

# HOWNIKAN

Zisbaktokégises | April 2025

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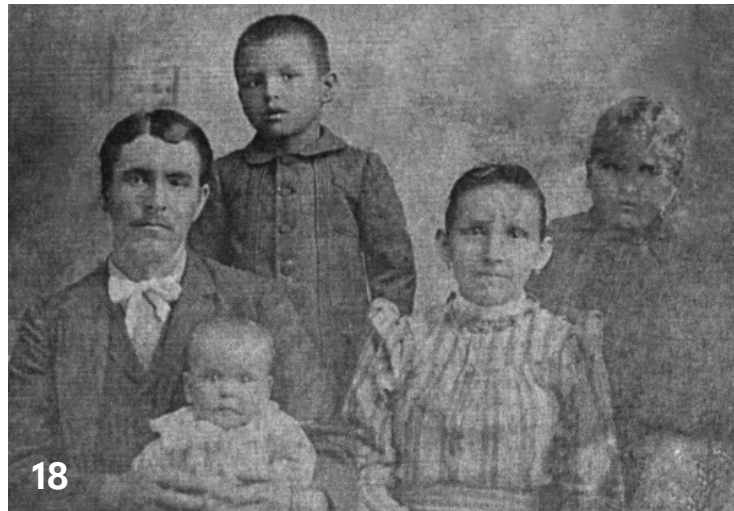
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# CPN Care offers Tribal members free, virtual visits

Sometimes, in-person doctor visits just aren't feasible — when living in a rural area, when on vacation, when life is busy, or even when someone is concerned about being exposed to illnesses such as the flu. That's where CPN Care can help.

CPN Care offers Tribal members free virtual visits to help with medical conditions including allergies, cold and flu symptoms, sinus problems, ear infections, urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, skin problems and other issues.

Through CPN Care, Tribal members have access to Call a Doctor Plus, where they can reach U.S. board-certified doctors at any time of day (even on weekends and holidays) through phone, video or a mobile app.

While CPN Care does not replace having a primary physician, it can help in many scenarios. Once a Tribal member has signed up, they can use CPN Care's Call a Doctor to get care quickly for non-emergency issues, while away from home on vacation or a business trip, or even for short-term prescription refills.



There is no cost to virtual visits, however, any prescriptions will be paid for by the Tribal member.

The program is only available to enrolled members of CPN, so non-Tribal spouses do not qualify.

Because confirmation of enrollment with CPN is required, it can take one to two days for Tribal members to receive access once they opt to sign up. It's recommended to sign up now rather than waiting until something happens.

To enroll, reach out to Lauren Thomason at [lauren.thomason@alliant.com](mailto:lauren.thomason@alliant.com) or 405-607-7376 or enroll at [cpn.news/cadrplus](http://cpn.news/cadrplus).

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## April brings awareness to sexual assault

By Kayla Woody,  
CPN House of Hope Prevention Specialist

During April, the House of Hope has several events planned. Staff are eager to educate and discuss prevention strategies when it comes to Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Attention must be called to the widespread violence that impacts individuals in all communities.

According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health, "Nationally, it is estimated that 17% of women and 3% of men have been victims of sexual violence in their lifetime. In Oklahoma, the rate of rape and attempted rape among females reported to law enforcement has been 35-45% higher than the U.S. rate for the past decade." Among our Native communities, "over half of Native women will experience some form of sexual assault," said Sarah Deer, a University of Kansas professor of women, gender, and sexuality studies and a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma.

Throughout the month, House of Hope is planning to focus its time on bringing education to the community on what this type of violence looks like and how individuals can respond more empathetically to victims when they do disclose the trauma they have experienced.

What Where You Wearing Exhibit — This event will be held April 7-12 at the Oklahoma Baptist University Geiger Center in Shawnee and is open to the public. The exhibit displays clothing based on local survivors' descriptions of what they were wearing during their assault. The

display aims to shatter the myth that sexual assault can be attributed to a person's choice of wardrobe but rather places the blame back on the perpetrator.

SANE Training — April 14, House of Hope has partnered with the YWCA of Oklahoma City to host a training for nursing students on SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner). This training aims to encourage students to seek a career specializing in this field. The International Association of Forensic Nurses states that only 25% of hospitals in the U.S. have SANE on staff or available. This is a huge barrier to victims who are seeking assistance after an assault.

National Denim Day — The last event held on April 30 will focus on uniting the community around supporting survivors of sexual assault. As the longest-running sexual violence prevention campaign in history, this event allows support in healing by also giving survivors a voice. The House of Hope encourages those in the community, along with Tribal employees, to wear denim in honor of survivors.

If you have any questions about the events held or would like to participate in some way to bring information about this topic to your community, please reach out to Kayla Woody, prevention specialist at the House of Hope.

If you or someone you know is experiencing intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking and would like more information, please contact House of Hope at 405-275-3176 or visit us online at [facebook.com/cpnhouseofhope](https://facebook.com/cpnhouseofhope).



## What box do you check?

By the Citizen Potawatomi Nation  
Department of Education

How often do you check the box that says “Native American” when filling out a form for enrolling in school or starting a new job? How often do you check a different box? Do you check more than one box?

It may seem insignificant to you, or it may feel like you’re being more accurate when checking multiple boxes. In the Department of Education, those boxes are incredibly vital to our work and being able to inform you of our services! When you check two or more boxes, or decide not to mark “Native American,” it makes it difficult for your school administrators and your tribal education department to know where to target outreach efforts. In Oklahoma, schools are required to ask which tribe you are enrolled in if you mark Native American. Specifying that you are Citizen Potawatomi is amazing data for our work at the department. Checking two or more boxes means that, generally, you will not be counted in the number of Native students at your school or employees at your workplace. To be counted as Native, to help us get the best data possible, it is vital to mark that you are Native American and Native American alone. Regardless of what race or ethnicity you look like, if you are enrolled Citizen Potawatomi, claim your Tribe on those forms.

All K-12 schools that meet specific requirements and receive certain streams of federal funding are required to consult with tribes near them. While schools are supposed to listen to every tribe they must consult with, the consultation carries more weight when the number of CPN identified is higher, and it helps us know which schools to focus on in terms of outreach. This is important even when you live outside of Oklahoma; last year the Los Angeles Unified School District asked to meet with our department because they had one

CPN student enrolled. The data picture is fuzzy or incomplete if you are not self-identifying to your school.

In some K-12 schools, there are programs designed to support Native students’ academic achievement, and you are entitled to things like extra funding for school supplies, tutoring and cultural programming. The programs to ask your school about are called Title VI and Johnson O’Malley. The Title VI program goals are set by parents, and those programs often provide cultural programming, field trips, additional career and college prep, and more, depending on your school’s needs. Johnson O’Malley funding can do things like help with school supplies and the cost of extra curriculums. If your school does not have its own Johnson O’Malley program, another tribe in your area may administer the program. Our Workforce and Social Services Department administers this program for all citizens of any federally recognized tribe that attend certain schools in our area. Even if you do not need additional support, increasing the number of eligible children at your local school can increase the overall funding for the program and help get other Native students the support they need.

For these programs, it is not enough to self-identify as Native, though once you have done that your school’s counselors and Title VI coordinators should be reaching out to get you involved. You will also need to fill out something called a 506 form and provide a copy of your child’s tribal ID to be fully eligible. You should only have to do this once per child per school, not every school year. This helps the program know how many students they might be able to serve and helps them connect you with resources. Returning those forms is absolutely necessary to get assistance.

The next time you are asked your race or ethnicity on an official form, including the U.S. Census, be proud of your Tribe and mark yourself as Citizen Potawatomi! 🔥

# Made in Oklahoma Coalition recognizes FireLake Foods as Retailer of the Month

The Made in Oklahoma (MIO) coalition named FireLake Foods retailer of the month for February 2025. Opening its doors in May of 2001, Citizen Potawatomi Nation's FireLake Foods became the largest tribally owned grocery store in the United States.

FireLake Foods was selected for this statewide honor because of its dedication to provide area shoppers with a large selection of MIO products. With numerous Made in Oklahoma products on its store shelves, FireLake Foods goes above and beyond to support Oklahoma-made companies and provide a robust selection of local food and beverages to customers.

To qualify as a Made in Oklahoma coalition retail partner, a retailer must support Oklahoma owned businesses by highlighting and promoting Oklahoma made products on its store shelves.

"FireLake Foods greatly values its partnership with MIO and its members. It is a privilege to be recognized as Retailer of the Month by such an esteemed organization. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to enhance our partnership by continually incorporating more Made in Oklahoma products into our extensive product offerings for our customers," said Richard Driskell, director of FireLake Foods.

"When shoppers make the choice to spend their dollars on a locally made product, they are not only



choosing to support their neighbor, but their dollar has a ripple effect that goes far beyond what you might think," said Emily Shuping, executive director of the Made in Oklahoma Coalition. "Thanks to exceptional retail partners like FireLake Foods, shopping for Made in Oklahoma products has never been easier."

The Made in Oklahoma Coalition is a non-profit membership organization for food and beverage companies manufacturing and producing products in Oklahoma. With over 100 members, MIO aims to strengthen and diversify Oklahoma's food supply chain by promoting local products on a statewide, regional and national level. 🌱

## Graduation Celebration

APRIL  
**26**  
12-2PM

CPN  
CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
CENTER

1899 S. GORDON COOPER DR.  
SHAWNEE, OK

TO SIGN UP,  
VISIT [PORTAL.POTAWATOMI.ORG](https://portal.potawatomi.org)

If you are unable to attend the in-person event, please still sign up to be featured in the video and receive a limited edition print from a Potawatomi artist!

QUESTIONS?  
EMAIL [EDUCATION@POTAWATOMI.ORG](mailto:education@potawatomi.org)

# Tribal citizen posthumously recognized for heroism

A Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member from Hope, Maine, posthumously received a medal for his heroic actions that saved the lives of two family members.

Henry Norman Brooks, a Greemore family member, walked on after saving the lives of his two daughters on July 8, 2023, in Union, Maine. Brooks was 45.

Henry and his son were by the St. George River when his daughters slipped on algae-covered rocks and fell into the river. Brooks and his son quickly jumped into action. As his son retrieved his younger sister, Brooks grabbed his other daughter. Henry managed to get his daughter close to the shore before he was overcome by the fast-moving current. Brooks' son was able to return both girls to the shore. Tragically, Henry Brooks did not survive.

For his actions, Henry Brooks received the Carnegie Medal for Heroism from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission ([carnegiehero.org](http://carnegiehero.org)). The commission awards the medal to individuals from throughout the United States and Canada who risk themselves to an extraordinary degree saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

The Carnegie Medal is considered North America's highest civilian honor for heroism. It has been awarded to 10,476 heroes since 1904. The award was established by the industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

## Holding precious memories

Henry was survived by a son, two daughters, and wife, Danielle. The family has many treasured recollections of a man who was known for his loving, giving spirit and big heart.

Among Danielle's happy memories of her husband was visiting CPN headquarters when their children were young, she said. They were most excited to explore the Cultural Heritage Center.

"We were driving across the country and we made sure to make time, but we only had the day to go. Our son was older, but the girls were really young when we went. Other than the pictures, they don't really remember too much. So, we're going to try and do it now that they're a little older," Danielle said.

Henry and Danielle grew up in California. They had known each other most of their lives, first meeting as teens. The couple eventually had three children, a son, now 28, and two daughters, now 15 and 14.

"I knew (Henry) since he was 12. I kind of watched him grow up," Danielle said. "He was a good father. He was very committed as a father, and he worked really hard."

The family moved to Maine in 2015, seeking a quiet place to raise a family. Henry was always



*Henry Norman Brooks*

mechanically inclined and would eventually make his living as a climate technology field mechanic.

"He was always very good with mechanical stuff. He pursued welding and mechanical, marine diesel and was a heavy equipment mechanic. He did that at a very early age," Danielle said.

Henry worked for a tugboat company and later for a company that maintained several large machines used in road work. He even worked in the oil field, flying from Maine to Texas, spending one week in the field and one week at home in Maine.

His most recent position was with Emerson, a climate technology company.

"He was a commissioning engineer. So, he'd start up new power plants for alternative energy. His main contract was in Pennsylvania where they take all of the trash from New York and they process it and turn it into natural gas. That was his job before he passed," she said.

Henry always had a unique connection to the machines that he worked on, Danielle said.

"That was something he was very good at. He kind of listened to them, could understand them. It was very unique, I have to say. He could hear a car go by and say, 'Oh, that has a problem there,'" she said.

Henry valued time in nature, including camping, fishing and boating. Maine was a perfect fit for the father and outdoors enthusiast.

"He grew up loving the water. He was always on boats and a big fisherman. He and his brother would go out on big fishing trips together. They'd catch sharks and all the crazy stuff," Danielle said. "He was also really into motorcycles."

Henry respected and appreciated the environment as well.

"When we came (to Maine), he wanted to create a big farmstead. We found some property where we raised animals and planted. That was kind of our thing to try and reconnect," she said. "Maine is very forested, so he was drawn to it."

## A treasured family history

Henry's grandmother was Evelyn Hart. Hart grew up in Oklahoma, on Potawatomi land. Like many Potawatomi families, Hart's family eventually made their way to California to seek new opportunities. Hart embraced her leadership abilities, Danielle said.

"She was the former mayor of Newport Beach, California. She was also woman of the year," she said.

Henry's mother and grandmother were a big influence on him growing up, Danielle said, teaching him about his Tribal history.

After the family became established in Maine, Henry's mother eventually joined them there.

## Actions fit his character

Danielle was not at all surprised by Henry's heroic actions. They showed exactly the type of man and father he had become, she said.

"He was fully dressed so he didn't have time to take his shoes off. My son, luckily, was able to grab a life jacket or I probably could have lost all of them," she said.

She doesn't believe Henry would have considered himself heroic but just doing what needed to be done.

