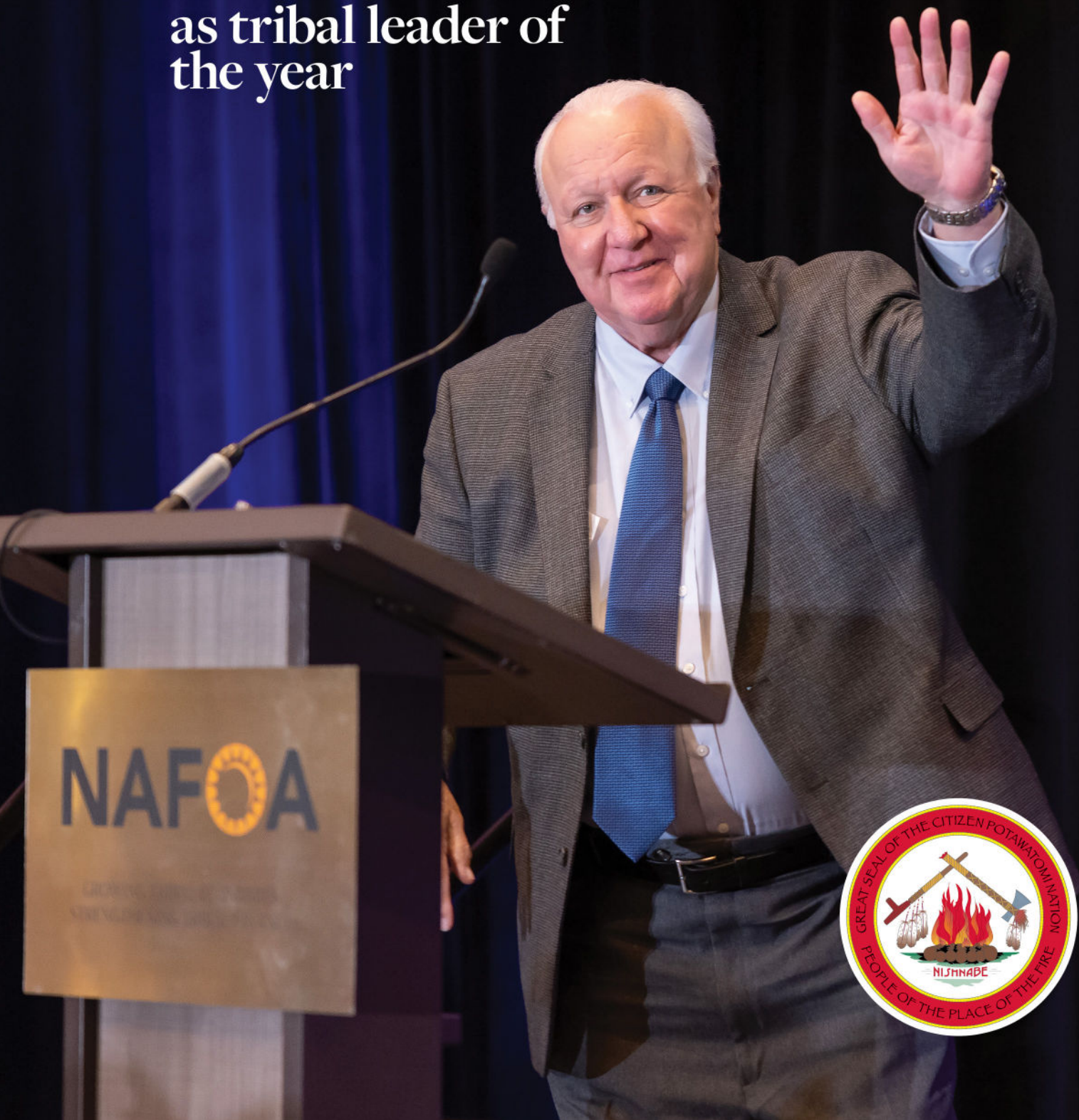


# HOWNIKAN

Démengises | June 2025

## Chairman honored as tribal leader of the year



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**Disclaimer** - This month's edition of the *Hownikan* features political advertising. These ads are created and provided by the candidates and their supporters in accordance with the statutes of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the *Hownikan* election guidelines.





# Chairman honored as tribal leader of the year

NAFOA (Native American Finance Officers Association) honored Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett as the Tribal Leader of the Year at its 43rd annual conference at the end of April in New Orleans.

Each year, NAFOA celebrates those who have had a lasting and positive impact on tribal economies, with the Tribal Leader of the Year award considered the highest honor for elected leaders. The award recognizes leaders who have “displayed significant foresight and resolve in the financial advancement” of their tribal nations.

“Visionary. Leader. Honored one. These are a few of the words which describe the chairman of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation,” CPN Chief Financial Officer Mary Chisholm said in her introduction of Chairman Barrett at the awards luncheon.

He received a standing ovation from attendees as he accepted his award, and he offered those present a heartfelt thanks of *igwien*.

Chairman Barrett thanked the members of the NAFOA board for the honor, CPN employees and management, especially those of the Tribe’s Sovereign Bank, several of whom attended the conference, and Tribal members who have allowed him to serve in office by voting for him for 11 terms.

During his speech, Chairman Barrett also spoke of the decisions all leaders make that have unfortunate consequences and how important it is to acknowledge those mistakes and learn from them.

“What we do not do, as is the current political fashion in other governments that we deal with, is just to deny that the mistakes ever happened and lie about the results and say what a great accomplishment they were,” he said.

Though identifying as a conservative, Chairman Barrett talked about how troubled he is by the current political environment.

“The ghastly impact of these first 100 days of this administration will be remembered as the time of the most self-destructive acts by the federal government in modern history,” he said.

He spoke of the resurgence of populist governments every two to three generations and how they serve as a threat, especially to tribal governments, and discussed what he believes to be the best path to navigate the current environment.

“We need to make ourselves, as governments, an indispensable part of those non-Indian communities with which we share territory,” Chairman Barrett said, explaining some of the ways CPN has partnered with surrounding communities, from operating a state-chartered rural water district to having CPN officers deputized to serve Pottawatomie County to paving and lighting roads.

“We hope that if and when the federal government acts to harm us in some way that both our tribal and non-tribal neighbors will come to our defense at the polls, because we are needed in the community and because we are essential to the quality of life for our neighbors. And that will be when America returns to its original, conservative values.”

Chairman Barrett closed by asking NAFOA officers to excuse his use of his speech to discuss politics.

“I ask your forgiveness, but I’m not alone in my alarm. It is based on over 40 years in tribal elected office, and 24 of those years in litigation with either the city, the county or the state of Oklahoma,” he said. “My advice will be held in as much value, I hope, as I hold your award in value. And I thank you from my heart for it.” 🔥

# New patient portal launches July 14

CPN Health Services patients may soon notice a change with the launch of Epic's MyChart, a new patient portal, on July 14.

With MyChart, CPNHS patients who sign up will have a means to securely access and manage their personal health information online. It allows users to view test results, request prescription refills and schedule urgent care appointments from a mobile device or computer.

## What are some examples of ways patients might use MyChart?

- A parent who remembers a child's vaccine form is due can find the immunization record on MyChart and email it to the school.
- Patients can receive refill reminders, put in requests for refills, pick their pharmacy and even track when their prescription is ready.
- Patients can receive billing alerts, make payments and set up payment plans.
- For urgent care visits, MyChart offers a way for patients to see open times and schedule the one that works best for them.
- Patients can see past and future appointments, test results, shots and summaries on their MyChart.
- Patients can also update personal information such as address, phone number or insurance information.

## Learn more and sign up at the Family Reunion Festival

Tribal members attending the Family Reunion Festival can look for the MyChart booth that will be set up there. Information Technology and registration teams can walk patients and their families through the sign-up process. A valid ID is required. Bring



# MyChart

your phone if you are able, but if you cannot, there will be tablets available to use at the booth.

## Will personal information be safe?

MyChart uses the same encryption as online banking, so patient data stays private. Only you — and anyone you choose — can see it.

## Why the change to Epic?

CPNHS hopes MyChart will mean patients spend less time on the phone, have fewer papers to take up space on desks and refrigerators, and have more control of their own health information.

Working with Epic, the nurses and providers at CPNHS will also have instant access to information such as a patient's surgical history, ER visits, dental records and previous treatments, not just from CPNHS but also from any partner organizations that use Epic.

"This partnership is not merely a technical change. It is a commitment to our mission. We are investing in tools that will allow us to capture and analyze data in real time. With this information, we can make informed decisions that directly impact our patients' health and well-being," Dustin Farris, CPNHS's project director for Epic, said. "We will reduce errors, enhance safety, and personalize care in ways we have only dreamed of. Together, we will not only change how we record information but how we change lives."

For more information about MyChart, visit [cpn.news/mychart](http://cpn.news/mychart). 🔥

# CONTROL IS NOT REAL LOVE



## CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

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# Vice-Chairman Capps receives Helping Hands Award

The Shawnee News-Star recently recognized Citizen Potawatomi Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, a member of the Navarre family, with a Helping Hands Award.

Vice-Chairman Capps was among four community members honored for being someone in the community who “selflessly helps others and makes the community a better place for everyone.”

She and the other award recipients, Sarah Bailey, Travis Flood and Bill Ford, received their awards at a reception held in downtown Shawnee in April.

The individual who nominated her said that though she serves as an elected official, Vice-Chairman Capps also “personally does so many other things because of her caring heart.”

“I know she volunteers her time on so many boards and committees to help others,” the nominator continued. “She is always one phone call away in times of need to help make things happen. She puts everyone before herself and absolutely loves her entire community. She is a leader and someone who sets the example of helping others. She is always the one that says let’s talk about it and see what we can do to make it happen. She exemplifies all she does with her helping hands!”

During her administrative tenure at CPN, Vice-Chairman Capps brought several initiatives to the table, from working with Tribal Rolls to develop photo IDs for tribal enrollment, to helping with a 2005 electrical project to install streetlights on Hardesty Road, to acquiring important parcels of land for the Tribe, including acreages like the Knight Farm, Giverny Golf land, Luman property, Sharp property, Gilbert Trucking property, and much more.

CPN Director of Education Rachel Watson said Vice-Chairman Capps also is the department’s “fiercest supporter,” who helps enable them to accomplish the things they want, shows up at every event she can and enjoys connecting with students.

“Last year, she made a special point to spend additional time with our Potawatomi Leadership Program participants and make sure each one of them felt seen,” Watson said.

When students have additional needs beyond the limits of the department, or when local schools are looking for additional support, Watson said Capps does all she can to make sure those needs are met and that students are getting the services they need.

“We have schools that are not required by law to consult with us, choosing to do so because of their relationship with her and her reputation within the community,” Watson added.



Vice-Chairman Linda Capps receives the Helping Hands Award at a reception in April.

In addition to the many years Vice-Chairman Capps has served as an elected official for the Tribe, she also made a difference to the lives of students for many years.

Throughout the years, she has served as a high school business teacher, yearbook and newspaper sponsor, secondary business instructor, Title IV Indian education coordinator, career education coordinator, bid assistance coordinator and as an adult education instructor.

She has worked at Dover Public Schools, Tecumseh High School and Gordon Cooper Technology Center, where she was a founding member of the GCTC Foundation Board. In 2010, Capps was inducted into the Gordon Cooper Technology Center Hall of Fame, which aims to honor those who give their time and talents to the betterment of GCTC.

Capps has also served on many boards and professional organizations throughout the years. Some of those include being on Oklahoma University’s Planning Committee on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) for Southwest Center of Human Relations Studies, Community Advisory Council of the Kansas City Federal Reserve, a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank Branch of Oklahoma City, Board of Directors of Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma, and a long-standing member of the Board of Directors for Sovereign Bank.

Over the years, she has been a recipient of awards such as Oklahoma Citizen of the Year, the Small Business Administration’s Oklahoma Minority Advocate of the Year (1997), the *Journal Record*’s Native American Leaders in Business (2021), Pottawatomie County Most Powerful Woman (2020), Tecumseh Citizen of the Year (2020 and 2012), Don Bodard Friend of Youth Award (2017), Kate Barnard Award (2017) and the Shawnee Chamber’s Gordon Richards Achievement Award (2016). 🔥

# Long-time legislators retiring

Expressing gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Nation and optimism for the future, Citizen Potawatomi Nation Legislators Bob Whistler (*Bmashi*, or He Soars) and Gene Lambert (*Memegwe*, or Butterfly Woman) are retiring from their elected offices.

Whistler has represented District 3, which includes most of Texas, since 2008. He is a Bourassa family descendant. Lambert, a Navarre and Melot descendant, has represented District 5 since June 2008. District 5 includes Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska and parts of Texas.

## What first motivated you to run?

**Whistler:** "Before I ran, we had about 10 (representative) regions. When they announced (district representatives), I knew I had to try to do this. My aunt Philonese taught me a lot about our culture and I had worked in quite a number of types of businesses. I thought I could bring knowledge from these businesses that most people don't have, so I went for it. The other thing was my background in math and science. I felt that helped me look at details and I thought I could bring some things to the Nation that others might not bring.

"I had also been an at-large representative for the city of Bedford, Texas. So, I was bringing a little bit of government experience, too. When you wrap all those things up, I really felt that I had a lot to bring."

**Lambert:** "I had been a regional director for nine years. When the legislature was developed, (Vice-Chairman) Linda (Capps) thought it would be a good crossover for me to stay in the region that I had already been working with, but in a different capacity. The regional director represented the Nation to the people. But the legislature represents the people to the Nation. The transition was very different. I had to unlearn and then relearn. But, I'd already gotten to know the families and the people I'd be working with and wanted to continue to serve.

I was honored to have that opportunity and to be in as long as I was."

## What is your favorite memory from your tenure?

**Whistler:** "I am proud of myself because there was one particular resolution that I personally was opposed to. But I stopped and I thought about my district and the people, having known a lot of them



Bob Whistler

over a period of time, I decided it was best for the people. Although I personally would have voted against it, I voted for it. I think for a lot of our current people who are in office in (national) political positions do things that are selfish rather than what's best for their constituents. Whoever is the representative at CPN has got to look at the whole picture. Do what they think is best.

"I do think that you really need to go to Family Festival and the (Potawatomi) Gathering, that way you see what the variances are between the nations and learn how each has adapted and what they're doing. I think it's very beneficial. All of the nations must take advantage, just like they did historically, with the area that they live in."

**Lambert:** "Helping someone keep their baby, helping people get themselves enrolled and get the help that they needed. The Tribe has been so good to so many people. Then to get to be a part of all that, helping anyone from a homeless person to being able to experience someone's wedding day, their funerals, their namings and there's a bonding that happens. They become family and that's been my experience in 27 years.

