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# Inauguration 2026



*Left: Winners of the 2025 Elections being sworn in, from l-r: A2 Kendricks Sleeper, C2 Milan Roman Nose, C4 Mariah Youngbull, A1 Pamela Sutton, Gov. Reggie Wassana and Lt. Gov. Hershel Gorham. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)*

*Below: Gov. Reggie Wassana takes the oath of office beginning his third term as governor of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.*

## Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Swear in Leadership at 2026 Inauguration Ceremony

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(GEARY, Okla.) Ringing in the new year, new beginnings are underway for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes as tribal communities near and far came together to witness tribal leadership take their oaths of office as part of the 2026 Inauguration ceremony.

The Inauguration 2026 for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes took place January 3 at the Gib Miles Emergency Response Center (ERC) in Geary, Okla.

The ceremony opened with a meal and a prayer given by Roy Dean Bullcoming. Following a meal, the inauguration officially began with an opening prayer presented by Dara Franklin, followed by traditional drum flag and memorial songs.

As tribal citizens made their way to fill seats and shake a hand or two with familiar faces, a community of fellowship could be felt throughout the building as citizens came together for the purpose of witnessing tribal officials profess their oaths of office to lead the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

In a historical win, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Gov. Reggie Wassana and Lt. Governor Hershel Gorham won the 2025 elections for governor and lieutenant governor, continuing the administrative work of Wassana for his third consecutive term.

Four legislative seats were on the ballots for the 2025 elections, with C2 Milan Roman Nose, Jr., C4 Mariah Youngbull, A1 Pamela Sutton and A2 Kendricks Sleeper winning the election. In another historic win, Sleeper returned for his third consecutive term as legislator.

Fred Mosqueda served as master of ceremonies for the inauguration, who read the preamble to the constitution and cited words from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Election Commission.

"The election commission had a vision of taking this momentous occasion to be witnessed by our communities, it is the will of the people that project these past for a better future, that our ancestors so variably dedicated their lives, as we continue to step into the unknown with each passing day, let us take time to enjoy these achievements," Mosqueda said on behalf of the election commission.

Justice Lindsay Robertson of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Supreme Court conducted the oaths of office for each individual being sworn in for their respective seats.

All incoming legislators were called upon to stand and raise their right hands, repeating their oaths to uphold the constitution and laws of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, with each



*Lt. Gov. Hershel Gorham recites the oath of office issued by Supreme Court Justice Lindsay Robertson.*

# Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes thwart cyberattack on government network through rapid response

Rosemary Stephens  
Editor-in-Chief

On December 9 bad actors lurking in the crevices of the dark web attempted to hijack the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' government network system. Because of diligent monitoring of the tribes' network system, the breach was detected almost immediately resulting in the network being taken completely offline by IT professionals to prevent a take over of the system.

According to Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Information Technology Program Director Jameison Smith, the swift response likely prevented what could have escalated into a full ransomware attack.

"Usually the goal of these hackers are to get inside the system so that can start encrypting all your data and then once completely encrypted they basically send out like a ransom note to get all your data back, but we caught it so early that we never saw a ransom note or anything to that effect," Smith said.

The tribes contract with an outside vendor to assist in managing server security. That vendor detected unusual activity on the network, prompting the IT Department to take the system completely offline as a precaution. Following the attempted breach, the tribes began working closely with a third-party cybersecurity firm recommended through their cybersecurity insurance provider to conduct a forensic investigation.

"As of right now we do not believe any data was taken or exported, but they were in the process of trying to lock it down and get to the data when we shut it all down," Smith said. "We are waiting for the complete forensic report to hopefully determine where exactly the hackers gained entry to the network."

The December incident is not the first time the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes have faced cyber threats. In June 2021, the tribes' Lucky Star Casino in Concho, Oklahoma, reported a ransomware attack that forced the temporary closure of all six Lucky Star Casino locations across western Oklahoma. The closures began June 18, 2021, as tribal officials worked closely with the FBI and cybersecurity ex-



perts to contain the attack. The tribes did not pay the ransom and instead rebuilt systems from isolated backups to ensure they were secure and resilient.

Following that attack, the tribes implemented stronger cybersecurity measures. According to tribal leadership and casino officials, these steps included additional system hardening and safeguards during the rebuilding of servers, strengthening overall cyber defenses based on findings from formal forensic investigations, and engaging external forensic cybersecurity investigators for ongoing monitoring. The casino's insurance provider also offered 12 months of free credit monitoring to affected employees and customers, and new protocols were issued advising staff and patrons to remain vigilant against phishing attempts and spoofed communications.

Cyberattacks against tribal nations are becoming increasingly common nationwide. While there is no comprehensive public data on the exact number of tribal nations affected in 2025, multiple tribes and tribal enterprises have confirmed significant cyber incidents.

The Salt Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, for example, was forced to shut down all five Kewadin Casino locations and experienced weeks-long disruptions to tribal government services in early 2025. In April 2025, the Lower Sioux Indian Community also reported a cyber incident.

A survey distributed by CDC Gaming in September 2025 found that 75% of tribal nations experienced ransomware attacks within the previous year. The report noted that low incident reporting could signal either strong prevention measures or limited detection capabilities, as well as cultural reluctance to publicly report attacks.

Experts warn that the advancement of artificial intelligence is likely to make cyberattacks more frequent and more sophisticated in the coming years, affecting not only tribal nations but governments, corporations, hospitals, banks and businesses at every level.

"Sadly with the introduction of AI, hackers are getting much more intelligent and they can do much more targeted approaches to trick people into clicking on links in emails that are gateways to having networks

exposed," Smith said. "Our federal government spends millions of dollars in protecting and hardening their servers, their equipment and they still sometimes get breached. Just recently I was told Canadian County had a similar incident and it took them up to three weeks to get back up and going and they are much smaller than we are."

As cyber incidents continue to rise, Smith emphasized that security awareness training for employees will become increasingly important. He noted that while some new safeguards may be inconvenient, they are necessary.

"There are strong security measures we are putting into place, that will be inconvenient for employees but necessary to protect our servers from any future attacks," he said.

Despite growing awareness, cybercrime remains difficult to prosecute. According to U.S. government reports, only three out of every 100,000 cybercrimes result in prosecution, underscoring the ongoing challenges faced by governments and organizations working to defend against increasingly complex digital threats.



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Birth Certificate

Utility Bill

Proof of Income

Grades, Transcript, or Diploma.

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**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**  
3/31/2026 5:00 PM

# Our Land, Our History, Our Truth: The Story of Sand Creek in 2026

Submitted by Chris Tall Bear

As the United States prepares to mark its 250th year and Colorado marks its 150th, we, the descendants of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, stand at a crossroads that begins and ends with the memory of Sand Creek. I write this to you as a descendant of Grey Beard, who survived the attack at Big Sandy Creek so that our family bloodline would not be broken. For us, these national anniversaries carry a deeper weight shaped by the displacement and betrayal that occurred on that cold November morning in 1864. His survival, and ours, is not just a story of endurance; it is a calling to move beyond the narrative of victimhood and confront the responsibilities of our future. We are the "Long Line," the descendants of those who survived, resisted, and carried our Cheyenne and Arapaho nations forward.

To truly know our history is to understand that the story of Sand Creek IS United States history. Every milestone this country celebrates is inextricably tied to our Cheyenne and Arapaho presence and the resistance that was forged in the aftermath of that massacre. We must recognize the parallels between 1864 and the world we live in today, where fear-mongering and political ambition once again attempt to marginalize our voices. The birth of Colorado was built directly upon the violence at Sand Creek, but our Tribal roots in that soil were established long before statehood. We remember the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, which recognized our

sovereign territory long before the betrayal at Big Sandy Creek took place. In that sacred agreement, the United States recognized our lands, promising this land to be the territory of the Cheyenne and Arapaho:

*"commencing at the mouth of the White Earth River... thence up the North Fork of the Platte River to the junction of the North and South Forks... thence up the South Fork of the Platte River to the summit of the Rocky Mountains; thence along the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the head of the Arkansas River; and thence down the Arkansas River to the crossing of the Santa Fé road."*

While the United States celebrated its centennial in 1876, our ancestors and our Lakota allies delivered a stunning reminder at the Battle of the Greasy Grass that the spirit of those who survived Sand Creek could not be erased. This victory, where warriors of the Cheyenne and Lakota overwhelmed Custer and his 7th Cavalry, was the counter-story to the American centennial, a declaration that Tribal sovereignty was still powerful. It offers a timeless lesson: *"the morning of 1864 did not break us; it forged a resistance that would echo across the plains for generations. The victory at Greasy Grass reminds us that when we stand in unity, we are an unstoppable force, capable of reclaiming our Cheyenne and Arapaho narrative and our place in this world."* In our current world, tech-

nology brings us closer, allowing us to exchange information instantly. You have to wonder: if the internet had been available in 1876, maybe Cook and Benteen's troops would have checked their Instagram accounts and gotten word about the situation at Greasy Grass a little sooner.

In all seriousness, we use these modern tools for good to achieve a level of solidarity and unity that honors the peace sought by our leaders at Sand Creek. This is part of what we call "Phase Two," where we look to the blueprint of principled leadership left by men like Black Kettle (*Moke tav a to*), White Antelope (*Wo ka ho ko mas*), and Left Hand (*Niwot*), who held to their word even when surrounded by betrayal. Beside them was the strength of our women, like Medicine Woman (*Mah kéhé*), who survived the massacre only to be killed by the same 7th Cavalry four years later at the Washita. In the new memorial being dedicated, she is depicted holding a baby representing the Seventh Generation, the future they were fighting for even as the first shots were fired in 1864.

To our Tribal youth and all Sand Creek descendants: **this is your story to tell.** We encourage you to participate, to step forward, and to share the accounts of honor and resilience passed down through your families. Whether through oral tradition or the digital world, your voice is the continuation of our sovereignty. One of the most

powerful ways we continue this walk is through the **Sand Creek Spiritual Healing Run 2026**. As we look toward 2026, this run remains a sacred tradition of prayer, remembrance, and resilience. It is where our youth and elders alike put feet to their faith, retracing the path of our ancestors to ensure their sacrifice is never forgotten. While details for the 2026 Healing Run are forthcoming, it will serve as a cornerstone of our efforts to heal and unify our people.

Healing and forgiveness are acts of strength that free us to lead without being chained to the past. By using modern technology to communicate our own truth and groom our future leaders, we build a foundation that secures our sovereignty beyond the Seventh Generation. Our story is not only one of trauma, but of survival, resistance, and sovereign presence. As you move through this world, I ask you to consider: what stories of honor, truth, and resilience would you like your future ancestors to read about you? The path has been long, but with the strength of the "Long Line" behind us, we are ready to finish the walk that began at Sand Creek.

For more information on the **2026 Sand Creek Spiritual Healing Run** and how you can share your family's stories of resilience, please visit the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation at [www.sandcreekmassacrefoundation.org](http://www.sandcreekmassacrefoundation.org).

## Connecting Sovereignty, Opportunity, and the Digital Future Tribal broadband workshop comes to Oklahoma City in February

By Max Hahn, Marketing Director, Fiber Broadband Association

On February 5, 2026, tribal leaders, broadband practitioners, policymakers, and industry partners from across the region will convene in Oklahoma City for a day dedicated to one shared goal: building resilient, future-ready internet infrastructure that supports tribal sovereignty, economic opportunity, and community well-being.

Hosted by the Fiber Broadband Association (FBA), the Regional Fiber Connect workshop brings national expertise and local leadership together at a pivotal moment for Tribal Nations investing in their digital future.

The agenda reflects the scale and urgency of the work to build broadband internet networks that is already underway across tribal communities and beyond. With billions of dollars in federal and state broadband internet investments flowing, the focus has shifted from whether to build high-speed internet networks to how to build them right—sustainably, collaboratively, and with long-term community benefit at the center.

This broadband internet

infrastructure will support the high-speed connectivity needed to advance quality of life in tribal communities as well as preserve culture, language, and communications between tribes that are spread across vast distances.

Our own Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Governor Reggie Wassana will participate in a panel during the Regional Fiber Connect workshop. Joining other panelists, he will explore what comes next once fiber is in the ground. The session will discuss edge data centers and data sovereignty, examining how tribes can protect data and unlock new economic opportunities.

Margaret Gutierrez, Division Chief, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), OICG, U.S. Department of Commerce will also attend the event. She will examine how Tribal Nations can leverage federal broadband programs.