"He always told the children that he would protect them from anything, no matter what the threat was. He

reminded them that no matter whether it was a bear or a bad guy or any kind of imminent threat, he would gladly sacrifice himself," she said. "As far as my husband and my son, they didn't even give it a second thought."

## Enthusiastic about Tribal learning

Henry Brooks was enormously proud of his Potawatomi heritage, Danielle said. He encouraged his family to learn as much as they could about their culture.

Danielle said the family stays connected today through the Tribe's YouTube page and social media.

"We enjoy doing the Word of the Day and those kinds of things. We like the Potawatomi dictionary, and we have many books," she said.

She has even encouraged her children's teachers to share the Potawatomi books with their classes so their classmates could be exposed to the Brooks children's culture.

"When the children were growing up, he wanted to make sure they had some connection. He said he wished he had more connection growing up because his aunt and his grandma did. He wanted to instill that with the girls, our son, to have pride in that and to have that as part of their identity," Danielle said.

Henry felt strongly about his Potawatomi heritage because of his children.

"He thought that that was important for them growing up, opposed to when they're older and then try to make up for the lack of connections," she said. "That's why I'm trying to continue that for him. I'm trying to make sure that they still hold onto and still have it in their lives because that was important to him to reinforce that for the children."

Danielle hopes people who think of Henry will remember his caring nature and respect for others, of all his many positive attributes.

"He was just a really, really genuine person who loved the idea of justice and inclusivity. He was a really big guy, and he had tattoos but he was just the biggest loving teddy bear. He'd give everybody a hug," she said. "He just really felt that people need to be able to feel comfortable in their authentic self, and to feel accepted and to be accepted. It's hard to sum up someone in a small bit, but I think he thrived on happiness around him. He always wanted to put a smile on people's face, and he was just a really good person."

"That's exactly how he lived his life. And he had friends of all races and ages and social classes, and he treated everybody the same. He felt that everybody should have the confidence and the support to feel good about themselves," she said.

To learn more about the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, visit [carnegiehero.org](https://carnegiehero.org). 

# Program helps build Potawatomi language resources

Each semester, students in a Potawatomi I language course have a chance to write children's books in the Potawatomi language. Recently, the author of one of those books was Bonner family descendant Morgan Aguiar.

Aguiar found out about the chance to write a book in Potawatomi while pursuing her degree at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. As part of her degree path, she selected a Potawatomi language course as one of her electives.

"I was so excited to see that this class was an option and immediately enrolled," she said.

Students in the course are given the chance to establish a foundation in the Potawatomi language, and their final assignment is to write a children's book in Potawatomi.

For Aguiar's book, *Nwi-o-skono*, she chose to write about a child who goes to school and participates in school activities, such as eating lunch or reading, first alone and then with friends made at school.

"I knew I wanted to write my book about school, because I currently work with children in an afterschool program," she said. "I love getting to hear about their day, the activities they did, and the friends they did the activities with."

Once she had an idea, Aguiar started designing a storyboard. From there, she used the online Potawatomi dictionary and a verb conjugation sheet provided by the course's teacher, Robert Collins, interdepartmental language lead at CPN. The art was sourced from a free art database.

"I tried my best with the rough draft, though I required some guidance with the verb conjugation from Mr. Collins," she said. "He was so kind and such a great help when creating and submitting the final draft of the book."

Aguiar said the class helped her learn basic Potawatomi skills, but also to build a vocabulary and understand some of the rules of the language. Writing a book, too, helped her achieve some of her language goals.

**Nwi-o-skono**  
By Morgan Aguiar



*Nwi-o-skono follows a child going to school and participating in activities.*

"It encourages you to learn the language well enough to portray a message to others, so that they can understand the message as well," she said. "Writing a children's book seems daunting and challenging at first, but the more you learn



*Morgan Aguiar wrote Nwi-o-skono in her Potawatomi I Language course at OU.*

about and spend time with the language, the easier the writing process becomes."

"By the end of the course and the final submission of your book, you will feel accomplished and proud of your hard work, and you will have learned the basics of an ancient and beautiful language that is rich in Native American culture," she added.

Aguiar is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Communications Sciences and Disorders, with plans to become a speech-language pathologist after graduation.

"I am passionate about someday working as an SLP in a school setting, where I can support children with speech, language and communication disorders to thrive and succeed," she said.

In her free time, she enjoys cooking, going to the gym, crocheting, coloring, doing nail art, working with children, attending church and spending time with friends and family.

## The project behind the books

The children's book project is the final assignment for all students in the Potawatomi I class.

Students begin to develop their projects in the first four weeks of the class, and after brainstorming, developing storylines, creating illustrations and refining concepts with guidance from Collins, the projects are completed in the 16th week of the class.

One of the books is then selected for publication and to be distributed to children at the Child Development Center.

"It is truly heartwarming to witness the children from the Child Development Center receive their very own books, an occasion that brings smiles and excitement to their faces. Observing the students excel in their grasp of our language as they skillfully create these materials is nothing short of inspiring," Collins said. "I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of this meaningful experience, where the blending of creativity and learning occurs."

CPN Director of Education Rachel Watson said the idea first came to fruition when collaborating with Collins and former Director of Education Tesia Zientek.

Potawatomi, like many other endangered languages, has a shortage of printed materials to help new learners. The three decided that allowing students in the course to write children's books could help in two ways — giving students a chance to build their own language skills, but also adding to the catalogue of Potawatomi children's books for future learners.

"I love that the end result of this class has a real-world impact beyond just the college students," Watson said. "I don't know of other language classes, for an endangered language or otherwise, that have a similar final project with similar aims and intentions. It's incredibly beautiful, the way Robert works with his students and the way they are able to produce such substantial content for new language learners. I can't wait for us to have shelves full of children's books in *Bodéwadmimwen*."

Watson added that because the course is offered through all of CPN's partner universities, students can take it online from anywhere in the world and have the credits transferred to their university.

Aguiar's book is the fifth book that has been printed through the program. Anyone interested in obtaining copies of the books, whether tribal or non-tribal, can contact the Education Department or [robert.collins@potawatomi.org](mailto:robert.collins@potawatomi.org). 🍀

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## Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

*Bozho, jayek* (Hello, everyone),

It's been a busy spring in the Language Department. We had an awesome turnout of around 70 people for our Winter Storytelling event. Everyone seemed to have a good time. Over a hundred people joined us online as well.

April 3 was the start of a new Beginner Language Class every Thursday from 5-7 p.m. This class will be taught by Shelly Watson and hosted at the Cultural Heritage Center. This will be a six-week course. We are also looking at hosting another family/children's course in the near future.

We are currently having an online conversational course every Wednesday from 3:30-4:30 p.m. This course focuses on students getting used to hearing the language and becoming comfortable vocalizing the language. Often, students are a little shy when first speaking the language, but the more they hear and speak it, the easier it will become. If you are interested in the conversational course, send an email to [language@potawatomi.org](mailto:language@potawatomi.org) with Wednesday conversational course in the subject line. We originally planned on doing this for just six weeks, but due to the renewed interest, we are going to continue this course into the foreseeable future.

We also have an in-person conversational course every Thursday from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Cultural Heritage Center.

April 14 we will host a lunch and learn at the Cultural Heritage Center from 12:15-12:45 p.m. If you are interested in attending, let us know. We do a quarterly lunch and learn. Often this tends to be geared towards

Tribal employees, but all are welcome. Just let us know you are attending so we can plan accordingly.

We recently applied for and received an Endangered Language Fund Grant, which allows us to host an eight-week immersion program where we speak and use the language all day and all week. If a person attends all eight weeks, they will have 320 hours of speaking and hearing the language. The grant allows us to pay two interns to be part of the program. In years past, we partnered with the Education Department to host one additional intern. This may be a possibility as well this year.

We welcome others who would like to join us in this endeavor. If you would like to come, let us know. The last two years we have had eight to nine Tribal members join us for the whole time. We also had one join us for three weeks. If you can only come for a day or two, we would consider allowing you to attend as long as it isn't a distraction. I say distraction because we are going to be going fast. We will review many of the countless verbal combinations and then we will get right into speaking and using the language. That being said, someone could definitely get a lot from coming. This is our third year. We saw incredible growth from our students from the beginning of year one to the end and then year two at the beginning to the end. Some came in with limited to no knowledge scoring around 20% to 30% on our intro test and 75%-85% on the exit test.

April 29 we will be hosting a community game night at the Cultural Heritage Center at 5 p.m. We are asking members to bring a dish to share as we will do this potluck style. RSVP [language@potawatomi.org](mailto:language@potawatomi.org) with the name of your dish and how many will be attending. For the first game night, we plan on playing dice and bowl. Come on out and join us for a fun evening. 🍀

# CPN Lease with Option to Purchase Program

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Housing Department offers a Lease with Option to Purchase Program that is designed to assist low- to moderate-income Native Americans with the dream of homeownership. We designed this program to open the gates to financial and maintenance responsibilities that often are limited or closed to our target population. The lease portion of the program is a strict three-year lease where the lease payments are substantial enough to reduce the shock that mortgage payments can present to new homebuyers and the maintenance responsibilities that fall upon the tenant. Enrolled Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal members will receive first preference. No felons or members of the household that are felons are eligible for this program. This program is income based, and payments are established on the cost of the home and potential mortgage payments. All program occupants, when ready to purchase, must obtain their mortgage through the Tribally-owned Sovereign Bank. Rental history and payments will be required.


The low-income Native American population we are targeting is from the high end of the low-income spectrum to the low end of the moderate-income spectrum. These guidelines are provided each year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and fluctuate in an upward trend year after year.

The targeted population has difficulty in qualifying for a conventional mortgage loan due to less than stellar credit and/or debt-to-income ratios. Often paying overpriced market rents, this target population also struggles with saving enough to make a substantial down payment that could reduce their monthly mortgage payments.

Our solution is to provide an affordable home with incentives in the form of down payment assistance and mortgage buydown to reduce the mortgage loan amount. We also provide financial education and homeownership maintenance training. Families closest to loan readiness and acceptable debt-to-income ratios will get preference. This program is not specifically based on a waiting list system. This program is limited to the jurisdiction of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and is not nationwide. The homes for this program are built or purchased by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Housing Department and are available as inventory allows. This program requires the housing department to closely work with applicants during the time of the lease. The purpose is to monitor your progression toward the goal of homeownership. This program requires serious dedication and a disciplined, goal-oriented focus. We are currently accepting applications for future phases of this program.

If you have an interest or questions about this program, please contact Sherry Byers, Homeownership Manager at 405-273-2833 or you can email at [sbyers@potawatomi.org](mailto:sbyers@potawatomi.org).

	80% Median	100% Median
1 Person	\$54,768	\$68,460
2 Person	\$62,592	\$78,240
3 Person	\$70,416	\$88,020
4 Person	\$78,240	\$97,800
5 Person	\$84,499	\$105,624
6 Person	\$90,758	\$113,448
7 Person	\$97,018	\$121,272
8 Person	\$103,277	\$129,096



**REQUEST YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT**

Cut out and mail back to receive your absentee ballot.  
Please only return one request for ballot.

## Citizen Potawatomi Nation • Request for Ballot • 2025 Election

Name \_\_\_\_\_ please print

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I reside within the boundaries of CPN Legislative District No. \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Oklahoma residents should write Oklahoma in the blank above)*

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby declare this to be my legal signature and Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal roll number.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal Roll # \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If you do not know your roll number, call 800-880-9880 and ask for Tribal Rolls)*

**Must be postmarked no later than June 8, 2025**

**Mail to**  
Citizen Potawatomi Nation Election Committee  
P.O. Box 310, Tecumseh, OK 74873-9900



# February legislative meeting minutes

Feb. 27, 2025

**Present:** Chairman John A. Barrett, Vice Chairman Linda Capps, Secretary-Treasurer D. Wayne Trousdale and Representatives David Barrett, Jon Boursaw, Bobbi Bowden, Dave Carney, Eva Marie Carney, Mark Johnson, Gene Lambert, Alan Melot, Rande Payne, Paul Schmidlkofer, Andy Walters, Paul Wesselhöft and Robert Whistler.

**Absent:** None.

**Guests:** Jason Smalley, George Wright, Greg Quinlan, Chris Abel and Jamie Moucka.

**Call to order:** Chairman Barrett called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. followed by the invocation.

**First item of business:** Minutes from the previous meeting held on Dec. 5, 2024. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Representative Schmidlkofer and seconded by Representative Walters. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Second item of business:** Resolution 25-22-HHS: A resolution approving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for funding under the U.S. Department of Energy Tribal Home Appliance Rebates formula grant program. Motion to approve Resolution 25-22-HHS was made by Representative Whistler and seconded by Representative Lambert. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Third item of business:** Resolution 25-23-J&PS: A resolution confirming the nominee for tribal judicial office subject to electoral confirmation by the General Council. Motion to approve Resolution 25-23-J&PS was made by Representative Wesselhöft seconded by Representative Barrett. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Fourth item of business:** Resolution 25-24-J&PS: A resolution approving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for funding under the U.S. Department of Justice FY25 Office for Victims of Crime Tribal Victim Set Aside formula program. Motion to approve Resolution 25-24-J&PS was made by Representative Eva Marie Carney and seconded by Representative Payne. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Fifth item of business:** Resolution 25-25-J&PS: A resolution approving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for funding under the U.S. Department of Justice FY25 Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) program, Purpose Area 1. Motion to approve Resolution 25-25-J&PS was made by Representative Johnson and seconded

by Representative Bowden. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Sixth item of business:** Resolution 25-26-NR: A resolution approving a fee-to-trust acquisition application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and request for trust acquisition of the (non-gaming/on reservation) Campbell property. Motion to approve Resolution 25-26-NR was made by Representative Walters and seconded by Representative Boursaw. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Seventh item of business:** Resolution 26-27-TC&A: A resolution approving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for funding under the Institute of Museum and Library Services FY25 Basic Library Services program. Motion to approve Resolution 25-27-TC&A was made by Representative Melot and seconded by Representative Wesselhöft. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Eighth item of business:** Resolution 25-28-TC&A: A resolution approving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for funding under the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families FY25 Native American Language Preservation and Maintenance program. Motion to approve Resolution 25-28-TC&A was made by Representative Payne and seconded by Representative Whistler. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Ninth item of business:** Resolution 25-29-LCoE: A resolution for the voluntary relinquishment of Joe Keith Cavender. Motion to approve Resolution 25-29-LCoE, as amended, was made by Representative Barrett and seconded by Representative Whistler. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

**Tenth item of business:** Resolution 25-30-LCoE: A resolution enrolling 106 applicants into the membership of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Motion to approve Resolution 25-30-LCoE was made by Representative Bowden and seconded by Vice Chairman Capps. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining.

