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VA Secretary meets with tribal leaders in Oklahoma to address Native Veteran Care

Rosemary Stephens, Editor-in-Chief

(OKLAHOMA CITY) Doug Collins, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), joined Tom Cole in Oklahoma City on March 30 to meet with tribal leaders for a roundtable discussion focused on improving care for Native American veterans.

The meeting brought attention to two critical issues facing Native veterans: suicide prevention and homelessness. Tribal leaders emphasized the need for more culturally appropriate approaches, particularly in suicide prevention efforts.

One key concern raised was that current suicide screening methods used by the VA do not always align

with Native cultural values. In many tribal communities, discussions about suicide or death are considered sensitive or avoided altogether, creating barriers for veterans who may need support but are hesitant to speak openly.

Secretary Collins acknowledged the gap and stressed the importance of reaching veterans who may feel disconnected from VA services.

"One of the things I've been focused on at the VA is how do we reach out to those who may not reach out to us or how do we reach out to those who don't feel welcome?" Collins said in an interview.



Pictured l-r: U.S. Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins, VSR Prevention Specialist for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA) Elizabeth Kerns, OVA Coordinator Jerry Chebon Levi, OVA SSG Fox Prevention Coordinator Rosanna Tallbear, OVA VSR Prevention Specialist Delena Nibbs and U.S. Senator Tom Cole. (Submitted photo)

VA SECRETARY pg. 4



Darlington Public Schools perform an Arapaho Hymn and a Cheyenne Hymn in the 6th-8th grade extra large group category at the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

Record numbers mark 23rd Oklahoma Native Youth Language Fair, honoring legacy and lifting voices

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(NORMAN, Okla.) Celebrating language diversity and cultural pride, the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair returned for its 23rd year with record-breaking participation. More than 1,900 Native youth took part in this year's event, making it the largest gathering in the fair's history.

Spanning over two days, the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair was held April 6-7 at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman, Okla. Over the two-day event, the stages were filled with youth speaking their native languages, through song, spoken languages or poetry, while groups or individuals also performed skits, cited speeches or sang duets.

Off stage, students could also participate in the fair by submitting artwork, posters, film, and writing materials to proudly display at the fair. All participants of the language fair were awarded with participation medallions.

With the amount of youth participation growing each year, Dr. Raina Heaton describes the language fair as a special time of the year.

"It's just really wonderful that everybody could come out, we always are struggling with scheduling conflicts, the sports conflicts, but we had 1,908 students register this year, which is a new record again, it is the most we've had by about 200, so lots of growth," Heaton said.

This year's gathering also carried a moment of remem-

brance. Founding member Geneva Navarro, who passed away in December 2025, was honored during the morning ceremony. Her family shared reflections on her life and her dedication to preserving Comanche language and history.

"We wanted to make sure we honored her in the morning ceremony, so we had that in the morning, her daughter and some other family came down to say a few words about her and teach us all about her life and the Comanche history, so that was pretty special," Heaton said.

Along with Navarro, other founding members of the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair are educator Quinton Roman Nose, Cheyenne, and the museum's first Native languages curator, Mary Linn. Together, they envisioned a space to uplift Native language teachers and students across Oklahoma.

Dr. Marwin Begaye was the guest speaker for the language fair, an internationally exhibited printmaker and painter. Begaye, a dine citizen, is also a University of Oklahoma faculty and has been a judge for the language fair for many years.

Each year, between 35-40 languages are spoken at the language fair among the youth. This year the fair has reported 37 languages being spoken, making it particularly challenging for judging as youth are becoming more fluent in their native languages.

LANGUAGE FAIR pg. 5

Labor Department opens \$76M in workforce grants for tribes, Native organizations

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) The U.S. Department of Labor said it will make about \$76 million available in grants to support employment and training programs for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, directing funds to tribal governments and affiliated organizations under federal workforce programs.

The funding, administered by the Employment and Training Administration, will support about 163 grants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's Indian and Native American programs.

Roughly \$62 million is allocated for adult employment and training, with \$14 million designated for youth services, including summer and year-round job programs for individuals ages 14 to 24 in tribal communities, Alaska, Oklahoma and Hawaii.

The grants are structured to fund education-to-career pathways, including academic instruction, occupational training and literacy development.

The department said the funding is intended to improve workforce competitiveness and support self-employment through entrepreneurial training, while strengthening connections between tribal communities, employers and education providers.

Eligible applicants include federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations, Alaska Native-controlled entities, Native Hawaiian-controlled organizations, Indian-controlled nonprofits, and certain state-controlled entities and consortia.

Final award amounts will be determined through a geographic funding formula. The grants are part of the federal government's workforce strategy aimed at aligning training with labor market demand, according to a DOL news release.

Strengthening the Voice of the People: Remote Participation and the Future of Tribal Council Meetings

By the Office of the Tribal Council Coordinator

For many years, participation in Tribal Council meetings has depended largely on the ability to travel—often long distances—to be physically present. For a geographically dispersed tribal nation like ours, this has quietly limited participation for many of our people.