"It's almost as if it hasn't hit me yet. But it's time though. It's time to let the younger ones come in and mix because you need the mature, but you also need the new ideas."

## What do you envision for the Nation's future?

**Whistler:** "Involvement by the younger people is waning. It is not to the same level it was a few years ago. I would like to see a maximum of four terms. I think we need to make a change in (legislators) at least once every 20 years if not sooner. That way, the younger people are going to bring in the new ideas. As we age we tend to sort of get locked into things that are comfortable and we think are good, but sometimes, like with technology, we don't keep up with it. We really need that if we're to go into the future.

"We've got to have people that are broad-minded because we have to be looking at culture and our history, as well as our future in the business area. We have to be able to look at that."

**Lambert:** "We've gone from getting together individually to Zoom. Because we're so large, people don't have an opportunity to meet their leadership. Through



Gene Lambert

teleconferences, they would have opportunities to see (leaders) and ask questions during our meetings. I would like to see more of that. Maybe even teleconference access to different departments so they're able to have a chance to talk to people. That would be what I would like to see."

## How do you plan to stay involved with the Nation and community?

**Whistler:** "The education department offers *Mdamen*. I see that particular group as one of the focal points to get members involved in being a legislator. I see them taking that knowledge and using it to motivate themselves. As far as my future, I will stay involved by going and supporting Family Festival, going to the Gathering, but I also will stay involved with the Native American community that I'm in. There are several groups that I work with. I'll stay on as a member with the groups that I've been working with. I'm involved with a group that is creating a high school class on American Indian Native Studies. I've actually made presentations to the State Board of Education about five times. So, I will continue to pursue getting that particular program approved for use in the Texas high schools."

**Lambert:** "I'm here if anyone has questions. Anything that I can offer to help the next person coming in, I certainly want to do. I'm here for that. I remember when I took over, Philonese Williams was the regional director, and when I took over, she kind of hung by my side for about a year. I want to be sure that the

new person coming in knows that anything I can do to be supportive along that way, I'm happy to do it."

## Final thoughts:

**Whistler:** "When I ran, I won on a runoff. In fact, there were five running when I initially ran and I beat the third-place person out by two votes. That is one of the reasons I tell everybody that every vote counts. Those two votes moved me into being the candidate and ultimately the representative. Getting the people to vote is a big thing because we'll have races where the total that voted were maybe only 500 or 600, and that's not a whole lot of people. When you consider that there's about 2,000 in the group, you're looking at one in four voted, you really need to get more than that involved."

"In summary, during my tenure I have been honored, proud and deeply thank (*Igwein*) the District 3 Tribal members for electing me to represent them."

**Lambert:** "I would really love to see the Tribal members become more involved. I think the major reason that more people don't go to Shawnee is their fear of fitting in. But I always tell them, just go, it's like going home."

"It's just been a wonderful experience. The Nation's been fabulous to me on a personal level. I've learned so much from the people, by far more than they could ever learn from me. So, it's been an honor." 🔥

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# Veterans Report

Bozho (Hello),

It's Festival time again. Our Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization's June meeting will be on Saturday at 9 a.m. in the upstairs room of the CPN FireLake Golf Club. It's a meet-and-greet meeting with coffee and doughnuts. We hope to see all CPN veterans and CPN veteran spouses there.

The CPN Veterans Organization will have a veterans table set up in the air-conditioned sign-in arena, so be sure to stop by and let us know you have arrived safely and say, "Hi!"

On another issue, I have received several requests for information about filing for veteran disability benefits. The Shawnee area has a Department of Veterans Affairs employee who works as a filing specialist at the Shawnee Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, 811 East MacArthur. He is only there from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (on a first-come, first-served basis). I hope this information will help.

Each veteran needs to learn about the benefits for veterans in their state. The benefits may vary for each state. For example, some states have no state income tax and tax benefits for your spouse and survivors. Check it out.



I received a message from a member of a Native American Women Warriors Veterans Color Guard. She and her fellow members carry the Colors at numerous powwows throughout the western states.

I have attached a photo that she sent me. This group makes a very impressive entrance at the powwows.

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 🔥



# Powwow etiquette

Tribal members attending their first powwow may have a few questions about the best way to enjoy themselves while making memories.

Everyone, whether experienced or a first-time participant, is welcome to join in. The powwow is a great time to dance or just sit back and enjoy the singing and socializing. Many Tribal members who complete a craft project at home or at the Cultural Heritage Center find that the powwow is the perfect opportunity to use their new regalia item.

Following a few simple guidelines ensures a great experience for everyone.

## Is the powwow social or ceremonial?

Powwows are largely social but still involve some ceremonial elements. It is important to be respectful. The dance circle is reserved for those dancing or singing. Don't walk across or stand inside the dance circle. Please ensure that small children do not run or play in the dance circle.

The powwow opens with Grand Entry at 8 p.m. Everyone who is able should stand as the eagle staff and flags are brought in by veterans and elders. During the Flag Song, or other honor songs, everyone will remain standing. Men should remove their hats.

## I've never danced before, but I'd like to dance. What do I need to know?

All dancers are welcome during intertribal songs. Listen to the Master of Ceremonies, or emcee. They will announce when all dancers are invited to enter the circle.

Women should wear their regalia or a long maxi-type skirt and a top that covers their shoulders. Women may wear their shawl across their shoulders or carry it folded on their arm. Men should wear a ribbon shirt and slacks. It is acceptable to add ribbons to a commercially

made shirt. Everyone should wear close-toed shoes. The dance circle is grass covered, so flat shoes are best.

Dancers will move in a clockwise direction around the circle.

During contest songs, or other special songs, exit the dance circle so that contestants or those being honored may dance.

If you are participating in Grand Entry, head to the Grand Entry point a few minutes before it begins. An arena director will help everyone find their place. If you are participating with one of the honored families, gather with your family members.

## I'm not dancing, so how should I enjoy myself?

Seating is available around the dance circle. You may bring your own outdoor-type chair or sit in the bleachers. The benches around the circle are reserved for dancers. Please do not sit on the benches or move any blankets or regalia placed on the benches.

Listen carefully to the singers and observe how slowly or quickly the beat moves. Sometimes you may be able to pick out *Bodéwadmimwen* words or other Indigenous languages being used.

Watch the dancers and note the differences between each style of dance. Appreciate the wide variety of colors, beadwork and other elements each dancer wears. Notice the different materials used, both modern and traditional. Many dancers spend months or even years preparing their regalia. Some pieces are proudly handed down from previous generations.

Remember, it is not acceptable to touch a dancer's regalia without permission. Some regalia items may become damaged if casually handled, or they may have spiritual significance and should not be touched by others.

## Can I take photos?

Photography is permitted but do not use flash photography during a contest or honor song. It is distracting to the dancers. Do not step in or stand inside the dance circle while taking photos.

Always ask permission before taking someone's photo. Please respect their preference not to be photographed if they decline.

A good opportunity for photos may be found away from the dance circle. Many dancers are happy to socialize and answer questions in between songs.

To respect the sacred nature of the dance circle, food, beverages, smoking/vaping and pets are not permitted.

Read more about powwow etiquette at [cpn.news/festival](https://cpn.news/festival) or watch a video on YouTube featuring Tribal members Dr. Kelli Mosteller, Coby Lehman and Tesia Zentek. 🔥

# Festival health screenings available

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services will be offering primary care and other services on Friday, June 27 and Saturday, June 28 during the 2025 Family Reunion Festival.

Most Festival guests are looking forward to the cultural activities, but the event is also a good time to consider overall health and wellness.

“CPNHS offers a wealth of health services to CPN tribal members that may be challenging to access or financially prohibitive in their home states,” said CPNHS Director Chris Skillings. “Taking a few moments out of your weekend for preventive screenings or a routine wellness visit supports the overall wellness of our Tribal members and provides the opportunity to catch potential health concerns before they become a problem.”

CPNHS operates six health clinics near Shawnee, providing primary medical care, dentistry, optometry, diabetes management, chiropractic care, public health services, lab services, pharmacy, advanced imaging and mammography.

In addition to on-site health services, informational sessions will cover cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automatic external defibrillators and naloxone. The course meets Friday from 9 to 11 a.m., 1 to 3 p.m. and

3 to 5 p.m.; and Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Registration is not necessary, but seating is limited. Each session is limited to the first eight participants. The sessions will take place at Mission Hill, located next to the Raymond Peltier Park and powwow grounds.

While Tribal members attend Festival, a first aid tent will be available from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. to assist with any minor medical issues.

“Our team looks forward to Festival every year, and we especially enjoy seeing and visiting with some of our patients who only come to Health Services during Festival,” said CPNHS Medical Director Braden Parmer, M.D.

Tribal members may call to schedule an appointment during Festival. Clinics will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

East Clinic: 405-273-5236  
2307 S. Gordon Cooper Dr. Shawnee, OK

West Clinic: 405-964-5770  
781 Grand Casino Blvd, Shawnee, OK

For more information, visit [potawatomi.org](http://potawatomi.org).

## RE-ELECT JOHN “ROCKY” BARRETT

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# 2025 Honored Families

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.



*Delila Bourassa Bergeron (right) and Leon Bergeron (left) on their wedding day*

## Bourassa

Members of the Bourassa family played a large role in the development of both the fur trade and French-Native American relations. Bourassa descendants would eventually live in Fort Michilimackinac in northern Michigan. This fort was located near several *Nishnabé* villages, helping Bourassa fur traders gain a foothold in the United States.

Daniel Bourassa's son, Daniel II, married a Chippewa/

Ottawa woman named Theotis Pisange (*Aranwaiske*). She was the niece of Chief Shabbona, and they settled near the Yellow River in Indiana. Together, they had 12 children: Joseph Napoleon, Mark, Jude, Lazarus, Stephen, Gabriel, Eloy, Alexander, Daniel III, Jaques, Elizabeth, and one child that passed away.

The family lived outside of Potawatomi Chief Menominee's village in northern Indiana in the late 1830s. They were forcibly removed on the Trail of Death in 1838.

Joseph Bourassa signed the Treaty of 1861 that granted members allotments and the opportunity to become U.S. citizens. Like many agreements made with the federal government, this treaty had negative consequences for the Potawatomi people.

After the Treaty of 1867, most of Jude and Joseph's children began moving to present-day Oklahoma, while some remained in Kansas. Many took allotments on the southern portion of the reservation. Joseph remained in Kansas and passed away in 1877.



*Abraham Burnett*

## Burnett

*Kaukima*, daughter of Potawatomi Chief *Nanaquiba* (Water Moccasin) and sister to Potawatomi Chief *Topinabee* (He Who Sits Quietly), married French fur trader William Burnett. *Kaukima* and William had seven children: James, Abraham, John, Isaac, Jacob, Nancy and Rebecca. In 1826, Abraham received three sections of land near Logansport, Indiana, and a community 13 miles west

of it bears his name — Burnettsville.

Although Abraham never married, he would later adopt a younger cousin. *Nanweshmah* (He Prays With Plants) was born in Indiana near the Tippecanoe River in November 1812 to Chief *Shauquebe* and his wife, *Conezoquah*. Abraham Burnett was a cousin of *Conezoquah*. After *Conezoquah* and Chief *Shauquebe* passed away, Abraham Burnett adopted *Nanweshmah*. *Nanweshmah* took his adopted father's name and became known as Abram Burnett.

Abram studied at the Carey Mission in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. He worked as an interpreter for church and governmental purposes. Burnett married a Potawatomi woman named *D'mooshkeekewawh*.

As more and more settlers wanted land in the Great Lakes region, Potawatomi and other Native American tribes lost most of their ancestral homelands. On Sept. 4, 1838, the Potawatomi began their forced removal, walking 660 miles from Indiana to Kansas on the Trail of Death. More than 40 Tribal members perished on the journey, mostly women and children. Because of Chief Burnett's background, he also served as an interpreter on the Trail of Death, helping lend a voice to his people.

Burnett and others later established successful businesses and took advantage of the Oregon Trail that cut through the Potawatomi Reservation. He became a successful farmer and sold livestock. Burnett supported efforts to create a community approved business committee.



Joseph C. Melot and family in 1892

## Melot

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

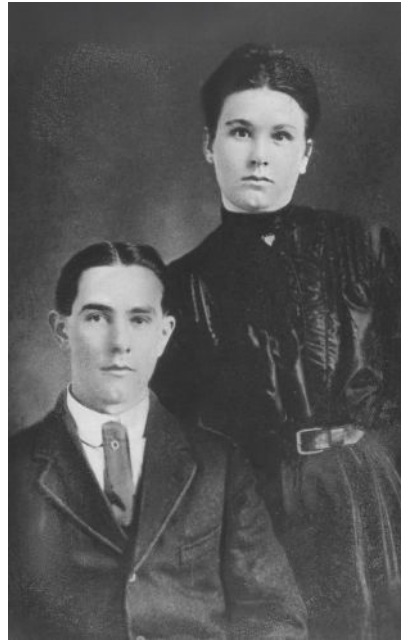
and *Wat-che-kee* had Jean (John) Batiste, Catherine (Katy), Matilda and Charles.

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.

The town of Wanette, Indian Territory, was founded March 19, 1894, by Joseph and Katy Melot. The couple owned 240 acres on which the first townsite was built. 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.

In 1876, 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 prospered, 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.



Clarence Patton Navarre (Ellen) and Jenny Love

## Navarre

The roots of the Navarre family reach back to an 1834 wedding in *Pokagon's* village in Indiana. *Kis-naw-kwe*, a daughter of Potawatomi chief *Wabaunsee* (Break of Day), married French fur trader Pierre Navarre.

*Wabaunsee*, born *Naksés* (Shining Sun), had earned a reputation as a powerful and influential leader among the Potawatomi, Odawa and Ojibwe of Illinois and Indiana. He was

opposed to American expansion but recognized the need to maintain peace for the protection of his people. With his people in mind, *Wabaunsee* made many visits to Washington, D.C. to discuss potential treaties.

*Kis-naw-kwe* was baptized and took the name Angelique. Pierre had worked with the American Fur Company. Later, he established his own trading post, and his marriage to *Kis-naw-kwe* and alliance with the Potawatomi contributed to his business success.

During the 1860s, the Potawatomi were faced with a significant decision. The U.S. government offered citizenship and individual allotments to the Potawatomi in Kansas in order to obtain the land. The group that accepted U.S. citizenship and individual allotments in Indian Territory became known as the Citizen Band. The group that preferred to live communally in Kansas became known as the Prairie Band. Some members of the Navarre family continued to live in Kansas while others made the move to Indian Territory.

