positive role model. As a tribal citizen, Roberts tries her best to be a good Native role model. She hopes to see more Native teachers in the classroom someday. When Roberts graduated from Okmulgee High School, she remarked that she only remembered one teacher who was Native. This inspired her to become an educator.



Ramona "Lynelle" Roberts took third place in the America's Favorite Teacher competition. (Photo Courtesy: Lynelle Roberts)

## INTERNATIONALLY-KNOWN USA MARTIAL ARTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE DEVOTES CAREER TO SELF DEFENSE AND DISCIPLINE

MVSKOKE CITIZEN DR. CHEBON MARKS SHARES THE STORY ABOUT HIS MARTIAL ARTS CAREER



Dr. Chebon Marks holds his weapon in front of his martial arts awards. (Courtesy: Chebon Marks)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

OKMULKE, Oklv. - Internationally-known USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame Inductee, and Fifth Grand Master Dr. Chebon Marks (Mvskoke) shared about his experience training in martial arts. He has learned many different styles, which he has taught and passed down to students. Marks holds two PhDs in Martial Art Science and Philosophy.

In order to reach his current level of mastery in martial arts, it took Marks years to study and train. Although Marks was never into the belt-ranking system, he still wears a belt since it is proper protocol. "My Sensei, my teacher would say it's not what you got

around your waist that counts, it's what's in your head and he said that's the true martial artist because anybody can put a belt on," Marks said.

According to Marks, he uses the martial art principle in his daily life, from the time he wakes up, until he goes to bed. It requires strict physical, mental and spiritual discipline on a daily basis. These principles help Marks make decisions in life of what direction to take when confronted.

Marks started off learning the three types of Korean styles, which include Moo Duk Kwan, as well as the soft and hard styles of Taekwondo. Later on his grandmaster taught him the Okinawa style and his family's style. Marks has studied under his Grandmaster for 44 years. "I look at my martial arts skills as a blessing from God,"

Marks said.

Marks' favorite move is the small circle jujitsu. It is a move that does not require muscle or power, it only requires use of the fingers. The pressure points it targets can make anyone collapse. "If you know where to touch, you don't have to hit them, you don't have to kick them," Marks said.

Additionally, Marks also teaches karate and weaponry. He is familiar with multiple styles, including Chinese, Filipino, Okinawa, Korean and Japanese. Marks has even taught his family these different skills. He started teaching his son when he was four years old. By the time Marks' son was six years old, he knew how to use five weapons under his belt.

### Martial Arts Seminars

Marks has expressed interest in hosting seminars with Mvskoke citizens in mind. During the last seminar he hosted he taught self defense and weaponry. "When I say weaponry teaching, it isn't so much learning how to hurt somebody with a weapon. It's learning how not to get hurt by a weapon, self defense," Marks said.

Marks also participated in a martial arts seminar in March, along with Grandmaster Dr. Akita Roberts. This was held at the Sapulpa Creek Indian Community Center. The free two-day event welcomed any age and was opened to the public. Marks and Roberts demonstrated moves, and counter moves.

In the third grade Marks attended Seneca Indian boarding school, where he watched martial artists on TV demonstrating the art. At the time he did not know anything about karate.

"I was completely in the dark and I watched them, it looked like ballet in motion. I thought it was so beautiful like they were dancing, with their hand work and what he was doing. They were demonstrating self defense, I looked at it as graceful moves and beautiful, real beautiful art. That is how I got involved. However going to Indian

boarding school, being in foster homes, two of them, being passed around from family. I never could afford it," Marks said.

When Marks finally began martial arts training at the academy as an adult he was not allowed to wear a Gi (keikogi or "practice clothes"). He had to wear street clothes for four months. According to Marks, he had to wait until he tested for the rank of white belt. Students were not allowed to touch a weapon until they achieved the rank of black belt.

"I went to the old school, they didn't do that then and during that time you were not allowed to touch a weapon until you became a black belt. You can look at the weapon but the instructor said 'I better not catch one in your hand,'" Marks said.

Marks' end goal was to earn his black belt and travel back to Oklahoma to teach fellow Natives martial arts to defend themselves.

"The Native American center was looking for certified, identifiable martial artists. So I applied, I got the job and so I was teaching Native American students for nothing, but at the same time the program was paying me. So I fulfilled the impossible dream and I felt good about that, I felt as if again I was blessed," Marks said.