The Special Tribal Council Meeting held on March 7, 2026, in Elk City marked another important step toward changing that reality.

At that meeting, the use of handheld electronic voting devices (“clickers”) alongside remote participation through online access allowed more tribal members to take part in the decision-making process than ever before. This effort reflects an ongoing commitment to ensure that every tribal member—whether near or far—has a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

What We Saw on March 7

Participation numbers tell an important story.

- 118 tribal members registered to vote remotely, a notable increase from previous meetings
- 24 remote voters actively participated on the day of the meeting
- Over 230 tribal members attended in person

While in-person participation remained strong, the growth in remote registration shows a clear direction: our people are ready for more accessible ways to engage.

The final vote totals also reflected a combined process—integrating both in-person and remote voices into one outcome. As shown in the official meeting minutes, remote votes were counted alongside in-person votes, contributing to the final tally of 230 votes on the resolution.

This is what inclusion looks like in practice.

Why This Matters

At its core, the Tribal Council is not a building or a meeting—it is the people.

When participation is limited, so is representation. Remote participation begins to remove those barriers:

- Elders who may not be able to travel
- Working families balancing responsibilities
- Tribal members living out of district
- Individuals facing transportation or financial challenges

By introducing remote voting and electronic tabulation, we are moving closer to a system where participation is based on willingness—not proximity.

Efficiency, Accuracy, and Transparency

The use of handheld voting devices also addresses long-standing challenges.

Electronic voting allows:

- Immediate and accurate vote tabulation
- Anonymous and secure voting
- Real-time display of results for transparency

These systems reduce delays and minimize the potential for human error that can occur with manual counting. As noted in recent updates, these tools are designed to help a large Tribal Council conduct business more efficiently while maintaining trust in the process.

At the March 7 meeting, 100% of voting devices were returned, demonstrating strong accountability and respect from participants.

Lessons Learned

As with any new effort, there were challenges.

An internet interruption temporarily affected remote participation just before the final vote. According to the meeting minutes, contingency plans—including preparing for hand counting—were discussed while the issue was resolved.

The system was restored, and voting proceeded.

Importantly, these experiences are not setbacks—they are part of building a stronger system. Adjustments have already been identified, including:

- Clear help desk support for remote users
 - Structured pauses to resolve technical issues
 - Improved communication during disruptions
- Each step forward

strengthens the reliability of future meetings.

Looking Ahead

The goal is not simply to maintain remote participation—but to expand it.

There is a vision for a future where:

- Remote participation equals or exceeds in-person attendance
- More tribal members feel informed, engaged, and empowered
- Tribal Council decisions reflect a broader and more representative voice

As stated in recent communications, the long-term aim is to increase overall voter turnout while continuing to improve access and inclusion.

A Collective Responsibility

Technology alone does not strengthen the Tribal Council—participation does.

Whether attending in person or logging in remotely, each tribal member plays a role in shaping the future of our nation. Asking questions, staying informed, and casting a vote are not just rights—they are responsibilities.

The March 7 meeting showed that when opportunities are expanded, our people respond.

And that is something worth building on.

SoonerSelect Open Enrollment Begins May 1

What Native Americans living in Oklahoma need to know

Open enrollment for Oklahoma’s SoonerSelect Medicaid program runs from May 1 through June 12, giving SoonerCare members the opportunity to choose a health and/or dental plan that best meets their needs. For American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), participation in SoonerSelect is optional, and tribal citizens can choose whether to enroll or remain with traditional SoonerCare.

SoonerSelect is Oklahoma’s coordinated health care delivery system designed to improve quality of care and health outcomes. Through SoonerSelect, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) partners with health and dental plans to coordinate services for members, with a focus on preventive care and overall wellness. This approach allows providers to focus on quality care and better health outcomes, while ensuring members receive the same core services currently offered through SoonerCare. Plans may also offer extra benefits to support healthier lifestyles.

SoonerSelect serves many SoonerCare members across Oklahoma, including children (including foster children), low-income adults, pregnant women, non-disabled adults ages 19–64, and children involved in the juvenile justice system. Some individuals are not eligible and will remain in traditional SoonerCare. Members who choose to enroll can select from three available health plans: Aetna Better Health of Oklahoma, Humana Healthy Horizons in Oklahoma, and Oklahoma Complete Health. While all plans offer the same core services, they differ in extra benefits, including support for traditional healing services. Aetna offers up to \$400 per year for traditional healing, Humana offers up to \$300 per year for ceremonial or traditional services, and Oklahoma Complete Health offers up to \$250 per year for traditional healing support.

AI/AN members have important protections and flexibility when it comes to Soon-

erSelect. Enrollment is voluntary, meaning no action is required to remain on SoonerCare. Members may choose to opt in during open enrollment if they want access to additional benefits, and they can disenroll at any time without needing a reason. There is no cost to enroll, and AI/AN members are exempt from copays. If members do not opt in during the May–June enrollment period, they will need to wait until the next open enrollment cycle to join.