Harrah, Oklahoma, was established thanks to Louis Navarre. The land for the original site of Harrah was donated by Louis, who was first to arrive at his allotment in the 1870s. While a plaque outside the city's history museum mentions Navarre's contributions, the town was later named in 1898 for Frank Harrah. However, Navarre Street is prominently located near the center of town.

CPN Vice-Chairman Linda Capps is a Navarre descendant. Capps has been a CPN elected official since 1987. In June of 1990, she was elected vice-chairman of the Nation, a position she still holds today. A career educator, she has always emphasized the importance of education. Drawing inspiration from her ancestors, Capps works for the betterment of her community, volunteering her time on numerous local boards and leadership organizations.



Oliver Peltier (left) and Henry Peltier (right)

## Peltier

After Nicholas Peltier arrived in America, he worked as a carpenter. His son Alexander went into the fur trading business, and he worked among the area's Native American tribes, including the Potawatomi.

In 1837, the Potawatomi removed from Wisconsin and Illinois to Council Bluffs, Iowa. Alexander Peltier, Sr., married a Potawatomi woman named Josephine Bennett (*Osy-sin-ga*), at Council Bluffs.

Alexander and Josephine's children were Ezekiel, Alexander B., Victoria, John B., William H. and Louise.

As settlers eyed the Potawatomi reservation, the Potawatomi were removed again to Kansas in 1846 under the Council Bluffs Treaty. Alexander Jr. would later serve on the business committee in the 1890s in Kansas. He married Helen Bourbonnais. They had Alice (Slattery Davis), Caroline (Pambogo), Clarissa (Mars McGown) and Catherine "Kitty" (Bourbonnais).

John married Ellen Vieux. John and Ellen lived in Wamego, Kansas, where John worked as a stone mason. Ellen accepted an allotment and she and John went to Oklahoma to pick their allotment. Ellen recalled in an interview that the wild turkeys on the allotment were plentiful. However, as settlers arrived in the area, their shotguns scared many of the turkeys away from the area. They were the parents of John B., Ezekiel A., Joseph E., Edward, James A., Clarence A. and Paul E.

William H. married Rose Marquis. They had Cordelia, William, Henry A., Arthur, Rosa Mabel, Oliver and Mary C.

Oliver married Ozetta Bourassa. Their children were Mildred Louise, Ruby Cecilia, Kathleen Rose, Oliver Thurman, Gerald Leroy, Raymond Paul, Kenneth Eugene, Annetta May and Willa Lou. Oliver Sr. served as a deputy U.S. Marshall and worked to maintain the peace in the area and chase down bootleggers in the county.

Ozetta's grandfather, father, father-in-law and three of her sons would serve the Potawatomi as leaders. Raymond and Gerald were on the CPN business committee and Kenneth was a tribal secretary.

Annetta May married John A. Barrett Sr. They had John A. Barrett Jr. "Rocky" Barrett would later serve as vice chairman from 1974-1975, tribal administrator in 1983, then was elected Chairman in 1985.



Joseph Wamego and family

## Wamego

Chief Wamego was among the Potawatomi leaders who worked to protect his people as they experienced countless hardships during the removal period. The Potawatomi, part of the Three Fires Confederacy, had flourished in the Great Lakes region, which included parts of present-day Wisconsin, southern Michigan, northern Indiana and northern Illinois. Trade routes along the rivers and trails spanning from Indiana to Chicago allowed the Potawatomi, Ojibwe and Odawa to connect and communicate with each other.

In 1830, the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act and forced all tribes to relocate west of the Mississippi River. The U.S. government was motivated to stop the continual conflict between tribes and settlers following the 1832 Black Hawk War.

The 1833 Treaty of Chicago set the terms for the Potawatomi to be forced from their ancestral homelands. More than 5,000,000 acres of land, cash payments and tracts of land west of the Mississippi River were included. Potawatomi chiefs, including Wamego, believed the settlers, backed by the U.S. government, would continue to push into Native lands. They believed it was in the best interests of their people to find a peaceful solution and ensure their survival.

After the treaty was ratified in 1835, it wasn't until 1838 that tribes had to leave. This would lead to an unimaginable tragedy for Wamego and the Potawatomi.

In 1838, the Potawatomi were forced to walk 660 miles from northern Indiana to eastern Kansas. In September of 1838, Wamego was among the Potawatomi chiefs who were tricked into meeting with the U.S. government. Instead of a meeting, Wamego and the other leaders were shackled in the back of a wagon. From there, 800 Tribal members were forced to walk with little food, hardly any water and no shelter. More than 40 people died on the journey. The survivors arrived in Kansas in November of 1838.

In Kansas, Wamego had a son named Joseph *Che-quas* Wamego. Joseph *Che-quas* married Julia Battese. Their children were Harry, Willie, Catherine, Eli, Rose, Thomas, Agnes, Fannie and George.

George and Harry were listed on the 1887 land allotment of the Prairie Band Potawatomi. A directory for the Ship Shee Cemetery in Jackson County, Kansas, lists Joseph, Julia and several family members buried there.

The town of Wamego, Kansas, later received its name in 1866 in honor of Chief Wamego of the Potawatomi, whose pursuit of peace helped to ensure the survival of his people.



Elizabeth Wilmette  
Welch Darling

## Willmet

The Chicago, Illinois, area owes its earliest development to a Potawatomi family. Antoine Wilmet (Wilmette) was a French-Canadian fur trader and early resident of Fort Dearborn in Illinois. As an agent for the American Fur Company, he first moved to the area in 1790. Antoine married Archange Chevalier in 1796. She was the daughter of Francois and Marianne (Chopa). They had eight children: Sophia, Joseph, Louis, Francois, Elizabeth, Michel, Archange and Josette.

Archange was from a prominent Potawatomi family. With his wife's ties to the area Potawatomi leaders, Antoine was able to remain in the area following the Battle of Fort Dearborn and the War of 1812. Following the war, he was the only non-Native resident of the area. He also worked as a farmer and guide.

The family lived in a cabin near what is known today as the village of Wilmette, Illinois. Traders and travelers were known to stop there to visit.

Antoine was involved in the negotiations of the 1833 Treaty of Chicago that caused the removal of the Potawatomi from the Great Lakes and established reservations in Missouri and Iowa. Five years after the treaty, Antoine, Archange and their family removed to Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Archange walked on in 1840. Antoine passed in 1841. Their children would later petition the U.S. government to sell their mother's land holdings in Illinois. The government purchased 640 acres for \$1,000.

## Vieux

Jacques Vieux, a non-Native fur trader, married a Potawatomi woman, Angeline LeRoy at Green Bay, Wisconsin. Angeline was the niece of *On-au-ge-sa*, a Potawatomi chief. Jacques and Angeline had a son named Louis.



Josephine and Louis Vieux

Louis Vieux, Sr. later succeeded his father as chief fur trader. Louis met his wife, *Sha-note* (Charlotte) in Michigan. *Sha-note* was the daughter of *Che-shaw-gan*, a prominent leader among the St. Joseph Potawatomi. After Louis and *Sha-note* married in about 1830, they moved to present-day Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Their children Madeline (Nadeau) and Jacob "Jake" were born there.

When the U.S. government forced the Potawatomi from their ancestral homelands under the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Louis and Charlotte left Milwaukee for Council Bluffs, Iowa, joining other Potawatomi on the United Bands Reservation. The family lived in Council Bluffs for approximately 20 years.

Louis Vieux, Sr. often acted as an interpreter and helped the Potawatomi during business or government transactions. He was later elected chief. With a keen business sense, he was also known for his fair treatment of all and his generous nature.

As the government in Iowa began to push for statehood, the Potawatomi were again forced to relocate. In 1846, the family joined others leaving for Kansas. They settled in Indianola, near present day Topeka. The Vieux family began farming and raising stock while Louis continued helping with Tribal business or assisting those who were sick or needed help.

Louis later established a home on the banks of the Vermillion River, intersecting the famed Oregon Trail, operating a lucrative toll bridge through the 1850s and 1860s. He was appointed to the first Potawatomi Business Committee. As a delegate, Louis traveled to Washington, D.C. to negotiate on the tribe's behalf. Louis walked on in 1872.

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). 🔥

# EXTEND YOUR STAY AFTER FESTIVAL

Located next to the First Americans Museum, **OKANA Resort and Waterpark** is taking fun to the next level with its rides and slides, wave pools and relaxing, sandy beach. The park features a 100,000 square foot indoor waterpark, a 200,000 square foot outdoor waterpark, an arcade, sports simulators, dining and drinks and a spa. Relax, unwind, eat and play. Accommodation is available at the onsite hotel, or guests may purchase a day pass.

OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark | 639 First Americans Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK | Tickets and more at [okanaresort.com](http://okanaresort.com) | Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission: Day passes begin at \$49.99 for the summer outdoor day pass; other packages are available

The **First Americans Museum** offers visitors an opportunity to learn and explore Native American cultures in Oklahoma. The museum has two permanent exhibitions, OKLA HOMMA and WINIKO: Life of an Object, and a new traveling exhibition called One Place, Many Nations: Acknowledging the 39. OKLA HOMMA includes the stories of all 39 tribes located in Oklahoma through art, interactive media and film. WINIKO represents the repatriation of objects back to the 39 tribes in Oklahoma for the first time in 100 years. The One Place, Many Nations: Acknowledging the 39 exhibition includes hands-on activities, educational opportunities and rotating objects that share cultural experiences from the tribes, highlighting the dynamic cultural environment that makes Oklahoma unique.

An outdoor installation, 21 Century Mound Builders, is free to the public to explore. This installation honors Mound Builder societies that thrived across North America from about 3,500 BC to 1751 CE, according to FAM website. The mound rises to 90 feet, serves as a cosmological clock, and the walk is two-thirds of a mile around.

First Americans Museums | 659 First Americans Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK | Tickets and more at [famok.org](http://famok.org) Hours: Weekdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekends 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays | Admission: Children under 3 are free; youth are \$5; adults are \$15; senior, military, tribal and students are \$10

The **Myriad Botanical Gardens** in downtown Oklahoma City offers a chance to enjoy concerts, movies, classes, children's activities and nature walks. The Inasmuch Foundation Crystal Bridge Conservatory is an indoor space with overlook terraces, reflection pool, tropical plant collections and waterfall. Many of the outdoor features are free to the public.

Myriad Botanical Garden | 301 W. Reno, Oklahoma City [myriadgarden.org](http://myriadgarden.org) | Hours: Crystal Bridge open Monday

through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; outdoor space open daily, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. | Admission: \$10.50 for adults; \$9 for seniors and military/veterans; \$7 for students; \$5.50 for youth 5-17; children under 4 are free

The **Oklahoma City Zoo** has animals from all over the globe as well as elephant presentations, animal care chats with zookeepers, and a children's petting zoo. Other activities available include giraffe and Explorikeet feeding, Gorilla Trek VR, and carousel rides for additional purchase.

Oklahoma City Zoo | 2101 NE 50th St., Oklahoma City, OK [okczoo.org](http://okczoo.org) | Hours: daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Admission: Adults are \$16; children and those over 65 are \$13; children under 2 are free. Half price for active-duty military, retired members and veterans with valid military ID.

Escape the summer heat closer to home by visiting **Shawnee Splash Waterpark**. The park is open to all ages; it includes a regulation pool area, shallow play area, spray ground, diving area, climbing wall, slides, basketball goal and concession with covered deck. Outside food and drink are not allowed in the park, but picnic space is available outside the fenced area.

Shawnee Splash Water Park | 101 E. Highland Street, inside Shawnee's Woodland Veterans Park | [shawneeok.org](http://shawneeok.org) 405-273-0700 | Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 7 p.m. | Admission: \$6 for children under 48" tall and seniors; \$7 for those over 48" tall

The **Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art** in Shawnee is one of the state's oldest museums. It was founded in 1919 by Father Gregory Gerrer. During his European, South American and African travels, he acquired Renaissance art, Egyptian, Greek and Roman objects, and cultural artifacts from Native Americans, African, Oceanic, pre-Columbian and Eastern peoples.

Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art | 1900 W. MacArthur Street, Shawnee | [mgmoa.org](http://mgmoa.org) | 405-878-5300 Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 1 to 4 p.m. | Admission to the museum is free for the months of June, July and August.

Visit **Downtown Shawnee** to see some of the town's history at the Pottawatomie County Museum, located next to the Santa Fe Depot. The downtown area is pedestrian and cyclist friendly. Shopping is available at boutiques, art galleries and antique stores. Some of the popular dining options include Hamburger King, The Owl Shoppe and The Lunchbox.

Downtown Shawnee | 2.5 miles north of CPN headquarters | [visitshawnee.com](http://visitshawnee.com) 🏠

# Festival offers many activities for children

Family Reunion Festival has many activities for children throughout the day, including sports, crafts and competitions.

One change for this year is that the pool in the child development center will not be open. However, the pool and splash pad at the Festival grounds will still be available.

## Friday

Youth arts and crafts will go from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and then from 1 to 4 p.m. in the South Reunion Hall.

The youth coloring contest for ages 12 and under will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the South Reunion Hall.

The swimming pool and splash pad at the powwow grounds both open at 9 a.m. The pool closes at 7 p.m.

Chess and checkers for ages 15 and under will get started at 1 p.m. at the South Reunion Hall. The games conclude at 3 p.m.

The youth dance begins at 7 p.m. just south of FireLake Discount Foods. Dancing continues until midnight.

## Saturday

Registration for the ages 15 and under art contest opens at 9 a.m. at the South Reunion Hall. Registration concludes and judging begins at 10 a.m.

Youth arts and crafts begin at 9 a.m. in the South Reunion Hall. Staff will pause for a lunch break at 11:30 a.m. and then continue from 1 to 4 p.m.

The swimming pool and splash pad at the powwow grounds are both open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The three-on-three basketball competition for youth ages 14 and under begins at 9 a.m. at the after school facility gym, located next to the CPN Wellness Center. Competition continues until the winners are crowned.

## Sunday

On the final day of Festival, the swimming pool at the powwow grounds will open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 🔥

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## Help document your family's history

Whether this is your first Family Reunion Festival or your 40th, and no matter how important you think your story is, the Cultural Heritage Center invites all Tribal members to add to its collection of heritage interviews.

Heritage interviews are video interviews originally meant to capture the experiences of Tribal veterans and elders. Through the years, the process has opened to all Tribal members, and Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett has expressed a wish to get every Tribal member on camera at some point.

