

HOWNIKAN

Kchemkogises | January 2026



What's inside

1

Buttons help bring language to young Tribal members

2

Acton Family History

4

Meet CPN's new chief of police

5

January is Stalking Awareness Month

6

CPN Department of Education celebrates 10 years

7

Veterans Report

8

Iron Horse wins 2025 Honoring Nations Award

10

Scholarship opportunities

11

Notice of vacancies of Judicial Office

11

Accounting department receives award for 37th year

12

Tribal ties helped member succeed

14

Tribal executive and legislative updates

24

Walking On





Buttons help bring language to young Tribal members

Mtek (tree). *Mémégé* (butterfly). *Pnéshi* (bird).

Children with Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Childcare Program learn these and other words in the classroom, and now also with the help of interactive stations placed at several locations in their buildings.

One way Interdepartmental Potawatomi Language Lead Robert Collins has been partnering with teachers to bring language to children is through a community-driven platform that hosts a variety of lessons, songs, books and games.

"Bébamodéjek (the ones that crawl). *Ni je tso yawek?* How many are there?" Collins asked as a language lesson about dinosaurs played for Pre-K students. The students counted to three in Potawatomi before moving on to a new slide, where they counted five dinosaurs.

Collins and the teachers use the platform to offer ways to immerse the children in the Potawatomi language.

Recently, he also added interactive stations in the Child Development Center and at the West Daycare.

He said he was first given the idea while attending the Association of Tribal Libraries and Museums (ATALM) international conference.

"A member of the Penobscot Nation was telling us about how they positioned audio buttons near objects to help their kids learn the language," he said.

Bringing that concept back to CPN, Collins tested it by installing 18 audio buttons at the West Child Development Center and 17 at the East Child Development Center, including four handheld devices with images fixed directly to them.

Each audio button has Collins's voice recorded with a Potawatomi word and a corresponding picture displayed nearby.

"They love them," Collins said, adding that the kids get excited when they recognize his voice. "They'll say, 'It's you, Mr. Robert!'"

Children from toddlers up to the age of 5 are able to interact with the stations, and sometimes their parents do as well during pickup times.

"It just throws the language to them in a different way," Collins said. "The teachers are learning. The students are learning. We're all learning. Because you can't do it alone. You have to have community participating in it. We need our language in our surroundings."

Right now, most of the buttons sound out the words for animals, except at the nursing station, which says *mshkekiwnenikwé* (female nurse/female doctor). Going forward, Collins plans to add learning stations to areas suited for physical, creative and sensory play, such as the playground, kitchen, transportation, doll house and more.

It's one more tool Collins has found to bring the language to the children, something he said he wishes had been available to him at a young age.

"When I was growing up, we never had anything like this," he said. "It's a dream I didn't know I had. Watching them engage with the language, instead of simply being talked at, is incredible. This is a huge step forward for us and for them." 🔥

Acton 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 beginnings

It is believed that the Acton Potawatomi family connection began with Chief *Ashkum* (James Acton, Sr.) and his marriages to Madeline Oscum and later to Angeline Bellaire, or *Azhnick*. Angeline was born in 1841. She was the daughter of *Ne-ghan-be-quah*, who was born in approximately 1805, and Louis Bellaire.

Chief *Ashkum* was born in the 1700s and served as a headman and leader during the 1800s, speaking out against the loss of the Potawatomi's ancestral homelands in the Great Lakes region.

He had six children with Madeline: Mary Ann, Susan, Harrison, Cassie, John J. and Joseph. He had four children with Angeline: Helen, Zoa and twins Mary Louise and Julia.

His village was located in northern Indiana, along the Eel River. Acton signed the 1821 Treaty of Chicago. Under the terms of the treaty, nearly all Potawatomi land in southwestern Michigan was ceded. He also signed the 1826 Treaty of Mississinewa and the 1832 Treaty of Tippecanoe. These agreements established an official reservation for *Ashkum* and his band.

However, his name later appeared on several treaties without his knowledge, including some that revoked Potawatomi land rights. It was not until later as they received their annuity payments that Chief *Ashkum* and other leaders learned their ownership status had changed.

They tried to appeal to the federal government, declaring that they had not agreed to cede additional land. However, the government didn't acknowledge their pleas. In 1838, *Ashkum* and other Potawatomi were forced to leave their homelands when armed federal troops forcibly removed the Potawatomi at gunpoint. The Trail of Death had begun.

On the morning of Sept. 4, 1838, a band of 859 Potawatomi, with their leaders shackled and restrained in the back of a wagon, set out on a forced march from their homeland in northern Indiana for a small reserve in present-day Kansas.



Angeline Bellaire Acton Moore

The journey was a 660-mile trek in which the heat was oppressive and water was often scarce. They had only a few hundred horses to carry people and supplies, and additional wagons did not arrive as promised. The elders and small children were forced to walk. A day rarely passed that a member of the party did not die, usually a child, forcing their bereft and exhausted families to leave the bodies behind in hastily dug graves. In the end, more than 40 people died during the forced march.

Change and upheaval

The Acton family would witness tremendous change in their lifetimes. Surviving a forced relocation, they arrived in Kansas. Here, their reservation was located along the Oregon and California Trails. This location would later prove to be desirable to railroad developers.

The Treaty of 1861 would provide for Potawatomi to own land individually through allotments rather than living communally. This treaty also offered the Potawatomi the chance to become U.S. citizens. Many members of the Acton family would choose citizenship and individual allotments, hoping this would provide more stability in the future.

However, the allotment process proved unsuccessful for most Potawatomi due to multiple factors, including the federal government's failure to uphold all the treaty's agreements. In 1867, the Tribe pushed for and received a

new treaty and purchased land in present-day Oklahoma. Numerous Acton descendants moved from Kansas to the new reservation and established homesteads in southern Pottawatomie County near the Sacred Heart Mission.

Family connections

Several of *Ashkum*'s children married other Potawatomi, including daughter Mary Ann. She wed Wezo Burnett, and after her passing, he married her sister Susan. Together they had two children, Cora and Agnes.

On Nov. 2, 1872, Helen married Charles Richard Rhodd in Rossville, Kansas, and they had seven children together: Viola Alice, Ida Florence, Noah J., David C., Maggie, Thomas and Charles Daniel. Charles Richard kept the books for the Tribe for many years and had vast knowledge of the use of traditional medicines to treat various diseases. Many Indigenous families would ask Charles to treat their ailments rather than a non-Native doctor.

Helen walked on in 1924. Charles walked on in 1928.

John J.'s first wife was *Pekeshnoquah* and his second was Mary Vasser. Harrison and his wife Mary had one



Mary Louise Acton O'Marra, daughter of James Acton, Jr.



Charles Richard Rhodd and Helen Acton Rhodd on their wedding day

daughter, Madeline, and Cassie and her husband Alex Leonard had two daughters, Lucretia and Lizzie.

Zora had three children with Evanes Doud: Grace, Leroy and Ernest. Mary Louise married Cornelius O'Marra, and they had four children named James, Patrick, Katie and John. Mary Louise's twin sister Julia had three children with her husband, George, Maggie and Laura Davis.

Acton family members were witnesses to some of the most tragic events in Potawatomi history, such as the Trail of Death. However, they were also part of the Tribe's struggle for survival in the 1800s and eventual resurgence. Many members of the family still reside today in southern Pottawatomie County, where the county's earliest development took place under the direction of Potawatomi families.

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. Learn more about the Family Reunion Festival at cpn.news/festival, and find research resources online at potawatomiheritage.com. 🔥

Meet CPN's new chief of police

Citizen Potawatomi Nation welcomed Kyle Webb as the new chief of police last fall.

Webb grew up in McLoud, Oklahoma, where his mother still lives.

He graduated from McLoud High School and attended the University of Oklahoma before joining the Army Reserves, where he served in Desert Shield/Storm.

"When I got back, I got hired onto the Oklahoma City Police Department in 1992," Webb said. "I spent 25 years there."

During his time with OKCPD, Webb served as a patrol officer, child abuse detective, supervisor, public information officer, honor guard and D.A.R.E. officer. He was a medal of valor recipient, responded to the May 3 tornadoes in the Oklahoma City area, and was on the emergency response team for the Oklahoma City Bombing.

After retiring, Webb coached softball for Putnam City High School, Rose State College and Oklahoma Baptist University.

"My daughter had always played competitive softball, and I coached her for a long time," he said. "She went off and played in college, and when I retired, I really wanted to coach and see what that was like."

Following his time coaching, he went back into law enforcement as assistant chief in McLoud, later becoming chief of police until 2025.

After leaving McLoud, Webb took on a job with the CPN Police just before the Fireflight Balloon Festival in August.

"I got to start completely over, which was really fun," he said. "I hadn't been in patrol since probably 2016 ... Jordan Austin is the guy who had to train me for a little bit, and he was a year old when I got on the Oklahoma City Police Department. That was a little bit humbling. It was funny. He did a great job, and it was fun taking calls and checking buildings."