### Passing on What He Has Learned

So far Marks has taught at two schools in Oklahoma. He enjoys seeing his students grow and develop discipline through the martial arts. Carrying down lessons from his mentors, Marks discourages students from using martial arts outside of the dojo. Marks does not charge for classes, but does charge for seminars and demonstrations. He does not charge for classes in order to give back to those Native students who are less fortunate and may not be able to afford a martial arts education.

These classes also teach the benefits of learning discipline and control. "There's five rules in

self defense. Rule number one is best to run than to confront, rule number two is best to confront than to hurt, rule number three it's best to hurt than to lame or cripple, rule number four it's best to lame than to kill and rule number five when all else fails, go back to rule number one," Marks said.

"I'm a strong believer that it should not even be used unless you're protecting your family or yourself. Even then if you protect yourself, you're limited on what you can do. You don't overdo it, now when it comes to your family that's an exception," Marks said.

Additionally young women in Marks' class have disclosed how their boyfriends could sometimes be physically abusive toward them. It is Marks' belief that martial arts should be taught and learned by everyone, regardless of sex or size.

"When I teach, we're pairing off partners. I'll get the smallest person and I said 'walk up to the biggest person in here, that's going to be your partner for tonight, none of these girls on girls, boys on boys.' If you want to learn the art, learn it right because if somebody got hurt, they don't care if you're male or female, they don't care if you're big or small, if they're about to hurt you," Marks said. "They take every means possible and usually a person who's out looking for trouble, they're going to try to pick on the weakest person."

Marks guaranteed that each student who takes his class will walk out with confidence they did not have when they walked in.

"I don't want you to walk away from my class being arrogant, if you're arrogant that means you want to prove something to somebody if not yourself. I want my student to walk away from my class with confidence. If you have confidence in yourself, you don't have to prove nothing to nobody. So that's the difference," Marks said.

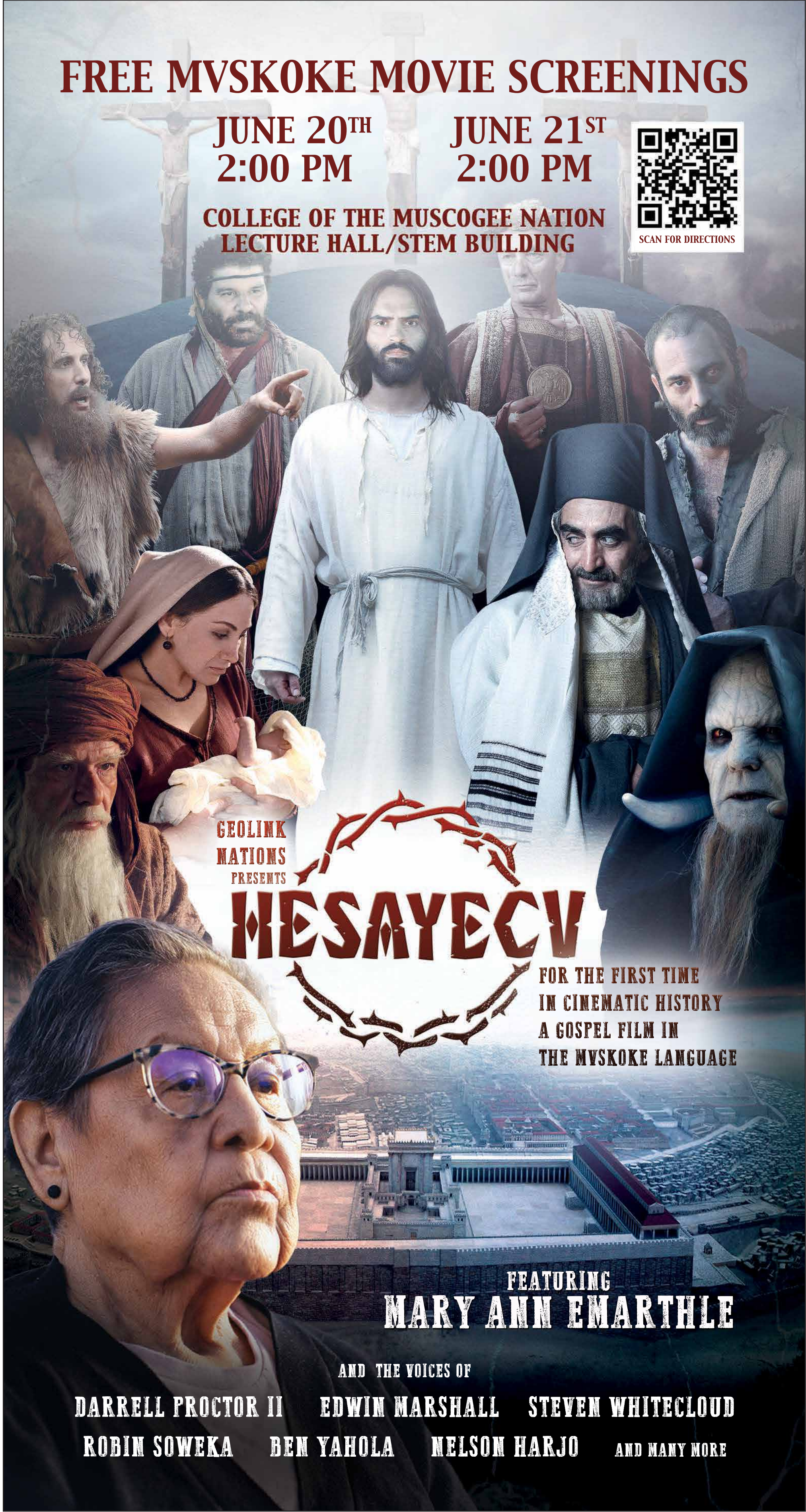
Those interested in learning more about martial arts can contact Marks. He can be reached at 405-212-6422, however he requests calls be made after 3:00 p.m. due to his schedule.

