

## ICE FACILITY pg. 6



# Bringing Our Children Home

Part 5 of a 5 Part Series

(CONCHO, OK) As the the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes begin their journey of reinterning 18 children who passed away and was buried on site while attending Carlisle Boarding School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, we complete our five part series, “Bringing Our Children Home,” by featuring Charles Whiteshield/Whitefoot (Cheyenne) and William Sammers (Cheyenne).

The children will be laid to rest in October at the tribes’ Concho Indian Cemetery in Concho, Okla.

Nearly 200 students died while attending the Carlisle Indian School while it was in operation from 1879 to 1918.

It was the first federally funded off-reservation boarding school for Native American children in the country. The cemetery is on the grounds of what is now U.S. Army War College.

Charles (Charley) Whiteshield, Cheyenne entered Carlisle on October 22, 1883. Passed on at Carlisle on February 1, 1887 (There are no listings under “home address” or for “father” and “mother” for Charley Whiteshield. The information below comes from Mark Whiteshield’s student information card.)



Photo of Abe Somers, brother of William ‘Billy’ Somers.

Home address: White Shield (Chief) / Father listed as living / Mother listed as living

Outings: Wm. S. Poulterer in Maud, Bucks County, Pennsylvania from July 9, 1884 to December 15, 1885

Charles Whiteshield made the honor roll in November 1886, as advertised in the Indian Helper from Friday, December 31, 1886.

William Sammers (also known as Billy Somers and Wykes Sumner), Cheyenne, entered Carlisle on September 12, 1885 at the age of 17 / Passed on at Carlisle on May 21, 1888

Home address: Red Eagle (William Sammers’ agency is listed as Pine Ridge, not the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency on his Carlisle student information card) Father listed as living / Mother listed as



For Information call: 405-422-7608 / 405-422-7732

living

Outings: E.L. Carey in Dolington, Bucks County, Pennsylvania from September 20, 1887 to May 15, 1888

Ran away from Carlisle with two other boys—Calvin Redwolf (Cheyenne) and Eustace Pelone (San Carlos Apache)—on July 6, 1886.

Billy made the honor roll in November 1886, as advertised in the Indian Helper from Friday, December 31, 1886

In his death announcement published in the Indian Helper, Carlisle newspaper from Friday May 25, 1888, it states, in part, “The funeral of Billy Somers, Cheyenne, who died of spinal meningitis was held Tuesday afternoon. No one mourns the death of this young man more than his brother Abe, who watched faithfully at the bedside of his dying brother until the last.”

In correspondence with Carlisle in 1914, Abe Somers writes that he now goes by William Abe Somers.



Portrait of Charley White Shield (on right) in 1886: (<https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/images/mark-white-shield-and-charley-white-shield-c1886>).

# Oklahoma Indian Nation Powwow Chairwoman Dara Franklin retires after 25 years, leaving lasting legacy

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

After more than two decades of leadership, Dara Franklin, Cheyenne and Arapaho, is stepping down as chairwoman of the Oklahoma Indian Nation (OIN) Powwow, leaving behind a legacy rooted in unity, tradition, and community growth.

Held annually in Concho, Okla., the OIN Powwow began in 1990 and was founded by James ‘Jimmy’ Hawk. Franklin’s first memory of her involvement with OIN was when Hawk had asked her to help assist his wife, Pat Hawk and Teresa White, Bobby Simpson and Marie Whitebird with the powwow in 1997.

Franklin would help where she was needed, whether that was assisting with head staff, selling tickets, tabulating, taking numbers or having tickets ready for raffles.

“I love going to powwows and so I talked to my dad about it. He said, well you know you’ve got to be around people, you got to treat people good, and welcome them, a lot of visitors come and I said, okay,” Franklin said.

Franklin would witness the crowds getting larger during the OIN powwow through the years and eventually a new parking lot was

built, allowing more parking for visitors. Celebrities would be invited to the powwow, drawing more people in to attend throughout the years as it grew. By 2000, Franklin had become chairwoman. Over the next 25 years, she led with persistence and care, always listening to feedback and striving to make the powwow stronger each year.

“Every year, we learned what we needed to do to make it better,” Franklin said.

Listening to complaints and feedback over time, Franklin said she wasn’t one to give up.

“If we got a complaint, we just had to make it better. I’m not for giving up. We’re just going to make it better, do what we need to do and then pretty soon there was so many people,” Franklin said.

Franklin remembered ordering numbers for contest participants and would order 150 numbers, now the powwow orders have grown to over 300 numbers, as that’s how many numbers are given out to people who attend, from children to elders.

Seeing participation from many people and the surrounding community is what brought the most joy to Franklin in her role

as chairperson.

“Seeing our people, seeing our families, their flags, how well represented that our families that come forward to recognize their family, especially those flags, that means a lot to our people,” Franklin said.

Through the different head staff, the donations and specials they’ve done to make the powwow better, to honor their families, Franklin said she “enjoyed seeing people have a good time.”

And by inviting people to feedings at OIN, making sure everyone was fed and bringing everyone together in unity for the powwow, it had accumulated through the years as it grew. Especially for the princesses.

Franklin remembers the first princesses of OIN, which were Tommye Dayle Simpson and Sarah Black. Then through the years, the committee started doing a penny a vote, where princesses would raise funds and some even raised as much as \$2,000, which helped take care of what was needed for the powwow.

As OIN continued to grow through the years, Franklin felt honored to be a part of the powwow and to witness the new addition of arbors built on the powwow grounds.

“Over the years, it’s been our people that have made this, what it is today, it’s our people that have done it.”

Franklin believes OIN has done a lot to help the community by bringing people together, as she hears news of younger generations entering the powwow arena, with dancers growing more and more each time.

“Culture is important to us and if we don’t keep it going, if we don’t keep our kids going, we’re not going to have it,” Franklin said.



Dara Franklin, chairwoman of the Oklahoma Indian Nation Powwow (OIN) during the 2025 powwow in Concho, Okla. Franklin retires after 25 years serving as the chairwoman of OIN. (Photos / Adriel Clements)

With the El Reno community well involved with the OIN powwow, the committee was able to have their first OIN parade.

“We’ve been trying to do one for the last four or five years, so this year was the first parade that we had and a lot of people came, we were surprised, we just wanted a little parade, let El Reno be a part of it too and that really turned out good,” Franklin said.

Passing on the role of the new chairperson of OIN to Randy Hawk and vice chair to Brad Blackcrow, a new committee will be announced for the powwow. Franklin and the rest of the OIN committee will continue to

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Oklahoma Indian Nation Powwow Chairwoman Dara Franklin (bottom right) is pictured with some of her family during the 2025 powwow. Pictured bottom left, daughter Carrie Whitlow. Standing l-r: daughter Stephanie RomanNose, granddaughter Violet RomanNose and granddaughter Rachelle RomanNose.



# Special Session of the Tenth Legislature called by Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Governor

Latoya Lonelodge, *Senior Reporter*

CONCHO, Okla. - On August 22 a special session of the Tenth Legislature was called by Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Gov. Reggie Wassana in Concho, Okla.

The public hearing was called to order at 10:09 a.m., with an invocation given by Rector Candy. Present at roll call was A1 Diane Willis, speaker A2 Kendricks Sleeper, A4 Rector Candy, C1 Bruce Whiteman. Legislators A3 Travis Ruiz and C4 Byron Byrd later joined the discussion, with C2 George Woods and C3 Thomas Trout present via zoom call.

On the agenda, seven items were discussed and voted on:

A resolution for the authorization of the application for elder services funding from the Administration for Community Living/ Administration (ACF) on Aging Older Americans (AOA) Act Title VI Nutrition, Supportive Service and Caregiver grants (Parts A/B and C) and participation in cycle IX of the National Resource Center on Native American Aging Needs Assessment (NRCNAA) “Identifying Our Needs: A Survey of Elders.”

Coordinator for Elderly Nutrition, Vivian Lime presented the resolution, stating it was time to reapply for the grant, which funds the program.

Lime said it is a three-year grant, with parts A and B being the nutrition side and part C being the caregiver side, which provide a hot meal four days a week to tribal elders.

“Part c is the caregiver, where we get caregivers that are caring for elders, we give them assistance, whether it’s giving them a break, or giving them training or any resources that they are seeking, that we help them to where they’re not overly stressed caring for their elders,” Lime said.

As part of the grant, a need assessment will be conducted for the application process.

Item number one passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to amend 10L-SS-2024-0111-006 – a resolution to authorize the governor Reggie Wassana to sign public law 93-638 sixteen months (2024) contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Tribal EPA program Tribal Youth Initiative Grant.

Gordon Yellowman, tribal historian within the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Language and Culture program presented the resolution, stating the resolution was to authorize and amend a previous resolution under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program.

“It was under EPA and so we applied for it as a partner into the grant, and then they said that they wanted to amend it to put it under

our program, rather than EPA. And so that’s why we have this amendment for this resolution to better fit our program for the culture resources that we can be doing in this grant,” Yellowman said.

With the grant, Yellowman said the program would be teaching youth ages 18-25 about tribal resources, such as native plants, wildlife, water, air and environmental initiatives to teach them about potential careers in environmental issues. The total grant amount was \$44,000.

Item number two passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to authorize the allocation of funds for commercial property and equipment insurance including general liability deductibles and contingencies.

Michael Toahy, property insurance specialist said he oversees all the different portions of the insurance policy and is responsible for commercial building and equipment.

Toahy along with Sabrina Norris, executive director of the Department of Administration, requested additional funding in the amount of \$195,000 to cover the remaining part of the policy.

“This is our only way to protect ourselves from losses. \$195,000 is the round figure and it’s broken down, for each additional amount but that is the total,” Toahy said.

The resolution stated the remaining four monthly installment payments for the current insurance cycle total \$155,000, with each installment valued at \$38,750. An additional \$5,000 is anticipated for policy modifications and additions within the current insurance cycle and a contingency fund of \$5,000 to mitigate risks associated with potential delinquent payments in other insurance segments and an allocation of \$30,000 is proposed to cover potential general liability deductibles. Funds not utilized under the appropriation will be returned to the general fund.

“We’re learning as we’re going along with property, but each time we’re adding a property, we have to also take a factor in the insurance coverage for that, like our budget, our insurance continues to increase, but it’s also because we are adding those properties,” Norris said.