Initially, Webb said working for CPN was just a "stop gap" until he could find something else. However, when the opportunity to serve as chief of police came up at the end of October, he was excited to take it.

"I'd really enjoyed my time at CPN," he said. "There's a lot of really good officers and a lot of potential."

Learning the differences between municipality law enforcement and tribal law enforcement is an exciting challenge, Webb said, and he's enjoying the experience. He's also looking to the future.

One plan he wants to work on is ensuring the department is accredited. Only 4% of police departments in the state of Oklahoma are accredited. Those that do receive accreditation, he said, are able to receive assistance



Kyle Webb is CPN's new chief of police.

with liability issues and given guidance for best practices regarding policies and procedures.

"That's one of the big things that we're going to do," Webb said. "I want to try to get them the resources they need to do their job and the training they need, because it's all about training. When you stop training, that's when bad things happen."

Webb also wants to put a focus on what he calls community policing.

"I want our officers to be much more engaged with the citizens that either live on Tribal property or even admin or other people that are working here. I want to be more accessible to them," he said.

He also said he'd like to have officers involved with CPN's childcare programs, participating in activities like reading books to the children there or taking part in events like Touch a Truck.

"We have the front seat to the greatest show on earth, so this job is supposed to be something you enjoy doing. Most people get into this job for the right reasons, just because they want to help people," he said.

Sometimes, Webb explained, law enforcement officers can become jaded because of how often they have to deal with people at their worst. However, he said he tries to encourage officers to be empathetic. When a fender bender happens, for example, it might be the third an officer has responded to that day, but for the people involved in the accident, it is still a traumatic experience.

"Treat everybody like they're your grandmother," he said. "Treat everybody as well as they'll allow you to treat them. That's basically it. This is a service-oriented profession, and you just get a lot more cooperation from people that way."

Webb also hopes that the department will be able to move into a new space at some point, ideally with a gated area for the department's vehicles.

Mostly, Webb talked about how important it is to make sure the officers have all the training they need.

"I really just want to make this the most professional police department in Pottawatomie County, at least, if not Oklahoma. Because they can be," Webb said. 🔥

January is Stalking Awareness Month

Kayla Woody, CPN House of Hope Prevention Specialist

The month of January is focused on stalking awareness, and our main objective here at the House of Hope is educating the public on the reality of stalking.

Stalking is defined as “any person who, willfully, maliciously and repeatedly follows or harasses another person in a manner that would cause a reasonable person to feel frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed or molested.” According to the Bureau of Justice, each year over 7.5 million people are stalked in the United States, and over half of those victims indicated that they were stalked before the age of 25. This puts teens and college-age students at a much higher risk.

So, what does a stalker look like? The common idea is that it’s a stranger lurking in the shadows. However, the Stalking Prevention Awareness and Resource Center, SPARC, states that nearly 3 in 4 stalking victims knew their offender in some capacity and, of those victims, 40% were stalked by a current or former intimate partner.

Common stalking behaviors include:

- Sending persistent unwanted gifts
- Seeking information about a person through public records or online searches
- Damaging property
- Sending unwanted texts and emails
- Posting personal information about the victim and spreading harmful rumors
- Creating or manipulating situations to contact the victim

- Hacking into social media accounts
- Putting the victim in a challenging or harmful situation to play the hero
- Waiting outside the victim’s home, school or place of employment
- Persistently asking for a date
- Tracking locations

Stalking is considered a crime in all 50 states. Unfortunately, it’s a highly underreported crime because of the difficulty in proving the stalking behavior. Victims are often not taken seriously because of the current misconceptions from society.

Some stalking myths include:

- Only celebrities are stalked
- If you ignore stalking, it will go away
- Stalking is annoying but not dangerous
- You can’t be stalked by someone you are still dating
- If you confront the stalker, they will go away

House of Hope can help those who may be dealing with stalking behaviors. We can assist with locating emergency shelters along with safety planning for the future. We can assist with a protective order as well as court advocacy. Our highly trained advocates can also provide tips on how to stay safe.

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

CONTROL IS NOT
ROMANTIC
REAL LOVE
HEALTHY



CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

24/7 CRISIS HOTLINE 405-878-HOPE
VISIT US ONLINE AT CPNHOUSEOFHOPE.COM

CPN Department of Education celebrates 10 years

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Department of Education celebrated its 10-year anniversary in December. Founded in December 2015, the department has developed into a central hub for scholarships, student advising, internships and leadership programs.

The idea for the department began while Tesia Zientek, now the managing director of programs for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), was working in the Office of Self-Governance for the Tribe.

“Drawing on my own experiences with Tribal scholarships and internships, I saw that our Tribal students could benefit from a consolidated process,” Zientek said.

At the time, she was assisting with the Potawatomi Leadership Program, but felt the broader network of services — scholarship, advising, internships and support for Tribal students who attended St. Gregory’s University while it was in operation — needed a coordinator.

“I shared my thoughts with Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, and she liked the idea,” Zientek said.

She was later approached by Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett with the proposal to establish an education department and appoint Zientek as the director. She accepted, becoming the director in 2015.

The Tribe offered three separate funding streams through Tribal Rolls, Housing and Higher Education.

“One of my first priorities was streamlining scholarships,” Zientek told the *Hownikan*. “I worked through a plan to consolidate the three streams into a single online scholarship application.”

She also prioritized strengthening the internship process and improving outreach to students across the country.

“When I think on my time there, I think about all the students I got to work with, many of whom have worked in some capacity at the Tribe, held leadership roles, run for office, or started Native American associations on their campuses,” Zientek said. “What I am most proud of is that we centered our work on one question: ‘What can we do to serve students?’ I believe that focus still guides the department today.”

Today, the education department consists of four staff members: Director Rachel Watson, Assistant Director Charles Lee, Internships and Projects Coordinator Kym Coe and Student Success Advisor Special Projects Kelley Johnson. The department also has an open Student Success Advisor position.

Watson had a connection with the education department before joining the staff.



I wanted to thank all of you for helping me receive scholarships over the past few years. I'm graduating in May, and with your help I was able to complete my undergraduate degree debt-free. Your continued support through my graduate program has greatly reduced the amount of money I've had to borrow. Thank you for this incredible program, and I hope that you all continue to help students in the future.

I wanted to pass along my appreciation for all your efforts over the years. I was finally able to walk for my doctorate, and the Nation's financial assistance truly made this lifelong dream for more attainable.

Thank you for working hard every day to ensure that young Potawatomi college students like my daughter receive their annual scholarship money. My daughter was so proud and honored to receive that money every semester from her Tribe. It played a meaningful role in helping me pay for her college tuition in Michigan, which is home to many Potawatomi students and families.

It has made it so much easier having the Tribe's support. It made my late great-grandpa especially happy to see our Potawatomi heritage making a meaningful difference for our family's future. Going into my junior year, things are getting more expensive. I can't express my gratitude enough. You've made this journey less stressful, and I've been able to pay for the remainder myself by working through my accounting internship.

“I frequently heard about the scholarship program during Family Reunion Festival and took advantage of the opportunity while pursuing a master’s degree,” they told the *Hownikan*.

After graduate school, Watson began job searching and heard the education department was hiring. They applied, interviewed with Zientek and joined the team in 2021. Watson became the director in 2024 following Zientek’s departure the previous year.

The education department continues to evolve and make improvements. Even small changes can make a meaningful difference for the students the department serves.

“The *Mdamen* Leadership Program was first offered in January 2021, and it has become one of the most impactful programs,” Watson said. “Coming into the Circle is an educational event for high school students. The department sends mailers to students across the U.S. and invites them to Tribal headquarters. We give them a tour of the aviary, Cultural Heritage Center and provide a chance for them to learn about dance, regalia and more. We have offered this impactful program for three years and hope to see it grow.”

Other impactful programs and services offered to Tribal members include the Potawatomi Leadership Program and scholarship opportunities.

"Impact can mean a lot of things in terms of individual transformation. PLP, *Mdamen* and Coming into the Circle are meaningful experiences for participants and for the staff who connect with Tribal members and see firsthand the impact of their work," Watson said.

Watson explained that the scholarship programs have also impacted many Tribal members over the years.

"Nearly \$60 million in scholarship funding has been awarded over the last 10 years," they said.

Many Tribal students rely on scholarships every semester, and some would not be able to complete their schooling without them.

Watson shared, "I'm not sure how I would have fared in graduate school, in a high cost living area, without the support of the Tribal scholarship. I even benefitted from the reminder calls I now get to make to students who are missing documents right before the deadline."

The education department has received messages of appreciation from students and families who are grateful for the financial support they've received over the years.

"Knowing that our Tribe has set money aside for Tribal members and made a substantial investment in their future is significant. I don't think a lot of people realize that this is Tribal dollars for Tribal members and a choice that leadership is making to say that this is important to us," Watson said.