6:25 p.m. Recess (Executive Session)

7:30 p.m. Reconvene

**Eleventh item of business:** Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Representative Schmidlkofer and seconded by Representative Whistler. The motion passed with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent and 0 abstaining. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m. 🔥

# RE-ELECT

## JOHN "ROCKY" BARRETT

OUR PROGRESS IS BUILT ON  
**LEADERSHIP, EXPERIENCE,**  
AND A COMMITMENT TO  
**FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett



**Mno Gizhget  
Bodwewadmi  
Eyawyan!**



**✓ VOTE**

## Charles Dwight Scott

*For Citizen Potawatomi Nation Chairman*

### WHY CHARLES SCOTT?

- 1 Putting Our People First**  
I will transform our Government by hiring from our Citizens. Our values will replace the current values.
- 2 Love for Our People**  
I'll govern like you are my relations. With love, kindness, humility and respect. You are my equal and not an adversary.
- 3 Culture and Language**  
I promise I'll always try to help and teach. I won't ever sit in an office and not be accessible. I will be in our classes, both as a student and to share what I know.
- 4 Economy and Culture**  
My goal is to enshrine a percentage of our annual budget to preserving and storing our Language and Culture, into a Constitutional Amendment. I will also create an Elders Council, Youth and Veterans Council who will guide our Leaders in restoring and preserving our culture.

 SATURDAY  
**06.28.2025**

### Vote Charles Dwight Scott for Tribal Chairman

Its A Good Day To Be Potawatomi  
#VoteCharlesScott  
Paid For By Charles Scott.



# Steve Livingston | District 1

bozho thayék!

It's my sincere desire to meet those that I have not had an opportunity to meet yet, connect with individuals, and have the opportunity for people to get to know me both personally and as a potential legislative representative. I'm committed to being accessible and open, and as part of that commitment I am having several virtual meet & greet events that are available to all, but in particular I want to meet those in District 1 so that I can listen.

Each month I will highlight a few of the beliefs and positions I hope to advocate for as your representative.

## Community Engagement & District Gatherings

**Community Advisory Committees:** Taking inspiration from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, establish boards and advisory committees that reflect the diversity of Citizen Potawatomi Nation, including representation across different age groups and geographic regions. Examples: Food Sovereignty Committee, Language & Traditions, Ethics, and Land Use.

**Expanded Participation:** Expand opportunities for citizens who live outside of Oklahoma to sit on boards and committees and positively contribute to the direction of our nation.

**Citizen Feedback & Proposal Submission Process:** We have many talented individuals in our nation that lead in language, story telling, food sovereignty, regalia making, and powwow dancing. We should encourage and gather feedback from these individuals on community projects that our nation can support.

**Host two larger seasonal gatherings a year:** As Potawatomi, we celebrate the changing seasons, and I would continue to host a mnokmëk (Spring) and a dgwagëk (Fall) gathering where we gather together as a community to eat, meet and play games, and learn about what is happening within our nation.

**Host several mini meetups:** There are many gatherings that happen throughout our district, such as powwows, film screenings, and other native-related events. I would like to use these events as opportunities to meet and gather with smaller groups of community members closer to where they live throughout the district.

**Virtual:** I would like to host quarterly Zoom meetings to discuss what is happening in the nation, share updates, and to elicit feedback and answer questions from others.

## Meet & Greet Virtual Events

- April 8th - 6:30 - 7:30 PM EST
- April 24th - 6:30 - 7:30 PM EST
- May 13th - 6:30 - 7:30 PM EST
- May 29th - 6:30 - 7:30 PM EST
- June 10th - 6:30 - 7:30 PM EST
- June 26th - In Person @ CPN



For the Zoom link, follow the QR code or visit the link below.

<https://www.cpdistrict1.com/events>

*Paid for by Steve Livingston*

# VOTE

## Jennifer Bertelsen

Kno Migwenkwe "Eagle Feather Woman"

For District 3 Legislator

**Wisdom** to lead, **love** for our people, **respect** for tradition, **bravery** to take action, **honesty** in every decision, **humility** to listen, and **truth** to guide our path. We must honor our past, protect our culture, and drive progress to build a stronger future.

Paid For by Jennifer Bertelsen

[knomigwenkwe@yahoo.com](mailto:knomigwenkwe@yahoo.com)



**JUSTICE ON THE SECOND COURT  
OF APPEALS OF TEXAS**

**AND**

**SMALL BUSINESS OWNER**

**PREVIOUSLY**

**FIRST JAG IN AIR FORCE HISTORY TO SERVE  
AS A DRILL INSTRUCTOR AT THE U.S. AIR  
FORCE OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL**

**WHILE STILL UNDER 40, VOTED "LAWYER  
ON THE RISE" BY TEXAS LAWYER MAGAZINE  
(TOP 2 ATTORNEYS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE IN  
TEXAS AT THAT TIME)**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT JUDGE WALKER'S OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS AND  
EXPERIENCE, VISIT [WWW.VOTEFORWALKER.COM](http://WWW.VOTEFORWALKER.COM)**

**POL. AD. PAID FOR BY JUDGE BRIAN WALKER**



**Vote for Brenda Trevino (Ogee Family)**

**Paid for by Brenda Trevino**

**District 3  
Legislative Representative**

**Available, Committed and Ready to Serve**

**[brendatrevino924@gmail.com](mailto:brendatrevino924@gmail.com) or 281-466-7427**

**Vote absentee by June 8, 2025, or in person at the Festival**

# RE-ELECT A PROVEN LEADER JOHN "ROCKY" BARRETT

Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett



ELECT A CHAIRMAN WITH **REAL KNOWLEDGE** OF TRADITION AND CULTURE

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# Chairman election candidates Q&A

Editor's Note - Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.

## John "Rocky" Barrett



**Incumbent**

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** The experience that I have to serve as Tribal Chairman is over 40 years of successful performance as Tribal Chairman. During that time our Nation has grown from less than 5 employees and under \$500,000 in budget to our present 2,308 employees and \$679,000,000

in budget. This is not money given to our tribe by the federal government. We earn over 90% of our income from our businesses.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** If you vote for me, I hope to accomplish a goal I have sought for almost my entire time as Tribal Chairman: to build a community of Citizen Potawatomi that will attract our people to move back home. With the help and cooperation of our Tribal Legislature, I plan to develop the land around our central core of services and business with homes and apartments. These dwellings will be first rate and at a price well below the market utilizing unique financing. The quickest way for us to succeed as a nation is to turn the \$679,000,000 at least two times in our own economy before it leaves. That is the secret to a successful community.

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** An effective tribal leader is one who can find and recognize talent. He or she must also be able to lead and inspire that talent to produce on the job in a manner that provides that person personal satisfaction. And create revenue or services for his or her employer. This takes empathy, compassion, and leading by example. As the old saying goes: "You reap what you sow."

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** I plan to engage tribal citizens in the same manner that I have for forty years: with openness and empathy. I have been fortunate to know a lot of individuals and families in our Tribe. I plan to treat each of them as I would want them to treat me and my family.

## Charles Scott



**Challenger**

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** The Military taught me to Lead, to Listen, to Learn. Being a Union Organizer taught me to be inclusive and build a grassroots consensus. I've talked with and listened to many tribal members; you want Culture and Connection. I will bring my personality, leadership, empathy, and warrior spirit to our

government. I will balance our Traditional Potawatomi values with our Legislative goals, and I will build a community for us.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** I will focus on reviving our Culture and Language. We will grow our June Festival from 3 days to 5 days and include more Traditional teachings. I will refocus the mission of our Cultural Heritage Center into a Cultural Learning Center. I will expand our Language Depart to 12 employees to build a Cultural Immersion. I will make scholarships available to attend "Immersion School" every summer. The heart of our community will be our Cultural Immersion school, with the long-term goal of evolving into a private elementary, middle and High School. Jobs, Housing, Fiscal Transparency, Term Limits, will be addressed as well. The days of not hiring Potawatomi's will end on Day 1. There is no excuse for this travesty. I will replace Ball Fields and Golf Courses with affordable housing. It's time we invest in housing for our people. We will use our secure portal for Fiscal Transparency. I will work to enshrine "Term Limits" with a Constitutional Amendment. The entire focus of our government will be preserving our Culture and Language and building our community. It's time we invest in our Culture.

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** Leaders communicate, we listen, we build consensus and follow a chain of command, that flows up and down. We put people in positions to succeed. Tribal Leaders protect and provide for their family, you are my family. I will personally answer every email and return every phone call. We set the example.

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** I will hold monthly "Town Halls", we will do podcasts and use our secure portal. Our annual General Council meeting will return to being a true meeting. You will speak and we will listen. Ideas and concerns can be presented, voted on if necessary, or presented for review at any Legislative meeting. Our Government is your Government, when you vote for me, we will return to the days when your voice is heard.

# Legislature election candidates Q&A

Editor's Note - Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.

## District 1 candidates

### Anna Johnson



#### Challenger

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** I graduated summa cum laude from OKBU with my MBA May 2020 while working full-time and being a wife & mother to my young family - making me an excellent multi-tasker. I have used this education to maintain and grow 2 successful home businesses

where I manage my own budgets and expense reports. This experience directly translates to discussions in our legislative meetings, enterprise analysis, and budget creations.

#### Other qualities:

- Excellent Interpersonal and Communication skills
- Comfortable public speaking
- Will seek help and advice from others
- Not afraid of a challenge
- Can make decisions
- Takes ownership of missteps
- Detail oriented
- Eager to learn

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** Above all, I hope to establish connections. We are so vastly spread out, making us feel isolated. My hope is to draw closer to the feeling of community/family.

#### Other hopes:

- Host District Meetings in more locations
- Visit every state in my district within the first 2 years
- Promote/teach cultural learning opportunities in person and virtually
- Create a seed sharing/gardening community
- Have clear and concise communication with District Tribal Members
- Move further away from the dependance on Federal funding and aggressively towards a self-sufficient/self-funded
  - Tribe
- Promote the needs of District 1 and actively advocate on their behalf

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** Love is essential to leadership. Love for our people, culture, and traditions.

Effective leaders are not self-serving. They represent the people and adapt their vision according to the needs of the district. Leaders should be a guiding force; leading with passion, empathy, humility and the willingness to accept criticism. They should take an active role in truly listening to/learning what the needs of the people are

#### Leaders should also:

- Care
  - Foster collaborations
  - Respect our traditions
  - Preserve/promote cultural heritage
  - Advocate for the district
  - Offer and find mentorships
  - Be an effective communicator
- Vote in the best interest of the district

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** Meet them where they are. I am committed to have a presence in every state throughout the District. I will be available via phone calls, text, email, zoom meets, social media and in person. We need more community-centered activities, open dialogues, in person meet-ups, knowledge sharing, culture, consideration for elders, youth involvement, and Potawatomi Pride.

I want to hear from you directly. Your thoughts, concerns, celebrations, hardships, and hopes for our Tribe's future. *I ask for your prayers and the consideration of your vote. I do hope you take the time to reach out*

- [ajohnson1@gmail.com](mailto:ajohnson1@gmail.com)
- [candidate.ajohnson-cpn-district1.com](http://candidate.ajohnson-cpn-district1.com)

### Steve Livingston



#### Challenger

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** Professionally, I am a Senior Engineering leader and have led engineering teams for nearly a decade across multiple organizations. I work with other leaders to establish budgets, perform capacity planning, establish quarterly objectives and key results, and most importantly

look for opportunities to clear roadblocks and challenges so that my teams can do what they do best - we win together.

I believe the same principle applies to serving as a legislator. I'll be focused on transparency, accountability, and open communication. Success as your representative will be measured by the opportunities and progress made for those in District 1 and the larger CPN community.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** *I will work to support:*

- *Transparency: Advocate for policies that ensure all citizens have access to information about our leaders' decisions and actions - trust and accountability are at the core of good governance.*
- *Traditional Knowledge & Cultural Growth: Support initiatives that ensure our language and traditions not only survive but thrive, reinforcing our identity and sovereignty. Our tribal government exists to support our ability to live authentically as bodwéwadmik.*
- *Reviewing Citizen Services: Assess opportunities for improved housing, healthcare and education, focusing on those most in need.*
- *Community Engagement: Build more ways for citizens to have a voice, including a Youth Council, Elders Council, and Citizen Advisory Boards.*

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** *An effective Tribal leader is one who seeks to serve. They don't pretend to have all the answers, but instead listen, ask the right questions, and surround themselves with people smarter and more talented than themselves. A leader is not measured by personal success, but by the success and opportunities they create for others. Leadership is about making people feel safe, valued, and empowering others to be successful. Leadership is about having the courage to take risks for the future while being accountable in the present. A rising tide lifts all boats, and an effective leader enables the community to all rise together.*

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** *Citizen engagement is at the heart of a strong nation. I want to create opportunities for citizens, no matter where they live, to have a voice in our future. I'll host seasonal gatherings, mini meetups at regional events, and quarterly Zoom meetings to share updates and hear directly from citizens. I'll push for citizen advisory boards on language, food sovereignty, and traditions, ensuring diverse representation across all districts. Most importantly, I'll support community-led initiatives - giving our talented citizens the space and resources to teach, share, and lead.*

## District 3 candidates

### Jennifer Bertelsen



**Challenger**

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** I have spent years managing operations, negotiating agreements, and building relationships—skills that directly support governance, economic growth, and community development. As a small business owner,

I understand the challenges of maintaining financial sustainability and achieving long-term growth.