Item number three passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to authorize the allocation of funds for the Department of Housing.

Damon Dunbar, executive director of Department of Housing presented the resolution, stating emergency home repair funds had been expended. Part of the reasoning be-

ing roof repairs when winds were high back in March and April with gusts of winds 60-70 mph.

“We had quite a few roofs blown off, way over the limit, some were \$6,000 and we also had plumbing problems, not just leaks, normal leaks but leaks in the slab, which is pretty costly. So we pretty much need some extra funds to continue on to the end of the year,” Dunbar said.

Requesting \$100,000 for the Department of Housing, the amount was brought up for questioning by some legislatures wondering if that would be enough to carry the department through the end of the year.

“Originally, we requested \$250,000 but I said we better lower it ... we’re going to have snow coming, ice coming, trees coming down ... just trying to be budget friendly,” Dunbar said.

Fred AllRunner, special services for the Department of Housing said he takes calls on emergencies for housing, especially on the weekends.

“We got winter coming up. All these ACs and heaters are aging out. So you got to include that we’re going to need more funding for those to get replaced.”

“Increase the funding, because a lot of these elders can’t take care of these units themselves, or they don’t have the funding to do it on their own,” AllRunner said.

Dunbar suggested amending the resolution to request funds in the amount of \$200,000.

Item number four passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to authorize the purchase of tribal member interests.

According to the resolution, tribal citizens who own interests in trust land regularly desire to sell parts or all of their properties and the Tribes have a first right of refusal to purchase the trust interests from individuals before they can negotiate with others.

“We periodically get requests that tribal members want to sell their land. Sometimes it’s minerals and surface, sometimes its just surface, we have two applications. One is two tracts, that had 118 acres and 80 acres. They own 0.008% of the 118 and .0200% on the other one,” Wassana said.

The mineral and surface interests in the tracts entitled 801-690 B John Washa or Kus-seo and 801 236 Big Knee Woman for a total of \$17,971.87. The two tracts are located in Custer and Washita County.

“A lot of times, these properties, if they’re wooded or brass, you know, sometimes the tribal members need wood or they need wil-

lows and things like that, and as you go to some of the Sundances, sometimes people don’t know where to get willows and an ask farmers ... so those are opportunities for the tribe, they help the tribal members out,” Wassana said.

Item number five passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to authorize Governor Wassana to enter into a lease with Reagan Smith in Blaine County (Big Bellied Woman).

Alicia Starr, leasing specialist with Reagan Smith said the company is doing the leasing on behalf of Validus. The proposed lease terms are \$3,000 per bonus acre for a three-year term, at a 20% royalty rate with \$3 annual rentals.

“The \$3,000 per bonus acre is more than I’ve seen in the area, Validus is very motivated to get this leased due to the proximity of some other wells just in the section south of here, that they’re wanting to develop,” Starr said.

The resolution is to authorize an issuance of oil and gas lease for the land located in the SE/4 of Section 19, Township 15 North, Range 13 West in Blaine County, Oklahoma.

“The track in its entirety is 160 acre tract, that includes all owners and their portion of the tract. The BIA requires that we list the tract in its entirety on the lease,” Starr said.

Starr stated the initial signing bonus would be about \$5,000, with the tribe entitled to the 20% royalty for any producer in gas. The tract is completely in trust.

“It also benefits all of your tribal members,” Starr said.

Item number six passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

A resolution to authorize Governor Wassana to enter into a lease with Reagan Smith in Blaine County (Little Cup).

“Little Cup is a little bit different in that a majority of the tract is no longer restricted, no longer held in trust, and held in fee. So the total track for Little Cup is 159.2 acres,” Starr said.

Looking at 31.840 net acres, meaning what is in trust, Starr said of those acres, the Tribes have an interest in what amounts to 7.07 acres, with the same proposed terms of \$3,000 per bonus acre with a three-year term, 20% royalty rate and \$3 annual rentals.

“So a larger share of a smaller tract for this one,” Starr said.

Item number seven passed unanimously with a vote of 8 yes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

## Tribal Council Update

Submitted by Albert Old Crow, Tribal Council Coordinator

This past month has been filled with important work preparing for the special Tribal Council meeting held on Aug. 16 and continuing the day-to-day efforts of strengthening our government through transparency, accountability, and cultural grounding. I want to share highlights with you so that all citizens, whether living in-district or out-of-district, remain connected and informed.

**Legislative Affairs**

The 20th Regular Legislative Session convened in Concho, covering topics such as proposed election law amendments, the 2026 annual budget bill, and a settlement resolution in Election Board v. Governor Wassana. Discussions were, at times, intense, particularly surrounding election procedures.

The special legislative public hearing and session held on Friday Aug. 22, 2025, covered the authorization for the governor to contract for services, authorized funds for tribal insurance, the Dept. of Housing, the Dept. of Labor. The governor was to be also allowed to enter into leases for tribal lands and was authorized to purchase tribal member interests.

**Election Update**

Meanwhile, the Election Commission made decisions on candidate eligibility for the upcoming general election. (See article published Aug. 1 in the *Tribal Tribune*.) All candidates who were challenged, Reggie Wassana, Hershel Gorham, Amanda Shirey,

and Kendricks Sleeper, were approved to remain on the ballot.

**Community Engagement and Wellness**

Council Coordinator Albert Old Crow emphasized the importance of grounding governance in cultural practice. He participated in sweat lodge ceremonies at the George Hawkins Treatment Center, presenting eagle feathers to graduates of the 90-day recovery program. These acts reinforced the connection between healing, ceremony, and Tribal governance.

Community members also engaged in gun safety training hosted in El Reno and participated in health board discussions focused on improving mental health services. The Family Wellness Day in El Reno brought families together for resources and activities, underscoring the Tribe’s commitment to collective health and resilience.

**Protecting Sacred Sites and History**

A significant meeting was held with Gordon Yellowman regarding the use of ground-penetrating radar to locate human remains on Tribal lands. This initiative reflects the Tribe’s dedication to protecting sacred sites and honoring our ancestors through both cultural and technological means.

Looking Ahead – Annual Tribal Council Meeting

As the October Annual Tribal Council Meeting approaches, Tribal members were

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## Mental Health Clinic

Submitted by Jacqueline Turtle. Post 401 Commander

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Health Board and the Veterans Boards have combined their efforts to develop a Mental Health Clinic (MHC) with the assistance of the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Veterans Administration (VA). The proposed goal is to establish an MHC clinic on 92 acres of Tribal land, located on the south side of Interstate 40 and Country Club Road in El Reno, Okla. The purpose of the MHC clinic is to provide health services for the tribes’ mentally ill, and in addition, traditional health services will be developed to treat Tribal Veterans.

The intent is to utilize tribal resources and funds to build and construct an MHC clinic, which could include an opioid clinic utilizing the drug corporation settlement funds and lease funds from the El Reno IHS clinic. Additionally, funds from IHS could also be used to secure a construction loan by leasing the MHC. The tribes’ Health Board and Veterans

Board will review the proposed goals and determine the appropriate direction, and develop the required resolutions for review and approval by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Legislature.

American Indian/Native American (AI/NA) make up approximately 1.12% of the total US population, or 3,727,135 (2020 Census), with an additional 5.9 million identifying as a combination of other AI/NA or another race. Most AI/NA live in the Western United States. Most AI/NA, approximately 87% live off reservations.

More than twice as many AI/NA people (24.3%) in the US live in poverty compared to the total US population (11.6%). As of 2022, the unemployment rate of AI/NA WAS 11.1%, higher than the overall US unemployment rate of 4%.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SMHSA) national Survey on Drug Use and Health, 19.6% of NA adults report severe psychological distress, 7.3% of NA’s experienced a serious mental illness within the last year, 11.6% of NA received mental health treatment in the past year, 19.7% of NA adults report severe psychological distress, 8.5% of NA had severe thoughts of suicide within the past year, compared to 4.8% of the US population.

From 2001 to 2020 the frequency of mental health issues and substance use disorders among Veterans increased significantly, from 27.9% to 41.9%. Veterans face higher risk of suicide at 1.5% times more than the general population.

The common mental illnesses among Veterans: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Depression, Anxiety, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), substance use disorders (SUD), and Suicide.

For additional information please contact Jackie Turtle at 580-940-0396.



# CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO

## Cheyenne Princess

Hello, my name is Ella Beatrice Blackbear. My Tsistsistas name is heóvé'ke (Little Yellow Woman).

My parents are Eugene III and Larissa Blackbear. My paternal grandparents are Eugene Jr and the late Aurelia Blackbear from Watonga, Okla. My maternal grandparents are Brian and Lisa Medicinebear from Watonga.

I'm a freshman at Watonga High School. I play basketball and run track.

I have eight sisters and two brothers. Riley, Julien, Miklyn, Hannah, Avril, Isaah, Abbigayle, Aurelia, Larissa and Eugene IV(EB4).

I am glad to be the 2025-2026 Cheyenne Princess of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow. Nea'ese (Thank you).



## Arapaho Princess

Tous! My name is Skylene SingingAfter Beaver. I am the 2025-2026 Arapaho Princess for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow held in Colony, Okla.

My parents are Rayven Beaver and Danecia Wandrie. I am the granddaughter of James and Earlene Beaver (paternal), and Steven Bearbow and Doris Wandrie (maternal). I am a direct descendant of Cleaver and SingingAfter Warden (Arapaho). I am very proud of my Arapaho heritage and so honored to be able to continue to represent for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow committee this year!

I was born in Oklahoma City at OU Children's Hospital, so you can say that I am, "Sooner born and bred." I am 10 years old, and live in El Reno, Okla. I attend fifth grade at Darlington Elementary where I play basketball and cheer.

I am very active in our Cheyenne and Arapaho communities where I am often attending various powwows and gourd dances with my family. I dance both Fancy Shawl and Southern Cloth. In my spare time I like to do beadwork. I am also learning to do quillwork from my parents. I love to sing, dance, play Barbies and Roblox, go swimming, and I love spending the night with my grandma in Clinton. I am also a big fan of the Oklahoma Sooners and the Oklahoma City Thunder.

I am so excited for this year's Labor Day powwow celebration! I can't wait to see everyone! Please come out and dance with me! Hahou!



## FRIDAY FLAG Lance Cpl. Sterling Seger

Lance Corporal Sterling Seger enlisted into the United States Marine Corps on the 3rd of January 1966. He left for Vietnam serving overseas for 13 months.