The education department provides advising services and internship opportunities available to Tribal members and the broader community. The department also hosts a college and career fair that introduces 500 to 700 students annually to colleges and career paths across the U.S.

"I am really proud of all the people who contributed to making something that I hope just feels like a given now: the fact that there is a department to help students and that scholarships are easier to navigate," Zientek told the *Hownikan*.

"I love hearing from leadership and Tribal members about what they would like to see or what they hope the future of the department will be," Watson added.

To learn more about the Department of Education and services offered, visit portal.potawatomi.org. 🔥

Veterans Report

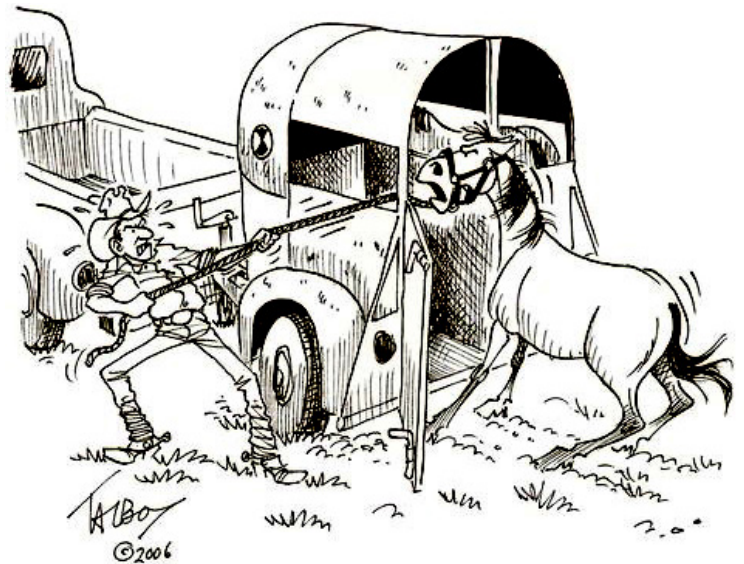
Bozho (Hello),

Happy New Year, everyone! Another year has come and gone, and a new one begins with 2026. It should be very exciting. The CPN Veterans Organization has a new system for our events and organization operations. With our new CPN Veterans Organization's facilitator, Chris Lenggenhager, leading the way with a more efficient operating system, we should be able to reach more Citizen Potawatomi Nation veterans and have a more efficient working system. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization's Color Guard events and parades are lined up for the new year; we should be very busy. We are still inviting all CPN veterans to join us at our social meetings, with dinner included. Remember, there are no dues required to be a member of the organization, and families are welcome to attend.

Remember, our monthly meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) in the Veterans Memorial Hall in the CPN Cultural Heritage Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Dinner is provided. Our meeting schedule is:

Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 24, April 28 and May 26, 2026.

The June meeting will be on Saturday, June 27, on the second floor of the CPN Golf Club.



Migwetch (Thank you),

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 🔥



Iron Horse wins 2025 Honoring Nations Award

Iron Horse Industrial Park received a 2025 Honoring Nations Award on Nov. 20, 2025, for expanding its capacity for economic development while prioritizing sustainable resource management.

Honoring Nations is a prestigious awards program of the Harvard Project on Indigenous Governance and Development based at Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. The program recognizes Native American tribes for impactful efforts to strengthen tribal governance. Iron Horse was one of six tribal organizations recognized nationwide.

Iron Horse is a 700-acre eco-industrial park located on Native American trust land in central Oklahoma. The park received its designation as a Foreign Trade Zone in 2015, allowing businesses located there to benefit from international trade advantages. Its layout provides tenants with direct access to both rail lines and the U.S. highway system.

"Iron Horse was created to diversify the revenue stream for the Tribe and to secure and protect sovereignty,

self-governance and our people," said Vedrana Milakovic, director of economic development.

The park was designed to recruit manufacturing companies interested in operating within a shared ecosystem. Companies are encouraged to work together by sharing resources, reducing waste, using shared warehouse space and transloading services, allowing goods to move efficiently between rail and truck transportation.

Portions of Iron Horse are also designated for renewable energy development, reinforcing the park's focus on environmental sustainability.

"With today's economic environment, uncertainty and excessive tariffs, it's important to have reliable funding streams," Milakovic said. "The impact of tariffs, rising food prices and increasing construction costs has caused many to look at how tribes, communities and companies can operate more sustainably. Tribes have always held that goal; therefore, we are recruiting domestic and international companies with which we can achieve synergy and share values related to sustainability."

Milakovic described Iron Horse as a business-friendly environment that offers incentives difficult to find elsewhere.

“We want companies that contribute to our infrastructure and invest in developing our Tribe and surrounding community,” she said.

Milakovic shared that Iron Horse being selected as a 2025 Honoring Nations Award winner was meaningful to her and her team.

“Receiving the Honoring Nations Award tells us that what we are doing is different and right when it comes to diversifying our revenue streams for the Tribe,” she told the *Hownikan*. “The beauty of this recognition is that tribes can learn from one another and share knowledge, leading to a greater economic impact.”

Milakovic previously served as assistant director of economic development before recently stepping into the director role. She was born in Bosnia and raised in Sweden and began working for CPN in 2019.

“I was a student-athlete playing basketball at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) during my undergraduate studies, and that played a role in bringing me to Shawnee,” Milakovic said.



After completing her undergraduate degree, she gained international trade and business operations experience at Retail Innovation HTT AB in Sweden. Milakovic returned to the United States to further her education, completing her master’s degree in international business at OBU.

Milakovic shared her vision for Iron Horse and the Nation’s economic development efforts with the *Hownikan*.

“Today, with AI, we are fostering innovation while improving quality of life for our Tribe and community members,” she said. “CPN continues to invest in initiatives, such as the education department and child development centers, which will carry the torch for future generations.”

Find Iron Horse Industrial Park online at ironhorsecpn.com. 🔥



Scholarship opportunities

Please note that due dates are subject to change and you should consult the websites for up-to-date information.

Udall Undergraduate Scholarship – January 6

The Udall Foundation awards scholarships to college sophomores and juniors for their leadership and commitment to issues related to Native American nations or the environment. They anticipate awarding up to 55 scholarships of up to \$7,000 each. This is for students focusing on health care, tribal policy, or the environment. This scholarship emphasizes leadership and commitment to Native American communities and cultural activities over academic requirements.

udall.gov/OurPrograms/Scholarship/Scholarship.aspx

Spring

Daughters of the American Revolution Scholarships – January

Multiple available, must be enrolled full-time and have 3.25 or higher GPA and financial need. Open to graduate or undergraduate students.

dar.org/national-society/scholarships/american-indian

Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarships – February

\$24,000 given over four years to low-income minority students. High school seniors with SAT 900 or above OR 21 ACT or above.

jackierobinson.org/apply

Indian Health Services Scholarship – February

Full tuition, fees, books, and related expenses for students majoring in health professions with a 2.0 or above and intention to serve in Indian Country.

ihs.gov/scholarship/scholarships/eligibility

Cobell Scholarship – March

The Cobell Scholarship is a competitive merit-first, then needs-based scholarship available to any post-secondary student who is enrolled in a U.S. Federally Recognized Tribe, seeking a degree, and enrolled in full-time study. There is no minimum GPA requirement, but a 3.25 for undergraduate work is considered competitive. Applicants with lower GPAs are encouraged to apply with a plan for improving their GPA. cobellscholar.org

American Indian Science and Engineering Society – March

National scholarships for American Indian students pursuing STEM degrees- deadline and requirements vary. Includes funding opportunity for conference travel.

aises.org/students/scholarships

American Indian Education Fund – April

The AIEF provides nearly half a million dollars to mostly first-generation Native American college students. In

addition, the scholarship comes with mentorship and support mechanisms that increase graduation rates and overall student success. nativepartnership.org/aief

Catching the Dream Scholarships – April

For students who are 1/4 or more degree American Indian, seeking a full-time degree in the United States. catchingthedream.org

Summer

American Indian College Fund – May

Any Native American enrolled full-time with at least a 2.0. collegefund.org/students/scholarships

Native Forward – Deadline varies/May – June

Native Forward offers more than 30 different scholarships and fellowships to fund undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies. Because of the variety of scholarships, the requirements change depending on which scholarship most interests or best fits an applicant. This resource is especially good for graduate students. nativeforward.org/scholarship-faq

American Indian Services Scholarship Program – Multiple deadlines corresponding to semester

For full time and part-time students with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.25, the AIS provides undergraduate Native American students with up to one half of the tuition needed for the upcoming term, sent directly to the school. If approved, students are required to write thank-you letters.

americanindianservices.org/scholarships

Association on American Indian Affairs Scholarship – July

Apply through the American Indian College fund. Native Americans enrolled full-time with a 2.5 or higher GPA seeking an associates or higher.

indian-affairs.org/nativescholarship.html

Fall

The Gates Scholarship – July 15 – Sept. 15

Targeting low-income students, Gates provides a last-dollar scholarship that fills the gap between a recipients' existing funding and the funding they need to complete their coursework. Scholars receive funding for the full cost of attendance that is not covered by other sources. The minimum GPA is 3.3 on a 4.0 scale or equivalent.

thegatesscholarship.org/scholarship 🔥



Accounting department receives award for 37th year

Citizen Potawatomi Nation received a GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 37th year. The certificate of achievement was for CPN's annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2024. The award is the highest form of recognition in the area of government accounting and financial reporting. It is bestowed on organizations that demonstrate a "constructive spirit of full disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story." 🔥

Notice of vacancies of Judicial Office - CPN Code 7-2-103(A)

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation, through its Tribal Chairman, hereby issues this Notice of Vacancies of Judicial Office. The Nation requests inquiries, nominations, and applications for two Supreme Court Justices and one District Court Judge to be directed to the Nation's Secretary Treasurer's Office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of this Notice.