I also had the privilege of participating in Mdamen, a leadership course that helps Tribal members connect with their identity and gain a deeper understanding of our government, culture, and economic development. This experience reinforced the importance of serving our Nation.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** If elected, I will focus on strengthening economic opportunities, increasing member engagement, and preserving our culture. I want to support policies that promote business growth and long-term financial stability while expanding mentorship and leadership programs to help our youth stay connected as they prepare for the future. I will also strive to enhance communication, accountability, and transparency.

As a candidate, I cannot stress enough the importance of voting. Every election shapes our future, and voting is one of the most powerful ways for citizens to ensure our voices are heard and our priorities represented.

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** An effective Tribal leader respects tradition while embracing progress. They listen to their people, act with integrity, and make thoughtful decisions that protect our sovereignty and create a better future for our members and the Nation.

Leadership is not just about making decisions from the top down but about uniting people to tackle challenges together. A great leader works to preserve our language, heritage, and customs while finding new opportunities for growth.

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** For me, engagement begins with accessibility and listening. I aim to maintain open lines of communication to keep members informed and involved. This includes hosting more in-person social gatherings, district meetings, and promoting cultural events where people can connect.

I also want to encourage participation in language classes, cultural programs, and leadership training to strengthen our community ties and ensure our traditions thrive.

### Brian Walker



**Challenger**

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** I currently serve as a Justice on the Second Court of Appeals in Texas. While in my 20s, I worked for the Texas Senate during multiple legislative sessions. While in my 30s, I taught government for four years as an adjunct professor at the collegiate level.

I have received immense experience working in, and with, the law through my legal education, my 17-year legal career, my time working for the legislature, and interpreting and applying the law during my four-plus years on the bench. Because a legislator is a law maker, all of that should translate well if I'm elected.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?** In addition to ensuring that the CPN remains an existing sovereign tribal nation, my primary goals are simple:

I want to use my vast experience to serve our people in developing sound tribal policy.

I want to maximize benefits for all tribal members while making sure that the tribe continues to thrive long into the future.

I hope to use my vast political experience and ties to network with leaders in D.C. - in order to attain the greatest federal benefits possible.

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** An effective tribal leader is one who uses his or her gifts, talents, and experience to make the tribe better. Almost like we see in the church, a person should use their personal giftings to better the tribe.

My gift set isn't really language and culture. Although I have an appreciation for those things, there are folks who are much better at that than I am. My gift set is leadership in the law, political systems, and government. If elected, I will be proud to use my gifts, talents, and experience to make a positive impact for our tribal nation.

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** I plan to continue writing the article in the Hownikan, I plan to make myself available, I plan to have intermittent in-person meetings around all parts of the district (North, Central, East, and South Texas), and I plan to hold more frequent virtual meetings. I can see doing them at least once per quarter, or, if the demand is there, maybe even monthly. I have used Zoom to teach Bible studies with men participating across America and we have even used them effectively in the legal profession. Because D3 is huge, I can see online meetings being very beneficial.

## Brenda Trevino



### Challenger

**What experiences do you have that can be applied to a legislative position with the Tribe?** An over 40-year career listening and leading cross-functional teams at public agencies, the Corps of Engineers in Galveston and with co-workers of all levels; developing, approving, controlling and reporting on organizational

and project budgets; understanding technical Issues, contracts, regulations and organizational hierarchy, all speak to transferable skills required for this job.

I also believe traveling to see all 50 states (completed in 2022) has given me a greater understanding of our ancestors and our ties to the land in states like Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. I personally feel a deeper connection to the land and people.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your time in office if elected?**

- My hope is to serve every district member. I have a phone and email exclusively for tribal business to accomplish this goal. Being recently retired, I intend to treat this opportunity as a full-time job.
- I hope to raise attendance at Regional Meetings by publicizing months in advance.
- I hope to maintain and build new connections in the district, with Executive Leadership, as well as with other Native American tribes and services in our area. I plan to share through the Hownikan, social media and email.
- I plan to support the Potawatomi Leadership Program (PLP), to advance existing department programs and to help the interns understand how important they are to the future of our tribe and culture, in the hope they will return to lead us in the future.

**Describe an effective Tribal leader.** An effective leader is available when you need them. They connect, listen, learn, communicate, plan, document, inform constituents and constantly look for new ways to serve. A CPN Legislative leader connects with Executive Leadership and other Legislators to perform as defined in the Constitution, to improve the way the organization operates. A leader prepares for the future.

It is important for our tribal leaders to respect our elders by safe-guarding the programs that support them, as well as the many additional programs and services that support all in the tribe. Our tribe has flourished for the past 50 years due to the exemplary leadership and vision of our executive team. The legislature should support the executive team to further the vision of the tribe and to avoid losing the rights and privileges we enjoy today.

**How do you plan to engage Tribal citizens?** I plan to ask the citizens how they want to be engaged and at what frequency by sending out a short anonymous survey to customize the needs of our district. I plan to engage our citizens by traveling to meet them one-on-one and small groups when I can. I plan to utilize a District 3 website, social media and email to not only inform, but to get input from others on topics of interest. I would also like our Regional Meetings to celebrate the families celebrated by the annual Shawnee Family Gathering each year (building up to the larger celebration in June).

**If elected I would work each day for you, cherishing your involvement and support. 🍀**

# Melot family history

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Cultural Heritage Center provides resources to keep the Tribe's history safe and accessible for generations to come. One key way the Nation does this is through the CHC's archives and video interviews. To highlight some of the archive's holdings, the *Hownikan* is featuring photographs and family history of every founding Citizen Potawatomi family. If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, and to schedule family interviews, please contact the CHC at 405-878-5830.

## Family's beginnings

The Melot family traces their roots to French immigrants Joseph Melot and Claude Melot. Joseph married Catherine (Katy) Bergeron, the daughter of Francois Xavier Bergeron and *Wat-che-kee* (sometimes spelled *Watseka*), or Josette Bergeron. Claude married Theresa Frances Navarre.

Together, Francois and *Wat-che-kee* had Jean (John) Batiste, Catherine (Katy), Matilda and Charles. Theresa and her husband, Claude, were the parents of Joseph Columbus, Emily (Holloway), Louise (Weddle), Alexander, Mary (Vieux), William and Carrie (Scully).

When the Potawatomi were forced out of their Iowa lands in 1846 by the Council Bluffs Treaty, they removed to a reservation of 567,000 acres in Kansas. However, settlers and railroad companies began pressuring the U.S. government to open Kansas land for settlement. The Potawatomi, displaced from their ancestral homelands, were now being forced from their adopted home in Kansas.

The U.S. government offered citizenship and individual allotments to the Kansas Potawatomi. Katy Melot was among those who accepted.

## Founding of Wanette

A *Shawnee News-Star* article in the CHC archives recounts the history of Wanette, Indian Territory. The town was founded March 19, 1894, by Joseph and Katy Melot. The couple owned 240 acres on which the first townsite was built.

Katy Melot was born in July 1851 in Kansas. Joseph T. Melot was born in France on Aug. 15, 1839. Katy and Joseph were the parents of Joseph Edward (J.E.), William Warren (W.W.), Joseph Thomas (Tom), Lewis (Louis), Elmer, Earl, Ruth, Grace, Leander (Lee) and Benjamin.

A 1970 news article within the CHC archives stated the oldest existing log cabin in Pottawatomie County at the time had been built by Joe Melot. The cabin was originally built as a two-story structure but later was reduced to one and a half story. At the time of



*Joseph C. Melot and family in 1892.*

publication in 1970, the article said the cabin was being used for hay storage while cattle grazed nearby.

Three years after establishing his home site, Joe returned to Kansas and helped six other families move to Oklahoma Territory in 1871. They traveled in a wagon train of 14 covered wagons.

When *Wat-che-kee* died in 1875, she was buried in an unmarked grave just southwest of the present-day site of the Wanette Cemetery in Indian Territory. Her husband, Francois, died in 1881 and was buried in the Wanette Cemetery.

The first Catholic mass held in the county took place at the Melot cabin, conducted by Fr. Isidor Robot shortly after Robot arrived in January 1876. That year, a council led by Peter the Great approved

the plan for Joe and Katy to grant some land to the Benedictine Order of the Catholic Church to establish a mission. Robert established Sacred Heart Mission, where many Potawatomi youth were educated.

The town was also known by other early names, such as Oberlin, Isabella, Clardyville and Wagoza, before finally settling upon Wanette. It is believed that the post office was opened on March 19, 1894.

However, the 1903 construction of the Santa Fe Railroad meant that the town would have to be relocated one mile north to its present-day location so the townspeople would have access to the railroad. The town prospered following the move, boasting of successful cotton gins, hardware stores, banks, a brick kiln and saloon. Soon a school was built, and more people flocked to the burgeoning town.

Joseph died in 1898 and was buried in the Wanette Cemetery. Katy died in 1933 and was also buried in the Wanette Cemetery.

Some of Joseph and Katy's children, such as Leander, Joseph, Lewis and William, began spelling their last name as Melott. Joseph Columbus Melot had a son, Anthony Herbert Melott, who also adopted this spelling. It is possible the spelling change was made to help with mail delivery. Relatives often had their letters mixed up with another family member and as a result, some members of the family adopted a different spelling to clear up confusion.

Katy and Joseph's daughter, Theresa, married Alexander Upton. They had three children, named Josephus, Emery and Marie. Sadly, two of their children, Bonny and Theresa, died young.

Joseph and Katy's son, Leander (Lee) Melott, was born in Wanette on April 15, 1880. He received an 80-acre allotment in present-day Pottawatomie County. In 1900, he married Nina Lucille Johnson, and together they had Minnie Ester, Raymond Verble, Violet May (Page) and Pearl Haze. Leander died Jan. 2, 1958, and was buried in Wheatland, Oklahoma.

Joseph and Katy's son, Joseph Thomas (Tom) Melott and his wife, Margaret Jane Lambert, were the parents of Glatis M. (Melott) (Johnson) Brown. She had a son named James Earl Johnson. James and his wife, Alice Brenda (Willis) Johnson, had a son named Dennis Erin Johnson. Tom Melott also had a daughter named Marjorie (Melot) (Sinor) Bailey. She had a daughter named Barbara A. (Bailey) Montgomery and a son named Denzil Woodfer Bailey, Jr.

Joseph and Katy's son Tom was also the father of Floyd E. Melott, Marion X. Melot, Sr., Milton, Milford Glen, Joseph Aaron and George Benton. Marion, Sr. was the father of Marion X. Melot, Jr.

Katy and Joseph's son Lewis (Louis) was the father of Benjamin Lewis, Lou Belle (Hash), Theresia Cardila

(Mitchell), Lee Haskell, Katherine "Katie" (Ferri), Viola Lena (Burrow), Emily Rudetha (Smith), Thelma Gustavia (Highland), Joseph David and Mary Ruth (Bledsoe). One CHC document stated that in 1970 Louis was 90 years old and still walked to town several times a day. He attended Sacred Heart School as a boy but later served many years as a Baptist and Methodist minister.

Katy and Joseph's son William was the father of Frank T. Melott and Ernest R. Melott. Frank's son was Roger Kenneth. Ernest's son was Teddy B. Melott.

## Early life in Oklahoma

The Melott family are among the earliest contributors to what would eventually become the state of Oklahoma. Life in Indian Territory was anything but easy. All infrastructure had to be built by hand, carved out from empty prairies. In some instances, Melott family members did leave Oklahoma to find stability.

An interview with Letha Melott Tacker published in 1983 revealed that she had two brothers and two sisters. Letha was born in 1903 in Wanette to William Warren Melott and Myrtle Melott.


The children grew up near Wanette but moved frequently to allow their father to find work. In 1911, they moved to Oregon, where their father found work in a sawmill.

They returned to Oklahoma after about a year, settling near Trosdale. There, the children helped their uncle on his family farm. They returned to Wanette, where Letha attended school until the fourth grade.

Later the family moved to Cushing where their father worked in the oil field, and their mother ran a cook shack. Eventually, the family found a home in Shawnee on East Main Street. The children attended Franklin School.

Letha and her husband, Carter, both survived the Great Influenza pandemic of 1918. The couple had been married for only 10 weeks when both came down with the disease. Carter later developed double pneumonia. Letha and her mother sat up all night, applying the homemade remedy of turpentine, grease and camphor. Fortunately, Carter recovered.

It was through the courage to take allotments and face the unknown in Indian Territory that the Melott family came to prosper. With their hard work and perseverance through unimaginable hardship, they put down roots that allowed the family to thrive, and in turn, the southern half of Pottawatomie County was able to flourish.

If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, and to schedule family interviews, please contact the CHC at 405-878-5830. Schedule interviews online at [portal.potawatomi.org](http://portal.potawatomi.org). Learn more about the Family Reunion Festival at [cpn.news/festival](http://cpn.news/festival), and find research resources online at [potawatomiheritage.com](http://potawatomiheritage.com). 

# Two individuals are leading the way in supporting CPN's 2,100 employees

From new hires to those who have been with the Tribe for decades, one CPN department's mission is to ensure that each of the Nation's 2,100 employees feels engaged, heard and supported.

The Department of Employee Engagement and Advocacy was established in 2022 to support a positive, fulfilling and engaging experience for CPN employees through the implementation of activities that promote connectiveness between employees and the Tribe. Through the Employee Advocacy component, employees can enhance their personal and professional goals, expand their networking opportunities and foster positive relationships with colleagues.