# FREE MVSKOKE MOVIE SCREENINGS

**JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>  
2:00 PM**

**JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup>  
2:00 PM**

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## SUBMISSIONS

### HUTCHE CHUPPA CHURCH CEMETARY

The Hutche Chuppa Church will no longer accept non-member bodies to the cemetery due to the fulfillment capacity of the cemetery. Mvto.



### HAIKEY CHAPEL UMC TULSA

Haikey Chapel UMC Tulsa will be celebrating their 120th Homecoming on Saturday, Oct. 5 2024, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with a pot-luck lunch. Haikey Chapel would like to invite all of their families and members past and present to this event. They are requesting addresses to send their save the date and invitations soon. Please email this information to

haikeychapelumc@yahoo.com. The church is also asking that if anyone has pictures or stories to email them as well. The church can also be found on Facebook, OIMC Haikey Chapel United Methodist Church.



(Shutterstock)

### ALEX CLARK



Alex Clark (Mvskoke) stands at attention next to the U.S. Air Force Academy's MVP trophy. (Courtesy: Tim Clark)

Alex Clark (Mvskoke) was named MVP of the U.S. Air Force Academy's Womens Swim Team. Clark had previously broke the Air Force 200 Butterfly record in February, which had not been broken since 2015 with a time of 1:59:90. She also broke the Air

Force Women's 400 Freestyle relay record, which had not been broken since 2014 with a time of 3:21:69. The Air Force Academy is in the Division I NCAA Athletics. Clark is currently an Air Force C2C Cadet stationed in Colorado Springs, CO.



Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

Account Tech I

The Accounts Tech I reports to the Finance Manager and is responsible for providing financial administrative and clerical duties. This includes processing and monitoring payments and expenditures and preparing and monitoring the payroll system. This includes working with vendors and service providers to reconcile purchase orders and paying invoices by writing checks or using electronic payment methods. All transactions must be approved by the Finance Manager and Executive Director.

An application for employment can be found at [hasnok.org](http://hasnok.org). Submit your application, resume and a copy of your valid driver's license. Applicant will be subject to a nationwide background check, motor vehicle report, and drug screen.

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Position open until filled.

SUBMISSIONS/PRESS RELEASE

TIMOTHY FISH



Dr. Timothy Fish is a May 2024 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning his Doctorate of Philosophy degree (PhD) in Civil Society and Community Research with distributive minors in Civic Education and Digital Media. While earning his PhD, Dr. Fish also earned a second master's degree in Human Ecology and a technical diploma in Cybersecurity. Dr. Fish also holds a master's degree in Clinical Social Work, a bachelor's degree in Community and Nonprofit Lead-

ership with a minor in American Indian Studies, and an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with an Ethnic Studies Certificate. Dr. Fish was selected by the University of Wisconsin-Madison as one of the "Most Notable Graduates" for Spring 2024. Dr. Fish was also given the honor and distinction to lead the class of 2024 to their commencement ceremony as the UW-Madison graduate school flag bearer where the chancellor gave Dr. Fish a "special shout out" in recognition for his accomplishments during the ceremony. Dr. Fish's parents are Mr. Pete Fish, Sr. of Pawhuska, OK, and Ms. Cynthia Bell of Edmond, OK. Dr. Fish is from the raccoon clan and his family stems from Kialegee Tribal Town. Dr. Fish would like to thank all of those who supported him throughout his academic tenure, especially his wife, family, friends, and the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma Higher Education Department.