Choosing SoonerSelect does not mean losing access to tribal health care providers. AI/AN members can continue to receive services from their Indian Health Care Provider (IHCP), as long as the provider participates in the selected plan’s network. This ensures members can maintain culturally appropriate care while also accessing expanded services if they choose to enroll.

SoonerSelect is part of the Medicaid expansion passed by Oklahoma voters in 2020.

Enrollment is simple, and support is available. Members can call the SoonerCare Choice Counseling Line at 800-987-7767 to speak with a representative who can help compare plans and benefits. SoonerCare staff are available to help individuals understand their options and choose the plan that best fits their needs.

For tribal communities, choosing whether to enroll in SoonerSelect is a personal decision. Some members may benefit from extra services such as traditional healing support, wellness incentives, and care coordination, while others may prefer to remain with traditional SoonerCare. No matter what you choose, your coverage remains secure, and your access to tribal health services continues. As open enrollment approaches, take time to review your options and select the plan that best supports your health, your traditions, and your community.

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO MMIP CHAPTER 2026 NATIONAL DAY OF MMIP AWARENESS



OKLAHOMA STATE CAPITOL
Protect our Future



Tuesday May 5, 2026

Oklahoma State Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd, 73108

MC's: Mr. Chris Sindone & Ms. Trista Vaughn



8:30 AM Booth Set up for information booths

10:00 AM

Prayer: Margaret Behan

Welcome: Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Chapter LaRenda Morgan

Governor Reggie Wassana

Lt. Governor Hershel Gorham

Oklahoma State Treasurer Todd Russ

C2 Legislator Milan Roman Nose

A2 Legislator Kendrick Sleeper

Rep. Scott Fetgatter & Rep. Mickey Dollens

Sen. Julia Kirt & Sen. Carri Hicks

Special Moment: Reading of Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Names #NeverForget

Angela Plumley, Executive Director of Transportation

Ida's Law - Named after Ida Beard (Cheyenne Arapaho)

Oklahoma Attorney General MMIP Taskforce

Chahta MMIP Chapter

12:00- 2:00 PM

Open Talking Circle and Healing Moments by Cheyenne Arapaho TOR Program

A time for families and MMIP advocates to remember, share their stories and bring awareness for MMIP families, victims and promote a journey to healing.

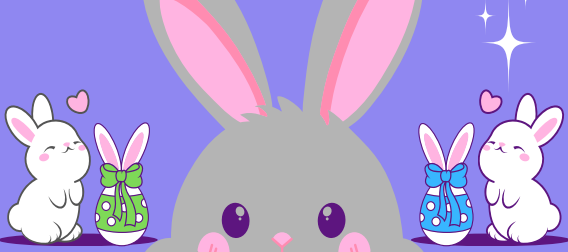


Oklahoma House of Representatives and Oklahoma Senate Citations to recognize Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day and Ida's Law in Oklahoma.

For information contact cheyennearapahommip@gmail.com

Event hosted by Rep. Mickey Dollens, Rep. Scott Fetgatter, Senator Julia Kirt and Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Chapter

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Lite meal will be served



Connected Circles Summit Builds Bridges in Tribal Behavioral Health

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(OKLAHOMA CITY) Tribal leaders and providers gather to share strategies, tackle stigma, and improve access to care

Building bridges between communities and behavioral health programs, and connecting vital resources, was the goal of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Office of Recovery (TOR) as it hosted the 'Connected Circles: A Summit for Tribal Behavioral Health Collaboration.' The summit aimed to strengthen collaboration among tribal TOR programs to better serve communities in need of behavioral health services.

The event was held April 1 at the Oklahoma City Tribal Service Center. As the first behavioral health summit of its kind for the program, TOR Director Darien Chebahtah said the initiative came in response to growing requests from other tribes seeking mentorship as they launch their own TOR programs.

In response, Chebahtah said bringing tribes together for a shared learning experience was the most effective approach.

"We decided to bring as many tribes as possible together to have a collaborated effort and mentoring each other to show each other what works in their communities, what doesn't so we don't have to go through the same growing pains," Chebahtah said.

While the Cheyenne and Arapaho TOR program is often invited to present in other tribal communities and at conferences, this marked the first time it hosted its own summit, welcoming approximately 35 participants.

"We just wanted to prepare every program to do the best practices that other tribes are doing, that way they can maximize that impact in their communities, we want to hopefully build bridges so that way there's a lot more intertribal collaborations too," Chebahtah said.

Participants traveled from across Oklahoma, representing tribal behavioral health programs, tribal departments, and nonprofit organizations. Tribes in attendance included the Comanche, Kiowa, Chickasaw, and Absentee Shawnee, along with various partner organizations.

Chebahtah emphasized that one of the most pressing barriers facing tribal communities is access to care.

"That's one thing we try to harp on is access to our services, our awareness, our education, our supplies, so that's one thing that we're trying to emphasize on other communities as well with our mail out systems, our leave behind distribution sites for NARCAN to prevent overdoses," Chebahtah said.

Through the summit, organizers aimed to share strategies that could help save lives while also increasing awareness of available services.

"Then this is who we are so that way people know who we are before they come and reach out for help," Chebahtah said.