Cha Lai, Vietnam was where his letters to his mother and siblings came through US Air Mail, describing his unit's next move. He left for Okinawa the 6th of September 1966. Not returning until November 1967.

While in Vietnam he participated in several Operations: Operation Dozer; Operation Stone; Operation Lafayette; Operation Canyon; Operation Cimarron; Operation Buffalo; Operation Hickory II; Operation Kingfisher. Sterling served in Company B, 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 5th Marine Division @ Camp Pendleton California.

His unit received the Presidential Unit Citation. He earned/received three campaign ribbons, was a high level fitness leader in

circuit training physical performance testing. Was a specialist in amphibian crewmen while @ Camp Pendleton, California where he was required to successfully pass the following survival tests: In deep water with no aids, jump from 15ft tower, remain afloat for 1 hour, swim 100 yards with rifle and all this while in full utility uniform and boots.

Sterling was the son of the late Bessie & Arthur Seger of Washita County, Oklahoma and Grandmother Jane Big Smoke of Washita County. Where he resided on the Pipe Woman Allotment, Washita County, Oklahoma with his siblings Douglas Seger, US NAVY; John H. Seger, US ARMY; Cyrus Seger; Bertha, Mary and Alice Seger. Sterling leaves behind a legacy of true heroship and warrior pride. A Tsistsistah Veteran was born in Clinton, Oklahoma December 1947 and went to the other camp on June of 1973 left to carry



on his memory are the nieces and nephews, grand hearts including Tammy (Seger) Rios, Patricia Seger, Lori Seger, Sherri Seger, April Rivers, Denver Seger, Raymond Buffalomeat and Lawrence Buffalomeat.

The Seger family is very honored and humbled the 2025 Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow committee has respectfully requested the honor of flying the flag of Sterling Seger. We are grateful and thankful for his honoring and invite all of our relatives to join us for the flying of Lance Corporal Sterling Segers Flag.

## Master of Ceremonies Max Bear, Cheyenne

My name is Max Bear currently serve as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. I am Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa and have lived in El Reno most of my life. I have been amongst our people all my life in different aspects socially and traditionally. I am a U.S. Navy veteran and served from 1997 until 2001 onboard the Aircraft Carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71 for the duration of my enlistment.

I have had the privilege of being on head staff for many years and master of ceremonies for more than 20 years. I am pleased to be a part of the year's wonderful celebration that has been a part of our tribe's history.

Hahou, and I look forward to the Labor Day celebration and serving as one of the MCs.



## MC: James Sleeper, Arapaho Head Singers Kendall Kauley, Cheyenne

My name is Kendall Kauley-my Cheyenne name is Blackstone. My mother is Arleen Fletcher Kauley and my father is the late Kenneth Kauley. Maternal grandparents are the late Anosta Whiteturtle Fletcher and the late Claude Fletcher. Paternal grandparents are the late Inez Elkriver Kauley and the late Arthur Kauley.

I make my home in Hammon, Okla., with my beautiful wife Sarah and our four children and four grandchildren.

I graduated from Hammon High School and Western Tech Center in May of 2006. I started my welding career at the age of 16 building equipment for drilling companies. I started singing at a very young age, singing for our family hand game team the Challengers. Later on in life after the passing of my father, I found my place at the big drum. It was pretty tough at first, people made fun of me and talked down to me, but I didn't let any of that negativity affect me. I practiced and studied day and night and now I'm very fortunate to be apart of champion drum groups such as Leading Arrow, Thunderhill, and our family drum group Bad Company. During my free time, I love to hunt and fish. A message to the young singers out there, learn all you can on your own time before you go out to the drum. I mean this in a good way, that way you can be helpful to the head singer and you can share your own style of song and music. Once again, I am very grateful and humbled to be selected as one of the Head Singers for this year's celebration. Aho.



## Kelly Cable, Arapaho

Kelly Cable, is an enrolled citizen of Comanche Nation, and also a descendant of the Arapaho Tribe of Oklahoma representing the Youngman family. He hails from Geronimo, Okla., and currently resides in St. Paul, Minn. He is the father of Kylen, Everett, Olowan-Waste-Win, Roderick, Penny, Lerris and Timothy. He started going to the drum at a young age, under the tutelage of his dad and many uncles and grandpas, and continues to sing and travel. He currently sings with the Southern Boyz drum group as well as Cozad, Leading Arrow, and Wild Band of Comanches.

"I am honored and very appreciative of the 2025 Cheyenne & Arapaho Labor Day powwow committee for selecting me to be this year's Arapaho head singer. I would like to invite all singers and lady singers to this year's celebration; and wish everyone a great and safe weekend!"





# LABOR DAY POWWOW

## Head Man Dancers

### Domingo Whiteman, Cheyenne

Peheveeseeva, Pehev-oomatseme,

My name is Domingo Ma'xemaheone' Bruce Whiteman, Natsistah I'm Southern Cheyenne from Ma'khibono-Oklahoma City. My Namshim-grandpa is Bruce Whiteman Sr. and my Geh'Eeh-Grandma is Dolores Little Coyote. My Nah-ko'i-ih-mother is Ginger Whiteman-Vun'aheo-Sage Women. Navoohistoto are Barry Whiteman and Yolanda Whiteman-Valenzuela.

I grew up attending Sundance ceremonies, peyote meetings, powwows, and benefit dances from Seiling to Fonda to Canton and many other towns. I'm a yoga instructor, I dance at many powwows in and out of state, attend Zumba fitness classes, and I reside in (Bono') El Reno, Okla., with my wife Courtney Whiteman, and with six of our kiddos.

I contribute to my tribes' Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Office of Recovery program (TOR). Culture is the Solution in Recovery! Ho'soo' means Dance, dancing is praying, healing, and celebration of life! I hope everyone has a great weekend at Colony Powwow, stay hydrated! Good luck to all the singers and dancers - from the youngest to the oldest!

Safe travels to all, Ni'ish Thank You



### Choppa Pratt, Arapaho

Choppa Pratt has been in the arena since he could walk. Choppa was raised by his grandparents Martin and Ann Shallow in the traditional way of life. He customizes his classic cars and his Harley Davidson motorcycles. Choppa's past time includes hobbies of beading and attending Arapaho ceremonies and sweats. Choppa makes his own regalia and his grandchildren's regalia as well. Choppa is a proud citizen of the Arapaho Tribe.



## Head Lady Dancers

### Brittany Ellen, Cheyenne

Hello my name is Brittany Ellen Taylor, Puh-Ve-Yuh(-good standing woman). I was bornin Durango, Colo. I grew up in Thomas, Okla., where I attended school and learned our Cheyenne traditions. While there I served as the Thomas Service club princess 2010-2012. I also held other princess titles. I graduated in 2016 from Putnam City North High School in Oklahoma City. After which I moved to Colorado where I worked in childcare for three years and found a love for working with the youth. Since then, I've made home in various places.

I currently reside in Livingston, Texas with my fiancé Shaundai Poncho and daughter Mi-Waxüba Joyce Poncho. I am the daughter of Raylene EchoHawk and Johnson Taylor. My maternal grandmother is Cleo Heap of Birds. My maternal great-grandparents are Alfrich and Joyce (Standing-Water) Heap of Birds. I enjoy spending time with my family, crafting, watching true crime documentaries and traveling to powwows. I grew up attending this powwow and I am extremely thankful for the committee for asking me to serve as this year's Cheyenne Head Lady.



### Ellen Sutton, Arapaho

Tous! My name is Ellen Sutton from Canton, Okla. My Arapaho name is Ceetee-hteeyou\_u, Blue Beads. I am a proud citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations. I'm the daughter of Cheryl Russell Quick of Kingfisher, Okla., and Arapaho Chief Allen Sutton Sr. of Canton, Okla., maternal grandparents, Frances Nibbs Russell and Cheyenne Chief Harvey MouseTrail Russell Sr., and paternal grandparents, Sally BlackBear Sutton and Arapaho Chief Arthur Sutton. I'm a mother of four to Ashlyn, Jacob, Michael and Tyler, and grandmother to Felix and Owen. My husband David and I reside in Montana and Oklahoma, where we enjoy attending powwows, cultural events and visiting relatives. I've worked remotely for an IT Staffing Company since 2010 as a proposal management coordinator.

I began dancing as a tiny tot at Barefoot and Colony where my family camped every year. I was blessed to be taught how to bead by my grandmother Frances when I was a young girl and I'm very thankful to Maheo'o that I was able to create my own regalia to return to the circle. I would like to encourage our next generations to embrace and continue our cultural ways and reach out if they're interested in learning how to speak our language, sew, bead, dance or create their own regalia. Keeping our language and traditions alive are critically important, and there are many tribal citizens who are happy to share our knowledge.

Hahou to the committee for the great honor of representing this year's powwow as your Head Lady Dancer for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow. Let us dance together in celebration of life, peace, and good blessings for all.



## SATURDAY FLAG Angelo Sleeper

Angelo Sleeper, U.S. Army (Saturday Flag)

Angelo Sleeper Sr. was born in Oklahoma City on May 7, 1946 to Stanely Sleeper and Pearl Tallbull-Sleeper.

Angelo was drafted and served in the United States Army-1st Battalion, 50th Infantry and 173rd Airborne. He arrived in Vietnam on the day of his birthday, May 7 in 1968. He completed his tour in the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged in 1969.

Angelo's grandfather John Sleeper Sr. was a World War I Veteran, his father Stanley Sleeper was a World War II Veteran who also survived the Bataan Death March and as mentioned Angelo Sleeper Sr. was a Vietnam Veteran.

Our family is very honored and thankful to be asked to fly the flag of our loved one at this year's Labor Day Powwow celebration. Ho'hou.



## SUNDAY FLAG-Bruce Whiteman Sr.

In loving memory of Veteran Bruce Whiteman Sr., who was born May 24, 1926 in Fonda, Okla., to Byron and Thyra RedBird (Lucy Buffalo) Whiteman and passed away Dec. 1, 2002.

Bruce Sr. was raised in the Cantonment-Fonda-Seiling area and remained a proud Cheyenne man devoted to family, tradition and service throughout his life.

Bruce Sr. enlisted in the United States Army October 1944 and was part of the 82nd Airborne Division, Company B, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment during World War II. He was honorably discharged November 1946.