CADE WINTER



Cade Winter is the son of Tamra and Robert Winter of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He is a 2024 graduate of Bartlesville High School where he maintained a 4.0 GPA all four

years of high school and graduated with honors in five subjects. Cade was a member of National Honor Society (where he served as Vice President), Oklahoma Indian Honor Society, Interact Club and World Language Club. He was named an Oklahoma Academic Scholar, BHS AP Student of the Year, Kiwanis Senior of the Year and earned recognition from College Board as an AP Scholar w/Distinction and the National Indigenous for Outstanding Student Award. The Oklahoma Council for Indian Education named him High School Student of the Year in December of 2023. Cade was a tutor and mentor at the Boys and Girls Club of Bartles-

ville, co-founded Replay Sports and was an Oklahoma Boys State delegate. He ran cross country for seven years (where he served as team captain his senior year) and played tennis for five years. Cade will attend Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut in the fall.



(Courtesy: Andy Dossett/Bartlesville Enterprise/ Examiner-)

LAUREN M. VENABLE



Lauren is a tribal citizen who lives in Virginia. She is graduating with Honors from Midlothian High School. She has a passion for volleyball. Lauren is undecided about which college she will attend in the fall, however she will seek a pre-med undergraduate degree and plans to pursue a medical degree after completing her undergraduate studies.

TWO MCN EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED WITH WITH RED CROSS HONORS



MCN Principal Chief David Hill presents Courtney Cosby and Tammy Lewis with the Red Cross Life Saving Award and the Awards of Merit, respectively. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

zure in their home in Kiefer, OK. Courtney was sleeping when she woke to her son exhibiting a jerking motion in bed beside her, she immediately carried him into the living room where she laid him down and could see his face was blue and was unresponsive. Courtney immediately started CPR and instructed her mother to call 911. Medical professionals arrived shortly after and the boy started coughing and crying while they were being transported to the hospital. Without a doubt the skills learned in the American Red Cross Training Services Course through Muscogee (Creek) Nation helped save the life of her son. For this act, Courtney Cosby was awarded the American Red Cross Certificate of Merit. This is the highest award given by the American Red Cross to an individual or team of individuals who saves or sustains a life by using skills and knowledge learned in an American Red Cross Training Services Course.

Press Release MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

OKMULKE, Oklv. - Courtney Cosby (Sapulpa Child Development Center) and her instructor Tammy Lewis (Office of Child Care Training Activity Specialist) were presented with a Lifesav-

ing Award and Awards of Merit respectively, both signed by President Biden and the ARC Chairman Bonnie McElveen-Hunter. On January 13, 2023 Courtney Cosby, trained in American Red Cross Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, helped save the life of her young son who experienced a sei-

KAISLEY FAYE COX

Kaisley Faye Cox is an energetic, vibrant six year old who is graduating kindergarten from Preston Public School. She is a straight-A student who enjoys having pool parties with her Barbie dolls and loves coloring with her markers and crayons. Her favorite foods are Chicken

McNuggets, mac and cheese and Hi-C orange juice. Her parents are Hanna Deerman and Brayden Cox. Her maternal grandparents are Amber and David Pascale. Jeremy and Laura Deerman. Her paternal grandparent is Amy Harjo. She hopes to one day become an artist.