Forward-looking discussions from Oklahoma Broadband Office Executive Director Mike Sanders, Oklahoma Department of Commerce CORE Deputy CEO & Executive Director Heather

Turner, and FBA President & CEO Gary Bolton will explore the fact that fiber is not just for faster internet; it is foundational infrastructure that allows communities to control their digital destinies for generations.

One of the morning's cornerstone sessions will highlight a powerful real-world example of impactful broadband journeys. Since being designated a Promise Zone in 2014, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has made strategic investments in fiber infrastructure to reach unserved and underserved areas across southeastern Oklahoma. Tribal leaders from the Choctaw Nation and its partners will discuss what worked, what didn't, and how these lessons can inform future projects across tribal communities.

As the day progresses, conversations expand to the practical realities facing tribes today. With dozens of fiber broadband projects launching across Oklahoma and the heartland in 2026, panels will explore creative solutions to workforce shortages, supply-chain constraints, permitting complexities, funding, and inter-tribal



At a previous FBA Regional Fiber Connect workshop in Scottsdale, Ariz., the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Traditional Dancers performed for attendees. (Submitted photo)

coordination. Attendees will hear from topical experts from Sac and Fox Nation, Wahzhazhe Connect/Osage Nation Broadband Division, Lumen Technologies, Trace Fiber Networks, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative/Cookson Hills Connect, 360 Broadband, and DYCOM.

The day will conclude by exploring emerging applications for high-speed

internet, such as agriculture technology, demonstrating how AI-driven tools can lead to smarter resource management in rural and tribal regions. Panelists include experts from Choctaw Nation, t3 Broadband, Calix, and Nex-Tech.

Beyond educational content, the Regional Fiber Connect workshop will also create opportunities for tribal

leaders, engineers, policymakers, and partners to network and build relationships that extend well beyond a single day.

This gathering is more than a conference. It is a statement of momentum and a reminder that when Tribal Nations lead the way, broadband becomes a tool for self-determination, resilience, and lasting prosperity.

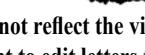
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# A man who travels many paths

*"The article below, written in 2012, is Harvey Pratt's Life's Journey as told by Harvey. I wrote my first article about Harvey in 2008 and little did I know I would go on to write many articles about Harvey Pratt throughout the years. To me Harvey was all about being good, being just and being kind. His friendship and his wife Gina's friendship will forever be one of my most valued relationships. Travel well Harvey – the memories I hold of you will last the rest of my lifetime here on earth."*

**Rosemary Stephens**

Harvey Phillip Pratt doesn't look like the ordinary federal agent one might conjure up in their minds with black suits and black patent shoes. Appearing in a sports jacket, a pair of jeans and cowboy boots, his long black hair, now tinged with gray, is pulled back in a pony tail and the only evidence that he is a member of Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations (OSBI) law enforcement is a gold plated badge clipped to his belt just inside his jacket.

Pratt, a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, is one of the most well known OSBI forensic artists in the state of Oklahoma and throughout the United States. He has been sought out by agencies across the world to help solve crimes, find missing children and fugitives, but his life began in a small quiet town called El Reno, Oklahoma.

"I was born in El Reno on West Watts in a house and there were a lot of hand maidens, a lot of older Indian women present and I was born with a veil over my face and attached to my chest, they called them veil babies and they all said, 'oh look he's going to be a chief,'" Pratt said.

Born April 13, 1941 to Anna and Oscar, Pratt was the second to the youngest of seven children.

"My father died early in life with cancer and TB when I was very young and my mother raised the seven of us. I was the sixth child and I have three sisters and there were four of us boys. Laura Birdwoman, aunt Laura, she bought us a house in El Reno," he said.

Pratt said they lived a simple life growing up, playing and hunting along the river staying in tents or under brush arbors.

"We would stay out by the river sometimes three or four days just hunting. I owned my first gun when I was 10 years old, can you imagine ... I mean I wouldn't buy my kids a gun at that age, but back then, we all had guns and we would hunt and eat what we hunted. I remember my aunt Laura would take us to church camp meetings and I hated them. They were all fire and brimstone types of meetings and everyone was going to hell and I just hated them because they scared me, you know, because I was

so young," Pratt laughed. "There were hundreds of us kids out there because those revivals would last like a week. They would take all of kids out there in the back of trucks and I as I thought about those times later on in my life I thought it really was a good experience."

Pratt said he had a good life growing up and as he paused for a moment he continued with some of his memories of his childhood.

"We all had Indian names and all the neighborhood kids knew who we were and our Indian names. When aunt Laura would call us in at night, she would yell out our Indian names and we would all come home. Then you could hear her still out on the porch calling our names and we would say, 'aunt Laura we are all right here' and she would say, 'I know but your little spirits are still out there and I am going to call them in so nothing happens to them.' I remember my grandfather, William Guerrier, loved to talk about the outhouses the white people first started building ... he would laugh and say look those white people like to keep their waste close and everyone would laugh. He thought that was so funny and he would say those white men, they pull out this white cloth out of their pants and blow their nose on it, fold it up and stick it back into their pockets and again we would all just laugh."

Pratt said he had a wonderful childhood growing up and he never knew they were poor or never really thought about why he only had one pair of shoes for school. "I had one pair of shoes for school but in the summer time we wore moccasins or we went barefoot. When we would go out on the river and ran into sticker patches my older brother would put on the moccasins and cross them then throw them back for the next boy to cross. All of us would do that Indians and white boys ... all of us," Pratt exclaimed.

The days passed for Pratt in much of the same way in El Reno until his mother decided to move to Bethany, Oklahoma.

"I went to junior high in El Reno, then my mom moved to Bethany and I didn't like Bethany at all. My mom had a hard time controlling my little brother and me so she asked if we wanted to go to the St. Patrick's Indian Mission School in Anadarko. I said sure why not I am unhappy here, I hate the school here in Bethany so why not. So she sent us to the St. Patrick's Indian Mission

with Father Gerard. There were Comanches, Kiowas, Caddos, some white kids, so it was a mixture of a whole lot of people and I learned a lot from the Comanche boys and Kiowas. I would work on local farms and I stayed there year round in the summer rather than go home," Pratt said. "I worked at the school too, I was the official car driver at the school. I would drive the nuns to Sacred Heart and Shawnee ... I even drove them to New York City one time. They trusted me and my driving so I was the official driver. Did that all the way through high school."

Pratt sat back, smiled and said they never locked their doors growing up, "never ... can you imagine ... it was a great life."

He said the Smithsonian would come to the house and interview his aunt Laura and his grandfather.

"I contacted the Smith-

sonian and requested those recorded stories that they taped with my grandfather and aunt Laura and you could hear the screen door slamming in the background where all of us kid would run in and out. We grew up with Cheyennes and Arapahos and my mother Anna was part Cheyenne and Sioux and all those languages were being spoken when I was growing up and Mexican too. Like if someone would come and they didn't understand Cheyenne, Comanche, Sioux or Arapaho they would speak Mexican. So I heard all kinds of languages," Pratt said.

"Grandfather taught us how to sign talk and we messed up all those Cheyenne and Arapaho words with our gestures something terrible. We would sign talk to the people behind us at the Nazarene church and they would laugh at us. It was kind of cute."

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Pratt said he had a wonderful childhood growing up and he never knew they were poor or never really thought about why he only had one pair of shoes for school.

"I had one pair of shoes for school but in the summer time we wore moccasins or we went barefoot. When we would go out on the river and ran into sticker patches my older brother would put on the moccasins and cross them then throw them back for the next boy to cross. All of us would do that Indians and white boys ... all of us," Pratt exclaimed.

The days passed for Pratt in much of the same way in El Reno until his mother decided to move to Bethany, Oklahoma.

"I went to junior high in El Reno, then my mom moved to Bethany and I didn't like Bethany at all. My mom had a hard time controlling my little brother and me so she asked if we wanted to go to the St. Patrick's Indian Mission School in Anadarko. I said sure why not I am unhappy here, I hate the school here in Bethany so why not. So she sent us to the St. Patrick's Indian Mission

with Father Gerard. There were Comanches, Kiowas, Caddos, some white kids, so it was a mixture of a whole lot of people and I learned a lot from the Comanche boys and Kiowas. I would work on local farms and I stayed there year round in the summer rather than go home," Pratt said. "I worked at the school too, I was the official car driver at the school. I would drive the nuns to Sacred Heart and Shawnee ... I even drove them to New York City one time. They trusted me and my driving so I was the official driver. Did that all the way through high school."

Pratt sat back, smiled and said they never locked their doors growing up, "never ... can you imagine ... it was a great life."

He said the Smithsonian would come to the house and interview his aunt Laura and his grandfather.

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**Harvey Pratt (r) at 7 years of age, with his brother Tony Pratt**



**Harvey Pratt (r) pictured with New York Mets Pitcher Allie Reynolds and Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Yvonne Kauger in 1997. (Photos submitted by Harvey Pratt)**

and I was pretty lost. Didn't know where I was going, so I joined the Marine Corp. and went to boot camp in San Diego," Pratt said.

Pratt said boot camp was especially difficult because he had to spend an extra month due to an injury.

"While I was at the rifle range they paralyzed my left arm because my sling wasn't tight enough to suit them. It had some slack in it so they tightened it and it pinched that nerve in my bicep and paralyzed my arm so they sent me to sick bay and it took me about two weeks to recover ... then they sent me back to the rifle range and I had to start all over. Man I was miserable. When they sent me to sick bay they put me in the back of a dog catcher's truck in the wire cage, threw my sea bag in and I crawled in there and it was raining. We were driving down the highway and I remember people driving by and looking at me and I thought, 'man these people think I am a prisoner or something', but they gave me my orders and when I opened up my orders and it said 'this is Pvt. Pratt and he is going to be a good Marine', that helped me make it, because I was really depressed," Pratt said through the tears on his face. "I did an extra month in the Marine boot camp and it was hard, man it was hard, difficult but I got through it and graduated as a PFC. They only made maybe 4 guys out of every platoon, so I felt pretty good about that."

After graduating boot camp Pratt received his orders and was immediately sent overseas to Okinawa and was attached to the military police. "I kind of liked being attached to the military police, kind of the boss and it came with a little authority and I liked that. Came a time when they were looking for volunteers and I said okay I'll go, I didn't know what it was for, but I volunteered anyway and it was for the 3rd Recon Battalion and they trained us to pick up downed pilots," Pratt said. "We trained and then we were sent to Viet Nam to rescue downed pilots and base patrol in Da Nang and if one of our guys got shot down we would go. Most of the time I never knew where we were. It was really exciting. I went over there weighing about 178 lbs. and I came back weighing 149 lbs. in seven months. Man ... then I did cold weather training. It was frigid and we lived in pup tents with snow all over us and about the second week they put us in a big tent and they gave us smudge pots for heat and we were covered in soot. It was so cold I didn't care about the soot."

# HARVEY PRATT

continued from pg. 4

roll clerk where he went to junior college. He said they wanted him to reenlist and told him they would send him to Officer's training school.

"I turned them down and said no I want to go to college first and I'll go do that and then I will come back and I would have, you know, but again I was young and really didn't know the reality of what life would bring. So I got out of the Marines and fortunately I had people around me that reached out their hand to pull me up instead of a hand to pull me down and my little brother had just gotten married and said, 'hey you can come stay with us and go to school', so that's what I did. That's what I did for a year I would commute from Oklahoma City to Edmond at Central State again, hitchhike and walk two miles to borrow my mother's car drive to school. I was so tired of being poor. One of the boys I went to school with in Anadarko saw me and said, 'hey I told Midwest City Police Department about you'. He asked me if I would be interested in coming and talking with them and maybe being a policeman," Pratt laughed as he remembered the conversation. "I told him heck yeah, I wasn't making any money and I was tired of being poor, I am dead tired of being poor. So I went and interviewed with them and they asked me to come back for a second interview and they hired me to be a patrolman. I said okay, how much money and they said \$395 a month and you work 28 days straight and I said okay what the heck, so they put me in uniform."

Pratt said in those days they would put you on the street with another patrolman with more experience and you rode with him, attending classes as they came up because you still had to be certified with so many hours per year.

Thus began Pratt's long career in law enforcement.