"Few employers offer a safe space for employees to go simply to talk through workplace issues and receive honest and candid feedback and solutions," said Employee Engagement and Advocacy Director Kelley Francen.

The department also helps employees navigate personal obstacles and towards finding success in all areas of life.

"One of the most rewarding experiences I've had since joining this department was helping an employee through a really tough time," said Employee Advocate April Carter. "We connected them with resources they didn't even realize they qualified for, ensuring they got the support and benefits they needed. Not only did this make a huge difference in their life, but it also reinforced how much CPN values its employees. It was amazing to see how that support helped them stay with CPN and continue doing great work. Moments like that make me so proud to be part of this team."

## Programs

Beyond individual collaboration with employees, the department offers numerous programs to support and celebrate employees.

Quarterly Employee Longevity Luncheons celebrate employees at employment milestones anywhere from five years to 35 years with a catered lunch and presentation at the Grand Casino.

"There's something really special about seeing employees who have dedicated years — even decades — to CPN get the recognition they deserve," said Carter. "You can see how much it means to them to be celebrated, and hearing their stories about their time with the Tribe is always inspiring. It's a reminder of the lasting impact CPN has on people's lives, and I love being a part of that."

The department also now oversees the NOEK Leadership Program, a curriculum of professional and personal



*April Carter and Kelley Francen*

development based on the teachings of the *Noek Nmeshomesek* (Seven Grandfathers). Each year, a cohort of 10-15 employees is selected by nomination to participate in the program, but the program is just as transformational for Francen and Carter as it is for the participants.

"I have so many meaningful moments watching participants grow, not only as leaders, but also as individuals," said Francen. "I have never been more honored than to lead and facilitate the leadership development program and walk the journey with such amazing people."

"While facilitating the program, I found myself learning alongside them — gaining new insights, growing in confidence and strengthening my own leadership skills," said Carter. "Watching the participants step into their potential has been inspiring, but what I didn't expect was how much I would personally take away from the experience."

During Employee Appreciation Month in September, the Department of Employee Engagement individually selects over 1,400 gifts which are raffled off through a drawing of 65 employee names daily throughout the month.

Francen has seen a mother select a watch that perfectly matched one that her son had requested, a mother and daughter pair select an air fryer to help them with

their goal of eating healthier and cooking together, and many other instances of employees selecting items for a parent or sibling rather than for themselves.

Another initiative that has unexpectedly taken off into an enormously meaningful one for both the department and employees is a birthday card initiative. Each month, Francen and Carter hand write and decorate 200 birthday cards to mail to employees. Every employee receives a card during their birthday month.

"This is our second year to do this, and we still get phone calls, emails and personal visits thanking us," said Francen.

"It's a reminder that sometimes, the little things make the biggest difference," said Carter.

## Positive impact

"It's hard to pick just one (initiative)" that has had the biggest success, said Carter. "They all matter."

The best part for her is hearing directly from employees about how much they appreciate being recognized and supported.

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## Veterans Report

Bozho (Hello),

The CPN Veterans Organization's Color Guard has been very active during this new year, 2025. We have some new programs planned and our meeting location will be changed. We will announce the start of these upcoming changes at our April Veterans Organization meeting on Tuesday, April 22 at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there). While our Color Guard was presenting the Colors at a luncheon meeting in the CPN Cultural Heritage Center, we were approached by Peter Kavourgias, collections manager, and Derra Pitts, event coordinator, to discuss having the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization meetings and Christmas dinner held in the Veterans Memorial Room of the Cultural Heritage Center. We were very pleased and excited. That is where the CPN Veterans Organization was born. We are returning home. We plan to have the details worked out by April's veterans meeting. Please join us in this new and exciting venture.

Remember if you require a Colors presentation or Honor Guard attendance, you can contact our CPN Color Guard coordinator, Daniel Castaneda at 209-207-2317.

Remember, the Citizen Potawatomi Veterans Organization meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) in the North Reunion Hall at the CPN Powwow Grounds. This month's meeting will be on Tuesday, April 22. We will have pizza, socializing and a fun time. Remember, you don't have to be a member of the organization to attend our meetings, and you can bring your family. Hope to see you there.

"We don't need surveys to gauge success," she said. "We hear it in meaningful conversations we have with employees who tell us how our programs and initiatives have impacted them in a real, tangible way. That's what makes this work so rewarding."

Carter and Francen also find inspiration and partnership from each other as they provide support to so many individuals.

"This is all something that April and I do together," Francen emphasized. "To work with April and watch her grow in confidence and wisdom has been a beautiful honor."

"There's something about navigating challenges, brainstorming ideas, and celebrating wins together that creates an unshakable bond," said Carter. "I couldn't ask for a better person to be on this journey with. At the end of the day, it's all about making sure people feel valued and supported," said Carter. "I'm beyond grateful to be part of a team that's doing exactly that." 🍀



*WHY THIS IS FUN, GUNNY, I GREW UP PLAYIN' LIKE THIS IN THE MUD, WOODS, AND CREEKS BACK HOME!*

Daryl Talbot, Commander, 405-275-1054

Daniel Castaneda, Vice Commander/Event Contact  
209-207-2317

David Barrett, Treasurer, 405-613-7313

Bill Wano, Secretary, 405-670-1200 🍀

# Mental health literacy offered to local communities

Annie Slease created the Mental Health Literacy Collaborative to help communities better understand mental health. She hopes to expand her work to include Indigenous communities.

"The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative is a national nonpartisan nonprofit, and it's focused on an evidence-based framework called mental health literacy. We bring that framework to schools and communities," Slease said. "We teach how they can use it to build knowledge and confidence about mental health."

Slease, a Wano family descendant, grew up in Oklahoma. She was a classroom teacher for 25 years, taught middle school English and even directed school musicals.

"In those years, I was also raising two children. My older child at 18 developed significant psychiatric symptoms, but I didn't recognize them and neither did my child. My child had just graduated high school, but there was no mental health education in that high school. We were both unaware of what was going on until it got very, very serious," she said.

Slease began writing an anonymous blog to help process her feelings. She wasn't ready to share her name due to the stigma involved in mental health. Other people began to read it and connect with her story. Eventually, the support she received helped her feel confident to share her identity. After she did, she connected with mental health advocates in her area.

"I got involved with NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness," she said. "Ultimately, I realized that anybody can teach English and anybody can direct musicals. But when you've been impacted the way our family was, I felt like I had a story to tell that could really make a big difference," she said.

Slease helped pass a law in her home state of Delaware that requires mental health education for kindergarten to grade 12. But the passage of the law was just the beginning. Without the infrastructure to carry it out, she said, a law may not be effective. She realized that teachers needed support to be able to teach about mental health.

"Educators, just like me, may never have learned about mental health. To require us to teach it, it's a big ask. (MHLC) is sitting in that intersection. We help empower educators and leaders to understand mental health literacy so that they can not only know it for themselves, they can help others learn it at the right pace in the right developmental and cultural fashion that they need it," Slease said.

## The framework

Mental health literacy has four components, Slease said. The first component is understanding how to foster and maintain positive mental health.



Annie Slease

"With or without a mental health diagnosis, you still should know how to take care of your mental health," she said.

The second component is understanding common disorders and their treatment.

"Just like we understand very general information about diabetes, and we understand that something like insulin can

help, we should understand that there are mental health disorders and there are treatments for those," Slease said.

The third component is understanding how to seek help effectively, whether for yourself or a loved one.

"When we talk about that, we're not talking about only a crisis like I described in my household. I didn't have the knowledge to help my child early. But if I had mental health literacy, I would have known how to get help much earlier and it would have been a much easier process to seek treatment for my child," she said.

The fourth component is understanding stigma and how to reduce it. Stigma is a primary barrier to care, Slease said. Stigma is the way society thinks negatively about mental health.

"We don't understand it and we often have judgmental thoughts about it. And we make people feel inadequate or shameful about these real health conditions. That keeps people from getting the help they need," she said.

## Breaking stigmas

To break through those misconceptions surrounding mental health, language shapes perceptions.

"If we could dissuade people from conflating the idea of mental health as a mental illness, because they're not the same thing. We're going to say that this person has a health condition, just like any other health condition," she said.

Slease believes it could take a generation to shift the conversation, but starting the process begins with our youngest community members.

“By starting it at our very youngest ages, they can grow up understanding this reality in a much more inclusive way. It can be done, but it’s not going to happen overnight, and it’s not going to be one school program or school assembly once a year,” Slease said. “It’s got to be a belief system. It’s got to start at the very youngest ages and be embedded into the fabric of the community. When my granddaughter goes to school and learns about her eyes, her lungs and her heart, she will also learn about her mind. Every child deserves that knowledge.”

## Tailoring services to needs

Slease said the framework can be adapted to support Indigenous communities that have specific needs.

“When we’re dealing with generational trauma, generation after generation, that really becomes an issue that can become problematic in communities. Trauma is a primary risk factor for developing a mental health condition. Indigenous groups, as well as other marginalized groups, face higher rates of mental health and substance use disorders. But that doesn’t mean that treatments aren’t possible,” she said.

According to a 2022 report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 19.6% of Native American adults experienced mental illness the previous year.

Slease said treatment options need to serve populations appropriately and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Mental health literacy can be adapted to serve communities appropriately.

“We can bring mental health literacy into a community space through the voice of people who are (Indigenous), people who do understand what those challenges look like, and how we can talk about them safely and inclusively,” Slease said. “That’s what mental health literacy is meant to do. It’s meant to be an adapted framework that serves communities where they are through the perspectives and voices of members of those communities.”

Partnerships are an important way of helping to spread awareness, she said. MHLC works with various organizations who have a greater understanding of their community and its needs. From nonprofits to public education, to the Clinton Global Initiative, their list of partners is growing.

“This work is all about relationships. We are bringing them the mental health literacy framework, but we’re not making it land on them. We’re helping them develop plans and strategies to make it work in their spaces. And we’re continuing to develop new projects so that those communities and those various partners can use mental health literacy to elevate their own work,” she said.

By working with universities who educate future teachers, MHLC plans to reach Indigenous students who will be taught by those teachers one day.

“We’ve developed a one-hour training called MHL Aware. We’re bringing it to 30,000 pre-service educators during their college years. When they enter their teaching professions, they already know mental health literacy and they’re bringing it into wherever they’re going to work,” she said. “If we could offer that to students in universities in and around Oklahoma, who will ultimately serve Indigenous students, that is how we bring mental health literacy into communities effectively. We can find those university partners and offer that training to students at no cost.”

Support for the training is available through the Clinton Global Initiative’s Commitment to Action.

“Our CGI project is open to all colleges and universities but because of my Potawatomi heritage and connection to Oklahoma, I personally hope to reach education students in and around the state.”

## Long term goals

MHLC is available to work with any tribal organization, whether education or health care related.

Slease hopes to make mental health literacy something that people don’t think of as a program. It becomes part of a community’s knowledge base and in turn, she said, helps ease the burden on crisis care systems and mental health providers. She envisions a time when people see mental health as part of their overall health.

“When mental health literacy is embedded in the fabric of these communities, we’re going to see suicide rates go down. We’re going to see overdose rates go down. It will be when people recognize mental health as part of health. Individuals who are talking about their own health conditions openly and not with shame,” she said. “I’m not ashamed to tell you that I wear contacts, or I couldn’t see to drive. But people are ashamed to talk about seeing a therapist. They’re ashamed to talk about taking medication or receiving inpatient treatment for substance use disorder. That shouldn’t cause people shame.”

“We just need to have the information, and we need to understand it at a level that it becomes inherently our knowledge. That’s why the framework is so important. It needs to come out of voices that are trusted in each community. My dream in Indigenous communities is not that I’m teaching it, it’s that I’m talking to trusted leaders in these spaces and we’re talking about it and we’re breaking it down and they’re adapting it to meet their community’s needs most appropriately.”

To learn more, visit the Mental Health Literacy Collaborative website at [themhlc.org](https://themhlc.org). 🔥

# 'Black Wolf's Legacy' opens spring exhibitions

An exhibition by a Citizen Potawatomi Nation artist that examined the forced removal of the Potawatomi people was the first exhibition in the University of Oklahoma's Lightwell Gallery for spring 2025.

Nicole Emmons, a filmmaker and mixed media artist based in Oklahoma City presented "Black Wolf's Legacy" on Jan. 23, 2025. The exhibit combined history and contemporary art to educate patrons about cultural identity and survival.

During her artist talk, Emmons said she intended "Black Wolf's Legacy" to be an immersive experience that combined animation, projection and mixed media to tell the story of the 1838 Trail of Death, in which the Potawatomi were forcibly removed from Indiana to Kansas.

"On Sept. 4, 1838, (the Army) rounded up the four main chiefs by gunpoint and put them in a jail wagon. Then they rounded up the rest of the people, with about 100 soldiers to marshal everyone together, and started the long march. It was about 660 miles, and it was a two-month march," Emmons said. "It was very, very dry and there was very little water. There was typhoid going around at the time. Nearly every day somebody died."

Emmons said that Black Wolf's story stood out to her because of his resistance.

"People like Black Wolf escaped and went to Michigan. He escaped once and went to Nottawaseppi, which is the Huron Band of the Potawatomi. Then he was captured and brought back to Kansas. Later in 1840, he got away again. But he was captured once again and brought to Kansas.

"What does he represent? He represents the idea of going against societal pressure. All these forces are coming together to tear this community apart and to tear this Nation apart. But Black Wolf saw through that and said, 'No, I'm not going to stand for this. I'm going to fight and I'm going to go back and I'm going to keep our culture,'" she said.

Black Wolf's fierce resolve inspired Emmons.

"What he represents is that spark of knowing who you are and standing for who you are. The legacy is about practicing your culture and how that can actually be in rebellion to what was meant for us as far as colonialization," she said. "The forced removal is an aspect of colonization that they used to break us down and break us apart. And it was ultimately unsuccessful because we are still here and we're thriving."