SUBMISSIONS/OBITUARIES

PETE DWAYNE MCDANIEL

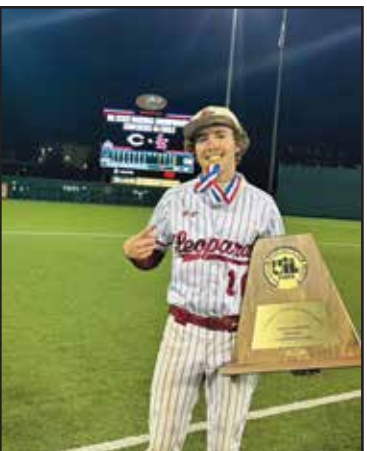


Pete Dwayne McDaniel was born on July 10, 1970 in Claremore, Oklahoma to Johnnie Ann Morgan and the late Loran Deon

McDaniel. Pete went to be with the Lord on May 23, 2024 at the age of 53 years old. Pete was a union pipeliner and also laid concrete. He was a very loved man. Pete was the type of guy you just could not go around and keep a straight face. He was always laughing, smiling and cracking jokes. He spent most of his life either on, in or near the water. He loved having his boat on the water fishing, camping and his music blazing with a cold beer enjoying life with friends and family. Most of all he liked cooking and filling everyone's belly, while his grandbabies were around. Pete is preceded in death by his father,

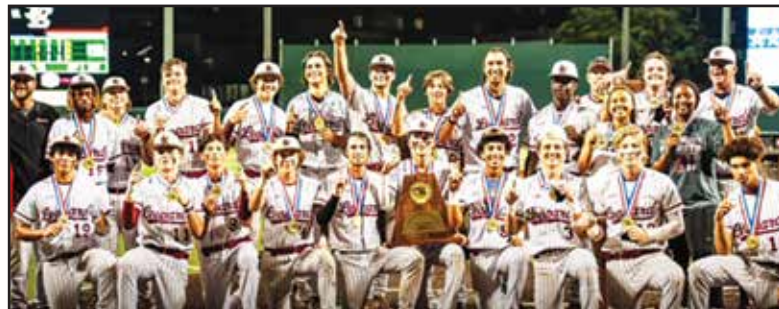
Loran Deon McDaniel, grandparents, D.L. "Bud" McDaniel, Rosie F. Green-McDaniel, Pete Marks and Edna Mae Berryhill-Harjo. He leaves behind the love of his life, Annette Scott Powell, his mother, Johnnie Ann Morgan, his children, Megan Gordon and Pete McDaniel Jr., grandchildren Tyson and Emery Bible, Heavenly and Ryot Chastain, Trinity Loran and Christopher McDaniel, his sisters, Wendy McDaniel-Griffith, and Julie Kaler, nephews Levi Heller, T.J. And Jerry Smith and Derek Beesley, a niece, Bobby Lee and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends.

WILLIAM TIPTON



William Tipton is a Mvskoke citizen from Texas who recently won the Texas 4A State Baseball Championship with his team,

the Liberty-Eylau Leopards. The Leopards beat the Calallen Wildcats 3-1 in the championship match.



**MUSCOGEE NATION FESTIVAL**  
2nd Annual  
4th Sunday on the Reservation  
**Urakkuecku Mocussecetu Hueketu**  
( Revival on the Reservation - A Call to Worship )  
Gospel Concert starts at 2 pm with hymn singing and message to follow.  
Fourth Sunday meal to follow (while it lasts)  
**JUNE 23, 2024**  
Mvskoke Dome | Claude Cox Omniplex, Okmulgee, OK 74447  
Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice...  
Phillipians 4:4  
Jordan Pannacher is the Associate Pastor of Olchamal Blue Baptist Church in Connerville, OK. He also serves as the youth leader and sits on the board for Indian Falls Creek. Jordan and his wife Maci and their children reside in Ada, OK. Jordan brings an extra excitement and joy for serving the Lord and will be bringing the message for this event.

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# TWO SPECIAL JUSTICES NOMINATED TO THE MCN SUPREME COURT IN EMERGENCY SESSION

ADDITIONAL \$45,000 APPROPRIATION ALLOCATED FOR STORM DAMAGE CLEANUP



The MCNC held an emergency session via teleconference in the Mound Building on June 10 (MM File).

by **THOMAS JACKSON** REPORTER

OKMULKE, Oklv. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation's National Council held an emergency session at the Mound Building on June 10.

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

**TR 24-065** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2024 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant was adopted. The law was sponsored by Representative Robyn Whitecloud of the Okmulgee District. It was adopted by the National Council with a vote of 14-0.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation will apply for a grant for the purpose of establishing more housing for Muscogee citizens.

**TR 24-069** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Temporary Operating Permit with Michael Grim on behalf of the Glenpool Creek Indian Community for the operation of one temporary fireworks sales facility was adopted. The law was sponsored by Representative Leonard Gouge of the Tulsa District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This would enable the Glenpool Creek Indian Community to run and operate a fireworks facility on Muscogee land, potentially bringing in more revenue for the tribe.