"Back then they put you on the street first, gave you a gun, and slowly trained you and if you didn't get in trouble, then you stayed on. So I stayed with the Midwest City Police Dept. as a patrolman and I was always in trouble because I wouldn't write tickets. I hated writing tickets to poor people, to people because their muffler was bad or their taillight was out or headlight," Pratt recalled. "Now I would write a ticket to someone who was really violating the law or misbehaving on the street, I didn't mind that, but I refused to issue tickets to people who couldn't afford the ticket anyway, so they were always after me about that. An open-

ing came up for a detective and I applied for it and they made me a detective over all those other guys."

He said they had just moved into a new building, had a new jail, a photo lab, a mug room and records room and all their systems were antiquated.

"I don't know how I realized that whatever they were doing wasn't up to date, but I started developing some records systems, jackets and mug shots and I went to OSBI and had them train me about fingerprinting and how to read them and classify them," Pratt said. "OSBI trained me about a year and I developed that whole system and I fingerprinted the ones who were coming into the jail and then I fingerprinted the policemen because none of them had been fingerprinted and when I did I found two felons, they had criminal records and they had just withheld them ... I hated that, but it was just the way it was. I was a young detective, working crime scenes and going to night school. I started going to OSU and I was learning all I can and I got a degree from OSU. I was working with a bunch of OSBI agents and I started working some undercover work and making narcotics buys ... I was one of the first officers to make an undercover synthetic drug buy in Oklahoma, LSD."

Pratt said in time the OSBI director was the ex-Midwest City chief of police and he was the one who hired him originally. One day he came to Pratt and told him he was looking for minorities and asked him to apply with the OSBI.

"I thought about that and thought man I could work the entire state of Oklahoma instead of the 14 square miles I was working. I took a reduction in pay, my wife was pregnant and I lost my insurance and I thought, 'man I have totally made a mistake', but I did it anyway," Pratt laughingly said and then with a more serious tone said, "I did it for a career and went to work with the OSBI. They made me an undercover narcotics officer and I wasn't real happy about that because they told me they were not going to do that. But they did and I worked undercover about four years across the state buying narcotics. When the OSBI split and part of them became the State Narcotics Bureau they wanted me to go with the narcotics bureau but I told them I wanted to stay with the OSBI. So I stayed and I thought I was going to do regular investigations that I was trained for and then they placed me in intelligence so I went

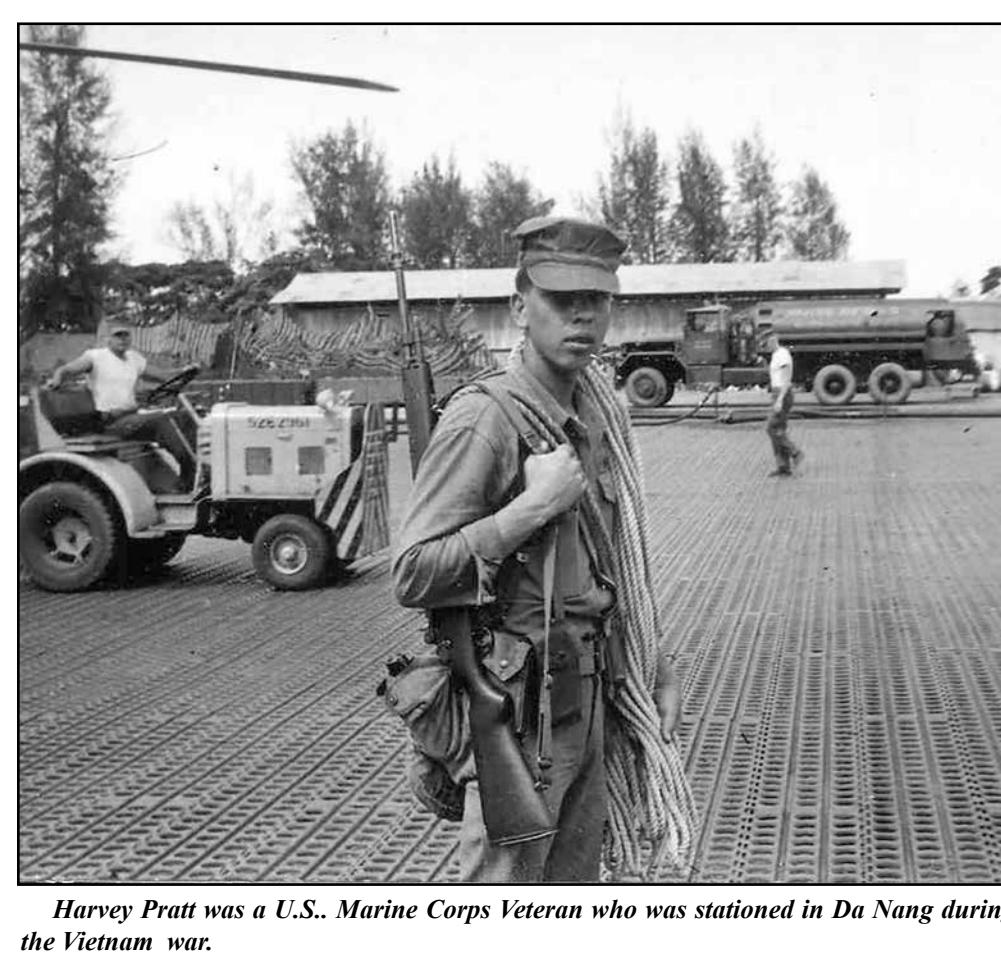
back undercover again. So I worked undercover for another six years with OSBI and criminal intelligence and traveled all over the United States. The OSBI guarded all the dignitaries back then and I guarded a lot of presidents back then."

Pratt said at that time there were issues over the American Indian Movement and the Secret Service was concerned about them and they asked the OSBI if they could have Pratt for a year to assist them.

"So I worked with the secret service advising them on cultural issues as one of their agents, but I still worked for OSBI. They offered me a position with them at Secret Service and I thought, I don't want to go to Detroit or New Jersey and at that time they wouldn't let you stay where you came from, but now they let you stay where you come from because you are familiar with the area," he said. "I enjoyed working with the Secret Service and working with criminal intelligence and I developed a criminal intelligence special projects and those programs for OSBI and at the same time I went through a lot of schools and training. There is a national organization call the RISK projects, the one in Oklahoma is called the Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROCIC) and it covers everything in Oklahoma and Texas to Washington D.C. and south to Miami so its like 16 states and they made me the chairman of that Regional Organized Crime Information Center. We tracked all the traveling criminals that moved through those areas. I did that as a chairman for one year and served on that board for about 10 years, so I became familiar with a lot of other agencies that were involved in traveling criminals."

It was during this time that Pratt began working with a lot of unsolved homicides and unidentified bodies. He said he has always been drawing witness descriptions throughout his law enforcement career and soon that became part of his job with the OSBI.

"I got interested in the skeletal unidentified deceased bodies and bones. But I was reluctant to touch those deceased bodies, the bones ... I think it was that they culturally bothered me, so I prayed about those kinds of things and I decided I would like to do that. So I contacted Dr. Clyde Snow and he introduced me to Betty Patton who introduced that technique into America and she trained me for a couple of weeks on how to reconstruct human remains," Pratt



Harvey Pratt was a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran who was stationed in Da Nang during the Vietnam war.

said. "While I was training I discovered there was soft tissue people that we don't know who they are but they had been shot or stabbed or something and still had soft tissue, I would just take a pencil and draw them repairing where the wounds had been, retouching. I asked them (OSBI) to send me to school to learn how to airbrush so I could airbrush out wounds on the human body and make them look alive."

No one in law enforcement, up to this point, was using these techniques in solving crimes.

I stumbled onto that technique and I started doing it and we got some identifications and the next thing I knew I was swamped by agencies all over the United States sending me photographs of their unidentified bodies and I had to teach them how to properly photograph these bodies and once I did that everything changed. The photographing of dead bodies changed, everything changed on how we did that prior to 1985 so everything changed on photography on unidentified dead bodies. I developed that technique that is being used all over the country now. So I am doing skull reconstructions and soft tissue reconstructions and witness drawings and one day the National Missing Children's Center came to me and said, 'Harvey we've got this kid whose been missing, you think you could make this kid look 16? So I said sure I could do that so I called a couple of people, a plastic surgeon and Dr. Snow and they told me a couple of things about how to go about it and I thought about it for awhile and thought well the way to do that was to look at his parents when they were 16. The boy was abducted when he was 6 years old and he had been gone 10 years so I needed to get the age progression from 6 to 16 years of age so I looked at his parents when they were 16 and I looked at his brothers and sisters to get an idea of how that genetic tree develops and I started aging kids like that and we started finding them," Pratt exclaimed, excitement coming from his voice. "I mean we started finding these kids. Then I started to do it with fugitives who had been on the run for five or six or 20 years. This is the way my career had been, I would look at something and just figure it out, how to develop new and different techniques and fortunately I paid attention to a lot of things and I was



Harvey Pratt pictured with his wife Gina and son Nathan at their home in Guthrie, Oklahoma.



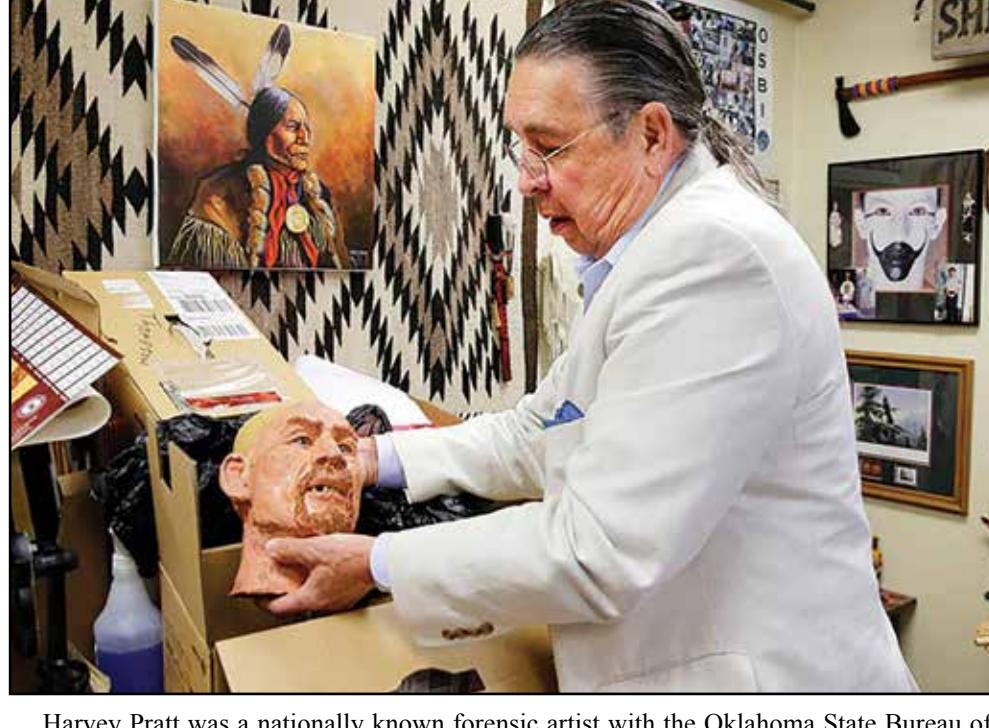
This photo was taken in 2012 to accompany the publishing of Harvey Pratt's life's journey story.



Harvey Pratt pictured during his retirement ceremony hosted by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Pratt served over 50 years in the field of law enforcement.

able to be successful in these areas of my career. A lot of these areas I never even received any training I just figured it out myself."

**HARVEY PRATT** pg. 6



Harvey Pratt was a nationally known forensic artist with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations.

# HARVEY PRATT

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In 1992 Pratt was ready to retire after 25 years with the OSBI.

"I was an assistant director in the OSBI and I am getting ready to retire and I am still doing all these things. By this time my kids are all in college and private schools and I am still broke," he said laughing. "I was getting ready to retire and I couldn't afford to stay, I needed to start drawing my retirement and get another job. I had a lot of people wanting to hire me and I was looking at Exxon as director of their security at the time so I had a lot of opportunities. This one day I was at the state capitol meeting with the OSBI director and this senator and the director said, 'We are going to lose Harvey he is getting ready to retire, and the senator said who do we have to do the work Harvey does and the director said nobody and the senator said, what will take to keep you here? Wow, I just started telling them I wanted my salary increased, my car, all my leave time and everything I listed the senator just kept saying, done, done, done. So that day in 1992 when I was getting ready to quit and retire they created a position for me and all I have done from that day to now is the forensic art for the OSBI. I have done work in around 40 different states and out of the country and some work for private corporations."