Bruce Sr. served his country with bravery and honor, representing the strength and resilience of the Cheyenne

people.

Bruce Sr. was preceded in death by his parents Byron and Lucy Whiteman, sisters, Nellie Ann (Whiteman) Hawk, Angeline (Whiteman) Redfox, brother James Daniel Littlecoyote and sons, Wayne Whiteman, Daniel Whiteman Sr. and Andrew Whiteman.

His daughter Theda Benton joined her father in heaven on Aug. 14, 2025.

Those who carry on his legacy are daughters, Virginia Reyes, Ginger Warrior, sons, Bruce Whiteman Jr. and Frank Whiteman Sr., 25 grandchildren, 77 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

The Whiteman family invites all relatives, friends and community members to join



them in honoring the life and legacy of Bruce Whiteman Sr. during the flag raising ceremony Sunday Aug. 31 at the Labor Day Powwow. Your presence is deeply appreciated as we pay tribute to a warrior, father, grandfather and respected elder.

## MONDAY FLAG Rayburn Orange



Rayburn Joe Orange Sr., was born Feb. 12, 1956. He passed away April 9, 2015 in Oklahoma City.

Rayburn was raised in Hammon, Okla., where he graduated from high school in 1976. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Philippines and Japan.





# Tye Littlebird, Thomas Fay Custer High School

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

THOMAS, Okla. - Suiting up with grit, pride and high expectations, Cheyenne and Arapaho youth Tye Littlebird, 19, enters his senior year of high school football as the starting quarterback.

Standing 5'10, Littlebird plays quarterback and safety for the Thomas-Fay-Custer High School football team.

Born in Yukon, Okla., and raised in various communities in Oklahoma such as Calumet and El Reno, Littlebird settled in Thomas, Okla., when he was in the first grade. He had begun playing football that same year where he would make the drive to El Reno to play little league football.

When asked by his mother if he wanted to pursue football, Littlebird jumped on the opportunity. Little did he know it would become a sport he would grow to love

through the years, especially when it came to winning.

"I really love winning. I love not losing, but playing with my teammates is really fun and just playing for the town I kind of partially grew up in and just the fans, it makes me happy," Littlebird said.

And not losing has become his biggest motivation in playing, as he's witnessed his team make a comeback from the losing streak since his freshman year when they were 1-9 for the season.

"I don't like losing. My freshman year, we only won one game, we went 1-9. I was a freshman, got thrown out there at quarterback ... I don't like losing and it really sucked. So it kind of motivated me to not want to lose anymore and that feeling that I had," Littlebird said.

Witnessing firsthand his

team build up the momentum throughout high school, the Thomas Terriers were just one game away from going to the state championship in the 2024-2025 season. The team was 11-2 for the season. Littlebird hopes to make a comeback in the upcoming season.

"Freshman year we were bottom of the barrel, this last year we were one game away from state and this upcoming year, I'm hoping we can win state. I think we have a pretty good shot," Littlebird said.

Looking forward to the upcoming season his senior year, Littlebird looks most forward to enjoying his time while he still can on the field.

"Enjoying it game by game, day by day. This is one of the last times I'll be able to play for the town I love and I'm really looking forward to hopefully making

a deep run in playoffs again and finally finishing it out, that would be amazing. So that's something I'm really looking forward to," Littlebird said.

Littlebird passed for 1,672 yards and 17 touchdowns while adding another 456 yards and nine scores on the ground last season, with nearly 5,700 career passing yards and 58 career touchdowns.

Setting his goals for the upcoming season, Littlebird hopes to be the best in terms of being a team player and quarter and safety. The best leader he can be.

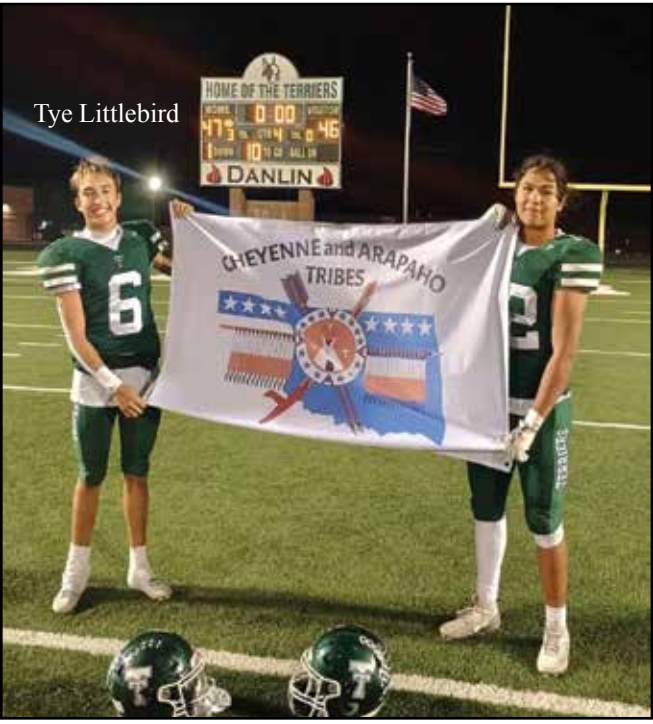
Maintaining an estimated 3.0 GPA, Littlebird best manages his time at school and on the field by prioritizing school first as he said, "I'm a student athlete, student comes first, so I try to put that before sports and that's how I manage it."

Through his years of playing football, Littlebird has grown the most as a player by learning from mistakes and taking in the lessons that were given to him.

"Freshman year I was devastated almost every single game, a loss and I would be so mad, but sophomore year we were all right. I just try to learn from those games," Littlebird said.

Prioritizing his time on the field, Littlebird hopes to improve his game the most by becoming faster and working on his conditioning in practice.

"Mainly this year, I'm just trying to focus on the mental aspect, where my guys are



at, where their guys are at, that's what I want to focus on mostly when I need to get better," Littlebird said.

Sticking by his motto of not wanting to lose, Littlebird prides himself on the discipline aspect of being a football player and hopes to be remembered as the football player that had good sportsmanship.

"Looking back, I want people to think of Tye, having good sportsmanship, cheering on his teammates and being there for his teammates," Littlebird said.

Overall, what football has taught Littlebird the most is perseverance.

"Setbacks are going to come, plays are going to go bad, you're going to have a bad day, a bad season but you got next play. You got a

next season and just don't let it happen twice," Littlebird said.

The season opening game will be held September 5, where the Thomas Terriers will face Sayre High School at home.

Reliving the moment when he's out there on the field, Littlebird enjoys his time on the football field, where he said he feels most happy.

"I really enjoy being out there. I like how it's chaotic, it just makes me feel good," Littlebird said.

*Tye's parents are Alana Wolfongue and Jeremy Littlebird. His stepdad is Creg Hart. Tye's siblings are Koda Birdshead, Keech Wolfongue, Nuo'Wah Wolfongue and Kynlee Hart.*



## TRIBAL COUNCIL

continued from pg. 3

encouraged to submit resolutions and applications for TC Coordinator by the August 29 deadline. Please look at the Tribes website for applications for Tribal members to take part in the meeting if they know they will not be able to attend in person. Community meetings have been scheduled, see flyer for locations, dates and times. These will be potluck with our office providing a stew, bread, dessert and water. The resolutions and Tribal Council coordinator applications will be presented. There will also be applications taken for tribal members who wish to take part in the recently passed remote participation action.

Ribbon Skirt Class – Out of District Tribal Members Priority

The Tribal Health Education Program presents a Ribbon Skirt Class to be held the day before the Annual Tribal Council Meeting! On Friday October 3, from 3pm until 9pm at the NAC Building. There will be light refreshments, no experience is required and materials and machines will be provided. This class is limited to 25 people, the number of sewing machines they have. Out of District Tribal members would be given first priority, all others would be put on a waiting list. Contact Melinda Sutton if you are interested or have questions. All Tribal members: come socialize and experience our hospitality! You can reach Melinda at [mesutton@cheyenne-andarapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:mesutton@cheyenne-andarapaho-nsn.gov) or call 405-570-2899.

### Plains Collective Art Festival

Watonga is preparing for an unforgettable celebration as the Cheese Festival and Indigenous Arts Festival come together on October 10–11, 2025. The weekend will showcase the rich creativity and culture of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people alongside beloved community traditions. Highlights include an opening ceremony and dance exhibition downtown, a lively parade featuring Tribal leaders and alumni, art shows with works by acclaimed Native artists, food demonstrations, and the always popular fry-

**Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Council**  
**COMMUNITY MEETINGS**  
  
Wednesday September 10 – Clinton ERC 6-8pm  
Wednesday September 17 – Hammon ERC 6-8pm  
Wednesday September 24 – Canton ERC 6-8pm  
Wednesday October 1 – Oklahoma City 6-8pm  
Location to be determined  
  
**AGENDA**  
Resolutions  
Tribal Council Coordinator Applicants  
  
**POTLUCK DINNER at 6pm**  
Provided: stew, bread, dessert water  
  
Albert Old Crow  
Work 405-422-7430 \* Work cell 405-437-5269  
[aoldcrow@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:aoldcrow@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov)

bread contest. Festivalgoers can also look forward to thought-provoking discussion panels, a dazzling fashion show, the Collaboration Powwow, and activities at Roman Nose State Park. With events ranging from a rodeo, quilt and art shows to the Great Rat Race, kids' zone, and local food vendors, the festival promises something for everyone—a true blending of heritage, community, and celebration.

### Closing

August has been a reminder that while challenges remain, our Tribe continues to move forward—embracing transparency, protecting sacred traditions, and empowering our people to engage fully in self-governance.

### Thought:

## ICE FACILITY

continued from pg. 1

The facilities have a combined capacity of 4,560 beds.

During a third quarter earnings call on Aug. 7, CoreCivic CEO Damon Hininger said the company was in advanced negotiations with the federal government to open two of its vacant prisons. In May, company officials described its Oklahoma facilities as especially attractive to the federal government because they're centrally located and close to the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City.

"Contracting activity is happening at a much quicker pace," Hininger said. "They have a need and a funding for all these solutions."

CoreCivic spokesman Brian Todd directed questions about when the facilities could reopen to the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement public affairs office. ICE did not respond to a request for comment.

The Sayre city manager said they have not received any information from CoreCivic. Watonga city officials did not return a call seeking comment.