The summit featured breakout sessions and group discussions focused on key behavioral health topics. Participants exchanged ideas, built connections, and shared practical strategies to take back to their communities.

Michaela Tuberville, with the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Opioid Response Program, attended to expand her network and gather resources for clients.

"I work with a lot of clients that constantly need resources



Darien Chebahtah, TOR director instructs participants to break into groups to discuss various topics related to behavior health. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

and this provides a place to gather those and be able to give them to my clients so they know where to go," Tuberville said.

Tuberville said the collaborative discussions allowed her to actively engage, share insights, and learn from others in the field.

"It's a great way to put our minds together to figure out how we can help our clients and work and go back to our tribe to implement these strategies to hopefully impact our communities," Tuberville said.

In her work, Tuberville often serves veterans and individuals experiencing homelessness. She said building connections at gatherings like this is essential to improving services.

"Even if they have a substance abuse issue, they may come from a different background and that backgrounds going to be able to help them better than I can, so even just making those connections, I also work with a lot of homeless and having to be heard here, gives me that resource and so it's great to just be able to meet people and know who to contact when I need this information," Tuberville said.

She added that mental health remains a critical issue that needs more attention, particularly in relation to substance use.

"I think getting us together in a group like this we can talk about it because not all people know the things I experienced as a case manager and not a lot of people know what's actu-

ally going on in the community because they're not out there every day, though I think seeing that and being able to hear it is important for everybody here so we can address it together to know how to be better for substance abuse and mental health," Tuberville said.

For Daviaann Connywerdy, case manager at the Comanche Nation Prevention Recovery and Medication Assistant at the Treatment Program, collaboration was one of the summit's most important takeaways.

"I think we all need to collaborate a little more that way we can provide more resources to our native communities and bridging those gaps as far as those things that we're lacking and by meeting each other and getting to know each other, that's helping with that connection that we need, as far as Indian people, we're a communal type of people, having a bigger community and bigger resources that helps with those that are needing that extra support," Connywerdy said.

Despite working in different roles and communities, Connywerdy said attendees shared a unified purpose.

"We all work in different places but our goal is the same by helping those ones that need that help and being here has brought me more connections to be able to do that," Connywerdy said.

She also highlighted the need to address stigma surround-

CONNECTED CIRCLES pg. 5

MISSING IN OKLAHOMA Day

Saturday, May 2, 2026 | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

UCO Roger Webb Forensic Science Institute
701 E. 2nd St., Edmond, OK 73034

Missing in Oklahoma Day is dedicated to helping families and friends who are searching for someone they love. Representatives from partner agencies will be available to help initiate new reports or supplement current investigations. Case details will be entered into national law enforcement and missing persons systems, and attendees may elect to submit a DNA sample to support investigative and genealogical searches.

To register for this FREE event, scan the QR code.

FILING A REPORT? PLEASE BRING:

- Photos of your missing loved one
- Photos of their tattoos (if applicable)
- A copy of the original police report (if possible)
- Medical documents for the missing person
- ID documents for the missing person
- If you want to submit a DNA sample, if possible, bring two family members from two different branches of your family tree (mother and father's side) for the most robust CODIS search.

Opening remarks and informational presentations start at 10 a.m. Representatives will be available throughout the event to provide missing persons resources, assist with filing new reports or updating existing reports, and offer families the opportunity to share information about their loved one.

QUESTIONS: okmissingpersons@gmail.com

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HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBAL MEMBER GUIDE

VOTING

Easiest way to check and see if you're on the voter rolls is going online and searching your name - Scan QR Code!

Why Voting Matters for Our Communities

Voting is one of the most powerful ways we can make our voices heard and protect the future of our people. This year's elections include the Governor's race, school board elections, and local offices that directly impact our daily lives, our children's education, public safety, health services, and how resources are distributed in our communities.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho people live across nine counties, stretching from El Reno to Elk City to Woodward and everywhere in between. Decisions made at the local and state level affect us all, whether it's funding for schools, roads, healthcare access, or policies that impact Tribal citizens and Native families.

Too often, decisions are made about us without us at the table. Voting ensures we are counted, represented, and respected in local government decisions. When we vote, we honor our ancestors, support future generations, and stand up for the needs of our Tribal communities.

Our voices matter. Our votes matter. Let's show up.

Contact for Help

Chris Roman Nose
NOA Fellow
405-397-0395

Zach Blackowl
NOA Fellow
405-434-4282

Cassandra Fraser
NOA Fellow
405-401-9529

DEADLINES

MAY 22ND
LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR JUNE PRIMARIES

JUNE 16TH
PRIMARY ELECTIONS

OCTOBER 9TH
LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN GENERAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 3RD
GENERAL ELECTION

VA SECRETARY

continued from pg. 1

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Office of Veterans Affairs Coordinator Jerry Levi said tribal nations were initially allowed to ask three questions each with their group ultimately limited to one.