## Elements reflect culture

"Black Wolf's Legacy" took patrons on a journey from the Great Lakes to forced removal to embracing culture in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's adopted home of Oklahoma.

"(Portions) represent the Great Lakes. It's representing nostalgia, things that we'll probably never get back, the purity of that time before colonization. But you can still have relationships with our family of animals and fauna and flora. There are still ways when you practice culture, you're able to get in touch with that," she said.

Visitors were encouraged to walk through several long curtains of fringe, representing a journey.

"I tried and tested a bunch of different materials and of different thicknesses. It's the idea of going from one place to the next. I can never reproduce the Trail of Death or what people went through, but you can have moments where you can sit and take time and think about what that might have been like," Emmons said. "On the opposite end, the images are other methods of colonialization."

The animation also reflected Indigenous elements.

"Everything is based on the number four. Four is a sacred number, such as the four directions, but it's also the different medicines. I did my drawings in cycles of four, so there's 40 individual drawings, and then there's four drawings of each of each image," she said.

The wigwam structure represented reflection, a place where Potawatomi ancestors would have thought about all that had happened to them.

"During the day when you're marching, people are dying and (you're forced to keep) going and going. At night you have time to rest and process what happened during the day and all the people that we lost. And think about 'What options do we have?' 'What other things can we do?'"

"Night is a time filled with possibility. That was the time when Black Wolf most likely made his escape as well as all the other people that escaped. When you listen to that audio soundtrack in the enclosure, it is a story. You're listening to the fire, you're listening to sounds of the encampment, you're listening to morning sounds, people crying, people singing," Emmons said.

A map of North America showed where the Potawatomi lived in the Great Lakes and their 660-mile journey to Kansas, then eventually to Oklahoma. A document was next to the map.

"That document is the muster roll of the Potawatomi. Black Wolf is actually listed on that document. I thought that would be interesting because you can see the actual names. These are real people. There's hundreds and hundreds of people that were forcibly removed.

"And that's just one story. On that muster roll, there's only 400 names. Obviously, the Trail of Tears encompasses 100,000 people that were removed. So, we're just one story of all those stories," she said.

Artist Nicole Emmons at her "Black Wolf's Legacy" exhibit.



of Potawatomi culture and history. He really instilled that in me as well," she said.

Emmons worked for a year on "Black Wolf's Legacy," while she simultaneously worked on other projects. She was grateful for the support from the gallery.

"Everyone at the school has been totally amazing and supportive. I came for several testing sessions, and they let me come up as many times as I wanted to work. It's just been really a great experience working here. It's beautiful," she said.

"I was really excited when she got all of her work up. It's been an awesome process to see this all come together. I'm happy that Nicole is providing us with this great exhibition and installation for our students and bringing in art and technology," said Amber Duboise-Shepherd (Diné/Prairie Band Potawatomi/Sac & Fox), assistant to the director, OU School of Visual Arts.

Emmons collaborated with Choctaw composer J. Cruise Berry to create the score for "Black Wolf's Legacy." The project was supported by the First People's Fund and the Andy Warhol Foundation, in partnership with the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition.

To learn more about Emmons, visit [nicoleemmons.com](http://nicoleemmons.com). 🔥



## Vote for Brenda Trevino (Ogee) District #3 Legislator

We stand on the shoulders of many great leaders, past and present. I would be honored to work for you, to pick up where others have taken us, and to walk with you into the future.

Paid for by Brenda Trevino  
[brendatrevino924@gmail.com](mailto:brendatrevino924@gmail.com)  
281-466-7427

## Collaboration

Emmons said her grandfather was a prominent and early influence in her life.

"He was a historian, a superintendent of schools in Tecumseh, and he was a great researcher

# ADVERTISED LEASE SALE 41 - MAY 15, 2025

Any lease granted herein will be for grazing and dryland farming ONLY. The Lease does not grant use of existing houses or the right to place mobile homes upon the leased premises. The Lease does not grant lessee the right to hunt or fish on the property.

## ALLOTMENTS WITH LEASES STARTING 1/1/2026

ALLOTMENT	ACRES	DESCRIPTION	
821-C33-E Mary Bourbonnais	40	SW/4 NE/4 of Section 12, Township 9 North, Range 3 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	1
821-35 James Burnett	80	W/2 NW/4 of Section 31, Township 9 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	2
821-S 62-E Josette Bennett	30	E/2 NE/4 NW/4 and E/2 W/2 NE/4 NW/4 of Section 17, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	3
821-84 Joseph Epeteska	80	E/2 NW/4 of Section 24, Township 6 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	4
821-97 Clarissa Mars	80	E/2 NW/4 of Section 7, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	5
821-S 116 John Baptiste Vasseur	80	E/2 SW/4 of Section 18, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	6
821-367 Peter Tescier	80	NE/4 NW/4 and NW/4 NE/4 of Section 23, Township 7 North, Range 1 East of the Indian Meridian, Cleveland County, Oklahoma	7
821-S 395-C Pea-ish or Peter Curley	40	SE/4 NW/4 of Section 4, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	8
821-S 510 Rozette Trombla	80	NW/4 SE/4 and NE/4 SW/4 of Section 25, Township 8 North, Range 1 East of the Indian Meridian, Cleveland County, Oklahoma	9
821-S 575-E Almira C. Bayliss	79.16	Lot 1 = NE/4 NE/4 and SE/4 NE/4 of Section 4, Township 8 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	10
821-T 748 Joseph Lewis Acton	40	N/2 N/2 SW/4 of Section 31, Township 9 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	11
821-809 Frank Davis	80	N/2 NE/4 of Section 15, Township 7 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	12
821-900 Madeline Denton	10	W/2 SW/4 SE/4 SE/4 and E/2 SE/4 SW/4 SE/4 of Section 6, Township 7 North, Range 1 East of the Indian Meridian, Cleveland County, Oklahoma	13
821-1325-D Harriet Pratt	10	SW/4 SW/4 NW/4 of Section 13, Township 8 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	14

These properties **MUST** be leased together

ALLOTMENT	ACRES	DESCRIPTION	
821-42 Annie Wilmet	80	SW/4 NE/4 and SE/4 NW/4 of Section 28, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	15A
821-S 697 Pos-so-ship-she-wa-no	80	N/2 NW/4 of Section 28, Township 6 North, Range 5 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	15B

These properties **MUST** be leased together

ALLOTMENT	ACRES	DESCRIPTION	
821-ST 579-A Laura I Bayliss	40	S/2 N/2 N/2 SW/4 of Section 3, Township 8 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	16A
821-ST 579-B Laura I Bayliss	20	E/2 SE/4 of Section 9, Township 8N, Range 1E of the Indian Meridian, Cleveland County, Oklahoma	16B
821-S 579-C Laura I Bayliss	20	N/2 N/2 N/2 SW/4 of Section 3, Township 8 North, Range 4 East of the Indian Meridian, Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma	16C

If you would like to request a bid packet, email Tonya Turnpaugh at [tonya.turnpaugh@potawatomi.org](mailto:tonya.turnpaugh@potawatomi.org) or call 405-395-0113

# From the executives

## John “Rocky” Barrett Tribal Chairman

*Bozho, nikan, (Hello, my friend),*



For over 40 years here at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, we have made it a priority to invest in our people. Education and training are the foundation of our success, and we have worked hard to ensure that more and more Citizen Potawatomi members have access to the resources they need to build a strong future. We hope that means working here.

Our government is very large and complex, with 46 departments with directors who manage 2,308 employees. Our operating budget is \$679,000,000. It is the largest business in Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma. It is vital that our employees and our elected officials have the experience, knowledge and skills necessary to successfully grow our Nation by capably managing your businesses and funds. Our Nation’s business has nearly 40,000 owners: all of you, the members of our Tribe. We never forget that here. You have entrusted us to enhance your children’s future opportunities and meet your needs as you age. We have to grow our earnings as fast

as our population. And, we have to turn those earnings into efficient delivery of services through skilled jobs.

Our goal is not just to help members gain skills and degrees, but to provide them with opportunities to bring their knowledge back home and work for their Nation. When our people succeed, our Nation succeeds.

One of the ways we identify future leaders is through the Potawatomi Leadership Program (PLP). This six-week program brings young Citizen Potawatomi members to live here for a summer and learn about our government, culture and economic development firsthand. I have always said that we can hire technical experts, but we cannot hire leaders — our leaders must come from within, and it is our responsibility to prepare them. Through PLP, we give our youth the goals to shape the future of our Nation. Many past participants have returned to work for Citizen Potawatomi Nation. We hope many more will apply as we expand employment opportunity.

Education is a vital element in our success as a Tribe. Beyond leadership development, we have made it a priority to support our members in their academic pursuits. Our scholarship programs provide financial assistance for tuition and housing, helping to remove barriers that might otherwise prevent students from completing their education.

In 2024 alone, we awarded \$5.7 million in scholarships, supporting 1,939 Citizen Potawatomi students. These scholarships help students pursue careers in business, healthcare, education, engineering and other fields that directly contribute to the future of our Nation. Many of these graduates bring their expertise back to serving our community, working in our health clinics, banks, businesses and government offices.

We have also focused on expanding workforce development programs, ensuring that members have access to training, career placement and job opportunities. Over the years, we have seen the number of Citizen Potawatomi members employed by the Nation steadily increase. Many of our employees began their careers through CPN-supported education and training programs, allowing them to develop skills that directly benefit our Nation.

At the same time, we recognize that our success depends on assembling the most qualified workforce possible. While we always prioritize hiring Citizen Potawatomi members first, we also regularly employ citizens of other tribes who bring valuable skills and perspectives to our Nation. There are also times when the expertise of a non-tribal member exceeds the other applicants for a given job. In those instances, we must manage your Tribal funds in the most efficient way and hire the most qualified individual to ensure the best possible outcomes for our businesses, services and government.

What matters most is that we continue to build a strong, capable workforce that is committed to the success of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Our investment in education, training and career development has paid off, and I am proud of the many talented individuals who have chosen to dedicate their skills to our Nation. By continuing to support our members in their education and careers, we are securing a future where the Citizen Potawatomi Nation remains strong, self-sufficient and led by our own people.

When you cast your votes in this next election, please bear in mind the weight of responsibility that the person you select will have to carry. Experience and education are essential, but dedication to the job is the key element to our success.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead the Citizen Potawatomi Nation for the last 40 years. It is the honor of my life. I hope to continue to serve you.

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

John “Rocky” Barrett | Keweogee (He Leads Them Home) | Tribal Chairman



## Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

*Bozho (Hello),*

My column this month covers two different events. The first is an **Inaugural Tribal Education Summit** that was held at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center on April 3. It was hosted by CPN, the Seminole Nation, and Sac and Fox Nation. Tribal leaders representing each of the three tribes welcomed the audience to the meeting, which lasted from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. The program highlighted interesting and pertinent education information. Rachel Watson, director of CPN Department of Education, and Margaret Zientek, director of Workforce and Social Services, and their staff members planned the summit.



*Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett with Jackson Roedl*

I found the presentation on the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) for state and national levels extremely interesting. During the federal policy update, the presenter detailed each executive order that had been signed by President Trump regarding Indian Education. The one thing that went through my mind during the morning session is how Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) governs government-to-government relations with Native American tribes within the U.S. Most of the information given during the summit has a connection to the 25 CFR.



*Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, Larry Watson and Gene Lambert*

Another subject for the meeting was the Johnson-O'Malley Program. This program, authorized by the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 with regulations provided in part 273 of 25 CFR, contains educational objectives to address the needs of eligible American Indian and Alaska Native students. Programs vary and may include cultural, language, academics and dropout prevention plans.

Also included in the meeting was information on the Office for Civil Rights, which enforces Title VI of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The mandate is to ensure that recipients of financial assistance from ED comply with Title VI, which covers pre-K through grade 12 public schools. In addition, it includes charter schools, state educational agencies, local education agencies, colleges and universities, and other institutions that receive ED financial assistance.

No doubt, this meeting was the beginning for local tribes to hold tribal education summits for many years. The program was tremendously successful. There was a perfect balance of local presentations and those from national educators and professionals. The agenda allowed the day to conclude with a discussion on additional pressing issues in Indian education, which fostered final thoughts on how to move forward.

On a completely different occasion, Chairman Barrett and I attended Gene Lambert's District 5 meeting on March 22 at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. Gene had arranged for a great meeting with approximately 100 attendees. She always has a first-class meeting and there was no difference in this one. She had beautiful potted flower gifts at each of the 15 tables for door prizes. The food buffet was well-presented and tasted even better than it looked.

It was delightful to see the many people we knew from that district. I have known some of the Tribal members for so long that they seem like relatives. I have included a few pictures from the meeting. I must mention 8-year-old Jackson Roedl, who introduced himself to the audience in fluent Potawatomi. I have included a picture of him and Chairman Barrett. The meeting was informative, pleasant and rewarding. Gene Lambert is an esteemed legislator that has served CPN in that capacity since 2008 and served as a coordinator in the region since the late '90s. Sadly, it was Gene's last meeting as a representative of CPN. Gene will be retiring before the end of her elected office date. She is loved by her constituents, she is admired by her many friends and relatives, and she is respected by her co-legislators. She will be truly missed.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Vice-Chairman since 1990.

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

Linda Capps | *Segenakwe (Black Bird Woman)* | Vice-Chairman  
Work: 405-275-3121 | Cell: 405-650-1238 | [lcapps@potawatomi.org](mailto:lcapps@potawatomi.org)

# From the legislature



## Eva Marie Carney District 2

*Bozho, nikanek* (Hello, friends),

### Note of Gratitude

There is no better way to start out a Legislative column than to thank a citizen who contributes in many ways to keeping our traditions lively and alive. I am writing today about District 2's Lyle Simmons. Lyle wraps the eagle feathers I use and gift in family namings. He does a beautiful job of this, using fishing line! He also prepared and shared photo-illustrated instructions for making traditional pucker-toe *mkesinen* (moccasins). These are posted to the Heritage portion of my website, [evamariocarney.com](http://evamariocarney.com). The instructions can also be viewed here ([cpn.news/moccasinguide](http://cpn.news/moccasinguide)). Lyle helps provide citizens with quality, Potawatomi-produced items intended for dance, ceremony or everyday use through raffles he manages through a private Facebook page.