Todd said CoreCivic detention staff receive training that meets or exceeds standards approved by the American Correctional Association. One sample contract reviewed by Oklahoma Watch found that ICE requires 60 hours of classroom curriculum and 40 hours of on-the-job training for new detention officers.

In contrast, Oklahoma law sets a baseline of 200 hours of training for state correctional officer certification. Cadets typically receive 400 hours of training during an eight-week training academy.

Federal government has used no-bid contract to populate detention centers

Gabriela Ramirez-Perez, an immigration policy analyst at the Oklahoma Policy Institute, said transparency has been lacking as ICE and companies such as CoreCivic and The GEO Group have sprinted to reopen vacant private prisons as detention centers. The federal government has frequently used no-bid contracts to populate the facilities, citing

a compelling urgency for thousands of detention beds. So-called letter contracts have also allowed private prison companies to update facilities and recruit staff without a formal agreement.

Organized opposition to the facilities reopening would likely have to happen at the local level, Ramirez-Perez said. That sort of resistance is playing out in Leavenworth, Kansas, where residents are protesting the reopening of the Midwest Regional Reception Center. The privately run facility was plagued by severe understaffing, rapes and inmate-on-staff assaults for years before shuttering in 2021.

"These facilities have quite a long history in the two towns that's not the best," Ramirez-Perez said.

She said the potential reopening of private detention centers contrasts with Oklahoma's successful effort to eliminate private prisons.

The North Fork prison in particular has a lengthy history of large-scale violence. Forty-six out-of-state prisoners from California were injured, with 30 requiring hospitalization, during an October 2011 riot. In April 2017, seven Oklahoma prisoners were hospitalized after a large-scale fight broke out.

CoreCivic also faced allegations of violating state policies when it housed state prisoners. In 2017, The Frontier reported that private prison staff destroyed audio and video evidence of a large-scale gang fight at the Cimarron Correctional Facility in Cushing, which itself began housing hundreds of ICE detainees this year.

Polina Rozhkova, a data analyst with the Oklahoma Policy Institute who has researched Oklahoma's history with private prisons, said private prisons are often a net negative for communities.

"The job postings may sound great, but this is not a stable source of employment or an institution in these communities," Rozhkova said.

Oklahoma Watch intern Valerie Scott contributed to this story.





# TOGETHER WE'VE BUILT A STRONG NATION - LET'S KEEP MOVING FORWARD!

## ELK CITY HOTEL & CASINO FAMILY RESORT



A new Lucky Star Casino & Entertainment Complex in Elk City. Featuring a 100-room hotel, travel plaza, RV hookups, convention center, and expanded casino, the project will bring 400 new jobs and strong economic growth to western Oklahoma. With the feasibility study complete, the architect selected, and design now in progress, this historic development is set to break ground in early 2026.

## CANTON MARINA



The Canton Marina Project in Canton, Oklahoma will feature a dock, boat storage, RV accommodations, cabins, dining, and family water floats—creating a destination for recreation and relaxation at Canton Lake. The project will bring new jobs, entertainment, and long-term economic growth to the area, making Canton Lake a hub for families and visitors alike.

## AI DATA CENTER



A new state-of-the-art AI Data and Cloud Storage Facility will soon rise on 200 acres, built with its own dedicated power plant and water supply to ensure efficiency, security, and long-term sustainability. This facility will serve as a hub for advanced data management and artificial intelligence, providing the speed, capacity, and reliability needed to support future innovation and economic growth.

## LUCKY STAR CASINO IN WOODWARD, OK.

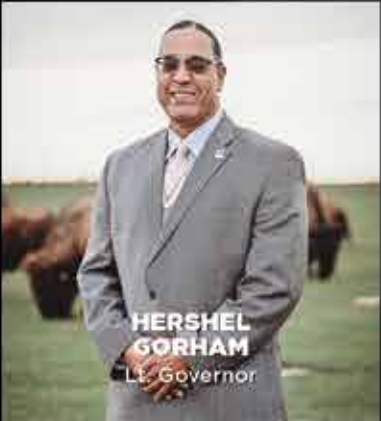


A new Lucky Star Casino in Woodward, Oklahoma—bringing growth, opportunity, and entertainment to the northwest service area of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation. Modeled after the success of our Watonga property, the new facility will feature a spacious gaming floor with 400 state-of-the-art slot machines, a modern 80-room hotel with luxury suites, and a full-service Travel Plaza to serve guests and travelers alike. This investment will create jobs, generate revenue, and strengthen the future for our Tribal community and the region.



REGGIE  
WASSANA  
Governor

# RE-ELECT WASSANA GORHAM 2025



HERSHEL  
GORHAM  
Lt. Governor







OLD CROW | SWEEZY  
for GOVERNOR / LT. GOV.

Open Books, Humble Leadership, Starting Now.

No empty promises.

We believe in accountability from day one. We can't in good conscience make any promises before conducting a forensic audit, because we don't know what revenue is coming in or going out. Until we do, the only promises we can make honestly are:



▶ OPEN BOOKS NOW

Running a campaign is expensive. A single postcard mailed to every tribal member can cost more than \$3,000.

Those high costs could push candidates to accept large donations from businesses or outsiders who expect favors once the election is over.

▶ We are making a different choice :

- We will only accept donations from individuals, never from outside businesses or special interests.
- We will publish all individual donations over \$500.
- This way, we will enter office owing no one but you.

▶ OPEN BOOKS IN OFFICE

Transparency can't stop on Election Day. If trusted to serve, our very first step will be an immediate forensic audit of tribal finances published for all tribal members to review. Every member has the right to see where we truly stand, and we can't make any promises until we have a clear picture of expenses and revenue.

From there, we will keep the books open with quarterly expense reports so no money moves in the dark.

We believe this is what humble, accountable leadership looks like.

▶ HUMBLE LEADERSHIP

We want to get back to our values as a people. In Cheyenne and Arapaho tradition, leaders gave to take care of the people, not the other way around.

▶ That is why we commit to .:

Lowering the Governor's salary to \$130,000, because leaders should not live lavishly while members go without

Using the extra \$50,000 each year to seed a new tribal non-profit that will secure grants for housing, elder care, education, and mental health for ALL tribal members, in and out of district.

No more expensive trips or unnecessary travel. Every trip we take will serve the people, or it will not happen.

As Albert likes to say, he has Motel 6 taste, not luxury taste. That's the kind of leadership our people deserve: simple, humble, and service-first, treating tribal money as belonging to the tribe, not to us.





**Community Meet-n-Greets**  
**6:30-8:30 pm**  
**Sept. 10 - Concho ERC**  
**Sept. 25 Kingfisher ERC**  
**Will Feed & Have Drawings for**  
**Household Baskets**



**VOTE**  
**JERRY C. LEVI JR**  
**FOR ARAPAHO DISTRICT 2**  
**LEGISLATOR**

***MY GOALS/VISIONS:***

- ***Better Out of District Representation***
- ***Utilize Tribal Constitution to Keep Executive Power in Check***
- ***Introduce Legislation for Merit Pay Raises for Tribal Employees***
- ***Establish Social Security Office for Inquiries and Disability Cases***
- ***Long Term Solutions for Elder Housing, Veterans At-Risk of Homelessness***
- ***Elder Coat Drives, Youth Empowerment and Involvement***
- ***District Food Bank for Families Struggling to Make Ends Meet,***  
***Single Income and Elders Raising Grandchildren***
- ***Keep Community at the Forefront - Initiatives & Improvements***  
***that further Us as a People. YOUR VOICE MATTERS***
- ***Honesty. Transparency, Keeping the District Informed***

**“**  
**TRIBAL**  
**FAMILIES**  
**FIRST**  
**”**

**About Me: Veteran Leadership (Current OVA Director / U.S. Navy Veteran 97-01**

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ARTIST MARKET & JURIED SHOW**

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5TH • 6TH • 7TH

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**SKY UTE CASINO RESORT  
Event Center**

PRESENTED BY THE  
**SOUTHERN UTE**  
CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

**ART & CRAFT BOOTH  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE  
SEPTEMBER 5TH**

REGISTRATION **OPEN**  
APPLY **ONLINE**  
OR IN-PERSON AT THE MUSEUM  
[SOUTHERNUTEMUSEUM.ORG](http://SOUTHERNUTEMUSEUM.ORG)



## WATONGA CHEESE FESTIVAL

continued from pg. 1

acknowledge the Cheyenne and Arapaho people as equal partners in the community.

“Really surprised at how fast it is growing, and everyone is getting excited,” Ramona Tall Bear said, a board member for the non-profit Plains Collective. “This was their (Roman Nose brothers) dream and it’s all coming together. This year’s event serves as a “soft launch” for an even larger Indigenous Arts Festival planned for next year. What makes this inaugural effort particularly significant is that it comes with the full support of both the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal government and the Watonga city leadership.”

The history between the city of Watonga and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes stretches back more than a century. After the Civil War, Plains Tribes, including the Cheyenne and Arapaho, resisted encroachment from settlers until they were forced onto reservations in what is now northwestern Oklahoma. The 1892 Land Run, which opened Cheyenne Arapaho lands for non-Indian set-

tlement, created decades of conflict and mistrust between Native peoples and incoming European settlers Tallbear said.

“But times are changing. Today, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Lucky Star Casino in Watonga is the community’s largest employer, with 575 tribal members on staff. The tribes’ growing visibility, professionalism, and success are reshaping perceptions and building new relationships,” Tallbear said.

The pairing of the new festival with Watonga’s beloved Cheese Festival is no accident. Watonga has hosted its annual cheese celebration since 1976, when local leaders launched the event to promote community pride and tourism. For decades, the town’s Watonga Cheese Factory, opened in 1941, was the heart of local industry and a symbol of small-town tradition.

Though the factory was destroyed in 2007 by Tropical Storm Erin, forcing its relocation to Perryton, Texas, the Cheese Festival remains one of Oklahoma’s


most recognized community events, drawing thousands each year to enjoy food, music, crafts, and family fun.

By intertwining the Indigenous Arts Festival with this local tradition, organizers hope to showcase the strength of Watonga’s history while honoring the resilience and creativity of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

“Through art, food, song, and community, we are creating a future where both cultures thrive side by side,” Tall Bear said.