"On behalf of the organization, we used that opportunity to raise a critical concern regarding the Suicide Screening tool currently required for eligibility in the VA's SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Program Grant. Our organization, now in its second year of the grant, highlighted that the existing screening method is not culturally sensitive for Native veteran communities. In many tribal cultures, topics such as death and suicide are not openly discussed, making direct questioning ineffective and often resulting in incomplete or untruthful responses," Levi said.

He proposed collaborating with other tribal veteran organizations to develop a more culturally appropriate, wellness-based screening tool, one that emphasizes overall well-being rather than explicitly referencing suicide. Such an approach, Levi said, would better align with Native cultural values while still identifying veterans in need of support and ensuring they remain eligible for critical services provided through the grant.

"Secretary Collins responded positively to this concern and later reinforced

the importance of updating this language in comments to local media, noting that such changes are overdue. Following the session, additional support emerged, including from the Cherokee Nation, which echoed concerns about the limitations of the current screening process," Levi said.

Currently, the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) is used to determine eligibility. While it is straightforward and widely used, it does not account for the cultural nuances of Native communities. This creates a disconnect: many Native veterans may screen negatively on suicide-specific questions yet still demonstrate clear signs of depression or emotional distress on other mental health assessments.

"With growing support from the VA and tribal nations, our organization is now taking the lead in developing a culturally grounded wellness questionnaire, one that intentionally avoids direct references to suicide while still identifying risk factors through a broader, more holistic lens," Levi said. "We have already initiated follow-up by providing our contact information to the VA Secretary and expressing our readiness to collaborate immediately with other tribal veteran organizations to develop and implement this tool nationwide."

At the same time, the

urgency for this effort is underscored by a newly released VA data from 2023. While overall veteran suicide rates have slightly declined, the trend for Native veterans, particularly those in urban and rural areas enrolled in VA healthcare, is rising. Native veterans now represent the highest suicide risk among minority veteran populations. These numbers reinforce the need for culturally appropriate tools and approaches. By implementing a wellness-based screener and increasing the presence of prevention coordinators on tribal lands, Native Veteran organizations can better engage Native veterans, strengthen community connections and address the isolation, depression and anxiety that too often goes unspoken.

"Today's discussion with the tribes actually saying, 'Hey, some of this language is not appropriate for what we're doing,' is some of the feedback I was looking for. I'm looking forward to taking that into consideration and seeing how we can work better with it," Collins said.

The VA Secretary also emphasized his goal of reducing bureaucratic barriers and making it easier for veterans to access the benefits they have earned.

This visit marked Collins' first trip to Oklahoma, where he also toured the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

NATIVE VETERAN WELLNESS CHECK-IN

◆ Screening Questions ◆

- 1. Spirit & Emotional Wellbeing**
"In the past month, have you been feeling so tired in your mind, heart, or spirit that you wished you could just rest and not wake up?"
- 2. Signs of Preparation or Withdrawal**
"Sometimes when people are hurting deeply, they may begin to prepare in certain ways—like giving away belongings, settling things, or putting themselves in unsafe situations. Have you noticed yourself doing anything like that?"
- 3. Safety Check**
"Have you taken any steps, made any plans, or started to do anything that could harm you?"

You are not alone. Your life is sacred.

Senior Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol

OKLAHOMA CITY — With nearly 900,000 Oklahomans age 60 and older represented, state leaders, tribal elders, caregivers, and advocates gathered at the Oklahoma State Capitol on March 30 for Senior Day at the Capitol, a statewide event focused on ensuring aging voices are heard in policy decisions.

Centered around the theme "Hear Our Voices," Senior Day provides an opportunity for aging Oklahomans to meet and speak directly with their legislators, share their experiences, and learn about policies and services that impact their lives and communities.

"Oklahoma is home to nearly 900,000 adults age 60 and over, and these seniors are an important part of our state," said Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell. "I look forward to speaking at Senior Day at the Capitol again this year and encourage seniors from all 77 counties to come to the Capitol and make their needs and priorities known."

"Advocating for aging Oklahomans means showing up wherever decisions are made," said Amanda Williams, one of the event organizers. "Senior Day is about making sure older adults, caregivers, and communities are heard in every space where policy is shaped."

Cheyenne Peace Chief Gordon Yellowman offered the invocation, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Government Affairs Officer LaRenda Morgan led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chickasaw Nation Color Guard presented the Flags.



Pictured l-r: Rebekah Williams, Oklahoma Alliance on Aging event organizer, Cheyenne Peace Chief Gordon Yellowman, LaRenda Morgan and Amanda Williams, Oklahoma Alliance on Aging. (Courtesy photo)



Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell and Cheyenne Peace Chief Gordon Yellowman.

16th Annual Graduates Tribute

Tsistsistas Hinonoei

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
MAY 15, 2026
Publishing
June 1, 2026**

**Submit Photo/Name of School/
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**TEXT: 405-201-3143
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CONNECTED CIRCLES

continued from pg. 3

ing medication-assisted treatment.

“One of the things is the stigma with medication assisted treatment and methadone, suboxone, things like that you just feel like it’s replacing one thing for another, but they don’t also see what I see, my clients, the progress, being able to be a support system to them and also providing those resources because they don’t choose to go the traditional route of recovery as far as being patient and sober living,” Connywerdy said.