All proceeds from these go directly to the artist unless otherwise noted in the posting for the item. He has helped fellow Potawatomi offer lovely beadwork, ribbon skirts, rattles, hats, medicine bags and more, allowing many to support fellow Potawatomi and giving Potawatomi artists a way to highlight their work. If you would like to participate, you can ask Lyle to add you to the private Facebook group or, if you message me on Facebook, I will make that request for you.

I am grateful to Lyle for the gifts of his time and talents, year after year. *Igwien* (heartfelt thanks), Lyle.

### Library Holdings; New Books

Periodically I write to remind folks that I maintain a collection of books on Indigenous subjects and Potawatomi history. Here is a link ([cpn.news/emclibrary](http://cpn.news/emclibrary)) to an alphabetical-by-author listing of the books; I updated it in early March 2025. The listing also is posted to my website, under "Services."

The most recent additions are "Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future," by Patty Krawec; "My Heart is a Chainsaw," a horror novel by Stephen Graham Jones; "By the Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Land," by Rebecca Nagle; and "When the Pine Needles Fall: Indigenous Acts of Resistance," by Katsi'Tsakwas Ellen Gabriel with Sean Carleton. In March I was able to Zoom in on the conversation Ms. Gabriel had with a Columbia University Professor as part of the Shirley Greenberg Annual Lecture at the University of Ottawa, speaking about how Indigenous peoples continue to fight for the preservation of our lands, cultures and identities in a world still shaped by the lasting impacts of colonialism. I have not read



*Wrapped eagle feather*



*Copeland Family at Fort Walton Beach, FL, meeting May 2011*

her book yet — I have moved it to the top of my always-growing-to-read pile.

Please give me a call or send me an email if there is a particular book on this list that you would like to borrow. I can check it out to you and mail it to you on your promise that you will return it after reading!

### Condolences

One of our elders, Leroy Copeland, recently walked on. I enjoyed his kindness during several of our District 2 meetings. I am sending heartfelt condolences to his family and particularly to his daughter Sarah Copeland, a dear person. May his memory be a blessing forever. I have included a photo of the Copeland family taken during a District 2 meeting in Florida in 2011.

### Upcoming Graduation or Other Good News to Share?

I appreciate getting news of graduations, weddings and other celebrations to share in this column. Please reach out to me if you are willing to share your good news. My family's happy news is that we officially added a member in October 2024, when our son Marshall married Emily. What is your good news?

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

Eva Marie Carney | *Ojindiskwe* (Bluebird Woman) | [ecarney@potawatomi.org](mailto:ecarney@potawatomi.org) | [evamariecarney@gmail.com](mailto:evamariecarney@gmail.com)  
[evamariecarney.com](http://evamariecarney.com) | PO Box 5595 | Arlington, VA 22205 | Toll Free: 888-849-1484 (voicemail)



### Bob Whistler District 3

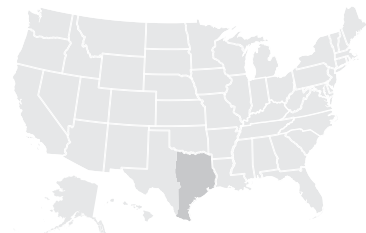
*Bozho ginwa* (Hello everyone),

#### UTA POW WOW

On March 1, I attended the annual University of Texas Arlington (UTA) powwow hosted by their Native American student body group in the Maverick Activity Center. There were well over 600 who attended, which included members of the Native American tribal citizens from various Nations throughout the U.S. This year as last year in Grand Entry they honored MMIW with a female holding a bright red dress at the rear of the color guard.

A number of students at the school are members of the MMIW-TX and support local Native American community members who have relatives that have been victimized. If anyone wishes to help them, let me know and I will put you in contact with Stephen Silva-Brave. They hold regular meetings at the Texas Native Health Care facility in Dallas. This year the group that participated in Grand Entry was larger than last. I have included a photo of them.

I always enjoy this event since it keeps me in contact with the various groups and members of other Nations



*Grand entry at the UTA powwow*

that I have worked with over the years, along with seeing members of our own Nation. I had the fortune to visit with Donna Coffee and her family, Susanne Zunker and her husband, along with Laura Badonski. The next scheduled powwow in this area is on April 5, which is the same date as our planned District 3 meeting at Texas Motor Speedway. So, I won't be attending the Indigenous Institute of America powwow in Cleburne, Texas, that day.

## AARP

For those of you who are elders and don't belong to AARP, you may want to consider joining. Yes, there is a \$20 annual cost. I joined and found that they send out a monthly magazine that offers excellent information on health, the current types of scams out there and how to avoid them, and other issues that affect us as we age. The February/March issue carried an article about the benefits of including nuts and seeds in your diet. The final benefit is that just reading this small magazine is another good exercise for your eyes and your brain!

## CPN3legislator@yahoo.com

This email address consists of the email addresses I use to send my own emails out to the members of District 3 for whom I have an address. Neither myself nor any of the other elected representatives are provided with your email contact. I have created this over the years from email you have sent to me. Of the well over 2,500 Tribal members in District 3, I have about 300 contacts. As you know, I am not running for re-election in the forthcoming election in June. I will be transferring this email address to whoever replaces me. It will help you get information from them in the future, so I urge you to send me your contact and I will add you to this information vehicle.

In a couple of months, CPN Family Reunion Festival will be here again and I look forward to seeing many of you there. In the meantime if you have any questions where I may be of assistance, please give me a call or email me.

I have been honored and proud to represent District 3. *Migwetch* (Thank you) for giving me this opportunity.

Nagech (Later),

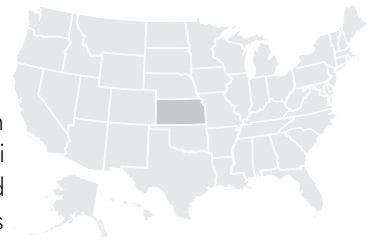
Bob Whistler | *Bmashi* (He Soars) | [rwhistler@potawatomi.org](mailto:rwhistler@potawatomi.org) | [cpn3legislator@yahoo.com](mailto:cpn3legislator@yahoo.com)  
1516 Wimberly Ct. | Bedford, TX 76021 | 817-229-6271 | [cpndistrict3.com](http://cpndistrict3.com)



## Jon Boursaw District 4

### Presentation at Johnson County Junior High

Remember I mentioned in last month's *Hownikan* that I had been tasked to give my presentation on the removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana to Kansas in 1838 at a Junior High School in Overland Park, Kansas. Well, it turned out to be bigger than I expected. I was expecting four classes of 25-30 students, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Instead, the class sizes were 65-70 in each session, totaling approximately 270 students. Needless to say, the question and answer sessions were full of good questions, which generated even more questions. I was not surprised that the students did not have an understanding of the significance of the Trail of Death and the information that I presented gave them a better appreciation of what the Potawatomi people



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experienced. After each session the class instructors took the opportunity to express their appreciation for having had the opportunity to better understand the Potawatomi removal from Indiana to Indian Territory, now Kansas.

## Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

Dates for the Elder Potlucks held in Rossville at noon are:

May 9      Breakfast: Fry Bread Nuggets & Gravy      RSVP by the 6th

Bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Please RSVP to Tracy at 785-584-6171.

## CPN Haskell student recognized by the University of Kansas



Issak Decker

The following appeared on the University of Kansas Facebook (KUHawkLink) in late February.

"We wanted to shine some positive energy on a tough time right now for our Haskell family and highlight another one of our amazing Haskell students participating in the Haskell/KU Exchange Program.

Meet Issak Decker. His Potawatomi name is *Waswaskone*. He is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and he lives in Topeka, KS. Issak is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and hopes to one day pursue a career in nursing. After completing his degree at Haskell, Issak has plans of pursuing Nursing School at KU. Through the Exchange Program, Issak is taking several pre-requisite courses for KU's nursing program like Principles of Nutrition and lectures and labs in Microbiology.

Issak loves being a student at Haskell because it allows him to dive deep into the rich culture of not only his tribe but of the many tribal nations represented on that storied campus. Issak said of his time in the Exchange Program, "Before taking classes at KU, I was told how big the campus is and how hard the courses would be, and almost made to feel like it would be too overwhelming. However, the constant support and guidance of our

Exchange Coordinator gave me the reassurance I needed and I quickly adjusted to the pace and rhythm of KU. Being in the Exchange Program has been a wonderful experience and I would highly recommend it to every student!"

Thanks, Issak, for being an awesome representation of your tribe, Haskell, and the Exchange Program. ONWARD, HASKELL! ROCK CHALK!"

I first encountered Issak when he was a PLP student in 2023 during which time he received his Indian name, *Waswaskone*, which translates to Quick Flash of Light, from Margaret Zientek. Issak is a descendant of the Ogee family.

Megwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | *Wetase Mkoh* (Brave Bear) | [jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org](mailto:jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org) | 785-608-1982  
2007 SW Gage Blvd. | Topeka, KS 66604 | Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11 a.m. | Thursdays 3-5 p.m. | Other times as requested

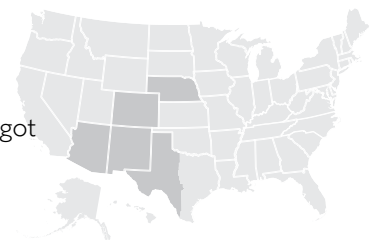


## Gene Lambert District 5

*Bozho* (Hello),

The blame game is alive and well. We are where we are. How we got there isn't as important as how we handle the issue of fixing it.

It is my opinion we could all take a look at what the word TRUTH really means. I see families, friends and partners separating over a differing ideology creating more obstacles than need be. So, let's take a look at what Google says first. "The quality or state of being true." "That which is true or in accordance with fact or reality." "There are four categories of truths; objective truths, subjective truth, normative truth and positive truth."



Now, there's the key, "reality." Your reality or vision might differ one from the other. You are both good people telling "your" truth.

We come by this honestly through our different life experiences and opinions of who, what, where or when.

Why am I bringing this up? One's values, be they political, personal, and professional or spiritual, have an original base within each of us. They have probably been established prior to any conversation you might have defining the people in your life presently.

You cannot change someone else's belief system. They would have to do that on their own. Their entire existence depends on being right. They can decide but no matter what you present as facts the odds of them changing their minds is little to none.

I have two of my best friends who disagree with my political or spiritual beliefs, yet they light up my life and bring it joy. They treat people well and are very giving with beautiful hearts. Our visits are always uplifting. The respect level does not allow their truth, though different, to interfere with mine.

Because we disagree in those areas, we set boundaries and agree to disagree. Still, their reasoning makes sense from their lives, which differ from mine. It is their truth. Never would I be willing to let them go because of it. You know the old saying if you both always agree, one of you is not necessary. It is what keeps the world interesting and you in the learning process.

No matter the subject, there are always at least four ways to look at it. I have to remind myself sometimes. It is logical to them.

The point here is, don't allow the passing changes or differences take you away from those you love. Politicians don't even know who you are and have never given your family a second thought. It is your job.

So, as the ministers and politicians come and go you will always have your family. Respect and treasure their values as your own.

Once you tear down the bridge it is almost impossible to build it back.

Take a look at their gifts not the shortcomings.

My concerns here are of the relationships under stress because of differing opinions due to world affairs. We all need to keep our focus on those things that emotionally feed us every day.

In closing, please take care of each other and realize that everyone is doing their very best. It may not be perfect or how you see it.

Regardless, this is your personal world you are protecting. Keep it safe!

Love you all.

Your Legislator District 5,

Gene Lambert (Eunice Imogene Lambert) | Butterfly Woman | [glambert@potawatomi.org](mailto:glambert@potawatomi.org)  
672 E Press Road | Queen Creek, AZ 85140 | Cell: 480-228-6569 | Office: 480-668-0509



## Mark Johnson District 7

*Bozho nikanek* (Hello friends),

On Saturday, Feb. 15, District 7 members gathered in Elk Grove, California, for a District meeting. We were honored to have Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett attend and address those that gathered with us at the meeting. The meeting provided an overview of Tribal history from our earliest times in the far Northeast to the present day. A discussion of our current direction of enterprise development and their importance to long-term success, and the security of our Tribe, was undertaken, with many questions from those members in attendance answered. It is always a pleasure to have Chairman Barrett in attendance; his knowledge and vision is unmatched, and his leadership has been and will continue to be a blessing to our Tribal government. After the members in attendance enjoyed a hot lunch, many more questions were answered, and as our tradition, we honored our members in





Mark Johnson, Bill Lackey and Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett

attendance. Our wisest member in attendance was Marvin Stites from Willows, California, a Greemore family member. Our youngest member was Alice Weaver from Mariposa, California, a Moore family member. Our furthest traveled member was Bill Lackey from Eureka, California, a Dugger family member.

Have you made your travel arrangements for the Family Reunion Festival in Shawnee from June 27 through the 29? Like I said previously, the 2025 Honored Families will be Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Willmet and Vieux. If you have never been, you need to add this to your bucket list and come join us, and like I said, it is never too soon to secure rooms and travel for your trip to Shawnee, and our new hotel near Tribal headquarters will be open.

One of the benefits available to members in District 7 we talked about at the meeting was CPN Care ([cpn.news/CPNCare](http://cpn.news/CPNCare)). If you haven't taken the time yet, sign up now for CPN Care. This benefit is available to you and your family.