Please direct all inquiries, nominations, or applications:

Secretary Treasurer
1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801

or to:

dtrousdale@potawatomi.org

Per CPN Code § 7-2-103, the minimum qualifications for Supreme Court Justice and District Court Judge shall:

(A) Be either:

- (1) An enrolled member of the Tribe, or
- (2) The parent, child, or spouse of an enrolled member of the Tribe, or
- (3) Domiciled within the territorial jurisdiction of the Tribe, or
- (4) An attorney, or
- (5) A lay advocate who has regularly practiced before the Court as a member of the Bar of the Court for a period of five years, or
- (6) An Indian graduate of an American Bar Association approved Law School, or a Paralegal program approved by the Supreme Court; and

- (B) Have demonstrated moral integrity and fairness in their business, public and private life, and
- (C) Have never been convicted of a felony or an offense punishable by banishment, whether or not actually imprisoned or banished, and have not been convicted of any offense, except traffic offenses, for a period of two years next preceding their appointment. The two-year period shall begin to run from the date the person was unconditionally released from supervision.
- (D) Have regularly abstained from the excessive use of alcohol and any use whatsoever of illegal drugs or psychotoxic chemical solvents.
- (E) Be older than twenty-five (25).
- (F) Not be the holder of any other elective Tribal Office, provided that the holder of elective Tribal Office may be confirmed upon their resignation.
- (G) If less than fifty (50), have completed at least thirty (30) semester credit hours at an accredited college or university, or at least two years of previous experience as a Judicial Officer for some recognized Court.

Other details about the nature of the office and the appointment process may be found at CPN Code §§ 7-2-101 et seq.

John A. Barrett, Jr.
Tribal Chairman 🔥

Tribal ties helped member succeed

Tribal member Samantha Masquat knows firsthand how the Citizen Potawatomi Nation can help Tribal members succeed.

Growing up, she was not able to remain in the custody of her parents. At one point, Masquat was made a ward of the state child welfare court. Eventually, she was placed with her grandmother and under the supervision of CPN tribal court.

"It was obviously not a fun experience for me as a young girl," Masquat said. "When (the case) was moved to CPN, I finally had a consistent caseworker, who was B.J. Trousdale. She was always rooting me on. I loved her and I still talk to her today."

With the support of Trousdale and many others, Masquat found her confidence growing.

"I continued to get that support as I went through college, as I was able to get scholarships. I was able to say, 'Hey, look, I can do this, I can make the good grades,' having that incentive and someone to be there for me. The Tribe was really like that in a lot of ways," she said.

Her extended CPN family continued to offer encouragement. After Masquat aged out of custody, Trousdale and other caseworkers put together a basket of items to help Masquat start a new chapter.

"It was towels, washcloths, things someone might need for a dorm. I thought it was like, they had an expectation of me, and they thought I could do it. I don't know if it was intentional on their part, but it meant a lot to me, so many people believed in me," she said. "I just felt that everybody with the Tribe have always had my best interest and were always willing to help me and believed in me."

Masquat said the Tribe has been there as she pursued post-graduate education and even in building her counseling business, Scissortail Counseling Services.

"When I got out on my own I decided to do my master's degree. I then worked at a non-profit as the clinical director. I thought, 'I want to do this in a way that feels true to me.' I thought I'd call the Tribe and see where this goes," she said. "I was surprised, but there were options for me and working with them was so easy. It was really amazing. That's how I was able to open my business and do my own thing."

Masquat has a unique perspective, having received support for her living situation as a child, for her education and as a business owner. She believes that opportunities are available and only limited by imagination.

"Honestly, thinking about the help that I have received is (it's important) for people to reach out, because it's surprising who's willing to help you and who is willing to support you that you might not even think of. If you



don't ask or you don't use those resources, then you'll never know," she said. "I think it was exciting that there were people who were there to back me up and say, 'You can do that,' and, 'Support your dreams and the things that are important to you.'"

Professional growth

The married mother of three and successful business owner primarily counsels patients with mental health and substance use issues.

She is also interested in alternative forms of medicine therapy and research, hoping to find the latest methods that will benefit her patients.

"I do work with mental health as well in a program with the California Institute of Integral Studies, which is focused on psychedelic medicine therapy and research. There's a lot of research with veterans with substance use, using different medications and plant medicines for treating that, so that's something I'm pretty interested in, especially for the people I work with."

She also started the Oklahoma Psychedelic Professionals Network to bring professionals together who are supportive of psychedelic medicine therapy research and starting a dialogue in the community of people who are interested in it.

Masquat chose her career path because of the experiences she had growing up.

"When I finished my bachelor's degree in psychology, I always knew I wanted to help people, I just don't think I really defined how I wanted to do that. I was scouring programs and there's a lot of different options for therapists, a lot of different master's programs in the state," she said.

"When I saw that there was one specific to mental health and substance use, it was like everything that I had experienced up to that moment just clicked. I thought, 'Oh my gosh, you can give so much back. You can make meaning of all these things that you've gone through by helping other people.' It was like a way to make meaning of my own experiences. And it has absolutely been so rewarding, it really has."

Masquat, a Rhodd/Bruno family member, may not have had every opportunity to experience Tribal culture growing up, and she is looking forward to immersing her children in as much CPN culture as possible.

"Having changed the trajectory of a lot of things for them, having gone through that experience myself and having to use those resources myself. That goes into the next generation, right? I have this knowledge and these resources and I can say, 'These things are here for you to do, to use, to support you, to help you.' It's already something we're talking about," she said.

She looks forward to maintaining and strengthening those connections.

"When you open that door and you realize that that is an option, then you see it's kind of always there, right? There's always somewhere to kind of turn to; support is there. Is there something that I could utilize there? And I would encourage everyone to do that and utilize those things," she said.

Marking accomplishments

She encourages other people to take time to celebrate their own accomplishments.

"It feels kind of weird to say, 'Oh, I'm really proud of myself.' But I really am, because putting myself in hard situations and doing things that I don't think I really thought that I could. And then when you do see



you are getting support from people around you or people do really care, it just increases your likelihood to move forward and have more faith in yourself.

If you would have told 18-year-old me that I would have done all those things, I don't know that I would have believed that. I think I'm the first person in my immediate family to have completed (college) and certainly a master's degree," Masquat said.

"Honestly, I'm proud of myself that I was able to overcome. I'm filled with a lot of gratitude for the people who have supported me, whether it's been within the Tribe or outside of the Tribe. In my family, the people who have been supportive, my friends, family, friends who've become family. Having that support completely fills me with gratitude. I'm proud that I didn't give up, I decided to do it and I actually did what I set out to do."

Learn more about Masquat's counseling services on her website at Scissortail Counseling Services or contact her at 405-625-1665. 🔥

From the executives



John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

Bozho, nikan, (Hello, my friend),

I hope all of you had a pleasant, fulfilling Christmas. I'm grateful for the good wishes my fellow Tribal members sent. It fills my heart to hear from each of you.

It is with sadness that I write of the retirement of Chief District Judge Phillip J. Lujan for health reasons. Judge Lujan was our longest serving elected official. He was our judge before we first amended our Constitution in May 1985, serving as one of the original judges in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Court of Indian Offenses. He was elected as our chief district judge when the first Constitution was amended and served with distinction for more than 40 years.

A member of the Kiowa Nation, his dedication led us to later form the current Tribal Constitution. Without his incentives to make the rule of law our guiding premise in governance, we would still be struggling to maintain constancy and stability, the key to our success and national recognition. We will miss him and wish him a speedy recovery. He is a personal friend and mentor and I fondly recall his humor and good nature. He is a very fair and compassionate man who let those qualities be the distinctive character of his conduct and judgements from the bench.

Progress on projects at Tribal headquarters continues at a fast pace. Unusually temperate weather through November and December led to this blessing. The new FireLake Casino is doing record business, and I congratulate General Manager Joe Garcia. He has a strong and talented group of managers and employees who are the key to our success. We are slowly building business for the new FireLake Hotel, and business will boom when softball season starts at the FireLake Ball Fields and when the season starts for the Potawatomi Fire, our professional basketball team.