Connywerdy said her work focuses on providing support and options for clients on their recovery journey.

“Somebody that can provide those resources for them to be able to make the choices of whatever route they want to go like mental health wise, giving them that option and helping them find those things I think for me, has helped me a lot destigmatizing medication assisted treatment,” Connywerdy said.

Also in attendance was the Be Heard Movement, a nonprofit based in Tulsa that provides mobile shower and laundry services for unhoused individuals. In just six months of operation last year, the organization provided more than 2,000 showers and over 1,200 loads of laundry.

“So the need is there, it’s been pretty amazing,” said Aybreon Cole, director of the Oklahoma City Be Heard Movement.

Cole said TOR invited the organization to participate due to an ongoing partnership and shared commitment to community service.

“It’s been great, I got a lot of takeaways, a lot of great new people I met, a lot of the takeaways I would say is

that I learned a lot I would say with overdose prevention and stigma, prevention, it’s been great to see and eye opening on a lot of things and we just love to learn and it’s been a cool experience, it’s been great,” Cole said.

He emphasized the importance of partnerships and continued engagement.

“Following up with your guests, following up with your clients, following up with other partners has been a great thing, also just education on NARCAN and opioids and things like that is a great thing, what has been a great takeaway for me is just getting our staff more educated on those type of things,” Cole said.



Break out groups lead discussions and network among one another during the connected circles summit.



Daviaann Connywerdy, case manager at the Comanche Nation Prevention Recovery, shares her input with the group discussion during behavioral health collaboration.

As the summit concluded, Chebahtah said he hopes to see more gatherings like this in the future, with different tribes hosting and continuing the collaborative effort.

“Hopefully we can even do a TOR where it’s from different communities, so different tribes host it because I think it’s needed,” Chebahtah said.

LANGUAGE FAIR

continued from pg. 1

“I’ve been really exceptionally impressed, the performances are always wonderful and a whole lot of fun, but I’ve been particularly impressed by the language, I’ve heard this year the judges have reported having a particularly hard time judging, particularly the spoken language and prayer categories,” Heaton said.

Heaton said it’s the best kind of problem to have as the youth are doing so well in speaking their languages.

“You can’t possibly decide because they were all so amazing, so that’s an interesting challenge going forward on the judging, which says volumes I think about how well our programs are doing, both the tribal programs and school programs,” Heaton said.

Proudly performing their languages on stage in front of others, native youth entered various categories displaying the Cheyenne and Arapaho languages through song, speech, group performances and duets.

For many, it’s a time of the year they look forward to, returning to the language fair to not only compete but to just acknowledge their own native language.

Aracelie Chavez, 17, from Clinton, Okla., is in her third year competing in the youth language fair, returning with her group, the Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church. Chavez said church is where she’s mostly learned her language as she performed a Cheyenne song with her youth group from church at the language fair.

“Every time we go to church on Wednesdays with the youth we learn a song and we’re really fast learners because who helps us, they

help us go through the song with us and it took us probably about two months to learn, not that long,” Chavez said.

Learning the songs and learning her language, Chavez said makes her feel really grateful because growing up, Chavez didn’t go to powwows and never got to learn and her grandmother who wanted to teach her grandchildren passed away before they were old enough to understand it.

“I feel like this really helps, my grandmas that are at the church and my uncle that helps us, it’s really made an impact on me and I’m helping my siblings learn, the language that is solely trying to be forgotten its like it’s not because our church is trying to impact it on everyone else,” Chavez said.

Participating in the language fair has become one of Chavez favorite things to look forward to each year as she’s able to go to school and tell people she knows her language.

“It’s like really important to me and it’s really fun to be able to talk in my language,” Chavez said.

Teaching the youth at Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church, Roger Davis instructs with the Cheyenne hymns as part of the activities they do throughout the year at the church and said it means a lot to see the youth participating in the language fair each year.

The songs that are shared with the youth are songs passed down from relatives of Davis and that’s how he also learned them.

“We have this brown book there at the Mennonite church that has a lot of the songs that we’re able to



Cheyenne and Arapaho youth participating in the 23rd annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, participating in various categories. Pictured l-r: Lilliana Youngbear, 13, Adele Greeley, 13, Audrina Greeley, 15, and Sage Youngbear, 16. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

utilize, that was the purpose of that book, for the people before us, they wanted to put these songs on paper so they wouldn’t be forgotten, so for these kids to pick this book up and carry on their mission is outstanding and phenomenon,” Davis said.

Being involved with the church and instructing the youth with song and language for the past three years, Davis said they never pressure the youth into learning the language, they always leave the door open and the youth come and want to learn.

“I’m very proud of these kids for stepping outside of the box and it’s very hard to perform in front of people and so for these Cheyenne

and Arapaho kids from my area to do that is something amazing, so what they’re doing here with these songs with language needs to be commended because they’re a great group of kids,” Davis said.

Singing an intertribal song that Davis made for him, Levi Hulett, 17, placed second for singing a Cheyenne song in the tradition song category.