"We literally have hundreds of videos, but not nearly enough," Tribal Heritage Manager Christopher Lenggenhager said. "We have less than 1 percent of our Tribe. We'd appreciate more participation."

Interviews can be scheduled at [portal.potawatomi.org](http://portal.potawatomi.org) under the Festival Interviews tab. The Cultural Heritage Center will also have signage around the Festival grounds and at registration with information about how to participate.

Interviews can be scheduled during Family Reunion Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Staff lunch breaks are scheduled daily from noon to 1 p.m. Interviews can be scheduled in time slots of 30, 45 or 60 minutes.

Interviews often start with basic information, such as the Tribal member's name and age, before becoming a discussion that allows the interviewees to talk

about whatever they feel is important to them. Many participants share thoughts they would like to pass on to their future self or to future generations.

"It is like creating a time capsule where future generations of your family can hear your story in your words in your voice," Lenggenhager said.

Individuals can complete an interview one at a time, or families can choose to do a group interview together.

Those who are interviewed have the option to put restrictions on the use of the interview, though that rarely happens. Participants can request a video not be shown to the public or to family, or even request it not be shown until a certain amount of time has passed.

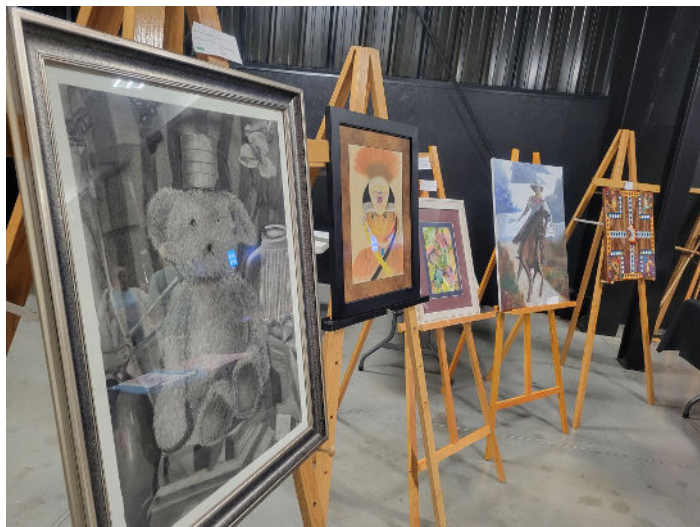
For those who cannot make it to Festival or who live far away, the CHC is in the process of developing online interviews, where interested parties can be sent a package to help Tribal members complete interviews free of charge from their homes.

"The technology package will include an HD computer camera, microphone, tripod, headphones and smartphone stand," CHC Director Blake Norton said. "Our hope for the package is to mitigate any issues related to travel, cost, time, interview apprehension, etc. that have proven to be interview hindrances in the past."

Look for more information about heritage interviews at registration and on signs located around the Festival. 🔥

# Festival offers chance to compete

Between taking classes at the Cultural Heritage Center and savoring some fry bread, don't forget to take part in some of this year's competitions at the Family Reunion Festival. Whether you're athletically inclined, a creative, or just love a chance to engage with a team, there are plenty of things to choose from.



## Art competitions

Each year at Festival, Tribal members of all ages and experience levels have the opportunity to enter the art contest.

This year, there have been a couple changes to the number of entries per person in the amateur adult category and the pickup time of entries at the end of the contest.

Tribal members aged 16 and older can enter one piece into either the amateur or the professional categories of the adult art contest. (Professional is for artists who have been paid for the type of work they enter. The amateur category is for those who have never been paid to create the type of art they enter.)

Submissions can include all types of modern and traditional art, and the art does not have to include Indigenous themes.

For professional artists, first place is \$300, and the winner will be selected by a vote of Festival attendees taken in the foyer of FireLake Arena.

Amateur artists can enter one piece of art into either the photography/painting category or the category for other mediums. Winners of the amateur art contest will be selected by a professional artist, and prizes are \$300 for first, \$200 for second and \$100 for third place.

Registration for the adult art contest is from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at FireLake Arena. All entries must be the work of the artist without any assistance.

Prize winners will be announced during General Council, where the prize money will be awarded.

All entries for the adult art contest must be picked up by 3 p.m. After that time, the art will be left unattended.

For those age 15 and younger, there are art contests available for four ages groups: age 5 and younger, ages 6-9, ages 10-12 and ages 13-15.

Each participant may enter one piece of art, and art can be submitted between 9 and 9:30 a.m. Saturday at the South Reunion Hall. All pieces must have been created before Festival but within the past three years.

First, second and third place winners will receive a gift card.



## Hand games

Hand games is a traditional Potawatomi competition that goes back generations, and each Family Reunion Festival, teams compete on Friday night at the pavilion.

All you need to compete is a team of seven people. Two hidiers from one team each hold a colored bead in their hands, which they pass back and forth behind their backs. The other team's picker attempts to guess where the beads are. The hidiers must stay in the circles painted on the ground but can still use tactics such as dancing and singing to distract the pickers.

Once the judge calls for hands forward, the picker uses a stick to indicate one of four guesses for the location of the beads. If they guess correctly, their team gets a point. If they do not guess correctly, the other team gets a turn.

Teams are eliminated until only one remains. The winning team receives \$100 for each of the seven team members.

Don't want to compete on a team? Don't miss out on the auction beforehand, where you have a chance to try

to bid on who you think will win. Each team has a flag that is sold in the auction. The winning team receives 25 percent from the auction, with the remaining 75 percent going to the person who bought their flag.

Find more information about hand games on the *Hownikan* Podcast at [cpn.news/handgamespod](https://cpn.news/handgamespod).



## Dance competition

During the powwow, there will be group, social and competitive dances. Competitive dance categories will

include men's traditional, men's fancy/grass, women's traditional and women's fancy shawl/jingle dress.

When dressing for the dances, women should have legs covered by ankle-length skirts and should carry a shawl and wear a shirt that covers the shoulders. Slacks and a ribbon shirt are appropriate for men to wear. Everyone should wear close-toed shoes.

For more information about powwow etiquette, see the story on page 6.

## Other competitions

There are several other competitions to enter throughout the weekend, so be sure to check your schedule. You could be the next winner of the fry bread making contest, or maybe your family will win one of the sports competitions. There's softball, golf, volleyball, dominoes, checkers, chess, three-on-three basketball, archery and horseshoes. Children can enter a coloring contest, chess and checkers tournament and youth softball throwing.

Due to construction around the pond, there will be no fishing competition this year.

Prizes for some of those competitions can range from \$100 for first-place individuals to over \$1,000 for first-place teams.

Look for more details in the Festival registration packet. 🔥

# Solicitation for Bids

**Project Title:** Rehabilitation of housing units at Father Joe Murphy Complex

**Project Description:** The Father Joe Murphy Complex, originally built in 1987, consists of twenty-five duplex units. Each duplex is 1,900 sq. ft., providing 950 sq. ft. of living space per side. The units were constructed with conventional building practices of the time and require significant updates to meet current energy-efficient building standards.

### Scope of Work:

#### 1. Rehabilitation:

- Fully rehab fifteen (15) 2-bedroom units
- Redesign one triplex with one-bedroom units
- Modernize four (4) one-bedroom units to current standards

#### 2. Alternate Bid:

- Include an additional ten (10) 2-bedroom units

**Project Goals:** The goal of this project is to transform these units into energy-efficient, modern homes that will last for another 30+ years.

### Bid Submission Requirements:

- Detailed project plan and timeline.
- Cost breakdown for each phase of the project.
- Proof of previous experience with similar rehabilitation projects.
- References from past clients.
- Compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations.
- Davis Bacon will be required.
- Bid, Performance, and Maintenance Bonding will be required.

**Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting:** All bidders must attend the pre-bid meeting on July 9, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Address: 44007 Hardesty Road, Shawnee OK, 74801

**Sealed Bid Opening Meeting:** Sealed bid opening meeting on July 31, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Address: 44007 Hardesty Road, Shawnee OK, 74801

**Contact:** For questions and bid packet information, contact Cindy Anderson, Development Assistant at [cindy.anderson@potawatomi.org](mailto:cindy.anderson@potawatomi.org) or 405-273-2833. 🔥

# 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

My Friends,

Everything we've built as a Nation, every clinic, every business, every community program, has been built with one purpose: to support Citizen Potawatomi people in ways that reflect who we are and where we come from. This doesn't happen by accident. It takes effort to build something that brings people home.

And just as we've come together culturally, we've grown stronger as a Nation, expanding our services, strengthening our economy, and increasing opportunities for Citizen Potawatomi members across the country.

The Federal government is withdrawing funds from tribes all over the United States. We have anticipated that and reduced our dependence on federal money. We are, with some "belt tightening," no longer dependent on federal money. Few tribes can say that.

Our progress is not just economic or cultural or social, it's all those things working together. We have invested in infrastructure and services, not to grow for growth's sake, but to ensure that our people, no matter where they live, are supported and represented. That commitment is built into our very form of government. Through constitutional reform, which I had the honor of writing, we established nationwide legislature with representatives elected by and for citizens in every district. Our members have a voice, and through regular district meetings and direct outreach, that voice is heard and reflected in the decisions we make.

Culturally, we continue to strengthen the ties that bind us as a Nation. Our Family Reunion Festival is one of the largest tribal gatherings in the country. Each year, we see more of our people in regalia, reconnecting with family, learning our language, and taking part in traditions that were nearly lost just a few generations ago. That kind of cultural revival takes work, but it also takes resources, space, and leadership. I am thankful to our Tribal members and employees who help to make this happen each year.

All of this is possible because we've taken a long-term, disciplined approach to economic development. Our tribally owned enterprises, including gaming, Sovereign Bank, FireLake Discount Foods, and

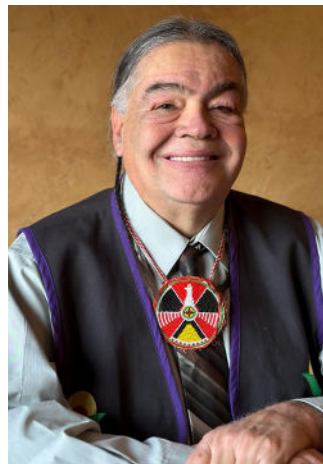
Sovereign Pipe Technologies, and others now generate most of our revenue. That gives us more freedom to make decisions based on what's best for our people. When you see new buildings going up across our reservation, you see the results of that planning.

We haven't separated culture from services or economy, they've grown together. A strong economy allows us to fund cultural preservation. Solid services help people stay connected to their community. Cultural pride strengthens our identity, which reinforces the value of everything we're working to build.

I respectfully ask for your vote for re-election to the office of Tribal Chairman.

John "Rocky" Barrett  
Keweoge - "He Leads Them Home"  
Tribal Chairman

## Charles Scott



### Challenger

Bozho Jayek,

Many of you have reached out and offered to support my campaign, I thank you and ask only for your vote and bring your family to vote as well. At Festival, we reunite with friends and family, we sing, drum, dance, play games. eat brats n burgers...and VOTE.

Our elected leadership has written about our lack of participation. Apathy runs rampant. We have done many things right, yet this problem has affected our tribe for years. We can fix it.

I have talked with many younger members; they are very apathetic. They don't relate to our elected leadership. They communicate via social media. They want jobs that are meaningful. They want to identify and learn to be Potawatomi. They want Culture. They want education. I have heard you.

I have talked with many older tribal members; they feel their voice isn't being heard. They want change. They want more elder housing and access to assisted living housing. They want to see more Potawatomi employed by our Tribe. They want the next generation to step up, participate, lead and care for them. I have Listened.

I have talked with several veterans; we would like to see our veterans group reorganize and focus more on our cultural identity as Native veterans. I agree.

We want District meetings for Oklahoma members with our Legislators. We want to communicate. We want jobs and We want to see Potawatomi in those jobs. We want more access to Language and Cultural Classes. We want accountability and transparency. We want change in small increments. I want what you want.

I promise, I will bridge the generational gap, be a mentor, be a teacher, be a Leader you relate to and can communicate with, and your voice will be heard.

I will serve you with Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility and Wisdom.

Migwetch, please vote.

**Charles Scott**

## District 1 candidates

### Anna Johnson



#### Challenger

Bozho, I am Anna Johnson, and I am asking for your vote for District 1 Legislator.

The past few months have been such a blessing for me and my family. I am forever thankful to friends and family who encouraged me to run, and believe in my abilities to be an unwavering force for District 1.

From all of our conversations, messages, phone calls and emails; here is a summary of what you all would want to see happen within the district:

- **More chances to be together.** Yes, we have the opportunity to connect virtually, however, we crave to be with each other, sharing stories, sharing meals, sharing teachings. I will work diligently to host meetings in varying places to better accommodate those in more remote areas.
- **Better understanding of available services.** Living outside of Oklahoma comes with limitations. There is a great need for help (not just financially) in D1 and I am committed to helping find solutions to hardships members may experience.
- **More timely and concise information.** Many have lamented that you wish information was more freely shared, and the lack of accurate information brings forth frustrating and divisive discourse. I will be forthcoming with information and push for agendas, and other pertinent information to be published timely; keeping us united and on the same page.

## MY PROMISES TO DISTRICT 1

- Visit members in every state in the district within the first 2 years.
- Have a consistent presence in the monthly Hownikan.
- I will be available - being your legislator would be my full-time job.
- Foster connections to make reconnecting less intimidating.
- Be open to respectful critiques and criticisms.
- Orchestrate cultural learning opportunities on a regular basis (virtually and in-person) throughout District 1.
- Utilize the yearly District 1 Legislative budget to the best of my ability in order to reach/teach/help as many members throughout the district as I can.
- Introduce proposals and use my vote at council for the betterment of Tribal Members.
- Regularly check in with members and verify that my intentions still align with the thoughts, feelings and desires of District 1 as a whole.

We are currently living in the 7th Fire, where the desire for our culture and traditions is spreading like wildfire. I am eager to learn, hungry for culture and ready to roll my sleeves up and get to work. Leading with love and walking with integrity.

Igwiyen (*heartfelt thanks*),

-Anna

### Steve Livingston



#### Challenger

#### What is community?

Is it a place? A feeling? *Is it the relationships we build through shared meals, laughter, and ceremony - the language we speak and the values we pass on?*

#### What is culture?

Is it learning to bead, make regalia, or attending a powwow or annual festival? Or

*is it the stories we share, the language we carry, and the values we live when no one is watching?*

Many of us feel it - that sense that we've been standing still. Despite our size, our resources, and our potential, we've stagnated in some of the most important ways: *culturally, spiritually, communally.* Too many of us feel disconnected - not just from Shawnee, but from each other, from our language, and from what it truly means to be bodwéwadmi in today's world.