Along with his work with OSBI, Pratt is active in creating eyewitness sightings of Big Foot for a company out of Silicone Valley in California. He is known world wide for his paintings and sculptures and said keeping busy keeps him active and young.

"I do a lot of other things too, when I am at home, I can't sit still, even watching TV I have to be doing something, so I am always painting and I sell a lot of my art. I do a lot of public speaking for organizations, high schools and elementary schools. I take a lot of Indian artifacts I have collected over the years and take them to the first graders and they love looking at them. Can you believe it," Pratt said shaking his head as if in wonder of all the blessings in his life. "God has really blessed me in my life. I have a wonderful wife ... I have great kids. All my children are great kids and they have never given me any trouble. Every one of them are college graduates, except one. All my kids are good, , Jason, Tracy, Judson and Nathan. They are respiratory therapists, computer programmers and my two youngest were police officers. Nathan was an OSBI agent for a year, but didn't like it and he quit. He could have had my job but he told me, 'sorry dad I don't like it' and I said hey do what you want to make you happy. I have had a great career, a great life. I have been an Honored One at Red Earth, I was interim director for OSBI and I am in the twilight of my career but I am still hanging around."

In his personal life, Pratt values his Indian teachings, culture and beliefs. He was named a Cheyenne Peace Chief in 1996.

"As a child growing up they named me that Indian name to be a Chief and that had always been in the back of my mind. I had applied to the Dog Soldiers Society to be one of their soldiers in the society because my whole family, in my past, were Dog Soldiers. Then the Chiefs came to me and said, 'we've been watching you and we want you to join us' and I agreed," Pratt humbly said. "It took me about a year in 1996 to go through everything and that was the same year my brother died and I kind of put everything on hold until he called me to him and told me to continue on with what I was doing, not to let him hold me back ... so that (being a Peace Chief) was always in the back of my mind because of when I was born and the hand maidens said I was going to be a Chief. When the opportunity came, I went for it. I have grabbed the brass ring because I believe God gives us all opportunities but it is up to us to recognize those opportunities."

Pratt said he has learned many things in his life and some



Harvey Pratt (center) pictured with the last Lt. Gov. Gib Miles, elder Larry Roman Nose, former legislator Billie Sutton and Gov. Reggie Wassana in 2018.

of those lessons he learned only made sense to him in his later years.

"When I was growing up I saw a lot of things that were not right and I watched people make a lot of mistakes, my brothers and myself made mistakes and I discovered early on its your friends that get you in trouble, not your enemies ... friends can talk you into a lot of crazy stuff and we all do that. They get you in that car and give you that drink and I recognized that fairly early and I found out that there are a lot of people in this world that are jealous of you and when someone extends a hand to you, are they extending that hand to pull you up or to pull you down, you need to recognize the difference because there are a lot of people out there that when you start to succeed in life that aren't going to like it and they want you to be down here with them," Pratt said holding his hand low to the ground. "I tell my children you need to recognize the people who are going to help you because we don't do anything on our own. I used to say well I will just do that on my own, but that's not the way it is ... there is always someone there to help you along the way if you recognize it. My grandfather used to say, 'grandson its good to listen to the wise man because he's smart, but he's never been there ... you've got to listen to the fool every now and then because he's been there and he survived.' When he first told me that I thought what the hell does that mean, and I thought about it for a while and as I got older I realized a lot of these wise men that made it were the fool. They survived and succeeded. It's kind of like the school of hard knocks, the smart man, the other guy says I am too smart to do that and the fool says I am going to go do it and he may get knocked around a bit but he ends up succeeding and becoming the wise man."

## Cheyenne Peace Chief

- Over 50 years in law enforcement starting with the Midwest City Police Department and ending with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations
- Nationally & Internationally recognized as an expert in Forensic Art
- Designer of the National Native American Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. entitled, 'Warriors' Circle of Honor'
- World-renowned Artist
- Board Member of Red Earth, Inc.
- Board Member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Office of Veterans Affairs
- Inductee into the Oklahoma Historical Society
- Inductee into the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Hall of Fame
- Inductee into the Oklahoma State Bureau Hall of Fame
- Served as Chairman of the Indian Arts & Crafts Board of the U.S. Dept. of Interior
- Served as Past Commander of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Post 401



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GENERATIONAL TRAUMA  
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Lucky Star Casino & Conference Center  
Watonga Oklahoma

# Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Lucky Star Casino distributes \$100,000 through December's "Neighbors in Need" initiative

Lucky Star Casino, in partnership with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, successfully distributed \$100,000 to support families and nonprofit organizations across Western Oklahoma through its December *Neighbors in Need* promotion, an annual initiative aimed at strengthening communities during the holiday season.

The monthlong promotion invited casino guests to donate \$5 in exchange for \$10 in free play, with all proceeds directed back into the communities Lucky Star Casino serves. Strong participation from patrons made it possible to provide critical assistance to organizations addressing food insecurity, housing needs, utility assistance, and other essential services.

Recipients of *Neighbors in Need* funding included the El Reno Salvation Army, El Reno United Way, Weatherford Food Connections, Clinton Mission House, Seiling Long Food Pantry, Elk City Help Inc., Woodward Hope Food Pantry, El Reno Blessing Baskets, El Reno Lord's Harvest, Canadian County CASA, and the Weatherford YMCA.

In addition, 13 Western Oklahoma Native American Church organizations received support. Many used the funds to host Christmas dinners and provide direct assistance to families and elders during the holiday season.

Beyond financial grants, the initiative also supported a range of community outreach efforts, including the delivery of gift baskets to local nursing homes, distribution of warming accessories to individuals experiencing homelessness, assistance with essential building repairs, and continued investment in Cheyenne and Arapaho language preservation programs focused on youth.

"The *Neighbors in Need* initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that the success of our properties translates into meaningful support for the communities around us," a Lucky Star Casino representative said. "Our guests play a vital role in making this possible, and together we are able to help our neighbors when it matters most."

That commitment will continue into the new year. In January 2026, Lucky Star Casino will collaborate with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Youth Council on a winter outreach initiative to distribute blankets and 24-pack warming backpacks to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or hardship across multiple Western Oklahoma communities.

Through *Neighbors in Need*, Lucky Star Casino and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes reaffirm their dedication to community investment, cultural responsibility, and partnership, values that remain central to their mission across Western Oklahoma.

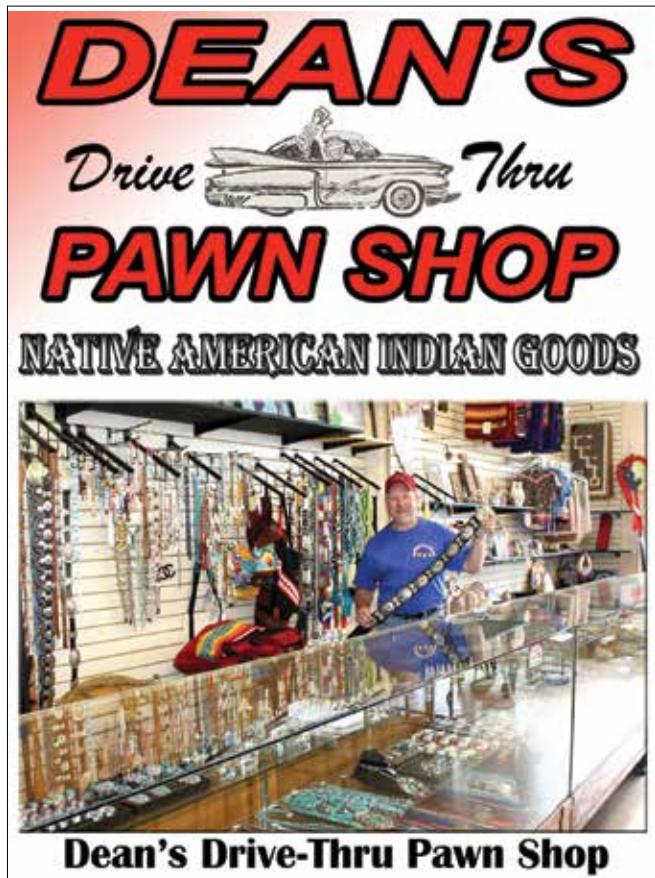


Members of Clinton Indian Baptist Church accepts donation from Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Lucky Star Casino. Pictured are: Jaxon Ruiz, Jalan Ruiz, Toni Ruiz, Justin Ruiz, Jason Goodblanket, Kendrick Fletcher, Pastor Gerald Banana, Eugene Beachhead and Chris Tallbull.



Weatherford Connections Director Elizabeth Amen accepts a generous donation from Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Gov. Reggie Wassana and Lucky Star Casino CEO Charlie Welbourne. (Submitted photos)

tion to community investment, cultural responsibility, and partnership, values that remain central to their mission across Western Oklahoma.



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## Tribal Transit Program celebrates 15 years of service

(CONCHO, Okla.) On December 22, 2025 the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Dept. of Transportation (CADOT), Tribal Transit Program celebrated 15 years of providing transit services in northwest Oklahoma.

Speakers included tribal historian Gordon Yellowman, CADOT Executive Director Angela Plumley, Transit Director Wilma Tapaha, Gov. Reggie Wassana, Compliance Office Bill Tall Bear, Fred Mosqueda and special guest

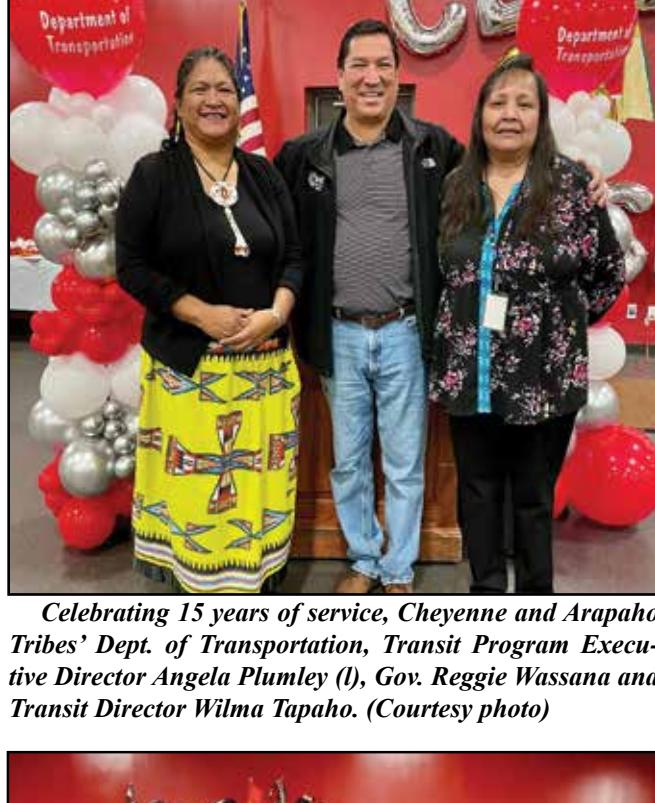
Cristi Williams, Southwest Oklahoma Mobility Navigator Cristi Williams with Southwest Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA).

Williams speech included the following, "I am truly honored to be invited to this special event celebrating 15 years of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Transit. This milestone represents far more than the passage of time, it's a testament to commitment, compassion and community service. And it means a great deal to me."

When I first started in my position as Mobility Navigator, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Transit was one of the very first agencies to welcome me with open arms. Over the past two years what began as a professional collaboration has grown into something much deeper, a genuine friendship, rooted in shared goals and mutual respect.

Working closely together to find transportation for clients has been one of the greatest privileges of my job. From attending each other's events, like Wilma's and my outreach event at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority, to an invitation for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Stakeholder meeting on local road safety, to engaging in public meetings for our Forward 45 Regional Transportation Plan, every experience has shown me the strength and dedication of this team. This collaboration speaks volumes, not only about your commitment to regional connectivity but about. Your belief in building a transportation future that serves everyone. Our relationship has become a seamless system of support. When Wilma or the Tribal Transit team has a client they are unable to assist, they call me. When I have a client in need of transportation solutions, I call you.

Angela and Wilma should be incredibly proud of this transit program and I know you don't always hear all the praise that makes its way to my phone, but I do. Every time someone specifically requests Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Transit it's because they had such a wonderful experience, that's something to celebrate. That is impact. That is legacy. Today as we honor 15 years of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Transit, I want to say thank you, not only for your collaboration,



Celebrating 15 years of service, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Dept. of Transportation, Transit Program Executive Director Angela Plumley (l), Gov. Reggie Wassana and Transit Director Wilma Tapaha. (Courtesy photo)



The staff who makes the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Dept. of Transportation, Transit Program work.

but for your friendship. For your trust. For your leadership. And the heart you bring to everything you do."