The new Tribal headquarters building is in the interior finishes phase, and we look to move into it in March. The building we now occupy will then be taken down to expand our Child Development Center. We have applications from over 500 potential new students for the Child Development Center, and nearly as many for the new Child Development Center we will build on Tribal land in Choctaw, Oklahoma, northwest of Shawnee. This land will also be the home of our dental facility. Citizen Potawatomi who reside in the far northwest portion of our reservation jurisdiction will have more convenient facilities, and the new dentistry will cut down the waiting time we now have.

We completed expansion of the Iron Horse Industrial Park Transloading facility with the working and holding concrete pads and a new section of railroad tracks. Traffic on the CPN Railroad will soon double and more, I predict. Iron Horse Industrial Park will soon have several new tenants besides SPT (Sovereign Pipe Technologies), which is doing great business. Our thanks to General Manager Paul Wetmore for his hard work, along with all of the employees there. The oil and gas boom in the Midland-Odessa region of Texas has created a huge need for the kind of high-density polyethylene pipe that we manufacture, especially the large diameter pipe, and our earnings are reflective of that new business.

The newest phase of Tribal housing is occupied, and the next phase of 18 new homes is nearing occupation. This is the first of many new housing units we will build in the next few years. The federal government has a special new loan through the federal home loan agency, FreddieMac, that will allow for the first time federally guaranteed loans for homes built on Tribal Trust land. Sovereign Bank, which is now the largest tribally-owned bank in the country, will provide and service these home loans. Having these new homes in our community is a great help to our grocery stores, fuel services, utility services and entertainment venues. Those of you who wish to "move back home" to Tribal lands should look for opportunities to take advantage of the quality of life, low costs, no property taxes, availability of Tribal services, and a warm and inviting place to live among your relatives.

Thank you with all my heart for the opportunity to serve as your Tribal Chairman. I hope to make this last four-year term that I am serving one of the most memorable of my career.

Migwetch (Thank you),

John "Rocky" Barrett | Keweoge (He Leads Them Home) | Tribal Chairman



Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

Bozho (Hello),

Best wishes to you for a great 2026. I feel like the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is positioned for a grand year. One thing that we especially look forward to before long is moving into the magnificent new administration building. It would have been beyond my imagination when I first became involved with CPN 38 years ago that we would ever own a building of such magnitude to hold so many offices. It will be a superb experience for so many employees to be in one location. It will be so convenient and so much more efficient. It will be a true blessing.

There are many tasks to be completed in 2026 by CPN's competent staff members. Our directors have been working on many projects throughout the Tribe. We are making great strides in programs like education, child development, Indian Child Welfare (ICW) and language, to mention a few. I don't want to leave any program out, because all our programs are making progress, but these are good examples.

CPN enterprises are also making progress. Sovereign Pipe Technology (SPT), Grand Casino Hotel and Resort, and FireLake Casino have all made good progress in 2025 and are looking at prosperity for 2026. Again, these are examples. We look forward to a tremendous growth year. An awesome undertaking for 2025 was CPN Health Services' installation of EPIC software, an automated healthcare reporting system. The system sets the stage for 2026 to be the most successful health services year that the Tribe has ever experienced.

I want to point out the painstaking work Tribal Rolls is doing. They are diligently verifying that the 39,627 CPN list of enrolled members follow guidelines of the CPN Constitution. Item (g) ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRIBE, Section 1 clearly states that ***"No member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation may hold membership in any other Indian tribe."***

If an enrolled member has parents that are from separate tribes, double enrollment could be a possibility. As an adult, it is the responsibility of each enrolled member to know if they are enrolled in more than one tribe. If we have an adult member who wishes to relinquish his/her membership, it should be their right to do so. If a minor is relinquished by a parent or guardian, that person should be able to apply for membership when he/she reaches the age of 18. At the same time, there are solid guidelines for disenrollment. If a person is enrolled erroneously, that person should be disenrolled.

Our CPN construction, electrical, mechanical and architectural departments are undertaking the enormous tasks of preparing CPN for growth in 2026 and beyond. There is construction in progress at the Grand for dental expansion and other medical services. There is construction in progress at the ballfields for the completion of the championship field. There are plans in the future for construction of a medical facility and other facilities in the Asher area. There are plans to prepare the Tribal grounds for the 2027 Gathering of the Potawatomi Nations in the summer of that year. These projects will depend on the skills and expertise of our employees in the above-mentioned departments. They have a huge undertaking before them.

In addition to the projects listed, the Chairman has plans to begin a ground plan for housing during 2026. This will include more work for the Office of Environmental Health (OEH) and Rural Water District #3, of which both programs are at near capacity.

Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion and observations with you for the New Year. I cherish the opportunity to serve you.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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

Are you dually enrolled?

To remain an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, you are not allowed to be enrolled in any other Indigenous tribe. If you are dually enrolled, or if you think you might be, please contact Tribal Rolls at 405-878-5835 or tribalrolls@potawatomi.org.

From the legislature



Steve Livingston District 1

Bozho (Hello),

As we begin a new year, my mind returns to one of our oldest teachings: gratitude. Gratitude isn't a seasonal mindset or something we practice only when things are going well — it's a daily choice that orients us to our community, our Creator and the responsibilities we carry to one another. This past November offered two reminders of that teaching.



We held our first District 1 meeting in Boston at Harvard's Peabody Museum. Seeing citizens from across the Northeast, some attending for the first time and others returning after

many years, was deeply meaningful. We opened with a traditional song from Asa Peters of the Mashpee Wampanoag. I introduced my family and myself in our language, with my daughter translating, and for some, it was their first time hearing *Bodwéwadmimwen* aloud. Sharing our language is important to me, and I hope moments like this encourage others to begin their learning journey.

We heard from District 1 elder George Godfrey of the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, and from Kabl Wilkerson, who helped organize the event and shared his work with Indigenous Chicago. I am grateful to Kabl for his support, to George for traveling many miles and to Dr. Jane Pickering, Dakota LaPlante, and Stephanie Mach of the Peabody Museum for their generosity and partnership. Photos are at cpn.news/guestcam (Code: CPND1-1108).

As we closed with gifts and a final song, what stood out most were the connections. One citizen reunited with a goddaughter he had not seen in years; another shared a recent



L-R Caitlyn Livingston, Laura Woodward, Emmy Woodard, Steve Livingston, George Godfrey, Caitlyn Jones, Dan Levine, and Marianne Almero having dinner after the meeting

health challenge and how meaningful it was simply to be among fellow *Bodéwadmik*. These moments reminded me why community matters and of my responsibility as your elected legislator to help foster it.

Another example of community emerged. During the federal government shutdown, many citizens reached out, unsure where to turn as paychecks and assistance were delayed. Much of our Tribal support is limited to the service area in Oklahoma, but the impact of the shutdown stretched across the country.

Former District 1 legislator Alan Melot and I were looking for ways to support those impacted. Together we contacted District 1 citizen Amanda Funk, who runs the Potawatomi-led nonprofit *Widoktadwen* Center for Native Knowledge, and a community-funded food assistance effort soon took shape. In our language, *widoktadwen* speaks to helping one another, which is what this effort has done. As of this writing, more than 20 donors have raised over \$2,000, already supporting several families!

None of this was done in any official capacity. It was people helping people. Traditionally, our most respected leaders were not those with material wealth, but those who gave of themselves. Our word for chief (*wgéma*), relates to our word for counting — not just in tallying numbers, but remembering who needed help and ensuring no one was forgotten. Leaders looked



L-R Dr. Jane Pickering of Harvard's Peabody Museum, District 1 citizen Kabl Wilkerson and Steve Livingston

after the community: if someone was cold, you offered a blanket; if someone was hungry, you shared what you had. That spirit of giving, whether you have much or little, is what holds our community together.

As I look back, the connecting thread is gratitude. I am grateful for every person who traveled to be with us, for those who donated to help families, and for those who reached out, asked questions and supported one another.

Being Citizen Potawatomi is not only about powwows or material culture, but the relationships we build and the responsibilities we share. My hope for the year ahead is that we carry this spirit of gratitude forward.

Wishing each of you a safe, healthy and hopeful start to 2026.

Steve Livingston | Legislator, District 1 | steve.livingston@potawatomi.org



Eva Marie Carney District 2

Bozho, nikanek (Hello, friends),

2026 District 2 Calendar

I have already planned a few events for 2026, including a medallion beading workshop taught by District 2 resident and art student Mars Pursley on Saturday, Feb. 21, starting at 10:30 a.m. Mars will teach the two-needle flat stitch. More information is available at cpn.news/mars. We will meet at a conference space in Alexandria, Virginia. There's space for about 10 people; let me know if you plan to attend! The date for our next Fall Feast is Saturday, Nov. 14, starting at 10:30 a.m. We will be at the Church Hall in Arlington, Virginia. I have posted the addresses and event details to my website calendar, which is the best place to keep up to date on future gatherings.