The Indigenous Arts Festival and Watonga Cheese Festival will take place Oct. 10–11, 2025, in Watonga, Okla. Admission to many events is free, with art vendors, food trucks, and family activities ensuring there





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**PAWN SHOP**  
NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN GOODS



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[www.deanspawn.com](http://www.deanspawn.com)  
**405.239.2774**  
*"OKC's Oldest Pawn Shop"*

**Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
RESOURCE  
CENTER**

**4420 SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street - OKC  
(572) 910-6017**

Some of the tribal programs ready to serve tribal members in the Oklahoma City metro!

**Office of the Governor**  
(572) 910-6020  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
8 am to 5 pm  
PROGRAMS AVAILABLE  
Government Affairs

**Department of Education**  
(572) 910-6028  
10 am to 3 pm  
PROGRAMS AVAILABLE  
Higher Education - Tuesdays  
School Clothing - Wednesdays  
JOM - Thursdays

**Department of Health**  
Coming Soon  
PROGRAMS AVAILABLE  
Mondays & Thursdays 10 am to 2 pm  
CHR  
TOR  
Pathways/CCR  
Prevention  
1st & 3rd Wednesdays 8am to 5 pm  
Diabetes Wellness

**Department of Housing**  
Coming Soon  
Monday - Friday  
9 am to 4 pm

**Department of Labor**  
Coming Soon  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
8 am to 5 pm  
PROGRAMS AVAILABLE  
Office of Veteran Affairs

**Department of Social Services**  
Tuesday - Thursday  
10 am to 3 pm  
PROGRAMS AVAILABLE  
HOPE (572) 910-6040  
Elder Care (572) 910-6043  
Food Pantry (572) 910-6024

**OPEN AUGUST 19**

**CheYENNE and ARAPAHo TRIBES**

**Come in We're OPEN**

**DREAMS PROGRAM**  
Ignite Your Drive, Spark Your Future with  
**FREE GED Classes!**

Ready to transform your life? Our dynamic GED (General Education Development) classes are your pathway to success! Whether you're aiming for better job prospects, higher education, or personal growth, our program is meticulously crafted to guide you towards greatness!

**Why Embrace Our GED Classes?**

- Expert Guidance: Learn from skilled counselors devoted to your success.
- Flexibility Redefined: Tailored schedules to harmonize with your busy life.
- Personal Empowerment: Customized lessons that match your learning pace.
- Empowering Community: Join like-minded learners, fostering mutual growth.

**Core Subjects to Conquer**

- Language Arts (Reading & Writing): Master communication for any arena.
- Mathematics: Unlock analytical skills to excel in practical situations.
- Science: Explore the world around you with a scientific mindset.
- Social Studies: Grasp the tapestry of human societies and history.

**What to Bring**

- CDIB: Proof of enrollment in a federally recognized tribe.
- Second Form of ID: Driver's license, birth certificate, social security card, passport
- Proof of Income: Paystubs, unemployment, benefits letter, SNAP/TANF/SSI
- Proof of Residency: Utility bill, bank statement, rental/lease agreement

**Light Lunch & Snacks provided**

**Registration Opens at 10:00 A.M. on day of pre-test.**  
**CLINTON, GED Pre-test Day:**  
**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**  
**10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
Call: DREAMS  
CONCHO: (405)422-7662  
Email: [Dreamsgroup@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:Dreamsgroup@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov)  
CLINTON Testing Site:  
10329 N 2274 Road, Clinton, OK 73601

**WORK  
READINESS**  
10AM - 2PM

**September 9, 2025**

**RESUMES. APPLICATIONS. JOB SEARCHING.**

Clinton Dept Of labor Office  
10329 N 2274 Rd. Clinton, OK  
Please contact 24 hrs Before event For Transportation.  
A light meal will be served.  
Dreams Office # 405-422-7662  
[Dreamsgroup@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:Dreamsgroup@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov)



# Healing Requires Remembering: Why Knowing the History of Native Reproductive Oppression Matters Today

By Olivia Friday Loneman, M.Ed, CSE

I come from generations who endured separation, loss, and survival in the face of colonial violence. My ancestors were taken from their people, my grandmothers bore children under circumstances not of their choosing, and my father was forced to hide who he truly was, often for his own safety. For much of my father’s life, practicing culture and ceremony was literally against U.S. law. It wasn’t until Jimmy Carter signed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978 that even the smallest religious, cultural and ceremonial protections were granted to us by our occupiers. 1978 is also the year I was born.

The history of Native Oppression in the U.S. is not distant history. These are the stories I carry in my body, the history that sits in my heart as I walk into classrooms and clinics, when I meet with young people, community members and CEOs. I share these stories - my story - to bring the history of Native Oppression into sharp focus, in every conversation I have. Our stories, our histories, our traumas, are so deeply connected to the land we are from, the land that was taken from us and portioned back. The same land that White medicine sits on and yet they know nothing about this history. They need to know.

When I stand before a room of providers, educators, or community members, I always begin with some version of my own story, like the one above. Not because I like the spotlight, but because who I am - my ancestors, my family, my lived experiences as a Cheyenne Arapaho woman, mother and educator - is inseparable from the work I do. To ask me to separate

the personal from the professional is itself an act of white supremacy, and to show up in my full authenticity is an act of resistance.

## Why Remembering Matters

The U.S. has a long, painful history of controlling Native bodies and families. From the forced sterilizations carried out by the Indian Health Service in the 1970s, to the residential schools that removed Native children from their homes well into the 1990s, to the ongoing removal of Native kids from Native families today (some would argue that the foster care system is the modern-day residential school). These are not abstract injustices, these are not historical points in time. They are ongoing threads of a colonial project rooted in denying Native people the right to autonomy, family, and culture.

Systems of oppression operate best when they operate invisibly. And too often, our medical systems continue this invisibility by failing to acknowledge the legacies that shape mistrust, trauma, and health disparities today.

## The Role of Providers, Educators, and Community Leaders

For mental and medical health providers, ignoring this history isn’t neutrality, it is complicity. Native people’s mistrust of doctors, clinics, and hospitals is not irrational; it is the result of generations of abuse. To build trust, providers must learn this history and understand that their work exists inside it. Trauma-informed care starts with acknowledging the truth, and this includes the truth of the trauma and harm perpetrated on our bodies by their systems.

For educators, remembering

means teaching the real story of reproductive injustice, naming residential schools, sterilizations, eugenics, and coerced contraception alongside resilience, survival, and resistance. Without this, students inherit the same silence that has allowed harm to continue.

And for community leaders, remembering is about advocating for policies rooted in reproductive justice: the right to not have children, the right to have the children we want, and the right to raise them in safe, culturally affirming environments.

## The Ongoing Impacts

Today, Native women face disproportionately high maternal mortality rates. Native patients continue to experience dismissal of their pain, lack of informed consent, and denial of culturally competent care. Families are still torn apart in child welfare systems. Our relatives go missing and are murdered at staggering rates, their cases ignored or dismissed by the very systems meant to protect them. None of this is accidental, it is the echo of centuries of reproductive control. It is part of the ongoing Native genocide that the American project is built on.

Moving Forward with Love and Accountability

Reproductive Justice, as Black feminist activist Loretta Ross reminds us, was built on the backs of women of color. It requires that we move beyond rights and into justice - justice that sees the whole person, their community, their history, and their future.

For those of us working in healthcare, education, or community spaces, this means slowing down, listening deeply, honoring experiences, and building community rooted in love. It means

remembering that the harm is not only past tense, it is still happening in real time.

The good news? The solutions are happening in real time, too. Native communities are reclaiming ceremonies, advocating for policy change, training the next generation of providers, and telling our stories so they cannot be erased.

When I wear the moccasins my grandmother made, or hold the eagle feather given to me when I earned my Master’s degree, I feel the strength of survival. But I also feel the weight of what was taken. That dual truth is what Native people carry every day: resilience and grief, survival and loss, a constant reminder that healing cannot happen without remembering.

And true healing requires that the rest of the world remembers, too.

## Biography:

Olivia Friday Loneman is a Cheyenne and Arapaho sexuality education specialist, consultant, and speaker. She is the founder of Many Paths Consulting, where she leads trainings at the intersections of reproductive justice, anti-racism, and community healing. She is an AASECT Certified Sexuality Educator, with a master’s degree in Sexuality Education, a bachelor’s degree in Gender Studies, and certifications in culturally responsive practices. Olivia draws on both her professional expertise as well as her own lived experiences to help communities confront the legacy of reproductive oppression while centering Native resilience and sovereignty. Learn more at [www.manypathsconsulting.com](http://www.manypathsconsulting.com) or contact Olivia at [OFL@manypathsconsulting.com](mailto:OFL@manypathsconsulting.com).



Bobby James

314 S. 16th STREET  
Clinton, OK 73601

IG: zhoni2004  
lonelypanda1996@gmail.com  
Phone: (602) 738-3076



Community Health  
Representatives





Happy Healthy  
Feet

September 23, 2025  
5:30-7:30 pm

Blood Glucose and Blood Pressure Checks  
Education Prevention for Diabetics  
IHS Benefits Coordinator for Insurance Sign Ups  
IHS Patient Advocate presentation on Medical Home  
and Purchase and Referred Care  
Dental offering Fluoride and Nutrition  
PHN Nurses - Immunizations - Clinfon Service Unit  
Cheyenne and Arapaho Social Services  
How to examine your foot by Kathy Shawnee

Call to reserve  
transportation  
by Sept 19th:  
405-295-1750

Healthy meal provided - Incentives for participants

Cheyenne and Arapaho Dept of Health Bldg 1950 S Shepard  
El Reno, OK 405-295-1750



Healing to Re-Entry Program  
Judicial Branch Court  
Services

Tribal Justice Center  
PO BOX 102  
Concho, OK 73022

Who Can Apply:


- Federally Recognized Tribal Member
- Served 6 months or more in prison/county
- On active Probation
- Must Physically Reside or Planning to Reside in program service area: Blaine, Beckham, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Kingfisher, Roger Mills and Washita Counties.


Office: 405.422.7423  
Cell: 405.215.1529  
Email:  
healingtoentry  
@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAH  
TRIBES


We Offer:

- Reintegration Services
- Health/Mental Health Referrals
- Court Reports/Court Advocacy
- Individualized Case Plans
- Creating a re-entry support team for you.
- Compliance with Probation
- Employment Referrals
- Transitional Living Referrals
- Treatment Correspondence
- Prison Correspondence
- Legal Aid Referrals






Happy 24th Birthday  
MaKayla Tru  
Sept. 6  
We love you and so proud  
Love, mom and family



Happy 5th Birthday  
Aaliyah Sevenstar  
Sept. 8  
We love you!  
From momma, daddy  
and all of your sisters!