December 22, 2025

**Governor Reggie Wassana**  
**Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes**  
**1000 Red Moon Circle**  
**Concho, OK. 73036**


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**REF: Mental Health Clinic; A GREAT NEED**

Dear Sir,

Native Americans Veterans face significant mental health challenges, including disproportionately high rates of PTSD, depression, and substance use disorders. These challenges are most likely linked to military trauma combined with historical/generational trauma and barriers like limited culturally relevant VA care, rural access issues, and cultural stigmas. This leads to higher suicide rates than other veteran groups, which emphasize a need for traditional culturally competent mental health care.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are more than 140,000 Native American Veterans in the United States. Roughly 40%, approximately 56,000, of these veterans are enrolled VA health care. A 51.8% increase in suicide rates among Native American Veterans in 2021. In the VA Suicide Prevention Annual report, 2023. 28.3 suicides per 100,000 Native American Veterans, compared to 16.8 per 100,000 Veterans overall. Rural Native American Veterans are 2 times more likely to lack access to adequate mental health services than their non-Native counterparts. 80% of Native American Veterans report unmet behavioral health needs, citing long wait times and lack of culturally relevant care options. For Cheyenne-Arapaho Veterans, the crisis isn't about of services...it's about the absence of culturally responsive healing spaces that resonate with indigenous identity and experience.

**Native American Intergenerational Trauma, or historical trauma, is the cumulative psychological and emotional generations from massive group traumas like forced assimilation via boarding schools, cultural loss, land theft, wars, and broken treaties. Native American trauma treatment focuses on culturally rooted, holistic healing, integrating traditional practices like ceremonies and storytelling with modern trauma informed care to address historical wounds, promote resilience, and restore community well being through approaches like the Medicine Wheel, community led solutions, and culturally sensitive therapy.**

**Veterans of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes request Indian Health Service, The Cheyenne and Arapaho Governor, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Legislature to develop a Mental Health Clinic in the El Reno area for the benefit and welfare of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal citizens and Native Americans. We further request the Cheyenne and Arapaho Legislature to adopt a resolution approving the financial management to construct the proposed El Reno Mental Health Clinic.**

**The intent of this letter is to request the elected tribal officials to adopt a Bill/Resolution to construct a Mental Health facility for lease to Indian Health Service in the El Reno service area.**

## OBITUARIES

## OBITUARIES

### Moses 'Buddy' Tall Bear Jr.

Moses "Buddy" Tall Bear Jr., of Lodge Grass, Montana, passed to the Other Side Camp on January 1, 2026. He was affectionately known as "Buddy," a nickname given to him by his older sister, Violet Rose Tall Bear Scraper, as he did not have a middle name.

Buddy was born on April 27, 1950, in Clinton, Oklahoma, to Moses Tall Bear Sr. and Blossom Good Bear. Enrolled member of the Cheyenne - Arapaho Tribes. His Cheyenne name, WoheWahtohis Man on Cloud, was bestowed upon him by his uncle, Lyndon Tall Bear. He was raised by his grandparents, Rosie Touching Ground and Eddie White Thunder. He was a member of the Bow String Society in the Cheyenne way of life. Later in life he followed his wife's the Apsaalooke ways. His father in law the late Joseph Morrison Alden Sr. took him in as a son and he followed the Bad War Deed clan and became a member of the Reece Society.

Buddy attended school in Watonga, Oklahoma, and Fort Worth, Texas, and graduated from Watonga High School in 1968. He excelled in athletics, including softball, football, basketball, cross country and track. His talent earned him a football scholarship to Haskell Indian College, which he attended beginning in 1968. He also played with the Oklahoma travel softball team, the "Watonga Braves."

While attending Haskell Indian College, Buddy met the love of his life, Amber LaVonne Alden Tall Bear, through his roommate, Frank Backbone Jr. The couple married in 1972 in Lawrence, Kansas.

Buddy grew up in a strong Cheyenne family during his early years at the homesite in the west countryside of Watonga, Oklahoma. During his youth, his family held many peyote meetings for healing on his behalf. As he grew older, Buddy developed a deep respect and love for these family peyote meetings. One that held special meaning to him was led by his son-in-law, Gary B. Dawes, in honor of his daughter, Neva Tall Bear, upon her graduation with a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

Buddy also participated in the Southern Cheyenne Sun Dance for four consecutive years, with the support of his wife, Amber LaVonne, and his mentor, the late Everett Yellowman. Soon after this he became a ceremonial instructor. In later years, he helped family members through the Sun Dance ways by providing ceremonial guidance when needed. Buddy was a praying man who respected all religions.

Buddy loved participating in powwows as a fancy war dancer and also enjoyed gourd dancing and singing at the drum with the late Phillip Whiteman Sr. Later in life, he took great pride in watching his sons, daughters, and grandchildren dance and sing at powwows. He encouraged his sons and grandsons to record at the drum for his cassette tape collections. His grandson, the late Anthony Nugget Whiteman, sang with the Bad Canyon drum group and loved sitting behind the drum to listen; the drum group always saved him a seat by the drum. Buddy made many lifelong friendships along the powwow trail and especially enjoyed creating fancy war dance bustles for his family.

He also supported the Lodge Grass Indian Basketball team, attending games for many years and cheering on children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and the children of friends. When his grandsons, Nugget, Jerrin, and Teivon, at-

tended Hardin High School, he proudly supported the Bulldogs, celebrating their athletic achievements, including several state basketball championships. Buddy took great pride in his family's accomplishments, whether academic, athletic, rodeo or cultural.

His pastimes included enjoying time at the casino, where he was known for his lucky streaks, and watching the Oklahoma Sooners, and Dallas Cowboys. He knew all the sports game schedules by reading his newspapers. Loved the great outdoors with hunting, camping, fishing and getting his camp ready for Crow Fair.

Buddy and Amber LaVonne Tall Bear moved to Lodge Grass, Montana, in 1979 following the passing of his mother. He was deeply dedicated to the Lodge Grass District, the Lodge Grass community, and the Valley of the Chiefs District. Along with his wife, he contributed greatly to many aspects of community life. His family, in-laws, First Indian Baptist Church, and his community were central to his life, and he was well known and deeply appreciated by all. Whatever he did, he did wholeheartedly and with unwavering commitment.

Buddy began his career at the Cheyenne-Arapaho Housing Authority as a carpenter and also worked at Haskell Indian College in Lawrence, Kansas, as a custodian. After moving to Montana, he collaborated with his brothers-in-law on numerous construction projects, including the Crow/Northern Cheyenne Indian Hospital in Crow Agency. He served at the Apsaalooke Housing Authority for many years until his retirement in 2014, supporting his wife and children, and worked with several contractors across the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations. Buddy had many friends and supportive brothers-in-law who were always there when he needed help. He was a humble, kind, and good man with a contagious smile and laughter.

Buddy and Amber LaVonne Tall Bear were blessed with four children, Rosanna "Rosie," Neva (Gary B. Dawes), Moses Dee, and Tommy Noel (Verlie) Whiteman. They also raised many other children as their own. He was always surrounded by loved ones, including his children, grandchildren, in-laws in Montana, and extended family in Oklahoma.

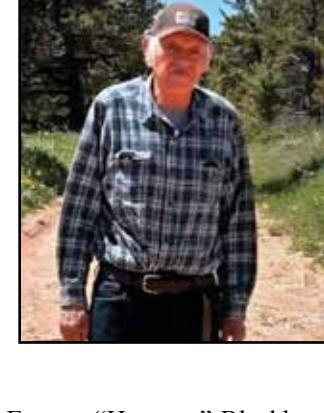
Buddy was preceded in death by his beloved grandparents and parents; his wife, Amber LaVonne Tall Bear; his brothers, Richard Tall Bear, Robert Good Bear, Ted Young Bear, Clinton Young Bear Jr., Belo, Alvin and Joseph Alden, Ronald Falls Down Sr., and Larry Kindness; his sisters, Violet Rose Tall Bear Scraper, Millicent Mae Young Bear, Etta Lorraine Coyote Robe, Jayshon Young Bear, Lavada HowlingWater Gould, and Daphne Alden; his adopted brothers, Harry and Wayne Mocassin, Dee Russell, and Robert Pickett; his adopted son, Gary Joe Whiteman; his adopted daughter, Lillie Jo Franklin and Brandi Alden; his nephews, Terrill Medicine Bird, David Young Bear, Darryl Young Bear, Shylon Alden, Greg, Alvin, and Indian Three Irons; and his grandson, Anthony "Nugget" Jade Whiteman.

He is survived by his children, Rosie, Neva (Gary B. Dawes), Moses Dee, and Tommy (Verlie); his grandchildren, Jerrin, Dacee, Cedric, Baby Devin, Nolan, Liam Whiteman, Cheryl Deputy, Jonah Taken Alive, Illena, Laree, Larry Jr., Teivon (Kdence), Violet Rose, Vydel Joe, and Taylor Mo-

ses (Karlee) Tall Bear, Caleb Little Owl, Gary Dawes Jr., Norman Dawes, Jandra, Isaiah and Blake Tall Bear, Gabriele Falls Down; and his great-grandchildren, Analeia Jade Tall Bear, Honor Moses, Kloli LaVonne, Cošim, Dakota, Dante Whiteman, Ja'Kobe Levi, and Dari'Anna Backbone. He is also survived by his aunt, Ruth Brooks; his brothers, Duke (Hollie) Young Bear, Richard Scraper Sr., RoyDean Bull-Coming, Gordon Yellowman, Eugene "Hammer" Blackbear Jr., Charlie HowlingWater, Philip Whiteman Jr., Jay Russell, and Benjamin Bear Below, Tony Davis; his sisters, Lois Jean and Bernice Young Bear, Dara Franklin, Bobbie Ann White Thunder-Hamilton, Charlene Alden, and Jolene Walks Last, Frances, Clara, Anita, and Laurie Alden, Joselyn (Clarence) Three Irons, Karen Watembach; and his adopted children, Polly (Ellsworth) Decrane, Nema (Charlie Scott) Alden, Sharon Whiteman, Michelle (Coolidge) Jefferson, Rochelle (Eugene) Duptee, Laurie (Lonnlie) Kindness Fritzler, Ivy Rose (Marlin) Stewart, Shara Rose, Tanya, Christina Beardontwalk, Shannon (Henry) Wilson, Krystal (Paul) Hill, Leslie (Clayton) Neiss, Cheyenne Robinson, Vanessa Birdinground, Loni Whitford Taylor, Penny and Lucy (Jesus) Scraper, Christine Levi, Gretchen, Jamie, Maria, and Ivy Brien, Tanya Falls Down, Lana Robinson, Jana Goes Ahead, Paula Small Plenty, Heather Bales, Jenifer and Nicole Lefthand, Regina and Melanie Young Bear, Kara, Theresa, Breanna, Raney Farris, Darla Brown, Andrea and Jessica Young Bears and adopted sons Jonathan and Evan Pretty On Top, Brandon, Randy, and Adrian Beardontwalk, Manuel (Mary) Whiteman, Mike, Kevin, and Ronald Buck Elk, Clay and Cameron (Tena) Three Irons, Joe (Heidi) Kindness, A.J. Not Afraid, Grant Scalp Cane, Nathon Little Hawk, Ted Lee Young Bear, Earl Scraper, Adam Young Bear, Nathan Chief Child, Stevie Mullenberg, and many more nieces and nephews.

His extended families include the Good Bear, Tall Bear, Young Bear, Shoulderblade, Roman Nose, Stars, Touching Grounds, Limpy, Waters, Brady, Levi, Big Bow, Franklin, Bullcomming, Yellowman, White Thunder, Red Birds, Scrappers, and the late Marie Whiteman family, Alden, Backbone, Blood Man, Bear Below, Old Horn, Morrison, Pretty On Top, Not Afraids, and Little Bears of Canada. We apologize if we have overlooked any family members, as our families are extensive, and Buddy loved everyone he encountered. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the family during this difficult time.

Wake services were held January 7 at the First Indian Baptist Church in Lodge Grass, Mont. Funeral services were held January 8, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Lodge Grass Cemetery under the direction of Bullis Mortuary.