Unfortunately, upon contacting the staff at the National Museum of the American Indian's Suitland, Maryland, Cultural Resources Center to request a date to tour the archives and visit with the Potawatomi materials in the collection, I was told that visits cannot be scheduled during 2026. Before the pandemic, this was a regular District 2 event. I am so disappointed by this response and will follow up next year with a 2027 visit. To substitute, I plan to invite folks to join me to tour the Truman Lowe exhibition (cpn.news/trumanlowe) at the National Museum of the American Indian on the Washington, D.C., Mall. The work is spectacular. Watch this space, the District 2 Facebook page and my website calendar for more details as I have them.



2012 Archives visit

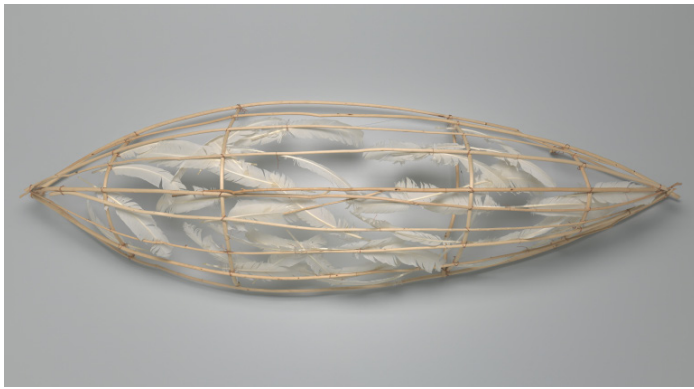
Join me at the 2026 Family Festival, which takes place Friday, June 26, through Sunday, June 28, and the 2026 Potawatomi Gathering, which takes place (starting with a language conference) Sunday, July 26, to Sunday, Aug. 2.

For the Family Festival, it is not too early to book one of our two hotels by calling the Grand Casino Hotel at 405-964-7777. Among details of note:

- The Honored Families for 2026 are Acton, Bergeron, Bruno, Curley, DeLonais, Greemore and Slavin
- Powwow and Grand Entry take place Saturday evening, June 27
- In-person voting on candidates and other ballot measures takes place on Saturday, June 27, before General Council and by absentee ballot; all ballots are counted immediately before Saturday afternoon's General Council meeting, when voters' decisions are announced

Look for Potawatomi Gathering details on the website managed by this year's Gathering host, the Forest County Potawatomi Community at cpn.news/fcp and on the Community's Facebook page (facebook.com/fcpotawatomi).

In addition, I welcome input about good District 2 meeting spots for about 50 people — I am looking for Florida and Arkansas locations most immediately.



Truman Lowe, Feather Canoe, ca. 1993

Long-Delayed Admission to the New York State Bar

Did you read that Ely Samuel Parker, an aide to Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War and a federal government official, finally was admitted to the New York State Bar, 176 years after he was denied entry because he was Native American? According to a New York Times piece published Nov. 19, 2025, Parker was a member of the Senecas, a Haudenosaunee Confederacy nation. He was blocked for admission because he, like most Native people, did not “qualify” for U.S. citizenship. (The Indian Citizenship Act was passed in 1924.) Read about this man’s many accomplishments, as explained by the History Society of the

New York Courts at cpn.news/hsnyc, or sign up as a guest to read the Times piece at cpn.news/nyt. I love this Times quote from Lee Redeye, deputy counsel for the Seneca Nation of Indians: “Ely’s story is an inspirational one; it inspired me when I was in college, to aspire to something higher. I hope there is at least one young Native who hears about Ely and is inspired to go into the law and help our people.”

Please Keep in Touch and Continue to Share Family News

What is your family news? Please keep in touch and share your family news as you have it!

Migwetch (Thank you), for the honor of representing you. Happy holidays and New Year to all!

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



Brenda Trevino District 3

Bozho jayek (Greetings all)!

Our history is full of winter stories that bring reflection and wonder of this planet and our Creator. So long ago, it was winter when the Creator and our fellow inhabitants of the Earth taught us to fish through the ice. It was winter when we learned the sweetness of the maple trees in the form of syrup. We also learned from the animals to save nuts in the fall to use as a form of energy and protein during the winter.

In addition to meeting our physical needs during the winter season, we became closer as a community. As the People of the Place of the Fire, we continued to keep the fire burning for warmth, connection and storytelling.

As we look forward to spring and the

promise of new beginnings, let’s keep the fire burning in our hearts for each other. Finding an interest to join or a program to volunteer with that directly supports our Nation, our people and our families is important. Just as the muskrat swam deep to find the soil for turtle island to grow, we can each do our part to bring about something new or to strengthen what is already being done.

By the time this article reaches you, the Corpus Christi Meet-and-Greet will be in the rear-view mirror. The February meeting in The Woodlands will be in front of us. Thank you for our time together. And may the planned district meetings bring us all closer to our family, friends and ancestors who kept the fire glowing for us.



CPN District 3 Meet & Greet

Come for the family. Stay for the fun!

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21,
2026 10:30AM-1:30PM**

**KEVIN BRADY
COMMUNITY CENTER**

2250 Buckthorne Place
The Woodlands, Texas 77380

District meetings are for members, their spouses and immediate family. Bring your tribal IDs to sign in.

RSVP by February 14, 2026
to brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org or call 281-466-7427

Finally, please send me your email address and any other contact information you consent to provide so you can receive communication directly from me.

The February meeting will be at the new Kevin Brady Library and Community Center, 2250 Buckthorne Place, The Woodlands, Texas, 77380. The room is reserved from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (program starts at 10:30 a.m.). This is the second of five meet-and-greet meetings through June, with a larger regional meeting in Waco on April 18. The save-the-date calendar for each of the monthly planned meetings in District 3 has been mailed to the address on file by Tribal Rolls. Please RSVP and come one, come all!

Migwetch for allowing me to serve each of you!
Please reach out if I can be of assistance.

Brenda Trevino | *Mkedewankwetkwe* (Black Cloud Woman)
brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org | 281-466-7427



Jon Boursaw District 4

What I experienced in November

Since I first was elected to the Nation’s legislature, I’ve never had a schedule like what I experienced in November. It started with a trip to Washington, D.C., actually Arlington, Virginia. Legislator Eva Marie Carney invited me to give my CPN history presentation at her District 2 meeting. Since her meeting started at 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 8, I flew to D.C. on Friday. After my presentation and lunch on Saturday, I arrived at Reagan National Airport in plenty of time before my flight. Everything went well until I learned of several flight cancellations.

About an hour after my original departure time, my flight was canceled. The airline provided a hotel

room, and I finally returned home on Sunday, Nov. 9. That accounted for our initial trip to Kansas City and 164 miles. But, there were several more trips to make:

On the evening of Nov. 18, along with CPN member Angela Montgomery, I attended a meeting of the Olathe (Kansas) City Council, where we received a proclamation acknowledging Native American Heritage Month. That was a 182-mile round trip.

On the next evening, Nov. 19, Angela and I were invited to a dinner meeting of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District Board of Commissioners where we were again presented with a proclamation. The proclamation read: “In recognition of this heritage



Proclamation acknowledging Native American Heritage Month by Olathe City Council in November 2025

New Year. New Chances to Earn.
uChoose Rewards.



Member FDIC

month we affirm our commitment to collaborate with Native individuals, families and tribal communities to enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of Indigenous contributions to our social, cultural and natural environments." Add 178 miles to our travel.

On Monday of that same week, I was notified that on Sunday, Nov. 23, I was to be honored as a Native American Veteran during the Kansas City Chiefs game as part of their Salute to Service Day. I informed the person who contacted me that there were others more deserving of this recognition than me. As it turned out, it was one of the greatest moments I've ever experienced. My first thought was that I wanted my son, Drew, who lives in Westbrook, Maine, to share this moment with me.

Here is how the day went:

- We had VIP parking just a few minutes from the stadium.
- We had seats in what is called the Founder's Suite, which offered food, beverages and front row seating.
- Midway through the first quarter of the game, I was asked to accompany an escort who would take me down to the playing field.
- When we arrived at the tunnel leading on to the field, I was met by two Chiefs cheerleaders, who would lead me onto the field.
- A timeout was called few minutes later and we proceeded out on to the field.
- Then a video began to appear on the "big board" at each end of the stadium which projected a few photos while a narrative of my career was read.
- At the end of the video there was a sound that I will never forget and that was the roar from 80,000 fans.



Legislator Jon Boursaw was honored as a Native American Veteran during the Kansas City Chiefs' Salute to Service Day.

That weekend there were three round trips. Drew's flight arrived at midnight on Saturday (164 miles), to the stadium on Sunday (166 miles) and back to the airport on Monday (164 miles). That means we drove a total of 918 in less than a month.

Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

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

Feb. 13 Breakfast RSVP by the 10th

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

Migwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | Wetase Mkoh (Brave Bear) | jboursaw@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



Mark Johnson District 7

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

The arrival of the New Year always gives us all a chance to reflect on the past and to look forward to the future. 2025 was a difficult year for many of our members and I am not sure I am sad to see it go, but I have chosen not to dwell on the difficulties but to look at the perseverance that has made our Tribal Nation one of strength and resilience. It never ceases to amaze me how fast the new year seems to roll around, my eternal optimism in the good that exists in the world, and the prospects of what challenges the new year will bring. 2025 was a banner year as a Tribal Nation, as many new projects were completed and new milestones were reached. The new FireLake Casino and Hotel opened, along with improvements to the ballfields. The new administration building is well on its way to nearing completion and should be open by mid-2026. A few in our Tribe have questioned why we feel it necessary to continue



the diversification and growth of our Tribal enterprises. With the growth of our Tribal population nearing 40,000 members, we need to keep growing to keep the ability to provide benefits like scholarships, mortgage assistance and health aids, for example, that many have come to depend on. I believe we have made great improvements towards meeting the current needs of our members and growing smartly to meet the needs of our members in the future.

Regardless of what you do or where you live, everyone has a responsibility to help make our community, our family, and our Tribe better, stronger and more vibrant than it was when we arrived. With that said, I would like to announce that I will be seeking another term as your representative for District 7. The honor and trust that you bestowed on me originally in 2010, and in re-electing me since, is never taken lightly or for granted. I hope I have earned your trust.

I have said many times over the years that it is refreshing to be a part of a government that works. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has been able to successfully defend itself against those who would like our sovereignty to be taken away. It is a job that will never be done, but is dependent on a strong, dedicated and focused legislature and executive branch. You have that with your currently serving legislature.

Vice-Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer are also on the ballot this year, and I would strongly encourage you to learn about each candidate and their qualifications for the job – the leadership that they provide in the executive branch and our Nation is invaluable.

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 representative. 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



Dave Carney District 8

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

Happy New Year! 2026 has all the promise and opportunity of every new year's beginning. I am very hopeful for the future of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as we head into the new year.

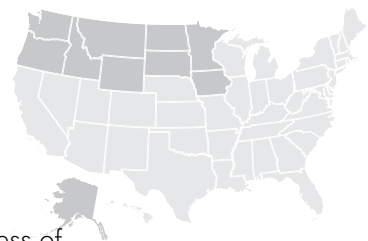
I spent a week in mid-November 2025 at the annual National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) held in Seattle, Washington. It was an honor to represent our Nation at this event. There were approximately 2,400 attendees from across the United States.

Getting there and getting home was a special challenge in the dark, rainy mornings in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Highway 5, speckled with accidents and highway patrol. One morning, the hour-and-fifteen-minute drive from Olympia, Washington, to downtown Seattle took over two and a half hours!

Each conference day began with a well-attended general assembly. Each one of these sessions had a general theme and some very prestigious speakers. There were government representatives from local Native nations, city of Seattle officials and representatives of the Trump administration (HHS and Treasury). Prior to every session, there was an invocation delivered by a different Native speaker. It was wonderful to hear so many different languages worshipping the Creator.

Afternoon and evening sessions covered a variety of topics affecting Indian Country. I attended lectures on topics ranging from tribal sovereignty, the missing and murdered Indigenous women crisis and safeguarding Native American intellectual property.

Tuesday morning, I enjoyed an excellent breakfast hosted by UNITY, United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. This organization is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The core mission of this organization is youth leadership



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development, community service, advocacy, networking and mentorship. An impressive panel of young people introduced themselves and shared a little about their involvement with UNITY and their future leadership aspirations. Two of the participants were Potawatomi (one from Pokagon and one from Prairie Band).

As a delegate to the National Congress of American Indians, I was able to vote both for CPN and for myself. There was the election of officers and over 100 resolutions, mostly in support of NCAI recognizing and affirming the rights of tribal nations and calling on the administration and federal government to fulfill their obligations.

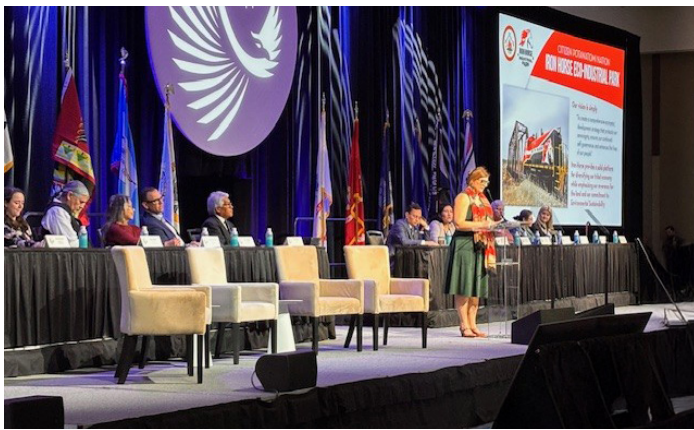
Thursday morning had attendees electing officers for two-year terms. Initially, there were three candidates, so a special run-off election took place for the role of president. In the end, the following individuals were elected:

President: Mark Macarro (incumbent), Chairman of the Pechanga Band of Indians

1st Vice President: Brian Weeden (incumbent), Chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Recording Secretary: Christie Modlin, Secretary, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Treasurer: Ashley Cornforth, Secretary/Treasurer, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.



Vedrana Milakovic presents about CPN's Iron Horse Industrial Park at the National Congress of American Indians

Friday morning, attendees voted on the resolutions and elected officials were sworn in.

During the general assembly on Thursday, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation was honored along with five other tribes by the Harvard Kennedy School. The Nation's 700-acre Iron Horse Industrial Park was recognized as a model to expand commerce in Indian Country. An interesting and informative presentation was made by Vedrana Milakovic, MBA, CPN director of planning and economic development. As an example of the other honorees, one was the Cherokee Nation for collaborating on a new College of Osteopathic medicine with OSU.

I am looking forward to seeing tribal citizens in both Oklahoma and throughout District 8 in 2026.

As always, it is my pleasure to represent you,

Dave Carney | Kagashgi (Raven) | dcarney@potawatomi.org | 360-259-4027



Paul Wesselhöft District 9

Bozho, nikan (Hello, friend),

Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

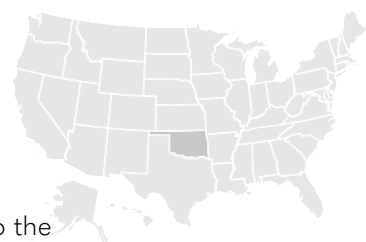
The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The amendment was enacted in 1868 under President Andrew Johnson.

The controversial phrase is, "and subject to the jurisdiction thereof," which is the subject of heated debate, and the exact meaning will probably be determined by the Supreme Court. However, that's my article's subject. I want to address U.S. citizenship of Native Americans.

Native Americans and their children did not become U.S. citizens until Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Some interpreters believe that there would have been no need to pass such legislation if the 14th Amendment extended citizenship to every person born in America, no matter what the circumstances of their birth, and no matter who their parents are.

The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge. The inspiration of the act came about because some 12,000 Native American male soldiers served the United States honorably and bravely during WWI. Many more Native Americans, men and women, served at home by working in war industries and buying war bonds.



The act reads, "That all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: *Provided* That the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property."

The act also paved the way for tribes to become recognized nations where their members would become citizens of two nations: tribal and the United States. I'm a citizen of two nations and three if I include my citizenship in Heaven.

There was a major failure of the Indian Citizenship Act. The act did not grant Native Americans full citizenship for the right to vote. Some states forbade Native Americans, as well as African Americans, the right to vote. It was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, that all legal barriers at the state and local levels were abolished.

As bonafide citizens of two nations, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the United States of America, we have the blessed right to vote and determine the future of our nations and homeland. It's inexcusable that any adult Native American has not registered to vote and voted.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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

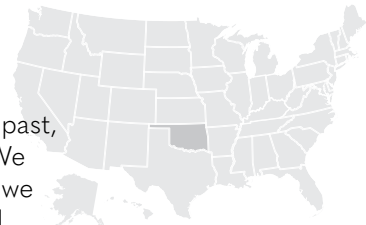
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Andrew Walters District 11

Bozho (Hello),

At this beginning of a new year, we must look behind us, into the past, to see our future. The past charts our course to some extent. We can always re-set our sails and tack a course of our own making, or we can remain steady on course. The choice is ours — that thing called "free will." Where we are today is a product of many yesterdays, and years, in the past. The past for our Tribe has been, in the long term, one of growth, identity and sovereignty. We have come, to say the least, from humble beginnings. Our ancestors came to Oklahoma with a dream. William Henley said it most poignantly when he wrote, in part, "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul." That was our ancestors' dream, their belief, their dearest desire: to live in a place where they could prosper and grow, where their families



would for generations live and build. A place of their own, for their people. A place where they commanded their fate.