“My uncle, Roger Davis made that song, he asked if I could sing it this morning, I just blasted it, I’m Kiowa, Cheyenne, Cherokee, Pottawatomie, Lakota Sioux and others,” Hulett said.

Learning his language and hearing the drum songs from his culture, Hulett said

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Light refreshments and child care provided for class registrants



Cheyenne and Arapaho Youth from the Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church perform a Cheyenne Hymn.

Pictured l-r: Walk Up Tallbear, 17, Aj Spottedwolf, 16, Marley Gamboa, 17, Aracelie Chavez, 17, Lariah Spottedwolf, 17, and Cameron Trout, 16.

LANGUAGE FAIR

continued from pg. 5



Levi Hulett, 17, sings an intertribal Cheyenne song with a hand drum and places second.

means everything to him as it was almost taken.

"We got it back so why not show it off that we can still do it and we're still here and we still know what we're doing, anybody can still criticize you, but if you know who you really are and where you come from, it shouldn't bother you, just be proud of what you have and continue on, is what I was always told growing up and I got to give a big thanks to my dad, Homer Wassana and my pops and mom raised me," Hulett said.

Performing an Arapaho hymn, Sky Sleeper, 15, returned for her second year at the language fair. Learning the Arapaho hymn from her grandmother, Sleeper returns understanding the importance of learning her language from her grandparents.

"I think it's cool that I'm learning our language, songs, but I know a few other songs, I know sweet by and by, take the name of Jesus with you, I learned sweet by and by from my grandpa he taught me because it was the song I sang last year and then the other ones we sang in church and that's how I basically learned them," Sleeper said.

Returning to the language fair, Sleeper said she looked forward to seeing other participants sing and to learn, listening to other people's languages.

"I think it's important because people tried to kill us off, but didn't, we also have to hold onto our traditions because it's spiritual," Sleeper said.

Participating in the youth language fair for her third year, Adele Greeley, 13, performed in the modern song category in the Arapaho language, where she performed Neixoo Jesus alongside Lilliana Youngbear and received third place. In her third year at the language fair, Adele said she was ready to sing and present her culture.

"I think speaking your language, there's not a lot of people that speak Arapaho and Cheyenne now days and I feel like if you present it in front of everybody then maybe more people would want to start learning about their culture," Adele said.

Also performing alongside Adele in the small group in modern song category, singing amazing grace was Sage Youngbear, 16, who has been singing songs for awhile and was first taught by her aunt at church. Youngbear said she knows the songs by heart.

"I think it's important that we're doing this is because our language got took away from us and I just think it's really important because it was wrong to take our language from us," Youngbear said.

Returning after several years, Darlington Public Schools students return to the stage at the youth language fair to perform an Arapaho hymn and Cheyenne hymn in the tradition song category for the 6th-8th grade extra large group.

Darlington student, Violet Roman Nose, 12, said the school came to sing the Arapaho and Cheyenne hymns called This World in Not my Home and Maheo, which took the group about two to three weeks to learn.

"It was just something we did with the school because we used to do it years ago but then we stopped doing it because of state testing and because of other stuff going on and we had to be able to come here. So this is our first year in about seven years, Roman Nose said.

In her first year participating in the youth language fair, Roman Nose said it was cool to see the different tribes coming from different locations and hearing all the different languages and their cultures.

"It's just really cool because I feel like language is getting really forgotten now and just us kids can bring it back and learn it," Roman Nose said.

Looking forward to representing her culture, her language and learning about other people's languages, Audrina Greeley, 15, spoke a prayer in the Arapaho language called God is good. Audrina spoke the same prayer last year but shortened the version for this year's language fair. Learning her language means a lot to Audrina, as she returns each year to the language fair, her goal always remains the same of carrying her language and sharing it with others.

"There's not much fluent speakers, any speakers at all in the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes and so I feel like if I start learning now and picking up on it then I can soon teach my kids and my grandkids so then the language can live on," Audrina said.

Over the course of the two-day event, Heaton said the overall greater outcome the language fair hopes to accomplish each year is just having a place for youth to come and speak as more language venues are becoming popular.

"It's been really wonderful to see that this isn't the only venue anymore in the way that it didn't used to be," Heaton said.



Adele Greeley, 13, and Lilliana Youngbear, 13 perform a modern song in the Arapaho language and place third.

Heaton has tried to visit with tribal language programs and see what else they're doing, including the Choctaw Nation, who started a film festival and the Kaw Nation, who has a powwow to celebrate their kids that attend the fair as well as the Shawnees who started up a similar language fair in the northeast.

"It's just really awesome to see it spread like that and grow, we are always happy to share with anyone that wants to hold another language fair, sort of wild that this has been going on long enough that we, along with the programs, have sort of developed this symbiotic structure to handle the fact that we're going to have 2,000 kids coming and speaking their languages and the fair gets to work with programs in that way," Heaton said.



By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

Juliana Thomas, El Reno High School

Making the most out of her senior year of basketball, facing adversity and finishing out the season strong, tribal youth, Juliana Thomas, 18, felt confident in the work she's contributed to her team and to herself as an athlete.