Happy Birthday  
Latoya!  
Hope it's the best birthday  
ever.  
Love, River, Lovelynn,  
Zori, Cori, mom, and all  
your family & friends

Health Education Presents:

RIBBON  
SKIRT  
CLASS

Out-of-District Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Members Priority  
\*District members will be put on a waiting list\*

Limited to 25 people

Light Refreshments


October 3, 2025  
3 pm to 9 pm  
NAC Building

No Experience required.  
Materials and machine will  
be provided.



A message from the SORNA Office  
If you are a registered sex offender planning to attend these events, Contact the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes SORNA Office at (405) 422-7454 or in person at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Justice Center located at 100 Black Kettle Blvd, Concho, Oklahoma 73602.

Contact:  
Melinda Sutton  
(405) 570-2899  
Mesutton@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov



EARL PLUMLEY  
FOR  
ARAPAHO DISTRICT 2  
LEGISLATOR

HONESTY

It will be my goal to represent the constituents of Arapaho District 2 in a clear, truthful, and credible manner. I will strive to ensure the trust of all Tribal members and not just those within my district. To build trust, my steps will be:

- HAVE OPEN COMMUNICATION
- BE CONSIDERATE OF ALL VIEWS/IDEAS
- BE CONSISTENT AND FAIR
- BE ACCOUNTABLE THROUGH MY ACTIONS

TRANSPARENCY

It will be my goal to be open, informative, and share information with the constituents of Arapaho District 2 on matters that impact the well-being of all Tribal members. To ensure that the constituents of A2 District are informed, my steps will be:

- ENSURE INCLUSIVENESS THRU MONTHLY MEETINGS
- DEVELOP ACTION PLANS OR PROJECTS
- GENERATE A QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
- PROVIDE A QUARTERLY EXPENSE REPORT

INTEGRITY

It will be my goal to remain focused on the needs of the constituents of Arapaho District 2. I will strive to be fair, accountable, and determined through my actions. To ensure integrity of my actions, my steps will be:

- MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS
- ADHERE TO A STRONG CODE OF ETHICS
- RESEARCH AND VALIDATE INFORMATION
- ADVOCATE FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS

For questions, come break bread and let’s discuss your concerns at one of the locations below...6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

Tuesday - August 26, 2025

Kingfisher Community Dinner  
Kingfisher ERC  
500 W. Erwin Avenue  
Kingfisher, OK

Wednesday - August 27, 2025

Concho Community Dinner  
Concho ERC  
200 Wolf Robe Circle  
Concho, OK

Thursday - August 28, 2025

Geary Community Dinner  
Gib Miles ERC  
928 S. Blaine Ave  
Geary, OK



# SANKEY MEDICINEBIRD — 2025 —



## YOUR MONEY. YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW.

Our people deserve answers. For too long, decisions about our money have been made behind closed doors. That ends when I’m elected. I will order a full forensic audit of our tribal finances — every program, every account. We will track every dollar, expose any misuse, and make the results public for all citizens to see.



FOLLOW US  
ON SOCIAL



VISIT OUR  
WEBSITE

VOTE SANKEY  MEDICINEBIRD 2025



# SANKEY MEDICINEBIRD 2025



## STILL SERVING

### FROM THE MILITARY TO OUR TRIBAL NATION

As a proud veteran, I have lived the values of courage, discipline, and service — not just in uniform, but every day since. My leadership is rooted in the wisdom of our elders and the traditions of the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples: lead with integrity, walk beside the people, and protect what matters most.

With that same steadfast commitment, I will bring unity across all boundaries, protect our lands and languages, honor our elders and veterans, and empower our youth. I will fight for transparency in our government, housing and healthcare for all citizens, and a future where every tribal member — no matter where they live — has a voice and a place in our Nation's story.

I've worn the uniform to protect this Nation. Now, I am ready to protect our Nation — the one our ancestors built — with the same commitment, honor, and heart.



**FOLLOW US  
ON SOCIAL**



**VISIT OUR  
WEBSITE**

# VOTE SANKEY MEDICINEBIRD 2025



Cheyenne and Arapaho Office of Veterans Affairs and  
The SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Program  
Presents:

# Veterans and Family



## BOWLING NIGHTS

- ✦ September 3, 2025 in Clinton
- ✦ September 17, 2025 in Watonga
- ✦ September 24, 2025 in El Reno

Join us in raising awareness for suicide prevention, a crucial cause that impacts individuals and communities worldwide. By coming together, we can break the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage open, compassionate conversations. Our collective efforts can help those in distress feel seen, heard, and supported. Whether it's through sharing resources, participating in events, or simply offering a listening ear, every action makes a difference.

**6pm to 8pm**  
**R.S.V.P**



For more information contact the Tribal OVA office at 405-422-7724 or [veteranservices@cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:veteranservices@cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov)



OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

Theda J. Benton



Theda J. “Francie” Benton, 76, (Cheyenne Name: Hémanéóhtsé’e “Bringing In Water Woman” of Seiling passed from this life on August 14, 2025 at OU Medical Center. She was born on November 9, 1948 to Bruce Sr. and Delores (Little Coyote) Whiteman in Clinton, OK. Charles and Olga Phillips raised her in California, and she later lived in Montana, and Oklahoma before making her home in Seiling where she finished school. . She was married to Herschel Benton Sr. in 1969, and to this union 5 children were born. Later in 1990 she met the love of her life, her companion, Burl Buf-

falomeat, and they enjoyed the rest of her life together. Theda enjoyed going to pow-wows and benefit dances, and spending time with her grandchildren, Tulane, Ira, Calvin, Harry, Izzy, BJ, Jackson, Kingston, DeAngelo, Diego, Adriana, Ariauna, and Aleilah. She worked as a community health representative for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. She then worked for the Seiling Post Office and also at Seiling Public Schools where she worked her way up to being the Custodian Supervisor before her retirement in 2008. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her daughter Joyce Benton; her son, Herschel Benton, Jr.; and four brothers, Wayne Whiteman, Daniel Whiteman, Andrew Whiteman, and Alan Pyle. She is survived by her companion Burl Buffalo-

meat of the home, children Yvonne Benton of Seiling, Brandon Benton of Seiling, Harry Benton of Ponca City, Oliver White Crow of



Clinton, Nina Woods of El Reno, and an “adopted” son Newley Hutchison; siblings Virginia Reyes of El Reno, Ginger Warrior of OKC, Bruce Whiteman, Jr. of Watonga, Frank Whiteman, Sr. of Lame Deer, MT, Billie Whiteman of Woodward, and Dewanda Little Coyote of Ashland, MT, aunt and uncle Rayford and Mary Ann Gray, 13 grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

Wake services were held Aug. 17 at the Seiling Emergency Response Center in Seiling, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 18 at the First Christian Church of Seiling.

Patrick Tennyson LeFlore

Patrick Tennyson LeFlore, 51, of Geary, Okla., passed away on Aug. 18, 2025. He was born on March 17, 1974, in Lawton, Okla., to Jerry and Eva (Roman) LeFlore. Patrick graduated from Riverside Indian School and lived in Oklahoma for most of his life. Over the years, he worked in a variety of roles, including as casino manager for Lucky Star Casino and Sugar Creek Casino. He also spent time working at Little Giant Pump Company and Precision Parts and Remanufacturing in Oklahoma City, Atwoods in Enid, and Tyson’s in Enid. A lifelong sports enthusiast, Patrick especially loved basketball. He also enjoyed playing pool, listening to music, and spending time with his family and friends. Known for his generous

heart and strong will, Patrick was someone who would help anyone in need. He was proud of his heritage as a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation. Patrick will be remembered for his love of sports, music, and family, and for the kindness and strength he carried throughout his life. Patrick is survived by his daughter Rayne LeFlore of El Reno, Okla., his mother Eva LeFlore and Frank Sweezy of Geary, siblings, Pamela Roman of Geary, Mary Cooper and husband Donnie of Oklahoma City and Jerry LeFlore of Oklahoma City, and a special niece Rosebud Benally of Oklahoma City. He also leaves behind numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death



by his father Jerry LeFlore, and his son Patrick “P.J.” LeFlore Jr. A traditional all-night wake service was held Aug. 21 at the Geary Emergency Response Center in Geary, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 22, at the same venue, officiated by Rev. Jay Mule, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Turner Funeral Home.

Regina Ann Cage

Regina Ann ‘Tweet’ Cage, age 64, was born Nov.11, 1960, in Lawton, Okla., to Thurman and Ruby (Aghoom) Cross. She passed away Aug. 11, 2025, in Clinton, Okla. Tweet was raised in the Colony and Clinton areas and attended Clinton Public Schools. A loving homemaker, she married Robert Cage on Feb. 14, 2015. She lived her entire life in the Clinton and Colony communities, cherishing the simple things. She loved spending time with her family, especially her two local nephews, cooking, caring for her dogs, and bringing positivity to those around her. Tweet was known for speaking straight-

forwardly and for her kind, uplifting nature. She was preceded in death by her parents, Thurman and Ruby Cross, her husband Robert Cage, her sister Reba Solomon and her brother Duke Cross. Tweet is survived by her son Elton Chris Taylor of Jasper, Texas, her sister Beverly Bryson of Canon City, Colo., nieces and nephews Keisha Cross of Jacksonville, Fla., Kassie Cross of Clinton, Matthew Bryson and Travis Bryson, both of Oklahoma City, Jeremy Bryson of Spring, Texas, Forrest Solomon of Norman, Okla., Bear Christiansen of Catoosa, Okla., Kamden Duke Long of Clinton, and



Hunter Suchite of Clinton. Wake services were held Aug. 14 at the Hyman Chapel in Clinton, Okla. Graveside services were held Aug. 15 at the Colony Indian Cemetery, with Gerald Panana and Oliver Pedro officiating, under the direction of Lee Home-Town Funeral Home.