It will take two to three days for your account to become active, so sign up now, before you need it at 2 a.m. It is no cost to you and your family to join or use, and it allows you to talk to a doctor 24/7/365 for general telemedicine, life assistance and pharmacy discount services. Sign up, even if you have good insurance. It may come in handy in the middle of the night when your regular doctor is not available. I have had the opportunity to use this a couple of times; it was quick, easy and professional.

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 Legislator. As always, give me a call and I will be happy to work with you on any questions you may have or provide you with additional information you may need to access Tribal benefits that are available to you. Please also take the time to give me a call or send me an email with your contact information so that I can keep you informed of the happenings within the Nation and District.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Mark Johnson | Wisk Mtek (Strong as a Tree) | 559-351-0078 | [mark.johnson@potawatomi.org](mailto:mark.johnson@potawatomi.org)



Mark Johnson, Marvin Stites and Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett



## Dave Carney District 8

*Bozho nikan*, (Hello friend),

Spring is just around the corner and the daffodils are springing up, reminding us that summer isn't too far away. However, if you've lived in the Northwest any length of time, you are aware of what we call "fake spring" and "fake summer." We will have an amazing day or two of 60+ degree weather, only to be rudely subjected to a week or so of 40 degrees and rain.

In preparation for more indoor time, I'd like to continue my list of recommended books to pass the time and learn more about the Nation. These books are readily available in the Potawatomi Gift Shop at our Cultural Heritage Center and on Amazon.

"The Potawatomi: Keepers of the Fire" (Volume 145) (The Civilization of the American Indian Series) paperback – 1987 by R. David Edmunds (about \$25). This is a serious history book that details the history of the Potawatomi from the fur

trade through alliances with the French and English, wars and treaties. A "need to have" for your library.

"The Last Blackrobe of Indiana and the Potawatomi Trail of Death" paperback – 2010 by John William McMullen. (about \$25). This is the true story of Benjamin Petit, a French attorney turned missionary priest, and his mission to the Potawatomi People. Petit joined the northern Indiana Potawatomi in 1837, a year before their forced removal west. The author retells the incredible journey of Petit, who traveled with the Potawatomi people and became part of their history.



“Two-Moon Journey: The Potawatomi Trail of Death” paperback – 2018 by Peggy King Anderson. (about \$10). You’ve heard me talk or write about this book several times, but it is dear to my heart. It is a work of historical fiction and is written by the widow of a Tribal member. It is the story of a young Potawatomi girl named *Simu-quah* and her family and tribe who are forced from their village in Indiana, where they have lived for generations, to Kansas.

If you are looking for a really nice gift for a Potawatomi in your life (even possibly yourself) I’d say take a look at “Dancing for Our Tribe: Potawatomi Tradition in the New Millennium” hardcover 2022 by Sharon Hoogstraten (about \$80). This very beautiful book was crafted by Citizen Potawatomi Nation photographer Sharon Hoogstraten as she visited nine Potawatomi Nations capturing modern day Natives in their regalia. It contains more than 150 portraits and corresponding handwritten statements.

We are just a few months away from the next Citizen Potawatomi Nation election. This June we will have contested races for Chairman, District 1 and District 3 (Districts 2 and 4 are unchallenged, and incumbents Eva Marie Carney and Jon Boursaw will continue to serve). Please VOTE and make sure your voice is heard.

I am in the process of setting up some meeting dates in our district. Plans will be firming up more but please save the following dates if you live in Alaska:

Aug. 9: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at Sealaska Heritage Institute – Juneau, Alaska – lunch, presentations, etc.

Aug. 10: Possible morning Naming and afternoon meeting at Lake Lucile Park, Pavilion B – Wasilla, Alaska

When more details are finalized, there will be a postcard invitation sent out.

If you live near the coast, please save Oct. 11 for our annual Fall Feast. Alternating between Portland and Seattle has proven to work well, since these are the largest pockets of citizens in our district. The 2025 gathering will be in Seattle and will be a lunchtime meeting. Stay tuned for more details.

It is my honor to serve as your Legislator,

Dave Carney | *Kagashgi* (Raven) | [dcarney@potawatomi.org](mailto:dcarney@potawatomi.org) | 360-259-4027



## Paul Wesselhöft District 9

*Bozho, nikan* (Hello, friend),

### CHEROKEE FREEDMAN

— Paul Chrisstarlon Wesselhöft

Cherokee Freedman,  
Indian Territory,  
A time of stress.  
Black skin,  
Indian heart,  
In a long white dress.

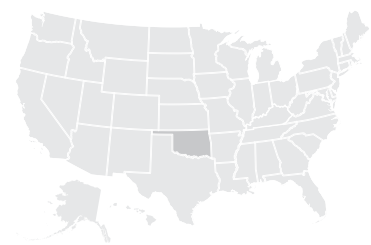
Slaves before the war,  
Her kin and kind

Were rejected by the tribe.  
A beautiful girl,  
Inside, outside,  
Perhaps a bride,  
But a work of art.

Her hair falls to the floor.  
Don’t know her name,  
Nor her birth, past, or death.  
Cherokee Freedman,  
Free at last.

*Migwetch* (Thank you),

Paul Wesselhöft | *Naganit* (Leader) | [reppaul@gmail.com](mailto:reppaul@gmail.com) | [pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org](mailto:pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org)



# Walking On

## **Carolyn Elizabeth McKelvey** Degraff Family



Carolyn Elizabeth McKelvey of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away on Jan. 14, 2025, at the age of 87. Funeral mass was held on Jan. 25, 2025.

Carolyn was born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on Feb. 13, 1937, to James A. Slover Sr. and Hazel E. (Traweek) Slover.

She graduated from Incarnate Word Academy in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1955.

On Oct. 20, 1956, she and N.H. "Mac" McKelvey were wed in Kingsville, Texas. To this marriage, two children, Willis Andrew and Margaret Colleen, were born.

She worked at the Stillwater High School cafeteria and then went to work at OSU at the Oklahoma Disease Diagnostic Lab and then Civil Engineering until retiring in 1998.

She was a member of the Cherokee HCE and the Lady Elks. She enjoyed lunches with the St. Francis Serenity Society and also served as a judge for the Payne County Election Board.

Carolyn is preceded in death by her parents; her husband; three brothers, James A. "Jim" Slover Jr., George W. "Duke" Slover, John T. "Stoney" Slover; brother and sister-in-law, John and Liz McKelvey; and brother-in-law Rowland E. Smith.

She is survived by her children and their spouses, Andy and Irene McKelvey of Stillwater and Maggie and Rance Johnson of Bethany, Oklahoma; her grandchildren, Lisa McKelvey of Olathe, Kansas, David McKelvey of Tulsa, Brendan and Asia Yates and Caitlin Yates, all of Bethany; and her first great-granddaughter, Bea Marie Yates of Bethany, born in November. She is also survived by her sisters-in-law, Harriett "Sissy" Smith of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, Kay McKelvey of Allen, Texas; numerous nieces and nephews; and many friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be sent to Payne. Co. Extension, Attn: Dea Rash, 315 W. 6th Ave, Suite 103, Stillwater, OK 74074. Please designate Cherokee HCE in memory of Carolyn McKelvey.

Condolences may be emailed to the family and an online obituary may be viewed by visiting [strodefh.com](http://strodefh.com)

## **Charles "Chuck" Edward Henderson Jr.** Trombla Family



Charles "Chuck" Edward Henderson Jr. was born in Ada, Oklahoma, on Oct. 11, 1988, and was found deceased on Jan. 3, 2025, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Chuck was 36 years old. He was preceded by his dad, Charles Edward Henderson, Sr. He is survived by his mother, Shelia Anna Gaddy (Spear); his two brothers, Jonathan Edward Pearson and

Timothy Michael Gaddy; aunts, Jackie Bonner and Sherrie Smith; his uncle, Johnny Spear; his nephews; and several cousins. He loved his family and was loved by them.

---

## **Johnathan Charles Morris** Peltier Family



Johnathan Charles Morris died Sept. 22, 2024, in Purcell, Oklahoma, at the age of 45 years, five months and 18 days. Memorial services were Oct. 2, 2024, at the Wadley's Funeral Chapel, entrusted to the care of Wadley's Funeral Service.

John was born April 4, 1979, in Lawton, Oklahoma, to Donnie Charles and Jimmie Sue (Hackney) Morris. Raised in the warm embrace of Purcell, Oklahoma, John's enduring spirit and strong

work ethic were evident from a young age. Throughout his life, he embraced a variety of roles, including the demanding work of cell tower construction. An adventurer at heart, John cherished the beauty of the great outdoors, finding joy in traveling and fishing. Music served as his sanctuary; the melodies of old country and gospel echoed his soul, offering a heartfelt outlet for expression. John's greatest joy came from the time spent with his family. He was devoted to supporting his nieces, nephews, children and grandchildren and relished the opportunity to commemorate holidays such as Easter and the 4th of July, creating cherished memories that brought everyone together.

John is preceded in death by his father, Donnie Morris; his mother, Jimmie Hackney; his brother, Joseph Morris; his maternal grandparents, James and Susie Hackney; and his brother-in-law, who was as close as a brother,

Jason Calhoun. Survivors include his sister, Amber Calhoun; his brother, Jamie Morris; his best friend, Jamie Stockdale; his child, Bridgette Black; his grandchildren, Nevaeh and Faith Moon; his nieces, Michala Morris and husband, Jesse Matherne, and Natasha Autry; his nephews, Nickolas Calhoun and wife, Kelsey Cross, Donovan Morris, Jerrod Calhoun, Jordan Yearly; his great niece, Kamber Matherne; his great nephew, Mason Calhoun; his stepmother, Janet Morris; his aunt, Leisa Morris; and numerous other relatives and friends.

**Clara M. George**  
Vieux Family



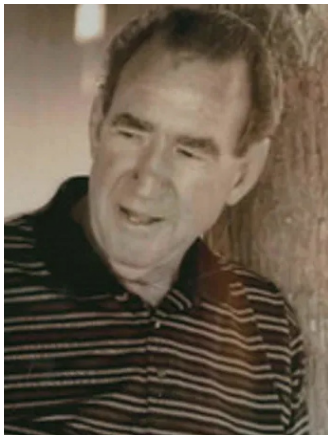
Clara M. George of rural Trenton, Missouri, died on Feb. 9, 2025. She was born in Silver Lake, Kansas, to Benjamin and Edna (Lemon) Wade on March 4, 1933. She married Jonny L. George on Nov. 10, 1951. They farmed near Topeka, Kansas, until moving to a farm near Trenton in 1964.

She was preceded in death by her husband; parents; a daughter, Annette Sager; five brothers; and a sister. She is survived by a son,

Wade (Sally) George, of Dayton, Minnesota; a son-in-law, Dennis Sager of Trenton; daughters, Robin (Charlie) Patrick of Cosby, Missouri, Joy (Steve) Jackson of Trenton and Renee George of Trenton; seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter.

Clara was a descendent of the Vieux family. Her father was Benjamin Wade, her grandmother was Rhoda Thurber Wade and her great-grandmother was Rachel Vieux Thurber.

**Robert A. Page**  
McKee Family



On Nov. 25, 2024, Robert Aaron Page of Moore, Oklahoma, passed away from this life at the age of 86. Born on April 29, 1938, Bob was raised by his mother, Virginia May (Chaulk) Cobb, and his stepfather, George Cobb. Both parents have preceded him in death, along with a brother, Billy Cobb; his maternal grandmother, Mame Chaulk; a niece, Kristy Bounds; and his daughter, Shirley Page.

He is survived by his wife of 15 years, Laura Page; his children, Connie Page and husband Ja, Rebecca Ferguson and husband John, Justin Krouse and wife Amber, Jeff Grady and wife Kristi;

brother, Randy Cobb; and sister, Jennifer Hunter and husband Michael; along with eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces and one nephew.

Funeral services were Dec. 2, 2024, at the John M. Ireland Funeral Home & Chapel, 120 S. Broadway Ave. Moore, Oklahoma. Interment followed at Sunny Lane Cemetery in Del City, Oklahoma.

**Rose Anna (Williams) Sharpe**  
Lewis Family

On Nov. 18, 2024, Rose Anna Sharpe, of Williams, Arizona, died peacefully in her sleep. She went to be with her husband, Arthur, to finish watching Monday Night Football together.

She is survived by daughters, Ruth Ann (Huey) Morris and Carol Jo (Eric) Fronstin; three grandchildren, Carrie Leann (Chris) Latella, Steven Arthur (Delfina) Morris, and Major Bryce Alexander (Madi) Fronstin; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; younger sister, Evelyn Ruth Topp; two nieces, Linda Topp-Hughes and Susan Schafer (Michael); two nephews, Porter Williams (Roxanne) and Gregory Topp (Jenny); great and great-great nieces and nephews.

Rose Anna was the middle daughter of James Porter Williams and Josephine (Lewis) Willams of Kingman, Arizona.

She attended Arizona Normal Teachers College (now NAU). She met the love of her life, Arthur, through her big brother, Richard Lee Williams.

Rose and Art lived in Globe, Arizona, as teachers then moved to Williams, Arizona, in the 1950s, buying their forever home and settling down to have two children.

Rose was active in the church and taking care of her girls until the youngest went to middle school. She started substitute teaching, then received her master's degree in library science, becoming librarian of Williams High School and Williams Elementary.

Then-Gov. Rose Mofford appointed her to visit schools statewide to improve their libraries as part of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

She was also a sponsor of Williams High School pom pom team and a counselor.

Rose Anna was a league bowler and active in Bridge Club and Friends Club.

She will be remembered as a woman who created a loving, magical environment. She touched many lives and will be missed by all who had the privilege to know her.

She is preceded in death by her parents; her beloved Arthur; her brother, Lee Williams; and son-in-law, Huey Morris.

Her daughters are considering a memorial in the springtime, her favorite time of year.

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# HOWNIKAN

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