Our community is fragmented and has drifted apart. We have political dissidents tired of empty words. Reconnecting Natives trying to find their way back. Cardholders who don't yet feel Potawatomi in spirit - or don't care to. And those who live deeply bodwéwadmí lives, carrying it quietly, wanting nothing to do with tribal politics.

But I believe we can come back to each other through *servant leadership, transparency, and inclusive governance* that focuses on access to healthcare, quality housing, education, and real cultural investment.

Electing a representative is a serious responsibility. This role carries the opportunity to shape how we govern, how we serve, and how we protect our sovereignty for the next seven generations. *Government alone can't create culture, but it can create the conditions where community and culture thrive.*

If you've ever felt like your voice doesn't matter, like you're on the outside looking in, I want you to know: I hear you. I've felt it too. And I want to change that.

I'm not interested in maintaining the status quo. This role is not symbolic to me. I'm running to speak for those who've long felt unheard. To ask the hard questions, open the doors, and build something rooted in both tradition and action.

Ask yourself: What kind of community do we want in 10 years? What does being bodwéwadmí mean to you - and how can our government help make that something we live, not just something we claim?

This is our chance to do things differently.

**I humbly ask for your vote in June. Let's rebuild trust, ask the hard questions, and create a community worthy of our descendants.**

---

## District 3 candidates

### Brenda Trevino



**Challenger**

**Bozho, jagenagenan!  
(Hello, all my relatives)**

At the time of this article, most will have already voted absentee. So, I want to thank you for exercising your right to vote. And for those who plan to vote at the festival, I hope to see you there.

Any of the District 3 candidates currently running for office could perform

the duties of Legislator. From the replies to the Hownikan questions over the last 4 months, as well as the campaign advertisements, it is easy to see the thoughtfulness and

dedication with which we are approaching this opportunity. **Of course, I believe I am the best candidate for the job.**

**I am primarily interested in meeting each of you face to face and bringing information TO YOU multiple times throughout the year in rural settings as well as urban ones. Whether it is our benefits, language, art, food, dance, music, government or history, I want to help us feel more connected and for Shawnee to feel more connected to us.** Knowing you, your stories and what you want from your Legislator will strengthen our district and will allow me, to best represent you. I aim to represent and serve both our district and the tribe.

**Remember, I am the only candidate that is retired and has the time to perform the role without competing priorities.**

Candidate Brian Walker has stated he is primarily interested in utilizing his background in law to focus on tribal policy and zoom calls to bring people together.

Candidate Jennifer Bertelesen has stated she is primarily interested in tribal business and in connecting those that know our culture with those who want to know more.

It takes courage and a vision for the future to run for tribal office. Each of the District 3 candidates have demonstrated this courage and vision... They believe in a strong future for our people.

As the election season ends, **I want to thank you for your engaging in the process. And to those who have called, emailed or texted me, know you are truly appreciated. I listened.** I am very proud of my Potawatomi heritage and look forward to working with each of you throughout the next legislative term, as the D3 Legislator or as a member of District 3. **Migwetch!**

Brenda Trevino, *Mkedewankwetkwe* (Black Cloud Woman)  
[Brendatrevino924@gmail.com](mailto:Brendatrevino924@gmail.com), 281-466-7427

### Brian Walker



**Challenger**

I am Judge Brian Walker, and I would appreciate your vote for District 3 Legislator. I am a proud Potawatomi, a proud American, a proud husband and father, and I am a proud Seventh-Generation Texan from my mother's side. With the exception of overseas and out of state military duty, I have been a Texas resident my entire life.

I live in Fort Worth and serve at the second highest level in the Texas judiciary. I have been a Justice on the Second Court of Appeals for four and a half years.

Our court has jurisdiction over twelve counties in North Texas serving well over four million constituents. In addition to my work as a judge, I also have an ownership interest in a small number of businesses.

I graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a B.S. from Texas State University in 2000. I later received two master's degrees. I graduated with an MA in International Relations from OU while earning a perfect 4.0 GPA. And, I have a master's degree in theology from Dallas Theological Seminary. I graduated "with honors" from DTS. I received my Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Houston in 2003.

I served as a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Air Force Reserves for nine years. I was the first JAG in the history of the U.S. Air Force to serve as a Flight Commander/ Instructor (drill instructor) at the U.S. Air Force Officer Training School in Alabama. This milestone received international coverage on Air Force Television, The Citizen Airman magazine, and various newspapers. You can watch a video that the Air Force did about my service at OTS by visiting the "video" page at [www.voteforwalker.com](http://www.voteforwalker.com).

I'm running because I want to do my part in preserving our sovereignty, culture, and heritage. My general legislative platform is simple. I want to create sound policy that reflects the values of my constituents. I want to maximize benefits for all tribal members while making sure that our tribal nation continues to thrive long into the future. And, 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 for the CPN and our members.

## Jennifer Bertelsen



### Challenger

#### Bozho,

Sovereignty isn't just symbolic — it's sacred. It's our Nation's right to govern ourselves, care for our people and land, and shape our future on our own terms. That responsibility doesn't rest on one person's shoulders — it belongs to all of us. But those we elect must carry it with clarity, courage, and

a heart for service — not just in word, but in action.

The role of a legislator isn't ceremonial — it's constitutional. Legislators don't manage programs or oversee daily operations. They are responsible for writing laws, reviewing budgets, allocating resources, and holding government accountable. They help shape

the framework that supports our culture, economy, healthcare, housing, and education. Legislators don't just represent the people — they are accountable to them.

I have deep respect for the foundation that's been laid. Our Nation has grown strong through wisdom, strategic investment, and cultural resilience. That progress deserves recognition. But true leadership means not only preserving what works — it also means recognizing where we fall short and having the courage to address it. I'm running to help do just that. I want to expand access to healthcare, housing, education, and cultural resources. I want to invest in youth engagement and ensure our elders receive more than respect — they deserve care, connection, and policies that reflect their value.

I deeply respect everyone who stepped forward in this election. It takes courage to run and a genuine commitment to serve. Each candidate brings a unique perspective, reflecting how much our people care about the future of our Nation. But leadership requires more than availability or name recognition — it takes preparation, consistency, and the ability to lead in today's world. Simply being available doesn't guarantee readiness, and holding office in another sovereign government raises fair questions about where one's focus truly lies. Our people deserve leaders who are fully present, well-informed, and deeply committed to serving and protecting the sovereignty of our Nation.

Our elders and youth are the twin pillars of who we are — one carrying our stories, the other our future. Our elders are the heart of our Nation and should be honored not just in word, but in action. And our youth? They're not just tomorrow's leaders — they're here now. If we want them to lead with pride in the future, we must empower them today.

This isn't about politics — it's about purpose. It's about honoring what our ancestors worked and fought for, and building a future that reflects their strength. I will lead with integrity, guided by the teachings that have shaped us for generations: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. These aren't just values I speak — they are values I live by, and they will guide every decision I make.

Let's move forward together — grounded in who we are, guided by those who came before us, and inspired by those rising to lead what's next.

I would be honored to earn your vote.

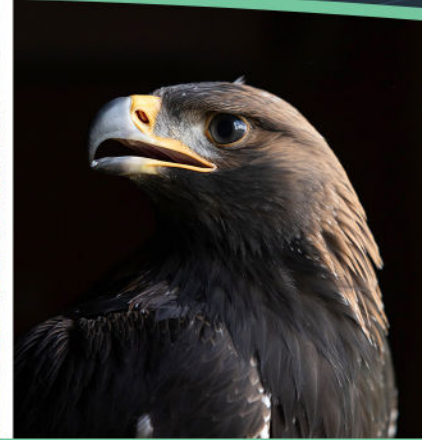
### Migwetch, Jennifer Bertelsen

*Kno Migwenkwe – Eagle Feather Woman* 🦅

RE-ELECT A  
PROVEN  
LEADER

JOHN "ROCKY"  
BARRETT

Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett



POTAWATOMI CULTURE ISN'T RESERVED FOR A FEW  
IT BELONGS TO ALL OF US WHO CARRY THE NAME, THE HISTORY, AND THE HEART

VOTE

Jennifer Bertelsen

Kno Migwenkwe [Eagle Feather Woman]  
for District 3 Legislator

I'm running for District 3 Legislator to make sure our voices are heard where decisions are made. I have deep respect for the leadership that has brought our Nation this far — and I'm committed to building on that foundation:

- I will seek **wisdom** in every decision, listening carefully to our people and learning from the generations before me.
- I will lead with **love** by working to expand access to healthcare, housing, education, and cultural connection across District 3 and our Nation.
- I will show **respect** by representing the will of the people.
- I will act with **bravery**, asking hard questions, challenging inefficiency, and standing up for transparency and fairness.
- I will speak with **honesty**, communicate clearly, and always act in the best interest of our people.
- I will carry **humility**, knowing this position is not about recognition — it's about responsibility.
- And I will live in **truth**, making sure my decisions reflect not only our values, but our vision for the generations ahead.

As Keepers of the Fire, we have a sacred duty to protect what's been entrusted to us — our people, our language, and our sovereignty. I'm ready to serve with those values and lead in a way that reflects who we are — and where we're going.

Ad paid for by: Jennifer Bertelsen [knomigwenkwe@yahoo.com](mailto:knomigwenkwe@yahoo.com)



Thank you



Paid for by Anna Johnson

Words cannot express how enriching the experience of running for Legislative office has been. I have had the opportunity to visit with, share meals with, and learn from more tribal members in these few short months than I ever have before.

Whatever happens on June 28<sup>th</sup>, I will be forever grateful for my relatives and my Tribal Community as a whole. It would be my honor to serve as your legislator; to lead with love and walk with integrity if given the opportunity.



From the bottom of my heart,  
Thank you

Anna Johnson

# VOTE Jennifer Bertelsen

Kno Migwenkwe "Eagle Feather Woman"  
For District 3 Legislator



Bourbonnais Family

## Voices Values Vision

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

Major points of my campaign are below

- **Unparalleled availability.**
  - ✓ I retired from my engineering/management career in May 2024. The other challengers for the position have demanding jobs that will compete for their time and energy.
  - ✓ I can commit to traveling throughout the district to bring the programming and culture you want directly to you, by planning meetings closer to you on a more frequent basis.
- **Expanding the knowledge of our customs and ceremonies.**
  - ✓ I will work with the Executive team and Legislators to develop and distribute training for those interested in learning our naming ceremony (and others).
  - ✓ I plan to survey the district so I can focus on what you want from your Legislator/Tribe.
- **Improved Connectivity.**
  - ✓ I will work on ways to improve our connectivity online and in person by working through the issues that prevent group emails from being sent from the Legislator in each district.
  - ✓ I have a phone, tablet and email already purchased to manage Tribal business.



**I would be honored to work for you!** Every voice is important. Send in your ballot as soon as you can. Migwetch!

Paid for by Brenda Trevino

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

# VOTE

Jennifer Bertelsen  
Kno Migwenkwe  
for District 3 Legislator

**Working for what matters**  
**Our people, Our future, Our Nation**

- Committed to expanding access to healthcare, housing & education
- Invest in youth engagement & cultural programs
- Support elders through care, connection & respect
- Demand transparency & accountable leadership
- Actively engage and represent members
- Protect and strengthen Tribal sovereignty & services



Ad paid for by: Jennifer Bertelsen

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

## Vote for Brenda Trevino (Ogee) District 3

- **Unparalleled availability.**
- **Expanding the knowledge of our customs and ceremonies.**
- **Improved Connectivity.**

**I would be honored to work for you!** Every voice is important. Send in your ballot as soon as you can.

Migwetch!

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



## INDIAN TRUST SETTLEMENT

## Are you an Heir of an Individual Indian Money Account Holder?

**\$38 MILLION IS AVAILABLE TO PAY HEIRS. THE DEADLINE TO FILE A CLAIM IS JUNE 30, 2025.**

A \$3.4 billion dollar settlement was approved in a class action lawsuit, called *Cobell v. Salazar*, that claimed individual Indian land, funds and other assets were mismanaged by the federal government. \$38 million is available to pay heirs and awards could be significant.



### Who is eligible?

You are eligible for a money award if you are an heir of one or more of the over 17,000 Individual Indian Money (IIM) account holders whose *Cobell* settlement awards were not distributed. You must submit a claim form with proof that you are an heir. Claim forms can be submitted online or can be downloaded and mailed to the administrator by **June 30, 2025**. More details are available on the website.

### Here's what you need.

Heir eligibility proof includes any of the following:

- A state or tribal probate order identifying estate heirs; or
- A last will and testament approved by a probate order; or
- A small estate document from an approved state in accordance with small estate procedures; or

- Documentation showing the appointment of an estate Executor, Administrator, or Personal Representative; or
- A federal probate order that directs distribution of trust funds or trust lands.

A copy of a tribal, or state, or federal probate order is needed to establish whether the Settlement Administrator can pay the heir(s) directly for the estate's Settlement award.

If you do not have a tribal or state probate order but a personal representative or executor has been named for the estate, funds may be released to the representative or executor and they will be responsible for distributing the funds according to the wishes of the deceased Class Member.

**You must act quickly.**

**The deadline to file is June 30, 2025.**

After the deadline, all remaining funds will be distributed to the Cobell Scholarship Fund, which is managed by Indigenous Education, Inc.

**LEARN MORE**

**CobellSettlement.com**

800-961-6109

Indian Trust Settlement  
c/o Kroll Settlement Administration  
P.O. Box 5324  
New York, NY 10150-5324



# FEMA cancels grant funding for storm shelter

In 2024, FEMA awarded Citizen Potawatomi Nation's application for a grant to build a community storm shelter. In mid-April, CPN received notice that the program that funded those grants was being terminated.

FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program offered competitive grants to allow "tribal, state and local governments to construct infrastructure projects to reduce the hazard risks associated with natural disasters," Jeremy Arnette, director of CPN's Office of Self-Governance, said. "It was one of the few grant programs that supported the construction of medium and large-sized storm shelters."

CPN went through several rounds of application review throughout 2023 before being awarded the grant in late June 2024.

The plan was to use the grant money for a community storm shelter at Citizen Place II, where a multi-phase construction project is underway to add 66 additional affordable rent units.

The shelter, Arnette said, will be located within walking distance of most of the homes, with parking and accommodations for seniors, and is expected to hold up to 205 neighborhood residents.

"Federal funds awarded for the project totaled \$413,188, and the project was approved for completion by June of 2027," Arnette said.