After the series of displacements from the Great Lakes, through Illinois and Kansas, our ancestors found themselves here in Oklahoma, living on land bought from their collective savings and land sales. This land taken from the Seminole by the U.S. government as punishment for their part in the not-so-distant Civil War became home.

It was hard for them. The Oklahoma summers were unforgiving. The work was hard. There were times when giving up and letting the dust of the "white man's wrath" have the land back seemed the best.

The winters were cold and bitter, worse than in other places. Before, there had been trees for wood and hills to find shelter from the winter's bitter bite. But here, there was nothing to hold winter back but, as the old saying goes, "a three-strand barb wire fence, and two of the strands were broken."

Some became "Indian Okies," moving to California. Others moved to other states and began to build new lives away from the "reservation." From those scattered ancestors, a Tribe grew. Like a tree spreading its roots. Tribal members from around the U.S. and the world came together, clinging tightly to the soil of their shared heritage.

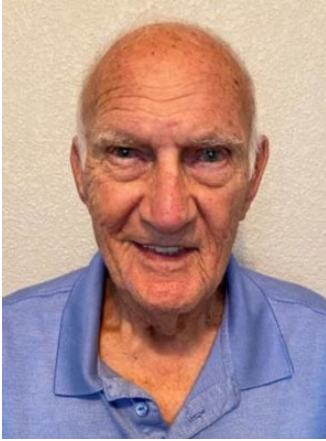
We have, since those humble beginnings, become a Tribe of nearly 40,000 members. Through the efforts of the past, we, the descendants of these brave people, have succeeded in building a sovereign empire of business, Tribal assets and people. And we continue to grow, to change. After all, life is change. In our existence, we have learned that the successful contemporary Native American Tribe must adapt. We must adapt to a new and ever-changing world of challenges and pitfalls. The art is to do that without losing our traditions, language and soul. We must dig deeply into that same soil of shared heritage that feeds our growth, to cling to the fruits of our endeavors, and watch our young people blossom in the knowledge of who they are and where they came from. Cora and I wish you all a wonderful, love-filled new year.

Bami pi (Until later),

Andrew Walters | andrew.walters@potawatomi.org | nibwemko@gmail.com

Walking On

Harold Jack Wooldridge Peltier Family



Harold "Jack" Wooldridge passed away on Sept. 4, 2025, at the age of 95.

Jack, the name he preferred to use, was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. He was born in Washington, Oklahoma. He was in his 50s when he found his biological father, Joseph Marrs, and was surprised and happy to learn of his Potawatomi heritage and became a proud member. Jack, with his wife, son

and granddaughter, loved going to the powwows until it became too difficult for him to travel. He did continue to attend regional meetings.

He was a man of many talents and his artworks can be seen in the Potawatomi museum.

He retired from the Navy in 1989.

Jack was a man of high integrity and beloved by family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; his son, Bret; granddaughters; and his great-grandsons and great-granddaughters.

Norman A. Frapp Frapp Family



Norman A. Frapp, 92, of Oblong, Illinois, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025, at The Haven of Ridgeview in Oblong.

He was born on Dec. 18, 1932, in Joliet, Illinois, to Norman E. Frapp and Kathrine (Johnston) Frapp. On Nov. 12, 1953, he married Donna J. Lane, and together they shared nearly 69 years of marriage filled with love, family and devotion until her passing on Oct. 24, 2022.

Norman graduated from Joliet Central High School in 1951. He worked for Caterpillar in Joliet and retired after 30 years of dedicated service. He was a proud member of the International Association of Machinists.

He was a man of simple joys and steady presence. He loved the outdoors, especially fishing and hunting, and had a lifelong passion for music. Norman and Donna spent many vacations with their children fishing in Fort

Atkinson and Hayward, Wisconsin. In high school, he played guitar with the Melody Ramblers Band with future brother-in-law Donald Reiss, and later in life continued to perform Bluegrass with local groups at area senior dances. Norman was always happiest when playing while his beloved Donna danced.

More than anything, Norman cherished his family. He was a loving and generous father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather who took pride in the lives and accomplishments of those he loved. His quiet strength and kind heart will be remembered by all who knew him.

He is survived by his daughters, Linda Walton of Calhoun, Georgia, Brenda Keller of Goodlettsville, Tennessee, and Norma Lewis of Rantoul, Illinois; as well as his son, Timothy (Angela) Frapp of Robinson, Illinois. He also leaves behind nine grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Donna; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Fredrick and Dorothy Horton; and brother-in-law, Donald Reiss.

Jeanette (Jean) Marie Burris Lavier Family



Jeanette (Jean) Marie Burris, age 75, passed away on June 4, 2025, in Kansas City, Kansas. She was born on May 24, 1950, to Donald and Ruby Olson in Omaha, Nebraska. She attended all of her school years in Omaha.

She married Charles (Uncle Chuck) Burris in December of 1990. She and Chuck loved to go to the movies or watch them from home. They also enjoyed riding his motorcycle. They both enjoyed spending

time with their many nieces and nephews. Jean worked for many years for JCPenney as a customer service representative. She made many friends there.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Burris; her parents, Don and Ruby Olson; and two brothers, Kenneth Olson and Gerald Olson. She is survived by seven sisters, Sr. Donna Olson of O'Fallon, Missouri, Sue Kopfle (Mike) of Columbia, Missouri, Marti Boling (Jay) of Topeka, Kansas, Mary Anglin (Steve) of Mobile, Alabama, Carol Olson of Rossville, Kansas, Paula Taylor of Topeka, and Monica Olson of Topeka.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Spay and Neuter Clinic.

A celebration of life was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at Davis Funeral Chapel, 531 Shawnee St., Leavenworth. Burial followed at Leavenworth National Cemetery.

Theresa Millen
Higbee/Bertrand Family



Theresa Millen was born on Sept. 16, 1960, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Grace and Chet Doyle and passed away on March 14, 2025, in Canon City, Colorado.

Theresa is survived by her partner since 2005, Eugene (Geno) Johns of Colorado; her only child, Tonya (Keith) Chavira of Lamar, Colorado; grandchildren, Brandon (Hannah) Chavira, Taylor (Levi) Lucio, Riley Chavira, and Keiton Chavira — all of Lamar,

Colorado; and great-grandchildren, Paxton Lucio, Myla Lucio, and Brynlee Chavira. She is also survived by brothers Rick, Neil, and Jeff Doyle as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other family, and a host of friends. Theresa was very proud of her Potawatomi heritage and spoke about it every chance she got.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Grace and Chet, and infant sister, Mary Catherine Doyle.

Willie (Sunny) Wamego-Marsh
Rhodd/Vieux/ Wamego Family



Born on Oct. 28, 1941, in Claremore, Oklahoma, to William O. Wamego and Emma M. Hunt-Wamego, Willie (Sunny) Wamego-Marsh passed away on Oct. 3, 2025, in Apple Valley, Minnesota. Sunny is survived by her loving husband of 61 years, Jimmie, and children, Christopher (Michelle) Marsh from Indianola, Iowa, and Melissa (Chris) Grassmann from Burnsville, Minnesota.

Sunny is the second oldest of 13 children, and she was raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She graduated from Holy Family Catholic High School in 1960. She then started Tulsa Business School while working at Saint Johns Hospital in Tulsa as a nurse's assistant.

Sunny met Jimmie Marsh in January of 1964 in Tulsa, and they were married on Oct. 10, 1964. They moved to Minnesota the next day, settling in Minneapolis. Willie

had never been away from her family, and the move was hard on everyone. They referred to this time as their lean years. In September of 1965, their son Christopher was born. Sunny thrived as a wife and mother.

During this time Sunny worked for Schaper Toys in Lakeville. After the factory closed, she went back to school at Dakota County Technical College to be a medical transcriptionist. She worked for a counseling clinic in Edina until her retirement in 2001.

Sunny's role of wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother was her pride and joy. Family was everything to her and she cherished all of her time with her them, spending time with them at every opportunity. She loved to cook, making countless meals for her family. She also loved movies, taking the children to movies and even midnight showings.

Upon her retirement they moved back to Oklahoma in August of 2004, living there for 18 years. In May of 2022, Sunny suffered a stroke, which is what led to them moving back to Minnesota to be closer to their children in March of 2023.



Hau ndenwémagnek

Ho my relatives

Ébyé yak shote gnom

We have come here today

Éwi nesh myé yak ode wdenwéma

To lay our brother to rest

Ngom she épam sét ode

Today he walks

Ga wje zhyé wat gi gambojek

Among those who have passed on

I yé i ébgednoyak ode ngenwen

That is why we offer this song

Émno shketot wa je zhyat ibe shpemsegok

That his journey will go well where he goes above

Iw énaj moyan

That's all I have to say

A Potawatomi prayer for a specific loved one who has walked on.

By Don Perrot

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