**TR 24-070** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Temporary Operating Permit with Sheila Buckley for the operation of one temporary fireworks sales facility on tribal trust land was adopted. The resolution was sponsored by Representative Dode Barnett of the Creek District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

The bill enables Ms. Sheila Buckley to run and operate a temporary fireworks store on Muscogee land.

**TR 24-071** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit the Fiscal Year 2024 COPS School Violence Prevention Program Grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services was adopted. The resolution was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud of the McIntosh District, and co-sponsored by Representative Darrell Proctor, also of the McIntosh District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This resolution will provide additional resources for area schools, including metal detectors.

**TR 24-072** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an updated Compact of Self-Governance for the purpose of amending the multi-year funding agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the United States of America was adopted. The resolution was sponsored by Representative Mark Randolph of the Wagoner/Roger/Mayes District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This resolution will allow the tribe to receive more funding via the multi-year funding agreement between it and the United States

government.

**TR 24-075** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Temporary Operating Permit with Chris Treat and Mike Treat on behalf of the Twin Hills Indian Community for the operation of one temporary fireworks sales facility was adopted. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Whitecloud. It was passed by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This resolution will allow the Twin Hills Indian Community to run and operate a temporary fireworks store on Muscogee land.

**NCA 24-076** A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services for Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of \$45,000 was adopted. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This law will provide an additional \$45,000 to the Office of Environmental Services for the purpose of storm damage cleanup.

**NCA 24-077** A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending Title 27, entitled "Judicial Procedures" was passed. The law was sponsored by Rep. Proctor and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was moved to an Executive Session with a vote of 8-6, and was later adopted by a unanimous vote of 14-0.

According to the legislation, this new law will allow two special justices to be placed on the Supreme Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in the event that one or more sitting justices recuse themselves from a case. The special justices will be nominated by the principal chief. Qualifications for the special justice position specify that nominees must not have any felony convictions. They

will serve until the conclusion of the case for which they have been appointed.

**NCA 24-078** A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Fiscal Year 2024 Budget in the amount of \$30,000. The bill was sponsored by Representative Randall Hicks of the Okfuskee District. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

This law will provide an additional \$30,000 for the purpose of providing Muscogee students with assistance in both educational activities and extracurricular activities.

**TR 24-073** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of James Jennings to serve as a Special Justice of the Supreme Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was adopted. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Proctor and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was adopted by the National Council with a unanimous vote of 14-0.

With this nomination, James Jennings becomes a part of the MCN Supreme Court as a special justice.

**TR 24-074** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Samuel Deere to serve as a Special Justice of the Supreme Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was passed. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Proctor and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was passed by the National Council with a vote of 10-3-1, with three members voting against the nomination and one abstaining.

With this nomination, Samuel Deere becomes a part of the MCN Supreme Court as a special justice.

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

## LEGALS GD-2018-36

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP )  
OF ACACIA WATSON and KHALEESI ) CASE NO. GD-2018-36  
WATSON. )

COMBINED NOTICE AND ORDER FOR HEARING OF MOTHER'S MOTION TO  
TERMINATE GUARDIANSHIP

IT IS ORDERED that the hearing on the Motion of Mother, Alexis Fields, to Terminate  
Guardianship is set for hearing on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2024, at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

The mother is ordered to give Notice of the hearing to the Guardian, Lisa A. Johnson, the  
biological father, Aaron Wilson, and Muscogee (Creek) Nation Children and Family Services.

Notice to:

1. Lisa A. Johnson, 102901 S. 194 West Avenue, Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. Aaron Watson, by publication notice once a week for two consecutive weeks
3. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 580, Okmulgee, OK 74447

Please take notice the hearing on the Motion of Mother, Alexis Fields, to Terminate  
Guardianship is set for the 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2024, at 10:00 o'clock a.m. You should govern  
yourself accordingly.

*/s/ Alex Masters*  
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:

*/s/ Michael D. Parks*  
Michael D. Parks, MCN #581  
10 E. Washington, Suite 102  
P.O. Box 3220  
McAlester, OK 74502  
(918) 426-1818; (918) 426-1836  
[mike@mikeparkslaw.com](mailto:mike@mikeparkslaw.com)  
ATTORNEY FOR MOTHER,  
ALEXIS FIELDS

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## SOUR SOFKEE



Editor's Note: The following is a revived column submission by Mvskoke citizen Fus Yvhiyv.