Unfortunately, in early April, CPN received word that FEMA was terminating the BRIC program and cancelling all awards from 2020-2023.

"CPN's BRIC application was for fiscal year 2022. The initial application was submitted in January of 2023, so the Nation was caught in the wave of cancellations even though the award was less than a year old," Arnette explained.

Still, he waited for official word on whether tribal governments would be affected.

"I was holding out a small amount of hope that there would be an exception for tribal projects, but that will not be the case," Arnette said.

In mid-April, an advisory update clarified which awards were being cancelled, confirming that CPN was among the many tribes that would be losing BRIC funding.

After a Zoom call with FEMA Region 6 administrator and his staff, who assist with all FEMA-tribal programs, it was reiterated that "the BRIC program was ending for all grantees, that the current year open competition would end without making awards, and that the decision of the Trump administration was unlikely to be rescinded," Arnette said.

He added that the Tribe is still awaiting an award termination notice specific to CPN's BRIC award, though it is clear it will be coming.

CPN Housing Department Director Scott George said they will still need to build the shelter so residents are protected from the threat of a tornado.

"This will delay the building process and cost us more money later," he said, adding that they are also waiting on the current White House administration to release NAHASDA (Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act) funding, which is administratively tied up at HUD even though a federal continuing resolution passed in March authorized the funding.

For more information on the housing project at Citizen Place II, go to [cpn.news/newhousingproject](https://cpn.news/newhousingproject).

Follow us on social media and in the *Hownikan* for any potential updates. 🔥

# Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

*Bozho, jayek* (Hello, everyone),

It's been a busy time in the language department. On April 29 we had our first community game night. We played the traditional game of *Gwzegegen* (dice and bowl). We had a great turn out of over 40 people. It was raining that day, so we were happy to have such a great turnout.

By the time this comes out, Shelly Watson will have finished her six-week beginner course. Her classes are online at the *Hownikan* YouTube page if you would like to check them out. We just recently wrapped up the eighth year of our high school language course. Over the years we have partnered with a number of districts, including Wanette, Maud, Seminole, Shawnee, Tecumseh and Shawnee Middle School. This year we had students in Shawnee, Tecumseh and added North Rock Creek. We are able to offer the course anywhere in Oklahoma for world language credit. So if you have a student who would like to take the course in Oklahoma, let us know. We would need to set it up with the local school board/superintendent so that it would be ready to go hopefully by fall.

Starting May 19 we are beginning our Master Apprentice eight-week summer program. We have gotten quite a bit of interest this year. This will be our third year of doing this program. Each year previously we averaged 10-11 people who came the entire eight weeks, as well as some who came for a week or two depending on their schedule. This year we are expecting 10-15 folks who will be with us.

We are also getting ready for Festival. We will be doing our Potawatomi Bingo on Friday and Saturday. We will also have a children's class and an adult class.

We have a number of tools available for learning the language. We have a course at [learning.potawatomi.org](http://learning.potawatomi.org).



Children play *Gwzegegen* (dice and bowl) at a community game night

This course has a number of class options, including a course for middle school, introduction course, grammar-based course and a children's course. We also have an online dictionary at [potawatomidictionary.com](http://potawatomidictionary.com). It has over 10,000 words with 90 percent having audio files. We are constantly updating and adding to our dictionary, whether it be example sentences, audio



*Gwzegegen* (dice and bowl) is a traditional Potawatomi game

files, images or ways of printing it out. You can print Potawatomi to English or English to Potawatomi and there is no cost to do so. You can also go to the tags section and look up words by categories, such as mammals, birds, weather, types of verbs, etc. There is now an option to print the tags version as well. Big shoutout to our IT team for helping us develop a very useful tool for our people. We have a course on [memrise.com](http://memrise.com) at [community-courses.memrise.com](http://community-courses.memrise.com), which was recently moved to their community pages. The courses are called "A Day in the Life" and "Conversational Potawatomi."

Our newest endeavor is a course on 7,000 Languages. It's at [7000.org](http://7000.org). You have to create an account and then click on Potawatomi. This course is really cool. It's based mostly on listening and comprehension. Each section is based on a room of the house (so the kitchen, bathroom, living room, entryway, bedroom, dining room) and then goes out to the community with going to the doctor, eating out, etc. The course is all phrase-based and conversational. There is no grammar and no individual words. The idea is to give people day-to-day phrases to use. This new course is really cool so go check it out. You won't be disappointed. I believe it will be a game changer. 🔥



# Congratulations

## CLASS OF 2025

**Cole Adkins**

Edmond, Oklahoma  
Melot/Beaubien Family  
B.B.A. in Accounting  
Oklahoma Christian University

**Davry Amparano**

Elmore City, Oklahoma  
Vieux/Lafromboise Family  
B.S. in Biology  
East Central University

**Darian Amparano**

Elmore City, Oklahoma  
Vieux/Lafromboise Family  
B.S. in Applied Psychology  
Oklahoma State University

**Aden Anderson**

Piedmont, Oklahoma  
Anderson/Lafromboise Family  
High School Diploma  
Piedmont Public Schools

**Traci Anderson**

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma  
LeClaire Family  
Doctor of Social Work  
The University of Tennessee

**Jesica Black**

Perkins, Oklahoma  
Bertrand Family  
Master of Education  
Southeastern OK State University

**Kacey Haynes**

Bryan, Texas  
Doctor of Pharmacy  
Texas A&M University

**Hannah Bourbonnais**

Edmond, Oklahoma  
Bourbonnais/Bruno Family  
B.S. in Pre-Physical Therapy  
Southern Nazarene University

**Corbin Bourbonnais**

Edmond, Oklahoma  
Bourbonnais/Bruno Family  
High School Diploma  
Edmond North High School

**Ashlee Dietzel**

Bertrand/Higbee/Clardy  
B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation  
The University of Tennessee

**Carly Gregory**

Shoeman/Bertrand/Clardy Family  
High School Diploma  
Choctaw High School

**McKenzie Brown**

Norman, Oklahoma  
Peltier Family  
B.A. in Mass Communications  
University of Oklahoma

**Addison Brown**

Shawnee, Oklahoma  
Peltier/Weld/Ogee Family  
High School Diploma  
North Rock Creek High School

**Blayre Buckner**

McAlester, Oklahoma  
Bourassa/Clardy/Bertrand Family  
B.S. in Health and Physical Fitness  
Northeastern State University

**Marcus Campbell**

Queen Creek, Arizona  
Young/Vieux Family  
High School Diploma  
Basha High School

**Jared Cheatwood**

Tecumseh, Oklahoma  
Wilmette Family  
B.B.A. in International Business  
Oklahoma Baptist University

**Ashleigh Coulter**

Goleta, California  
Frigon/Coulter Family  
High School Diploma  
Dos Pueblo High School

**Mary Darvin**

Oklahoma City  
Weld Family  
M.S. in Experimental Psychology  
University of Central Oklahoma

**Angela Demaree**

Centerview, Missouri  
Vieux/Navarre/Melott Family  
B.A. in General Studies  
Southern New Hampshire University

**Mio Dykstra**

Columbia, Missouri  
Pambogo/Peltier/Bruno Family  
B.A. in Journalism  
University of Missouri – Columbia

**Wkenodan Getgadekwen**

Bemidji, Minnesota  
A.A. in American Indian Studies  
Leech Lake Tribal College

**Karys Barreda**

High School Diploma  
Deer Creek High School

**Layni Ferris**

Elmore City, Oklahoma  
Vieux/Lafromboise Family  
High School Diploma  
Elmore City Schools

**Angela Franklin**

Paden, Oklahoma  
Bourbannais/Tesicer/Willimet Family  
B.S. in General Studies  
University of Central Oklahoma

**Emma Fulton**

Ada, Oklahoma  
Willimet/Darling Family  
High School Diploma  
Ada High School

**Alyssa Gass**

Davis, Oklahoma  
Anderson/Lafromboise Family  
M.S. in Finance  
Colorado State University

**Carly Gregory**

Shoeman/Bertrand/Clardy Family  
High School Diploma  
Choctaw High School

**Mikenna Griffen**

Edmond, Oklahoma  
DeLonais Family  
High School Diploma  
Edmond Memorial High School

**Holly Grissom**

Davis, Oklahoma  
LaReau/Bertrand/Higbee/Clardy Family  
B.A. in Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies  
East Central University

**Andrew Hickman**

B.S. in Criminal Justice  
Oklahoma Christian University

**Cadence Hopkins**

Newcastle, Oklahoma  
Darling Family  
High School Diploma  
Bridge Creek High School

**Alexander Houston**

Portland, Oregon  
Yott/Vieux/Juneau Family  
B.A. in English  
Portland State University

**Ariel Howeth**

Harrah, Oklahoma  
Willimet/Frapp Family  
B.S. in Aviation Management  
Southeastern OK State University

**Joshua Howie**

Crossett, Arkansas  
Bourassa/Clardy/Bertrand Family  
High School Diploma  
Beekman Charter School

**Easton Hubble**

Newcastle, Oklahoma  
Peltier Family  
High School Diploma  
Newcastle High School

**Mia Huberty**

Elk River, Minnesota  
Slavin Family  
B.B.A. in Accounting  
Upper Iowa University

**Ryleigh Ivy**

Darling Family  
High School Diploma  
Savanna High School

**Joel Kellogg**

High School Diploma  
Gateway Christian Schools

**Holly Lebeck**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Acton-Moore Family  
B.Ed. in Education  
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

**Bryden Lenggenhager**

Shawnee, Oklahoma  
Ogee/Weld Family  
High School Diploma  
Epic Charter Schools

**Kiana Lothrop**

Canton, South Dakota  
Muller Family  
B.S. in Exercise Science  
Grand Canyon University

**Casey McBroom**

Saint Louis, Missouri  
Smith/Weld/Ogee Family  
High School Diploma  
Mehlville Senior High

**Shannon Vorpahl**

Smith Family  
B.S. in Energy Systems  
Texas Tech University

**Colton Mixon**

Lexington, Oklahoma  
Bertrand/Higbee/Clardy Family  
High School Diploma  
Lexington High School

**Maile Morrell**

Ewa Beach, Hawaii  
Higbee Family  
M.S. in Library and Information Science  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Stephen Negahnquet**

Olathe, Kansas  
Negahnquet/Burnett Family  
M.B.A.  
Oklahoma Baptist University

**Allison Negahnquet**

Negahnquet Family  
M.S. in Nursing Education  
Liberty University

**Aften Palmer**

Shawnee, Oklahoma  
Shoeman/Clardy/Bertrand Family  
A.A. in Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Seminole State College

**Lucy Phillips**

Bourassa/Clardy/Bertrand Family  
High School Diploma  
Bob Jones High School

**Cassie Rapson**

Oklahoma City  
Vieux/Pappan Family  
B.S. in Elementary Education  
University of Central Oklahoma

**Guinevere Reece**

Sparpsburg, Georgia  
DeLonais Family  
B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies  
Columbus State University

**Teeagan Reed**

Lexington, Oklahoma  
Bertrand/Clardy Family  
High School Diploma  
Lexington High School

**Audrey Richards**

Haskell, Oklahoma  
Toupin/Lowe Family  
High School Diploma  
Haskell High School

**Caralina Richards**

Haskell, Oklahoma  
Toupin Family  
High School Diploma  
Haskell High School

**Kali Roberts**

Yukon, Oklahoma  
Toupin/Kennedy Family  
A.S. in Nursing Practice  
Oklahoma State University

**Joseph Rushay**

Liberty, Missouri  
Bertrand Family  
A.A.  
Metropolitan Community College

**Alexander Samples**

Edmond, Oklahoma  
Slavin Family  
B.S. in Marketing  
Oklahoma State University

**Justus Schmidt**

Ellensburg, Washington  
Lafromboise/Peltier Family  
High School Diploma  
Ellensburg High School

**Sylvia Scott**

Tecumseh, Oklahoma  
DeLonais Family  
High School Diploma  
Tecumseh High School

**Aaron Slavin**

Olympia, Washington  
Slavin Family  
B.A.  
Northwest Indian College

**Colton Slavin**

Sperry, Oklahoma  
Slavin Family  
B.S. in Biology  
Oklahoma State University

**Addison Slavin**

Sperry, Oklahoma  
Slavin Family  
High School Diploma  
Skiatook High School

**Caleb Sparks**

Tecumseh, Oklahoma  
High School Diploma  
Tecumseh High School

**Trevor Vertiz**

Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas  
Higbee/LaReau/Bertrand/Clardy Family  
B.A. in Business  
Golden West College

**Hannah Whitaker**

Purcell, Oklahoma  
Bruno/Peltier Family  
High School Diploma  
Purcell High School

**Paige Willett**

Oklahoma City  
Toupin/Willimet Family  
M.A. in Journalism  
New York University

**Bailey Yeager**

Weatherford, Oklahoma  
Johnson Family  
High School Diploma  
Weatherford High School

**Landri Lowden**

Curley Family  
A.A.S. in Computer Science  
Seminole State College

**Allie Loveless**

Mustang, Oklahoma  
High School Diploma  
Mustang High School 🔥

# From the executives



## John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

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

Each June, we gather to celebrate who we are, not just as individuals, but as one Nation of related families. Our Family Reunion Festival is a reminder of everything we've built together: not just buildings and businesses, but relationships, memories, culture and a sense of belonging.

It's also a time to take pride in what we've built. Festival weekend gives us a chance to show off the progress we've made: new clinics, administrative buildings, business developments and housing initiatives. These are investments in our future and our ability to serve every member of this Nation, no matter where they live.

Everything we've built as a Nation, every clinic, every business, every community program, has been built with one purpose: to support Citizen Potawatomi people in ways that reflect who we are and where we come from. This doesn't happen by accident. It takes effort to build something that brings people home. And just as we've come together culturally, we've grown stronger as a Nation, expanding our services, strengthening our economy and increasing opportunities for Citizen Potawatomi members across the country. The Federal government is withdrawing funds from tribes all over the United States. We have anticipated that and reduced our dependence on federal money. We are, with some "belt tightening," no longer dependent on federal money. Few tribes can say that.

Our progress isn't just economic or cultural or social, it's all those things working together. We've invested in infrastructure and services, not to grow for growth's sake, but to ensure that our people, no matter where they live, are supported and represented. That commitment is built into our very form of government. Through constitutional reform, we established nationwide legislature with representatives elected by and for citizens in every district. Our members have a voice, and through regular district meetings and direct outreach, that voice is heard and reflected in the decisions we make.