Nettie Marie Littlecalf Lopez

Nettie Marie Littlecalf-Lopez was born on Sept. 18, 1977 to Laverne Littlecalf Sr. and Muriel Littlecalf in Clinton, Okla. Her given name is Pon-thi-mah which means White Buffalo Woman, she is from the Southern Cheyenne, Kiowa and Apache Tribes of Oklahoma. Nettie was proud to be raised in her Cheyenne traditional ways and carried that with pride. Nettie is the oldest out of six children. As a toddler Nettie and her family moved to El Reno, Okla., where she went to school and grew up. Nettie was very passionate about helping the sick. She went on to become a CNA for over 20 years. In 2013, she moved to Ohio to be with her now husband. Nettie married Israel Lopez Sr. Nov. 2, 2024 and they have been together over 11 years where she also helped him raise his two children and loved the opportunity to be a mother. In 2015 Nettie started working for Sustaita Roofing and Construction as a driver, she drove dump

trailers for roofing and loved every minute of it. Nettie is survived by her husband Israel Lopez Sr., children Israel Lopez Jr. of Columbus, Ohio, Stefanie Lopez of Columbus, Hector Lopez of Blooming Grove, Texas, Ruby Lopez of Blooming Grove, grandchildren Eden Mateo Lopez of Columbus, Tristan Lee Lopez of Arizona; siblings Fern Gutierrez of Columbus, Alta (Alexis) Guzman of Columbus, Lisa Littlecalf of Oklahoma City, Laverne Littlecalf Jr. of Thomas, Okla., and Mary Littlecalf of Oklahoma City. She is preceded in death by her father Laverne Littlecalf Sr., mother Muriel Pawnee Littlecalf, twin babies Gradiola Littlecalf, Josiah Ryan Littlecalf, paternal grandparents Fred H. Littlecalf and Fern Tsotaddle Littlecalf, maternal grandparents John Kemble and Alta Harrison Pawnee, and sister Wilma Redbird. The family would like to thank everyone for all of the



well wishes and words of encouragement and prayers while Nettie was sick as it helped her keep going and fighting when she thought she couldn’t do it anymore. May God bless each and every one of you, each one of you made her life special in one way or another. She never would say goodbye, but see you later. Visitation was held Aug. 20 at the New Comer Funeral Home NE Chapel in Columbus, Ohio. Funeral services were held Aug. 21, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Evergreen Monuments under the direction of New Comer Funeral Home.

Wilma Raeann Red Bird

Wilma Raeann Red Bird of El Reno was born on Aug. 3, 1978, to Laverne Littlecalf Sr. and Muriel Littlecalf in Clinton, Okla., at the Clinton Indian hospital. She passed away on Aug. 7, 2025, at Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City surrounded by her loved ones. Wilma was a proud citizen of the Cheyenne, Kiowa and Apache Tribes. She was also a member of the NAC and loved attending meetings with her husband Emmett. Wilma was a well-known and accomplished singer; she was a backup singer for the Sizzortail Singers, Red Stone Singers, and Rough Arrow Singers. Her talent took her to many powwows across the United States winning many singing competitions including winning back-to-back at the Gathering of Nations world champion singing contest and the women’s backup singing contest with the Sizzortail Singers, she also participated in many host drum gigs with them.

Wilma was a loving and caring wife, sister, and auntie but most all a proud and very loving mother to Olyvia Fern. She was a homemaker who devoted her whole life to raising her daughter and supporting her husband. She attended the El Reno public school system and graduated in 1996. She has also worked for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Wilma is survived by her husband Emmett Red Bird Jr; daughter Olyvia Fern Redbird, niece Priscilla Littlecalf, six brothers, Roy Littlecalf, Laverne Littlecalf Jr, Phillip”Yogi”Bread, Lonnie Street, Richard Stree and Steve Street, six sisters, Nettie Lopez, Fern Gutierrez, Alta Guzman, Lisa Littlecalf, Lee Littlecalf-Wermy and Mary Littlecalf, aunts, Wilma Nibbs StoneCalf, Karen Littlecayote, Roberta Hamilton and many adopted brothers and sisters as well as many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Laverne and



Muriel Pawnee Littlecalf, maternal grandmother Alta Pawnee, paternal grandfather Fred Harvey Littlecalf and paternal grandmother Fern Tsotaddlde-Littlecalf, and auntie Lisa Pawnee. Wake service was held Aug. 12 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 13, at the same venue, with Rev. Sam Horse, Rev. Ruby Horse and Rev. Gerald Panana officiating, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber-Benson Funeral Home.

Bertha Colleen White Crow Thunder Bull

Bertha Colleen (White Crow) Thunder Bull, Cheyenne name, Esevohene ‘ehne’e’, meaning Buffalo Women, began her earthly journey on May 18, 1957, when she was welcomed by her parents Woodrow and Naomi (Hill) White Crow. Bertha passed from this life on Aug.10, 2025, in Clinton, Okla., at the age of 68 years, 2 months, and 23 days. Bertha was fortunate to be a part of a large and loving family having 10 siblings. The family made their home in the Seiling, Okla., area where Bertha attended the Seiling Public Schools. Bertha was blessed with five children, Derry, Debby, Devan, Phillip, and Shawna. Her children were the most important additions of her life. She truly loved and cherished each of them. Bertha was a true believer in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and she attended the Baptist Church in Clinton. Her faith was a guiding influence in her life. Bertha enjoyed drawing and artwork, she embraced

the traditional tribal activities, and she excelled in beading. Her Cheyenne heritage was an important part of her life. Bertha was preceded in death by her parents, daughter Shawna Thunder Bull, brothers, George Harrington, Andrew Harrington and Dewayne White Crow and sister, Charlene Harrington, Wanada “Tweety” Red Hat, Gerlene Chavez, Janice White Crow and Debbie White Crow. Bertha is survived by her children Derry White Crow of Guymon, Okla., Debby White Crow and husband Joe Flores of Oklahoma City, Devan White Crow of Watonga, Okla., and Phillip Thunder Bull of Canton, Okla. Her memory will also be cherished by her 22 grandchildren, numerous great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and countless other relatives and friends. Although Bertha is no longer living among us, her spirit will live on through those that were touched by



her love and kindness. An all-night wake service was held Aug. 14 at the Seiling Emergency Response Center in Seiling, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 15 at the Redinger Funeral Home Chapel, followed by an interment at the Cantonment Indian Menonite Cemetery under the direction of Redinger Funeral Home. Funeral Services will be Friday, August 15, 2025, at 2:00 PM at the Redinger Funeral Home Chapel with burial following at Cantonment (Indian Mennonite) Cemetery.

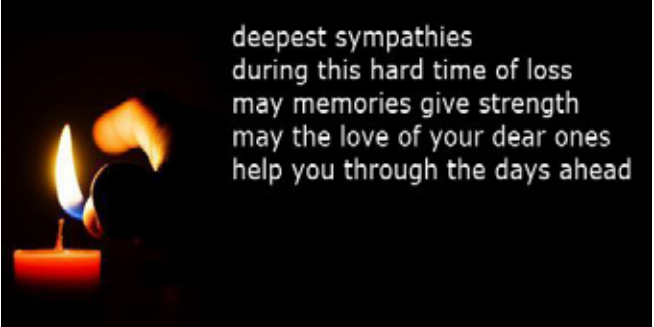


Cherrond DaShawn Davis

Cherronda DaShawn Davis was born in Oklahoma City July 21, 1970, to Mary Jane Davis and Charles Edward Davis. She left this world on Aug. 7, 2025. Cherronda lived her life in Oklahoma City where she attended Del City High

School. Cherronda was proud to be a Cheyenne and Arapaho citizen. Cherronda’s family includes daughters, Helena D. Davis, Zara A. Davis, sons, Justin Pl. Dav is, Demarco R. Davis, sisters, LaTanga E.A. Davis, Charlene Nicole Jar-

man and Shayna Y. Martin. Funeral services were held Aug. 16 at the North-west Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Temple & Sons Funeral Home.





# DARA FRANKLIN

*continued from pg. 2*

help assist when needed with the new upcoming committee, showing them the ropes of what it took to run the ongoing OIN powwow.

“We’re going to help them move forward because they’ve been a part of it, they’re the Buddy Bond Color Guard and they’ve been a part of it this whole time, so they’ve always supported us.”

“They’re younger than us. I know there’s new ideas, young people got all the new ideas and they’re going to bring something different, I think they’re going to do good, they’re traditional too, they grew up with us and are part of our community too,” Franklin said.

Franklin’s reasoning for choosing to retire stems from the need to bring in new people, and also to just take the time to enjoy a powwow setting among friends and relatives.

“I’m older now, we need new people that can take over and I enjoy looking on, going to a powwow and looking on, I just want to go and enjoy and see the people. I had friends come and they’d come say hello to me and I didn’t get to visit them,” Franklin said.

Looking forward to the future of OIN powwow and its ongoing legacy, Franklin said her children were sad to hear she’s retiring as they would often help her with the powwow, asking what will they do next?

“We’re going to continue to feed and welcome people, and then we all get to visit them,” Franklin said.

Franklin enjoyed her time serving

as chairperson, getting to witness firsthand what the people have done for the community in the powwow circle.

“I just enjoy what our people have done for our community, that have helped us ... they have come, served on head staff and fed the people. In honor of what they’ve done to show how our people are. We’re gift giving people, I swear and then they like to feed, that’s our people, that’s just us. That’s how we are,” Franklin said.

Following her retirement Franklin looks forward to spending more time for herself, whether that’s watching TV or reading, traveling or watching basketball.

Having spent over 20 years serving as OIN chairperson, Franklin thanks the other committee members, Christine Morton, treasurer, Jessie Botone, secretary and members Fritz Prairiechief and David Bearshield.

“I was super grateful and honored to have helped out and worked for the OIN committee, for them sticking with me and us learning together every year, we just knew what to get ready for, how to make things better and bigger, we didn’t mean to make it bigger, it got bigger through the years.”



After announcing her retirement at the 2025 Oklahoma Indian Nation Powwow, Dara Franklin shares, hugs, laughter and memories with numerous guests as they lined up to give their thanks for 25 years of dedicated service to the powwow. Above Dara Franklin shares a laugh with photographer Dakota Wahkinney. Below Michelle Whiteman visits with Dara Franklin. (Photos / Adriel Clements)



Lucky Star CASINO

HOT SEAT HARVEST

\$200

FREE PLAY

Every Half Hour

12PM - 11PM

24

Chances To Win

EVERY SATURDAY

IN SEPTEMBER!

\$115,000

TOTAL

FREE PLAY

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Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

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