### Gov. Stitt to Tribes: My Way or No Highway

It was a hot, humid day. A typical Oklahoman June. Me, Yahola, Tarpalechee, and Fixico were sweating our cvpos off as we labored under the hot sun. Perhaps "labored" isn't the correct term since our work was directing traffic through a construction zone.

Fixico had the perfect physique for the job as he is tall, skinny, and long-armed. However, being Native, he would only point with his lips. That led to several near-miss car wrecks and several female drivers air-kissing him.

Tarpalechee was a bad fit for traffic control as he is short, fat, and has tiny T-Rex arms. Were it not for his stove-pipe hat, he likely would have gotten run over. Yahola was in charge of a temporary, makeshift traffic signal. However, he spent most of his time texting his girlfriend. Distracted, he once kept all lights red for 10 minutes. Traffic backed up for miles.

Still, construction progressed at a brisk pace. We were improving the intersection of Highway 9 and Interstate 35 just south of Norman, OK adjacent to the Riverwind Casino. A ribbon cutting was planned for the next week. The project stood as a prime example of a tribe and Oklahoma work-

ing together for the greater good. Indeed, the tribe had contributed well over 70% of the project cost.

Suddenly a motorcade of black limousines rolls up. A phalanx of men dressed in dark suits and ties were belched out of the cars. A speaker's podium was quickly set up as members of the media swarmed about. Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt strode to the podium. All construction work ceased as we exchanged quizzical looks.

"Good morning," intoned the governor. It was 4 p.m. "Today I am announcing an immediate halt of this here highway project."

Audible gasps resounded across the crowd. If Yahola had been wearing his necklace, he would have clutched his pearls.

"Many will foolishly allege that this action is another example of me being anti-Indian. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am a proud Cherokee. Indeed, my grandmother was a Cherokee princess."

Me and the Creek boys emit porcine snorts of derisive laughter.

"In fact, the recent McKurt decision--"

An officious aide immediately rushes to the governor and whispers in his ear.

Stitt pauses and loudly clears his throat. The sound resembled a cat coughing up a giant hairball.

"In fact," the governor bellows, "The recent MCGIRT decision is to blame. It has forced us to re-evaluate existing and future tribal-state highway projects. Naturally, our primary concern is the safety and well-being of all Oklahomans. Therefore, it is imperative that we immediately halt this project. I'll take questions now."

"Your actions don't make any sense," a reporter shouts. "Especially since you are supposed to be here next week for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open this much-improved highway interchange."

Stitt turns towards his lackey assistant. He was caught on a hot mike saying, "What? A photo op next week? We can't cancel that!"

Suddenly Yahola was interrogating Stitt. He had wedged his way to the front of the press corps.

"Yo Guv.!" Yahola shouts. "Dude, this project benefits all Oklahomans and everybody who drives 'this here' road. And it is much safer now. You can't shut it down."

Yahola had mockingly emphasized the words, "this here."

Stitt stands in a state of paralyzed silence, at a loss for words. Rare for any politician. In this battle of wits, the governor is clearly an unarmed man.

"The prepared remarks," the aide condescendingly advises Stitt. "Stick to the written remarks!"

The governor fumbles with his script. He speaks haltingly.

"Well..uh...uh...benefit all Oklahomans...uh, McKurt decision...yeah, re-evaluate...uh, uh...top 10 state." The governor again clears his throat as the hapless aide rolls his eyes.

Yahola moves in for the kill. "Whatsamatter Guv.? Cat got your tongue? Looks like you could use a shot of that \$2 million dollar hydroxychloroquine."

Peels of laughter rolls across the crowd.

"If you can find it, that is," Yahola continued. "Maybe it's in a warehouse with all that PPE you purchased from that fly-by-night company."

At that moment a line of cars begins snaking between the governor and the crowd. Drivers are angrily honking their horns. A car with darkly tinted windows stops in front of the governor. A voice screams, "Get this road open Meathead!"

The governor surveys the situation. His calculating political instincts kick in. "I'm pleased to announce that I will be here next week to open this important roadway," Stitt announces. He then disappears faster than the Wicked Witch of the West.

The driver rolls down the darkly tinted window. It was Fixico. He was grinning like it was commodity distribution day. It was a good day to be Native.