Culturally, we continue to strengthen the ties that bind us as a Nation. Our Family Reunion Festival is one of the largest tribal gatherings in the country. Each year, we see more of our people in regalia, reconnecting with family, learning our language and taking part in traditions that were nearly lost just a few generations ago. That kind of cultural revival takes work, but it also takes resources, space and leadership. I am thankful to our Tribal members and employees who help to make this happen each year.

All of this is possible because we've taken a long-term, disciplined approach to economic development. Our tribally-owned enterprises — including gaming, Sovereign Bank, FireLake Discount Foods, Sovereign Pipe Technologies, and others — now generate most of our revenue. That gives us more freedom to make decisions based on what's best for our people. When you see new buildings going up across our reservation, you see the results of that planning.

We haven't separated culture from services or economy, they've grown together. A strong economy allows us to fund cultural preservation. Solid services help people stay connected to their community. Cultural pride strengthens our identity, which reinforces the value of everything we're working to build.

So, when you come to Festival this year, I hope you'll see the full picture. We're not just preserving who we are. We're actively building a future that reflects our values, honors our ancestors and meets the needs of our people today.

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

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



## Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

*Bozho (Hello),*

Greetings from CPN for the beginning of a great summer! The CPN Festival is on everyone's mind for the end of June. Our employees are trying to get projects completed and plans in place for the event. The legislature met on Thursday, May 29, and enrolled approximately 160 new Tribal members, which brings our enrollment to 39,392 members. Wow! I never believed we would witness such numbers. It is very exciting to see that we have grown so much. The most breathtaking part is that we have that many people of Potawatomi blood that are interested in being a member of the Tribe. Some will take an active role and want to participate in the cultural activities and learn the language. Others are satisfied to be members by name only but are very proud of the fact that they are enrolled CPN members. It is the responsibility of the Tribal organization to honor both mindsets. It is also the responsibility of Tribal leaders to provide on-going programs, enterprises and services to our membership. With our numbers growing, it is a huge obligation to maintain the status quo.

The same benefits that we provide today — academic and vocational scholarships, the pharmaceutical program for those 62 years of age or older, closing expenses for housing, health aids, the burial policy, and tele-medicine subscriptions — grow in cost alongside our enrollment. The Tribe must continue to advance both financially and economically. Financially is in reference to the management of money and assets, while economically relates to efficiency, cost-effectiveness and overall financial health of CPN.

Those who believe that cultural enrichment and language instruction comes without a cost do not comprehend the entire operations of our Tribal entity. Our cultural ceremonies and activities that are tied to our heritage are vitally important to our Tribal members. The maintenance of CPN Cultural Heritage Center is a top priority at CPN. Unfortunately, it all comes with a price tag. Thus far, we have prepared for the financial obligations of the demand, for which I am thankful. It is the future with the present economic environment for our entire country that is somewhat worrisome.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the end of the month. I plan to be more visible on the Festival grounds this year because I will not be tied to individual events. If you do not see me and need to ask me questions, please feel free to call me on my cell, 405-650-1238. I will have it close at hand. My prayer is for fair weather, which means it is not overly hot for the time of year. Blessings to each of you and please be careful during your trip to Shawnee.

Thank you for allowing me to be your vice-chairman since 1990. I cherish the years that I have had serving my Tribal members.

*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)



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# From the legislature



## Eva Marie Carney District 2

*Bozho, nikanek* (Hello, friends),

### Family Festival!

I cannot wait to see old friends and make new friends at our Family Festival — if I do not see you first, please come say *bozho* (hello).

It's tough to highlight which activities I'm most looking forward to, but here's my list: visiting with my brother Dave and sister-in-law Nicole; reuniting with our young golden eagle, *Kishko*, who was just five weeks old at last year's Festival (see photo of our first visit); taking the oath of office to serve another term as District 2's Legislator; participating in Grand Entry; cheering on District 2's 2025 hand games team; and

attending "The Trail of Death" presentation by my friends Sharon Hoogstraten, Matt Biel, George Godfrey and Rich Meyer. I missed their presentation at the Western History Association conference in Kansas City in the fall, so I am excited to hear it during Festival, where I will also be able to buy the reprint of Sharon's book, *Dancing for Our Tribe*. Sharon's book is filled with Potawatomi history and photographs of contemporary Potawatomi regalia. Her first printing sold out and Tony Roberts, director of Oklahoma University Press, encouraged her to produce the reprint so her work remains available. You can order the book at [cpn.news/dancingforourtribe](http://cpn.news/dancingforourtribe) or buy your signed copy at Festival.

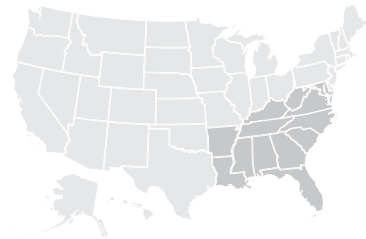
### Graduation Announcements/Teacher Recognition

Lewis family descendants — and sisters — Emily and Anna Korzeniewski are celebrating academic milestones. Anna is graduating from Grove City College with a B.A. degree in middle level math and history education, with a minor in studio art, and Emily is graduating from Yale University with a Ph.D. in musicology, specializing in medieval music. Emily has accepted a position with Cambridge University as a research associate. Congratulations to you both!

I also congratulate Nancy Sheble Rogers (Navarre family descendant), who was selected in February for a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This is the highest recognition that a kindergarten through 12th grade science, technology, engineering, or mathematics teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the U.S. Awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C. to attend recognition events and professional development opportunities and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. Nancy teaches mathematics at Rota Middle High School, in Rota, Spain, which serves military connected students in grades 6-12. *Migwetch* (Thank you) for your work, Nancy!



Eva Marie Carney visiting with baby Kishko, July 2024



Sharon Hoogstraten and Tony Roberts at the Western History Conference 2024

### Recommendation for Netflix Series *North of North* and Illustrated Picture Book *Fierce Aunties*

If you haven't seen it yet, you might enjoy "North of North." It is Netflix's first Canadian original series, starring a young Inuk woman in a fictional Arctic village. It's filled with Native humor and got a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. Two Inuit women from Iqaluit, Nunavut, created the series. A review notes that "this Netflix comedy shows abundant tenderness for its characters but also surprising depth and edge." (*North of North Is a Warm Arctic Comedy*, *New York Times*, April 23, 2025.) If you watch it, let me know your thoughts!

I also recommend a new picture book, "Fierce Aunties," by Indigenous author Lauren Goodluck and Indigenous illustrator Steph Littlebird. Readers learn that aunties come in different shapes, sizes and ages, with different laughs, skills and stories. They might be your parents' sisters, your older cousins, or even family friends. There is something they all have in common: they are fierce, they love you, and they will help make everything better. I know I need more aunties in my life, and you might too. This book will give you a warm, yet fierce, auntie hug.

Please keep in touch and continue to share family 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),

### Final monthly article

Depending on the outcome of the election on June 28, this is most likely my last article in the *Hownikan*. However, if no candidate receives a 50% plus 1 vote, there will be a run-off and my term will continue until the run-off election is held and a replacement for me is determined. If so, I may have the opportunity for another month or so. I have been proud and honored to have been the District 3 Legislator for the last 17 years and 3 months. *Igwien* (heartfelt thanks) for giving me this privilege to be your representative to our great Nation!

### Our Nation's future

In order for CPN to survive into the next seven generations, there are two areas that must be sustained. You have control in both. First, although we are a sovereign Nation, we must be successful in raising money to pay for the services and benefits the Nation offers. Your responsibility here is to vote for the best representatives that will find and incorporate new business opportunities and grant funds. Current voter turnout over the years is very poor, and less than 10% of our Tribal members eligible to vote do so. Fortunately, the votes cast have given us a great team that has driven us to success in these areas year after year. This must continue. So please vote.

Second, our language, culture and your heritage need to be continued. Loss of our language is the end of our really being a sovereign Nation and, ultimately, we would disappear. We are almost 40,000 strong and, yes, about two-thirds of our citizens live somewhere other than in Oklahoma. The Oklahomans do have greater access to these areas since they are close enough for various events and they have the Cultural Heritage Center for language, etc. If you are one of the others, you have online and Zoom programs



*Aztec ceremonial dance*



*New Mexico Apache Mountain dancers*

for a whole set of opportunities. In addition, I urge you to read. There are many books out there that will help give you background on our culture and history. "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer and "Potawatomi Trail of Death 1838 Removal from Indiana to Kansas" by Shirley Willard and Susan Campbell are great and cover two completely different areas. The second one gives a lot on events and history.

For those of you who are parents, get your children involved at an early age. Take them to our programs, meetings and to other Native American events and powwows. It will expose them to the different ceremonies and regalia of other nations. For example, at the April powwow in Cleburne there were ceremonial dances performed by two different nations: an Aztec group from

Mexico and an Apache Crown group from New Mexico. Photos are attached so you can see how different and varied their movements and regalia are. Notice the Apache group have their eyes partially covered with a red eye covering.

Also get your adult children to vote and spend time reading Native American articles and books, as well as attending our programs, etc. We need you in order to survive. If you aren't active at this time in any of the areas mentioned above, I urge you to get involved. This will ensure the benefits and services you may qualify for or need will be there when you need them.

For your first two steps, I ask that you vote in the June 28 election and attend Family Festival this year.

In closing, thank you again for allowing me to represent you.

Nagech (Later),

Bob Whistler | *Bmashi* (He Soars) | [cpn3legislator@yahoo.com](mailto:cpn3legislator@yahoo.com) | 817-229-6271



## Jon Boursaw District 4 2025 CPN Family Reunion Festival



The dates for this year's Citizen Potawatomi Nation Family Reunion Festival are June 27 to 29. There are several Festival activities, such as the powwow, cultural classes, a dance contest and General Council. Tribal elections are decided during the Family Reunion Festival. This year's honored families are: Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Willmet and Vieux. This year, I would like to have a casual gathering of Bourassa/Boursaw family members at 11 a.m. on Saturday morning under the BOURASSA banner in the Round House adjacent to the Dance Arena.

### Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

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

June 13	Hot Dogs & Hamburgers	RSVP by the 10th
July 11	Fried Chicken	RSVP by the 8th

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

### Affordable Rental Housing in Rossville

The Tribe has 10 rental duplexes (20 units) in Rossville, Kansas, for enrolled CPN Elders and physically handicapped members. Eligibility for housing is extended to enrolled members of any federally recognized Native American tribe. At the time this article was written there were a few units available, but that could change quickly. All units are two bedrooms with washer and dryer, stove and refrigerator included. But what has changed: There is currently a project underway to replace the existing tub and showers with walk-in showers and other improvements to the bathroom included. For more information on availability or submission of an application, contact the following: CPN Rossville Housing Office, 785-584-6401, or the CPN Housing Office in Shawnee, Oklahoma, 405-273-2833.

### Recent Naming Ceremony

We recently held a Naming Ceremony in the Prayer Circle in Rossville for several members of the Boursaw family, primarily the grandchildren of my cousins. What made this ceremony significantly different than normal was the naming of a 5-year-old adopted son of a Tribal member. He was adopted when he was five days old. But more significant is that his birth mother was a member of the Blackfeet Indian Nation. I normally decline a request to name a child that young, but I made an exception in this case.

### New Project: Locating the Burial Sites at Sugar Creek

We have initiated a new project, which is to identify the location of the 600-plus graves of those who died at the Sugar Creek Mission, which was the final stop on the Tribe's Trail of Death from Indiana. There have been recent discussions about making improvements to the property, but we cannot proceed until we have determined where the graves are located, or clearly not located. The initial search is to begin in mid-June.

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



## Dave Carney District 8

*Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),*



If you are reading this column, there's a good chance you are in the throes of summer heat. I am writing this on my back deck on a sunny May afternoon, enjoying a balmy 62-degree spring day. I always say that the weather in the Northwest is ideal for folks with poor memory. When the rhododendrons are blooming and the snowcapped mountains are in the background, it is easy to forget about our long, wet winter that makes all of this beauty possible.

I was recently contacted by a family member of fellow District 8 citizen, Angel Arasmith, who walked on in April. Many of us had the pleasure of interacting with Angel over the years and as recently as last October at our Fall Feast in Portland, where she was honored with a Pendleton blanket for being the wisest in attendance. She almost never missed a gathering and

was passionately proud of her Citizen Potawatomi roots. She will be missed.

As I write today (first week of May), absentee ballots are being sent out by the election committee to those eligible members who have requested one. Please be sure to vote! Your request for absentee ballot must be postmarked by June 8. If you receive one but end up in Oklahoma for an in-person vote, you must bring your absentee ballot with you to be able to vote.

We should all wish the legislators who are stepping away or retiring from their positions well, and thank them for their service to the Nation. *Migwetch* (Thank you) to Alan Melot, Bob Whistler and Gene Lambert. I've interacted a bit with several candidates in the contested races District 1 and District 3. I think there are some good candidates running and that the successful candidates will make valuable contributions through their roles in the legislature.

As for the Chairman's race, I strongly recommend voting for Chairman Barrett. His many years of vision, leadership and energy are a huge part of why the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is where it is today. He has earned our respect and votes.

A fond memory that illustrates my statement was an afternoon I spent with him and some workmen in a dusty construction zone pacing off what would be The Grand Casino Hotel and Resort. There was nothing but dirt, but he saw it clearly and discussed (in great detail) elevations, power needs, etc., etc. A year or so later, finishing touches were being put on our first-class enterprise.

I am planning to host two Potawatomi events in Alaska in August. We will be having a meeting at the Sealaska Heritage Institute in downtown Juneau from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 9. There will be presentations, prizes and lunch. If you live in Juneau or can reasonably travel there, I'd love to see you there.

On the following day, Aug. 10, we will gather at Lake Lucile Park (pavilion B) in Wasilla from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for presentations, prizes, a Potawatomi art contest and lunch. There will be a private Naming at the home of one of our Wasilla elders that morning. If you are planning on attending the Wasilla event and are interested in receiving your Potawatomi name, please reach out to me at [dncarney@gmail.com](mailto:dncarney@gmail.com). Please connect as soon as possible as this process often requires the expertise of the language department.

Our annual Fall Feast will be Oct. 11 at the Duwamish Longhouse in Seattle, and frybread tacos are on the menu.