### Evyn Andrew Yocham

Evyn Andrew Yocham, 21, was born on June 29, 2004, in Oklahoma City, to Erin Rae Steele and Ercel-Ace Lyndell Yocham. He passed away on Dec. 26, 2025, at his home in Fay, Oklahoma.

Evyn was raised by Erin and Hoyt Steele and Ace and Myria Yocham in Thomas, Oklahoma. He attended school in Thomas and later lived in Fay. As a young boy, Evyn always wanted to be a truck driver. When he got his CDL, he couldn't have been more proud of his accomplishment. Evyn loved driving trucks but also enjoyed working on engines. He and his dad, Ace, had been working side by side and were excitedly making plans for their future business.

Evyn was very proud of his Native American heritage and had a great appreciation for the culture. He respected his elders and had many mentors that helped guide him through his life, Lane Burchett, Lee Sears and his Uncle Jack Edwards are among these cherished relationships. Sandy Baldwin who

took Evyn under her wing, and Lagailda Barnes are two other treasured friends who had a positive influence on his life.

Siblings and friends were the people Evyn lived for. He cherished them and he loved big. But his love didn't stop there, he would give the shirt off his back to anyone in need.

Evyn was a light and loved life, he was always happy, smiling and was full of jokes.

Evyn's favorite quote was "a closed mouth don't get fed". He was a fighter and hard worker. He was truly a once in a lifetime person.

Evyn was preceded in death by his sister Eleeyah Yocham, grandfathers, Robert Yocham and Jarrett Sweezy, grandmothers, Sandra Steele and Glenda Ray, great-grandmother, Carol Rice and uncles, Scott and Andy Yocham.

He is survived by his father Ace Yocham and his wife Myria, his mother Erin Steele and her partner Kevin Herreara, step-father Hoyt Steele; his companion and love of his

life Whitney Marshall, son Onyx Yocham, step-sons, Kasyn and Maddox Marshall, brothers, Talyx Steele (Brittanna), Eric Martinez, Eliyah Yocham (Jericca), Eli Steele, Noah Wright, Ethan Wright, and Wyatt Yocham; sisters, Taelynn and Eternity Steele, grandfather Jim Steele and grandmother Lori Penner.

Funeral services were held Jan. 5, 2026 at the Freedom Worship Center in Thomas, Oklahoma, with Jerry Yoder officiating, under the direction of Lockstone Funeral Home.



**Obituaries continued pg. 9**

# INAUGURATION

continued from pg. 1

legislator citing the words, "I will perform the duties of my office with all honesty, integrity and sincerity."

After taking their oaths, each legislator was given time to address the public and give remarks, with Sleeper taking the podium first.

"I'm honored and looking forward to the next four years, working with our new legislators and continuing to work with our governor and Lt. governor and all the programs, departments, the services we provide to our people, I'm real proud of the work that we done in the past," Sleeper said.

Sutton, who has worked for the tribes for some time, took the podium next, said she looked forward to getting know her constituents in the community.

"I have worked for the tribe for a long time, it's all been with Head Start, I probably taught most of your children and I'm not going to speak for too long but I would like to say I'm looking forward to getting to know each and every one of you and thank you for coming out today and showing us your support," Sutton said.

Youngbull spoke next thanking the community for putting their faith and encouragement in her running for Cheyenne District 4 legislator.

"My words can't express how much it really means to me that you guys trust me this much," Youngbull said.

Youngbull also gave special recognition to former C4 legislator Byron Bird, showing appreciation for his dedication and work he put into the tribes for the past eight years.

"As I step into this position, I'm ready to make a change, ready to move forward, I'm ready to work with the tribe and to make the change that people have been wanting for the future," Youngbull said.

Speaking last for the newly sworn in legislators was Roman Nose, who thanked his supporters and family for believing in him to run for the C4 legislative seat. Addressing the



*Taking their oaths of office, four legislators are sworn in as elected members of the 11th Legislature of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. From l-r: A2 Legislator Kendricks Sleeper, C4 Legislator Mariah Youngbull, C2 Legislator Milan Roman Nose and A1 Legislator Pamela Sutton. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)*

audience, Roman Nose promised and reassured them he would stick to his same words he spoke while campaigning for his position.

"I know getting elected is only the beginning, it's a start, the real work starts Monday and I look forward to working with the legislators, the new ones and everybody, I'm just thankful to be here, it's a blessing and I'm so grateful for all of this," Roman Nose said.

Robertson was called upon once more to conduct the oath of office for governor and lieutenant governor. Gorham was called upon first to be sworn in as the lieutenant governor for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and then was given time to address the public with remarks.

Gorham thanked community members and tribal citizens for their presence and for wanting to witness the inauguration, as well as given special recognition to the election commission for conducting the election process.

"That's something that's often overlooked, it's a hard job, a lot of people don't understand that, they do it day in and day out and they pull through and we're here today," Gorham said.

Gorham continued to thank the incoming legislators, noting Sleeper's return as the incumbent for A2 and winning his third consecutive term as well.

"It's his third time being elected so that's a testament of the belief the Cheyenne and Arapaho people from A2 have in Kendricks

sleeper and I'm one of his constituents and I've always worked with Kendricks, the past eight years, ever since we've been here working in Reggie's administration," Gorham said.

Gorham also thanked Wassana for allowing him to serve by his side as lieutenant governor after the former lieutenant governor Gib Miles had passed away.

"I want to thank Gov. Wassana for allowing me to serve by his side, not only the past two years as lieutenant governor but after Gib Miles passed away and also asking me to run with him again in this election as well, having that faith in me that I can do the job, to work with the people, work with the legislators, work with our judicial branch, work with our election commission and work with our tribal council people," Gorham said.

Gorham said he understood that him and Wassana getting elected was not due to their personal achievements, but rather an affirmation to the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal voters, that they believe in the overall goal and progress that's been made in the last eight years.

"Not only with the Executive Branch but the Legislative Branch, the Judicial Branch, Tribal Council Branch and overall, that's a sign that we're moving in the right direction and I know there's a lot of good things to come ahead," Gorham said.

Lastly, winning his third historical consecutive term as governor of the Cheyenne and

Arapaho Tribes, Wassana was called on to take his oath of office, raising his right hand for all to witness as he recited, "I, Reggie Wassana, do solemnly swear and affirm that I will preserve, protect, defend and uphold the constitution and laws of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes."

Paying homage to former Lt. Gov. Gib Miles, Wassana stated they had talked about this day years ago.

"This historic day is here and it is historic because throughout all the things we've been through, nobody has done it three times, nobody has done it two times

and we were just talking about stability, how the tribe needs stability, what does the tribe do to get where we need to be," Wassana said.

Wassana spoke on the challenges of being in leadership roles and the need to move forward and make progress.

"Everything we have, we try to balance out and give more assistance, even in the summer time, winter time, we try to help out, some of the things we're doing by creating economic development is something that's going to get us where we want to be," Wassana said.

Wassana continued to say the economic development goals needed to be carried out, as it will be used for the future.

"It's for those people that really need those services and sometimes people don't understand," Wassana said.

Moving the tribes forward in the new year, Wassana said he looks forward to working on the projects they hope to accomplish.

"We can move forward, we can put out more services, so that's what our plans and intentions are to do, with that I just want to say thank you and appreciate everybody coming out," Wassana said.

As the ceremony came to an end, congratulatory applause and fellowship filled the ERC from the community, as all newly sworn-in elected officials move forward with their respective roles in office.

## Tribal Council Update: Progress Toward Full Restoration

Submitted by Albert Old Crow, Tribal Council Coordinator

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes continue working diligently to resolve the recent network outage that has impacted programs across all departments, with Concho being among the most affected. The Governor's office reported on January 2 that the team is approximately 80% complete in addressing the malware issue. While progress is encouraging, full functionality has not yet been restored. Limited access to desktops and essential systems has temporarily disrupted services to tribal members.

Despite these challenges, programs have begun holding meetings again, and the Legislature continues to conduct both regular and special sessions to ensure governance and decision-making remain on track.

In recent weeks, the tribal community has experienced the loss of many loved ones. We extend heartfelt condolences to their families and ask everyone to keep them in your prayers. During these winter months, please take time to check on your loved ones and neighbors.

For ongoing updates, Albert's Weekly Update has resumed following the outage. To receive these updates, please send your email address to [aolderow@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov](mailto:aolderow@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov).

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes appreciate your patience and understanding during this time. We remain committed to restoring full services and supporting our tribal members.

### Positive Indian Parenting Classes

Presented by: Indian Child Welfare Program

Tribal Justice Center

Social Services Conference Room

120 E Black Kettle Blvd., Concho, OK

Honoring Tradition • Strengthening Families • Supporting Our Children

Join us for Positive Indian Parenting Classes designed to support Native families through culturally grounded parenting practices that honor our traditions, values, and community strengths.

#### Who Can Attend?

Parents, caregivers, guardians, and community members interested in positive, culturally respectful parenting.

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Parents

# In Memoriam

Tribal Member Name	DOB	DOD
Jasper Kevin Washa	1/25/69	1/2/25
Delita Janell Starr	3/13/60	1/6/25
Charles Phillip Ganote	4/28/82	1/8/25
Harvey Vernon Black Bear	5/13/61	1/8/25
Robert McKinley Simpson Jr.	12/1/47	1/10/25
John L. Yellow Eagle Jr.	5/7/46	1/13/25
Gary L Haag	8/25/41	1/15/25
Steven Harvey Howell	3/24/93	1/17/25
James Ryan Fanman	9/10/84	1/27/25
Blaine Douglas Candy	6/6/79	2/10/25
James Simpson Haury	8/29/71	2/15/25
William Wing Madbull	4/22/62	2/17/25
Mary Elizabeth Ball	1/2/62	2/18/25
Virgil Franklin Jr.	10/31/57	2/18/25
Kish White Shield	8/25/58	2/25/25
Denny Lawrence Fanman	5/9/75	2/27/25
Gary Lee Morton Sr.	5/31/63	2/27/25
Charles Wayne Haag	4/7/56	3/1/25
William Ray Edmondson	9/17/43	3/3/25
Jesse Manuel Mendoza	6/30/92	3/3/25
Wesley Old Bear	3/7/54	3/3/25
Alisha Dawne Spencer	11/19/86	3/4/25
William Boyd Pendergrass	1/11/65	3/7/25
Jane Nightwalker	9/20/51	3/8/25
Georgene L. Herrman	3/9/53	3/11/25
Betty Carleen Phelan	8/17/38	3/12/25
Juanita Joyce Trout	2/7/58	3/13/25
Marissa Danielle Christie	6/20/91	3/17/25
Alfred Reece Whitecrow	10/9/79	3/17/25
Aloma Joy Waldon	5/31/68	3/19/25
Cynthia Lenore Karnaghon	10/20/58	3/24/25
Jemma Mae Powell	1/24/00	3/26/25
Alvin Lee Sage Sr.	3/5/54	3/28/25
Kaylan Whittley Naranjo	6/25/99	4/4/25
Wendell Eugene Red Nose	11/15/62	4/4/25
Rose Ann Fanman	10/1/57	4/10/25
Julia Krystal Buttry	4/11/99	4/10/25
Michael Dewayne Lowman	8/21/87	4/14/25
Thomas Wayne Kraus	9/30/50	4/14/25
Randall Gene Red Hat	9/12/57	4/19/25
Bertha Kay Nightwalker	9/20/61	4/20/25
Larry Gene Eades Sr.	5/2/49	4/22/25
Spencer Ray Little Calf	1/5/62	4/22/25
Shirley Monique Anderson	9/8/73	4/23/25
Mary Elizabeth Sankey	5/24/62	5/2/25
Edna Mae Aguilar	5/23/77	5/3/25
Sabastian Keane Thompson	4/10/93	5/12/25
Amos Malcolm Beaver III	2/9/89	5/13/25
Dana Lee West	8/13/55	5/14/25
Ryan Darnell Abram Jr.	1/19/18	5/21/25
Joyce Lee Bull Coming	7/2/62	5/28/25
Renecia Rose Youngbull	5/7/83	5/31/25
Jorene Charcoal Combs	9/14/36	6/3/25
Muriel Pawnee	10/14/39	6/3/25
James Paul Johnson	12/15/70	6/3/25
Alsace Lorraine Grantham	4/23/54	6/3/25
Eric Ryan Salinas	11/17/88	6/4/25
Chief Willey	2/22/74	6/8/25
Mary Margaret Moore	7/11/97	6/8/25
Red Bird Cooley	3/16/41	6/10/25
Ronald Gene Red Shin	12/14/57	6/11/25
Jerry Burkhart	12/20/49	6/11/25
Christopher Lee Miles	1/5/77	6/14/25
Lloydla Jane Fields	1/20/84	6/15/25
Earlene Faye Miller	10/9/62	6/15/25