As always, it is my pleasure to serve as your legislator,

Dave Carney | *Kagashgi* (Raven) | [dncarney@potawatomi.org](http://dncarney@potawatomi.org) | 360-259-4027



Angel Arasmith (wisest) with Robert White at 2024 Fall Feast

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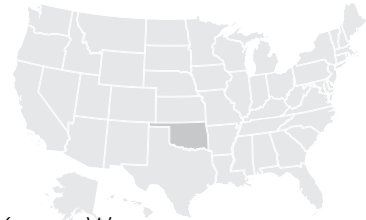


## Paul Wesselhöft District 9

*Bozho, nikan* (Hello, friend),

### The Old Man on the Curb

— Paul Chrisstarlon Wesselhöft



A gray-bearded Native American man, wearing a dingy cap with “Korean War 1950-1953” embroidered on it, sat on a crushed cardboard box by the curb. Wrapped in a soiled, tattered blanket, his face was carved with the lines of time, and his nose rose from the cold. In one hand, he held a cardboard sign that read, “Please help us out,” while in his arm, he cradled a shivering, emaciated mongrel dog.

A recently widowed woman and her young daughter cautiously walked by. The woman stepped closer to the man and tossed some coins into a basket and quickly retreated. The old man looked up, his breath expelled vapors in the cold air as he spoke, “Ma’am, can I ask you a favor?”

With her voice composed with regret, the woman said, “Sorry, I don’t have more coins for you.”

The man said, “Thank you for the money, but can I ask you something?” Hesitantly, she said, “Yes, go ahead.”

“My dog’s name is Missy,” he said in a quivering voice, “and she’s cold, hungry. I don’t have food for her. She was a street dog and I have had her since she was a pup. I love this dog. She’s all I have. But I can’t take care of her anymore. I can’t even take care of myself. She deserves a home, a warm home with food, food every day. Will you take my dog? Give her a home?”

The woman was taken aback and was prepared to tell the man sorry but no. Then her daughter bent down and petted the small dog. The dog, wagging her tail, licked the girl’s fingers. The girl said, “Please Mom. We don’t have a dog. The dog likes me, Missy likes me.” Her eyes sparkled with excitement as she looked up at her mother. The woman hesitated, torn between her daughter’s plea and the old man’s desperate request.

She knew the man was serious and she knew this would be an important decision, which would change their lives, and change the man’s life. “Sir, if this is what you really want to do, if you’re sure, we’ll take the dog. Give her a home.” The daughter clapped her hands, her feet jumped off the ground and tears filled her eyes. The man said, “Yes, I want your daughter to have Missy. She’s a real nice doggy. They will love each other.” The man rubbed the dog’s head. He kissed her and slowly handed the dog to the girl. She squeezed the dog in her arms and kissed her repeatedly. The man smiled. The lady asked, “Sir, what’s your name?” “Ronald Redcloud, I’m an Indian.” he answered.

“Mr. Redcloud, I’m Olivia Owens and my daughter is Penelopie. You’re a good man. Sir, please take care of yourself, okay.” The daughter said, “Thank you so much, Mr. Redcloud. I’ll take good care of Missy.” He couldn’t speak but nodded his head. As mother and daughter walked away, the old man covered his face with his cap.

*Migwetch* (Thank you),

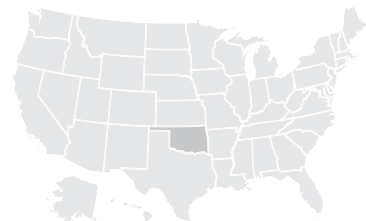
Paul Wesselhöft | *Naganit* (Leader) | [reppaul@gmail.com](mailto:reppaul@gmail.com) | [pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org](mailto:pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org)



## Andrew Walters District 11

*Bozho* (Hello),

Well, here we are again, coming up to the time we must make some critical decisions pertaining to the future of our Tribe. I don’t claim to know all the answers. And even if I did and could back them up with PowerPoint presentations, facts, statistics and surveys, some folks would argue that I was wrong. Seems to be a trait embedded in our DNA. “Don’t confuse me with the facts.”



I’ve found that projections never seem to be right. I’ve also found that surveys never have enough participants to be accurate to any degree and most don’t even ask the right questions. What I judge my decisions by is past performance. There’s an old saying that “past performance is indicative of future behavior.” I agree with that. Whether it’s stocks and investments, people’s actions, elections or governmental BS, I look at what’s been done in the past and then chart my course aligned with that.

For years the Tribe has grown in number and in assets. Our business enterprises are strong. Our governmental functions and practices, although not perfect, are solid. It can be argued that there is always a better way to do something. And I wholeheartedly agree, but I don't think that we should tear something apart or run somebody off and then "re-vision" it, as has been suggested by some in the past. To do that is being ignorant and unappreciative of our past.

I believe that some mistake governmental functions for cultural endeavors. It is the legislative branch that makes law, reviews budget, applies for grants and those type of things. We also fund programs, as we can, such as language. We don't generally fight or poke each other in the eye with sticks. Our duties are limited by a constitution. Things are discussed and opinions made in committees prior to meetings. This gives us time to work out the kinks and have a bill that we can live with.

(This is where the old sayings come out.) "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." We can fund all sorts of programs and provide all types of improvements that are beneficial to our Tribe, but we can't make you participate. Short of handing out money, free cars and a 10-day paid vacation in the Bahamas, we have problems getting folks in large numbers to participate in the functioning of our Tribe. Only about 5% of the Tribe votes in our elections, but 95% applied for and received money from the ARPA funds of the COVID era. Sometimes I wonder if we should just pay people to vote. There's a thought.

Perhaps it's apathy, perhaps it's our fault in Legislature. Folks complain on Facebook and social media ad-nauseum about what we should do. And then they pontificate about how they think it should be done. But then again, it's only less than 2% of the Tribe that is vocally negative. I know that I receive very, very few emails from folks in my District (11). Most of the complaints I hear are from people who moan and gripe online about the Tribe. And surprisingly, most of those have no solution, no constructive comments that are novel in nature. Just noisy wind.

Those are my thoughts, right or wrong. It's an honor and privilege to work with the Tribe in my capacity as District 11 Legislator. I love this Tribe and its people. My contact info is 1) [Nibwemko@gmail.com](mailto:Nibwemko@gmail.com) 2) [andrew.walters@potawatomi.org](mailto:andrew.walters@potawatomi.org). I can also be reached by phone at the admin office, 405-275-3121. They'll take a message, and I'll call you back, promise.

*Bami pi* (Until later),

Andrew Walters | [andrew.walters@potawatomi.org](mailto:andrew.walters@potawatomi.org) | [nibwemko@gmail.com](mailto:nibwemko@gmail.com)

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red Visa debit card. The hand is wearing a gold ring and a watch. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a person's torso. The image is overlaid with a large red graphic on the left side containing text.

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# Walking On

**Elizabeth Ann Bigler**  
Bertrand/Bourassa Family



Elizabeth Ann Bigler walked on peacefully on Feb. 27, 2025, in Independence, Missouri. Elizabeth was born on Aug. 15, 1936, in Bronaugh, Missouri, to Lewis and Marie (Hope) Adams. She was proud of her Potawatomi heritage, a descendant of the Bourassa family.

Elizabeth was a loving wife to Robert L. Bigler, married since 1956. She had a deep love for her family. Soon after marriage they had two daughters, Sheila and Linda.

When her daughters married, she loved having Tom and Roland as her sons-in-law and she always referred to them as her sons. She cherished being a grandma to Courtney and her husband Wes, Andrew and his wife Laura, Jessica and her husband Joe; and a great-grandma to Isaac, Levi, Emmett, Asher, Henry, Christopher, Vincent and Everett.

Her happy, joyful personality made her loved by everyone, especially her extended family, including many nieces and nephews. Friends both new and old were drawn to her smile and twinkle in her eyes. She loved to share memories of her grandchildren. She never missed an opportunity to tell people she had eight great-grandsons.

After retiring from Waddell & Reed she enjoyed traveling and exploring the Oregon Trail with her husband Robert. They began at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, Missouri, and finished at the End Of The Oregon Trail Visitor and Interpretive Center in Oregon City, Oregon. It took parts of three years of traveling to complete their adventure. They both thought the wagon wheel ruts were interesting to explore. Elizabeth's legacy will live on through the countless lives she touched and the memories shared by her loved ones.

**Leroy Copeland**  
Rhodd Family



Leroy Copeland, beloved father, grandfather, and friend, passed away Feb. 1, 2025, at the age of 79. He left behind a legacy of love, laughter and unwavering dedication to his family. A man of simple needs, he spent his life ensuring that those around him were cared for, always putting others before himself.

Born into humble beginnings, Leroy attended

a one-room schoolhouse early in life, and despite only having a fifth-grade education, built a remarkable career through hard work and determination.

Over the years, he worked as a mechanic, painter, foreman and estimator, earning certifications in waterproofing, lead abatement and mold remediation. His work ethic was unmatched, his skills vast, and his stories about the job — both humorous and harrowing — will be retold for generations.

He was a man of quiet sacrifice, often requesting only the simplest gifts at Christmas so his children and grandchildren could have more. He delighted in the small joys of life — always telling his silly jokes.

His love for his family was boundless. He was a source of laughter, always ready to tease and joke, finding ways to keep spirits high even in difficult times.

For the last six years, Leroy struggled with health problems. He had bypass heart surgery in February 2021. Even in his passing, his selflessness shone through — having chosen to be an organ and tissue donor, inspired by his daughter's own heart transplant journey 15 years ago.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Linda Copeland. He is survived by his children, Leroy Jr., Belinda, Charles and Sarah, as well as his grandchildren, Cecilia, Andrea and Karibian.

Though he is gone too soon, just shy of his 80th birthday, his memory will live on through the countless stories he told and the love he shared. His family will continue to honor his legacy.

**Mary Ellen Yox**  
Johnson/Scott Family



Mary Ellen Yox, born on Aug. 14, 1941, in Borger, Texas, to Emmett and Harriett Ruth (Willey) Hull, passed away peacefully in Skiatook, Oklahoma, on March 17, 2025, at the age of 83. She was a beloved wife, mother, sister and friend whose warmth and kindness touched the lives of many through many years of service.

Mary grew up in Phillips, Texas, where she received her education, graduating from Phillips High School in 1959. With a spirit of adventure and dedication to serving others, she entered the United States Army in 1963, serving with distinction as a registered nurse until her honorable discharge in 1969. Her time in the military took her to various locations, but it was in Tacoma, Washington, that she married the love of her life, John

Edward Yox, on Dec. 28, 1968. Together, they made their home across numerous states, including Texas, New York, Kansas, Germany, Colorado, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa and Illinois, eventually settling in Skiatook in 2013.

Mary possessed a vibrant spirit, engaging in various hobbies and interests that brought joy to her and those around her. She loved playing bingo, working on puzzles and engaging in card games. A passionate sports fan, she enjoyed watching hockey and golf, though her greatest joy came from spending quality time with her family, playing games that created cherished memories.

Mary is survived by her devoted husband, John; her son, John Damian Yox and his wife, Shanna; her sister, Ada Yarbrough; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends who will remember her with love and fondness.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Emmett and Ruth Hull, who undoubtedly welcomed her with open arms.

Mary Ellen Yox will be deeply missed but forever remembered for her compassion, her love for family, and the indelible mark she left on everyone fortunate enough to know her.

**Sister Marilyn Francoeur**  
Bourassa Family



Sister Marilyn Francoeur, formerly known as Sister Therese Noel Francoeur, died on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025, at the Dominican Life Center in Adrian, Michigan. She was 88 years of age and in the 70th year of her religious profession in the Adrian Dominican Congregation.

Sister was born in Adrian to Noel and Ruth (McKie) Francoeur. She graduated from St. Joseph Academy in Adrian and received a bachelor's degree in

mathematics from Siena Heights College (University) in Adrian and a master's degree in teaching mathematics from the University of Detroit (Detroit Mercy).

Sister Marilyn spent 30 years ministering in education, both in the classroom and/or as treasurer in Detroit, Jackson, Ypsilanti, Southgate, and Adrian, Michigan; Tampa, Florida; Wilmette, Illinois; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. This includes ministering at three Legacy Adrian Dominican institutions: St. Joseph Academy in Adrian; Regina Dominican High School in Wilmette; and Colegio Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

From 1984 to 1989, she worked in the finance office of the Adrian Dominican Sisters. She was the administrator of the Parable Conference in River Forest, Illinois, from 1992 to 2002. She returned to Adrian to minister in the office of information in 2002, and from 2003 to 2013 was the congregation archivist. She then retired and continued to live at the Dominican Life Center.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Lawrence; and an aunt, Sister Petronilla Francoeur, also an Adrian Dominican Sister. She is survived by a sister, Herline Harm; two brothers, Douglas and John Francoeur; sister-in-law Judy Francoeur, an Adrian Dominican associate; other loving family members; and her Adrian Dominican sisters.

Visitation was held on Feb. 26, 2025, in the gathering space of St. Catherine Chapel. The Vigil Prayer was held Feb. 26, 2025, in St. Catherine Chapel. A Funeral Mass was offered in St. Catherine Chapel on Feb. 27, 2025. Prayers of Committal followed in the Congregation Cemetery.

Memorial gifts may be made to Adrian Dominican Sisters, 1257 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, MI, 49221. Funeral arrangements were handled by Anderson-Marry Funeral Home, Adrian.

**Jim Rezac**

Bertrand Family



Jim was born on a ranch near Emmett, Kansas, on Jan. 31, 1938, the son of Clarence Rezac and Agnes Stueve Rezac. He died at age 87 on March 25, 2025, in Scottsdale, Arizona. He attended Holy Cross Grade School and Emmett High School where he graduated in 1956 as the valedictorian of his class. He graduated from St. Benedict's College, where he received a B.S. degree, and Kansas State University, where he received a master's degree

in Counseling Psychology and a Ph.D. in Education Administration and Management. He married his wife, Virginia (Enos), in May 1960.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Clarence Jr. and Richard; and son-in-law, Walt Foutz.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia; his children, Kay Foutz of Westminster, Colorado, Greg Rezac (Suzy), of Scottsdale, and Karen Prygocki (Mark), of Scottsdale; four grandchildren, Taylor Foutz, Race Sinadinos, Jill Sinadinos and Jake Foutz; step-grandchildren, Mark Prygocki, Jr. (Sarah), Jonathan Prygocki, Nick Prygocki, Blaine Coury (Bryanna) and Evan Coury; and step-great grandchild, Eli Coury.

Jim was an educator, having served as a teacher, coach and counselor at Manhattan Junior High School, principal at Highland Park Junior High School in Topeka, Kansas, and principal at Manhattan High School for 24 years. Upon his retirement from Manhattan High School, Jim worked as a residential real estate salesman in the Coldwell Banker office in Manhattan.

Services for Jim were held on April 9, 2025, at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Manhattan. Burial was in Mount Calvary Cemetery in St. Marys, Kansas. In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made to the James L. Rezac Memorial Scholarship Fund.

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# HOWNIKAN

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