Tribal Member Name	DOB	DOD
Leigh Ann Palmer	5/1/72	6/16/25
Roberta Ann Osage	3/5/56	6/20/25
Leonard Joseph Hatch	5/22/90	6/24/25
Jarrett Calvin Sweezy	2/15/78	6/26/25
Yolanda Jean Goodblanket	3/31/59	7/4/25
David Allen Hail	3/1/59	7/5/25
Nicole Racelis	10/13/79	7/7/25
Lawrence B. Francis Jr.	3/23/68	7/9/25
Reata Von Pedro	8/19/52	7/11/25
Candace Dionne Jones	8/31/84	7/11/25
Leroy Perry Jr.	8/16/54	7/15/25
Marianne Marie Hamilton	8/12/79	7/19/25
Alfred D. Tallbird	5/30/42	7/25/25
Doris Hamilton	4/9/37	7/27/25
Patricia Ann Roque	1/9/50	8/1/25
Cherronda Dashawn Davis	7/21/70	8/7/25
Wilma Ann Red Bird	8/3/78	8/7/25
Bertha Colleen Thunder Bull	5/18/57	8/10/25
Regina Ann Cage	11/11/60	8/11/25
Gregory Lee Keith	9/16/45	8/12/25
Theda Juan Benton	11/9/48	8/14/25
Nettie Marie Caldera	9/18/77	8/15/25
Beverly June Manzano	6/8/50	8/18/25
Patrick Tennyson Leflore	3/17/74	8/18/25
Marie L Seay	10/7/37	8/19/25
Juanita Margaret Lumpmouth	5/30/48	8/20/25
Tony K. Reynolds	3/31/62	8/20/25
Margaret Heap Of Birds	11/8/31	8/24/25
Ruby Lucille Standing Water	8/8/49	8/25/25
Shawn Harley Detmer	3/8/70	8/26/25
Marlene Walker-Payne	9/18/38	9/1/25
Jaci Jeanenne Parker	9/10/54	9/6/25
Blake Aaron Welbourne	2/26/90	9/8/25
Terri L. Welbourne	2/7/68	9/11/25
Donald James Hickey	2/4/42	9/14/25
Thomas Gregory Junker	9/2/58	9/20/25
Reta Louise Mata	9/5/58	10/3/25
Trina Lou Coffey	8/14/74	10/3/25
Shirley Ellis	5/7/80	10/3/25
Ida Elaine Hoffman	2/3/53	10/4/25
Aerianna Eve French	2/15/08	10/5/25
Herman Albert Sleeper Jr.	1/3/75	10/11/25
Jasper Homer Washa Jr.	6/22/72	10/14/25
Trae Andrew Blackbear	7/29/93	10/15/25
Arwen Sue Youngbull	8/11/78	10/15/25
Eleanor Hill Bianchi	11/28/44	10/26/25
James Wesley Whittington	5/5/89	11/4/25
Courtney Ann Sankey	11/5/88	11/5/25
Miguel Gonzales	7/6/68	11/18/25
Margie Ann Pewo	3/23/37	11/20/25
Lisa Marie Foster	8/20/85	11/26/25
Tryston Richard Proa	2/24/01	11/28/25
Fred Andrew Thompson, Jr.	8/4/47	11/28/25
Krystal Nicole Balance	6/12/78	11/30/25
Charlotte Ann Stilwell	4/8/45	12/1/25
Richard Eugene Richardson	10/21/53	12/2/25
Evelyn Angie Waters	3/19/56	12/2/25
Leroy Yellow Eyes	5/5/44	12/5/25
Armor David Brown	8/5/53	12/8/25
Stephen Alan Stone	12/6/58	12/15/25
Joshua Keith Hines	6/8/85	12/21/25
Audrey Catagas	2/18/79	12/21/25
Beverly Jo Hinojosa	12/23/35	12/28/25
Geneva Tusing Blue	10/18/49	12/28/25
Kyra Zane Marie Rutledge	7/28/89	12/28/25
Harvey Phillip Pratt	4/13/41	12/31/25

## “Congratulations to all the kids for their hard work and effort”

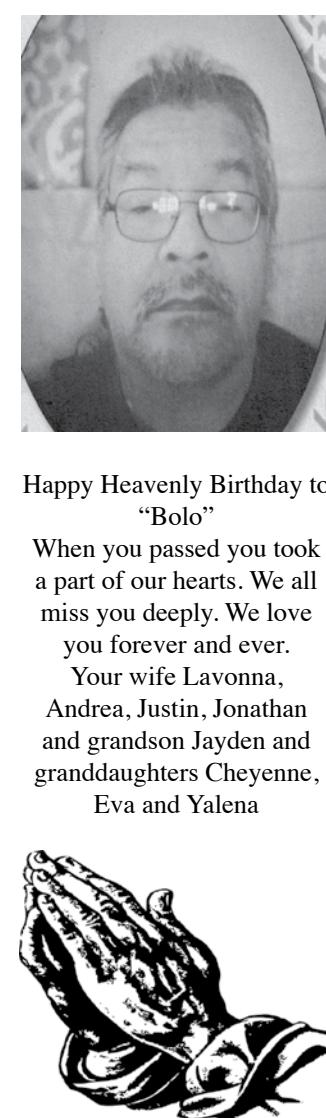
In Loving Memory of  
Spencer Ray Littlecalf  
January 5, 1962  
April 22, 2025



Pictured back row l-r: Otha Douglas Jr. and Adelyn Lonebear. Front row l-r: Khalil Douglas and Gavino Ace Camarillo.



Pictured back row l-r: Coaches Andres Lonebear, Otha Douglas and Jessie Camarillo. Front row l-r: Adelyn Lonebear, Otha Douglas Jr., Khalil Douglas and Gavino Ace Camarillo.



Happy Heavenly Birthday to  
“Bolo”  
When you passed you took a part of our hearts. We all miss you deeply. We love you forever and ever.  
Your wife Lavonna, Andrea, Justin, Jonathan and grandson Jayden and granddaughters Cheyenne, Eva and Yalena



On January 1, 2026 the Clinton Youth wrestling team traveled to Oklahoma City at the OG&E Coliseum to participate in the 50<sup>th</sup> annual United States Junior Open Championships. They had four wrestlers place, all of which are Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal citizens.

Otha Douglas Jr., age 7, took 5<sup>th</sup> place in the 8U 90lb division, Khalil Douglas, age 5, took 4<sup>th</sup> in the 6U Heavyweight division, Gavino Ace Camarillo, age 6, took 5<sup>th</sup> place in the 6U 46lb division, and Adelyn Lonebear, age 8, took 5<sup>th</sup> place in the 8U 49lb division.

The United States Junior Open Championships is one of the toughest tournaments in the country. All of the kids who participated and placed in this tournament were all first time competitors in this tournament.

Head coach Jessie Camarillo, assistant coach Otha Douglas, and as-

sistant coach Andres Lonebear worked with all the kids day in and day out to prepare them and couldn't be any happier and prouder by how they all performed. Now the team will prepare for novice championships and the state tournament.

## OBITUARIES

## Audrey Catagas

Audrey Catagas, 46, of Seminole, Oklahoma passed away Dec. 21, 2025, at her home.

Audrey, the daughter of Mervin Catagas and Margaret (Bellymule) Jenkins, was born Feb. 18, 1979, in El Reno, Oklahoma. She graduated from Shawnee High School, with the class of 1996. After high school, Audrey attended Seminole State College. She enjoyed beading, reading, and listening to music. Audrey was a member of the Mormon faith. On Jan. 17, 1998, she married Anthony Harjo.

Audrey is survived by her husband Anthony Harjo,

her parents, Mervin Catagas and Margaret Jenkins, sons, Anthony Wayne Harjo Jr., of Seminole, Brian Ethan Harjo, of Seminole, and Samuel Isaiah Harjo, of Seminole; daughters, Daisy Catagas, Kayla Catagas, Jasmine Harjo, and Makenna Catagas; brothers and sisters, Wallace, Dominic, Casey, Charley, Tyler, Elizabeth, Yolanda, and Kelly; Ivy Boutwell, Luke Catagas, Azalea Rose, Dawson Rose, Travis Harjo, Violet Harjo, Kyzma Killingsworth, Ras Killingsworth, Nami Killingsworth, Cordell Killingsworth, Coby Killingsworth, and Ares Odom-Catagas; along with



many other family members and friends.

A memorial service was held Dec. 31, 2025 at the Swearingen Funeral Home, with Eric Thlocco officiating, under the direction of Swearingen Funeral Home.

## Jordan Neil Bullcoming

Precious heart warrior, Jordan Neil Bullcoming, came into his parent's lives on Dec. 6, 2024. He was born with a complex congenital heart condition called Heterotaxy Syndrome, a rare disorder in which the heart and other internal organs do not develop in their normal positions. Because of this, many of his organs were abnormally formed, and he required constant medical care throughout his life. He spent his entire childhood under the care of specialists at OU Children's Hospital. During that time, he underwent three openheart surgeries and two catheterization procedures, one to address issues with his lung muscle and another to place a Gtube to help with feeding. From the moment he was born, Baby Jordan fought bravely for his life.

On Dec. 16, 2025, his mother, Arianna, received a call from Bethany Children's Hospital at 10:57 p.m. She was told that Jordan was in respiratory distress and had developed E. coli in his bloodstream, a serious infec-

tion. For a child with a heart condition, infections like this can be extremely dangerous.

On Dec. 20, 2025, while receiving respiratory treatment, Jordan's heart rate suddenly dropped to 29 beats per minute. The medical team immediately began chest compressions and were able to restore his pulse after four minutes.

Then, on Dec. 22, 2025, Jordan stopped breathing again. The medical team worked tirelessly, performing chest compressions for fortyfour minutes, but they were unable to find a pulse. At 8:44 a.m., God decided to call their sweet angel home. Everyone who knew Baby Jordan will hold him in their hearts forever.

Jordan is survived by his parents, Arianna Carrasco and Chantz Bullcoming, maternal grandparents, Janice and Fernando Garcia, Eddie Carrasco, paternal grandparents, Barry Sr. and Alesia Bullcoming, maternal aunts, Araceli Garcia and Mariah Sevenstar, paternal aunts, Bailey Bullcoming, Lindsey



Bullcoming, Wiyoka Brown, paternal uncles, Chad Bullcoming, Barry Bullcoming Jr., maternal great-grandparents, Lillian and John Sevenstar Sr., paternal great-grandparents, Joyce and George Bullcoming, maternal great uncles, Wesley Sevenstar, Jim Sevenstar, John Sevenstar Jr., and Brian Sevenstar.

Funeral services were held Dec. 30, 2025 at the Community Fellowship Church in Hammon, Oklahoma, followed by an interment at the Mound Valley Cemetery under the direction of Kiesau-Lee Funeral Home.

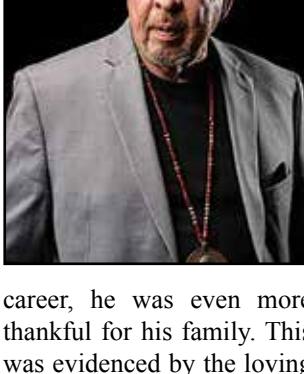
## Harvey Phillip Pratt

Born in El Reno, Oklahoma in 1941, Harvey Phillip Pratt, White Thunder (Vopenonoma'e), often spoke of those who are called to "run toward the fire" and help others who are in danger. In a military and law enforcement career that spanned more than half a century, he resolved to run toward the fire. He served in the United States Marine Corps, rescuing pilots who had been shot down. He was an officer with the Midwest City Police Department, a Special Agent and Forensic Artist with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. He served as the Assistant Director and Interim Director of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. He was a graduate of the FBI Academy. Working alongside the United States Secret Service, he protected multiple United States Presidents. His name is inscribed in the Oklahoma State Bureau Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. He designed the National Native American Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. A citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes he was a Southern Cheyenne Peace Chief who faithfully served his tribe. He especially enjoyed assisting his fellow veterans and tribal citizens, ensuring that they received their full military benefits. He was given a key to the city in his hometown of El Reno.

Harvey was gifted with a special ability to persevere throughout a career in law enforcement that often involved much human suffering. By day, his forensic drawings helped victims gain a sense of closure and justice. By night, he picked up a different set of pencils and paintbrushes. He found solace in the process of creating other kinds of art in the evenings. His award-winning art was sought-after by collectors around the world. He understood the importance of finding creative outlets that allowed him to process the grief that he experienced during difficult investigations. He was both warrior and artist. He was a rare embodiment of the warrior artist.

Harvey was an optimist. He was seemingly incapable of complaining or grumbling. Students, interns and employees often beat a path to his office, seeking out his peaceful presence and wise guidance. Trusting in God's grace, he bravely fought numerous cancer diagnoses for more than two decades. He was deeply respected for his hope and resilience in the midst of illness.

During his career of public service, Harvey Pratt ran toward the fire. He was the same man in public and in private. In quiet conversations later in life, he often seemed struck with humble surprise at the extraordinary life he was so graciously granted to live. While he was thankful for his storied



career, he was even more thankful for his family. This was evidenced by the loving tone in his voice every time he spoke of them.

Harvey was preceded in death by his father Oscar Noble Pratt, his mother Anna Guerrier Pratt Shadlow, his brothers, Charles and Tony Pratt and his sisters, Dorothy Marie, Micki and Marlene.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Gina Posey Pratt, his brother Otto Pratt, his children, Tracy Hardin and husband David, Jason Pratt and wife Lauren, Judson Pratt, Nathan Pratt and his wife Twyla, and his grandchildren, Jessica Hardin, Johnathon Hardin, Matthew Hardin, Natalie Pratt and Davis Pratt.

Wake services were held

## OBITUARIES

## Geneva Tusing Blue

Geneva Tusing Blue was born Oct. 18, 1949, in Hinton, Oklahoma, and passed away on Dec. 28, 2025, at her home in El Reno, Oklahoma.

Geneva was a secretary for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in the Farm and Ranch Program and a member of the Welch Memorial Baptist Church in Geary, Oklahoma. Geneva enjoyed bead work, sewing, gardening, playing bingo and spending time at the casino.

She is survived by her children, Bobby Gene Finch of Broken Arrow, Ronnie Cradduck of El Reno, Connie Tusing of Oregon, Michelle Worden of Tyler, Tex-

as, John Blue of Chandler, Texas, and Rhonda Blue of Redford, Mich., brothers, Jerry Fire of Geary and William Tusing of El Reno, 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Affectionately known as No'oo, Mama, and Neiwoo by those closest to her heart, Geneva was the heart of her family, known for her warmth, compassion, and unwavering love.

Her father Star Blaine Tusing, mother Cora Candy Fire and sisters, Iris Candy Fire, Joan Pawnee Candy Fire, and Bonnie Jean Tusing, preceded her in death.

An all-night wake service



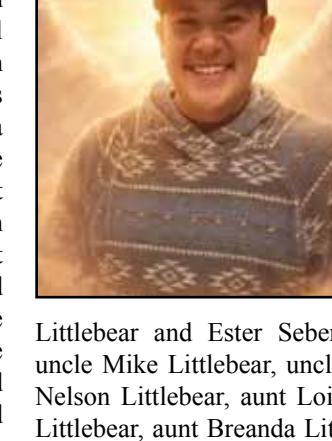
was held Jan. 2, 2026, at the All-Tribes Baptist Church in Geary, Oklahoma. Funeral services were held January 2, at the same location, followed by an interment at the Geary Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

## David James Littlebear

On behalf of the families of David James Littlebear would like to acknowledge the overflowing love and support of friends and family during this time of bereavement and mourning.

David James Littlebear was born on July 22, 1991, and left this world on January 6, 2026. David will forever be 34 years old. David Littlebear was the second son of Mary Rose Kaulaity of El Reno, Oklahoma and Daniel Littlebear of Tulsa, Oklahoma. David leaves behind his parents, older brother Daniel Littlebear and Ashley Littlebear, younger brother Jacob Littlebear. Brothers, Robert Tsotaddle, Joshua Stein, Chris Sindone and William Nelson Nelson Jr. Sisters, Mary Jo Kaulaity, Melissa Tsotaddle, Jill Miller and Savannah Stein, and the numerous others he considered his brothers and sisters.

David showed us all how to live by his kindness, good nature, willingness to help others and genuine happiness. David attended Dar-



lington School and Calumet High School, where he was a member of the basketball team and even completed JROTC. He attended Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, and was on the Student Senate as a Freshmen and Sophomore Representative. At present time he was employed with OKC West Livestock Market and Tractor & Supply. David was a Cheyenne Sun Dance Priest and a member of the Bowstring Society. David loved his people and loved attending traditional ceremonies. David was also a member of the Duck Creek ceremonial grounds (Muskogee Creek Nation) and served as a "YachEkE". David was given his Cheyenne name by Chester Whiteman, "Vo'omo ho'honii'" which means "White Rock." David loved music, comedy and sports, he was also an avid hunter and outdoorsmen, and a proud OU Sooners and OKC Thunder fan.

An all-night wake service was held January 11 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held January 12, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

## Wannie Jean Whiteshield

Wannie Jean Whiteshield, Little Woman, was born June 17, 1959, in Thomas, Oklahoma, and journeyed to the Happy Hunting Grounds on January 6, 2026, surrounded by her mother, children, and granddaughters, she took her final breath at the OU Edmond ICU. Wannie was the daughter of Ercel Whiteshield and was raised between Thomas and Denver, Colorado. She attended Thomas High School and spent much of her youth in Denver as well. From a young age, Wannie was grounded in strong traditional Cheyenne values, lovingly instilled by her grandparents, Gertrude and Richard Tallbull. She often spoke of cherished memories frying chicken for community feeds at the Denver Indian Center, volunteered by her grandmother, and helping with beading classes alongside her sister Ronda. Family meant everything to Wannie. She could spend hours sharing stories about Edward, Sara, Tator, and Dubee, and she was immensely proud to be their big sister. As an adult, Wannie devoted her life to her children. She would laugh when recalling the early years of raising George, Benji and Robert, joking that it felt like caring for triplets. Later came her girls, Sara, Lauren and Tiffani. Motherhood was her greatest accomplishment, and nothing brought her more joy than seeing her children happy and thriving.

Wannie worked for 16 years at the Clinton Indian Service Unit before retiring. She truly loved her job and took pride in advocating for her patients whenever needed. Through her work, she formed many lasting friendships, and even after retirement, she deeply missed being there and seeing familiar smiling faces. In 1982, Wannie met her companion, Lawrence Sittingbear. They shared 43 years together until Lawrence's passing in November 2025. As grandparents, they loved their grandchildren fiercely and cherished time spent watching movies together and visiting the casino. Wannie was a talented beader and an excellent cook. She enjoyed listening to audiobooks during long drives with her daughter Sara, watching The Golden Girls, and attending her grandchildren's school events. Above all else, she adored her grandchildren, Davi, Gertie, Nellie, LaQuita, Baby Will, Benji, Lars, Georgie, Jazzy, NaNami, Harviann, Truman, MaKayla, Evan, Aleck and RJ. Wannie's last days were spent in Weatherford with her daughter Sara, helping raise her grandchildren. Outside of work, Wannie and Sara were rarely apart, sharing a bond rooted in love, laughter, and devotion to family. Another past time they enjoyed was taking her mother, Lou, to the casino. She was preceded in death by her husband Lawrence



Sittingbear, her brother Edward Whiteshield, her sister, Sara John, her nephew son Benjamin Whiteshield, nephew James Whiteshield, her father David Whiteshield and her grandparents, Gertrude (Lonebear) and Richard Tallbull Sr., and Nellie and David Hamilton. She is survived by her mother Ercel Whiteshield of Thomas, her daughters, Sara Whiteshield, Lauren Whiteshield and Tiffani Sittingbear, all of Weatherford, her sons, George Whiteshield of Thomas and Robert Whiteshield of El Reno, her sister Vivian Whiteshield of Watonga and her 16 beloved grandchildren. An all-night wake was held, January 12 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla. Funeral services were held January 13 at Freedom Worship Center in Thomas, officiated by Rev. Gerald Panama, followed by an interment at the Thomas Cemetery under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

# ATHLETE'S SPOTLIGHT

By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

## Bentley Sharp, El Reno High School

(El RENO, Okla.) Determining her next maneuver and strategic move on the wrestling mat, Bentley Sharp, 17 gears up for the season in her senior year of wrestling to take on any challenge.

Standing 5'7 tall, Sharp wrestles and competes in the 235-pound weight class for El Reno High School Wrestling. Sharp is one of a handful of girls on the wrestling team.

Born and raised in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Sharp began wrestling at the young age of five, when her parents put her in little league wrestling. And over the years, it's become more than just a sport for Sharp.

"I really love when you have a good team together, it's like a second family," Sharp said.

Sharp's motivation for continuing to wrestle through the years is being able to win and place at tournaments.

"Making my team and family proud," Sharp said.

Although she's been wrestling since she was very young, Sharp has taken breaks away from wrestling. She began her high school wrestling career as a freshman, but due to an injury while at state, Sharp ended up taking a two-year break from the mat. However, Sharp had always been a part of the team as she continued as a wrestling manager for the team. Returning to the mat for her senior year after a two-year break, Sharp said was tough.

"Coming back in, getting back in shape for everything, other than that it's been pretty good, I have good coaches and a really good support, people to lean on," Sharp said.

In her senior year of wrestling, what Sharp looked forward to the most in the season is going to regionals and earning her spot at state. Her goals for the season are to just go

out there and do what she does best, which is to have fun and wrestle.

"Go out there and wrestle, do what I love the most and just place at tournaments where I can place," Sharp said.

Maintaining an estimated 4.0 GPA in academics, Sharp best manages sports and school by focusing more on her academics.

"I don't plan on going to a college for wrestling after, so juggling between them, it does get pretty hard, but I just push through it and get everything done," Sharp said.

So far in the season, Sharp had become an all-American by placing at the Kansas City Stampede Tournament, where she placed eighth out

of 33. Sharp also placed at a wrestling tournament in the Cache Wrestle Like a Girl Tournament, where she placed sixth out of 19 girl wrestlers. She is 10-9 so far in the wrestling season.

Working on maneuvers and strategies for wrestling, Sharp trains everyday and is on the mat practicing what she needs to work on, getting stronger for when she has to compete against opponents that are bigger and heavier.

"I try to focus on my cardio just so like I won't be so like out of breath in the six minute periods or in the six minute match, I just practice on my skills," Sharp said.

Through practicing, Sharp practices the most time on discipline.

"I've been working on the disciplines of all of it, right now I'm currently working on top and bottom, how to escape and how to break people down," Sharp said.

Sharp believes the best way to improve her game is by telling herself before each meet to go out and have fun, whether she wins or loses.

"The clock points start at zero and my main goal is really to just go out there and have fun," Sharp said.

As a wrestler, Sharp feels it's important to have a good mindset and that you find a good team.

"Make sure you have someone on the team that you can like count on, to just lean your shoulder on, just make sure you find the right place," Sharp said.

While Sharp hopes to accomplish placing at tournaments and at getting better overall, what wrestling has taught her the most is discipline, on and off the mat.

"I want to be remembered as a wrestler who went out there and tried and had fun and

did everything they could and to build good relationships on and off the mat with teammates, opponents and coaches," Sharp said.

Head Wrestling Coach for El Reno High School, Anthony McDonald described Sharp as soft spoken, but had begun to come out of her shell this season.

"She is a very smart and determined young woman as she balances high school, college classes, wrestling, and also being a manager for the wrestling team, she took a few years off of wrestling and just managed for us and decided she was ready to give it a go this year again. She always asks questions and gives everything she has on the mat, the toughness has come out late and she continues to get better everyday," McDonald said.

Sharp has helped the wrestling team in many ways, as she provides senior leadership to the younger girls on the team. She also video matches and stays late to sort and pass out team gear and uploads videos and pictures for each event.

"She does anything else that is needed, her strengths are that she is a team player, determined to succeed, smart, and self driven, she will be greatly missed when she graduates," Sharp said.

Graduating in the spring, Sharp plans to attend Oregon Tech and study sonography.

Bentley's parents are Ross Sharp and Casandra Fraser. Her grandfather is Jerry Fraser. Bentley's siblings include Ashyn Sharp, Ruben Sharp and Euline Lee-Sharp.



Photo by Latoya Lonelodge

Photo by Latoya Lonelodge</p