Born and raised in the El Reno, Okla., community, Thomas grew up playing basketball most of her whole life coming from a basketball family. Actively playing for the Cheyenne and Arapaho R.E.Sp.E.C.T. basketball team, traveling and competing in various tournaments, Thomas' life is in a constant state of basketball.

Standing 5'2, Thomas plays point guard.

As a former two-time state champion from El Reno High School, finishing up her

final season of high school basketball, what Thomas looked forward to the most this season was preparing herself for the next level.

"Really just using this year to kind of get ready for college and use it to prepare myself for the next level," Thomas said.

Thomas' motivation for playing basketball comes from her family and for herself. And her love for continuing to play the sport comes from the foundation she's built from basketball.

"All the friendships and relationships I built and the people I met through basketball," Thomas said.

Looking back on the season, Thomas believed it wasn't the best season for her team but it wasn't the worst

as they faced a lot of adversity. However, she enjoyed her senior year of basketball overall. Her goals for the season included becoming a better player overall.

"Just to be better than last year, be better than the past couple years, being more of a leader in different ways, that's really the goals and standards I kind of set for myself before the season started," Thomas said.

With her high school career of basketball ending, Thomas felt bittersweet, but realized she wouldn't have changed a thing with how the season went.

"I've been playing my whole life and that era coming to an end, it was enjoyable. I wouldn't want anything else to be different about last season," Thomas said.

Maintaining a 3.8 GPA, Thomas best manages sports and academics by prioritizing academics first.

"I think it's important to have good grades to be able to play the sports that you love, managing both at the same time can be hard, but just really focus on the school part mainly," Thomas said.

Hoping to become a better player with each season and each year, Thomas looks forward to playing at the next level as she believes she's grown the most as a player, improving on and off the court.

"I think I improved a lot, from freshman and sophomore year not really getting any minutes coming in and starting junior and senior

year, I think I really did improve on and off the court, kind of took it more seriously as a player," Thomas said.

With a busy practice schedule, Thomas stayed in the gym during the season working on improvements. While she wasn't in school for eight hours, she was in the weight room or in the gym putting up shots.

"It was really busy this season, really hard to go to eight hours of school to coming to practice for weights, then practice, then stay after to put extra shots up. It was kind of a lot, sometimes I would go in the morning too and work out or put up extra shots or lift, then going to school, weights, practice. It was what the daily routine schedule looked like," Thomas said.

Trying to get into a daily routine, Thomas was preparing herself for playing at the next level as she received an offer to play college basketball.

Working on her ball handling the most, Thomas has been focused on building a stronger foundation, mentally and physically.

"Being stronger, getting in the weight room. I know at college it's going to be way different, so this season I really try to stay in the weight room," Thomas said.

And the best way for Thomas to improve her game was to put in the extra work, whether it was in the gym, lifting, shooting or training.

"Just staying in the gym, putting in extra work, whether it's lifting, shooting, training, but personally I would



say training would help me a lot, getting in the gym early in the morning, working on little things that would help me improve my game and seeing it happen in games," Thomas said.

As a basketball player, Thomas feels it's important to have a strong IQ in basketball and be knowledgeable in the sport.

"I feel like that's really important to have as a basketball player, playing for so long, you kind of gain that basketball IQ and it will help in different ways moving to whatever level you're going to," Thomas said.

Ending the season, Thomas hopes to be remembered as the player who worked hard and who always pushed themselves and set the standards for others.

has taught Thomas is patience.

"I've learned and grew through a lot of patience, discipline and teamwork, learning to compose myself under pressure, I would say would be the main thing it taught me," Thomas said.

Following graduation, Thomas looks forward to attending college in the fall, where she will attend Connors State College in Warner, Okla., to study nursing and continue playing collegiate basketball.

Juliana's parents are Hanna Prairie Chief and Denton Thomas. Her grandparents are Simona Foreman and Duke Thomas, Theresa Tsoodle and Charles Prairie Chief. Juliana's siblings include James Blackowl and Arya Eaglenest.



Auction of Oil and Gas Mining Leases Cheyenne Arapaho Tribal and Allotted Lands



AUCTION OF OIL AND GAS MINING LEASES CHEYENNE-ARAPAHO TRIBAL AND ALLOTTED LANDS

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Concho Agency
Oral Auction Only Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 10:00 am-1:00 pm
Location: Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Justice Services Bldg. (conference room)
120 E. Black Kettle, Concho, Oklahoma 73022

ABSOLUTELY NO CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED. 100% OF THE TOTAL BONUS, RENTAL AND FILING FEE WILL BE PAID IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF AN INVOICE. ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS ARE ENCOURAGED THROUGH WWW.PAY.GOV

SALE PROVISIONS:

Oral Auction Provisions - Oral auction will be conducted for the leasing of restricted Indian lands described on the attached schedule for oil and gas mining purposes. All bids will be recorded and determination made for auction items on the same day. This sale will be conducted under regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior, Title 25, CFR 212 (Act of March 3, 1909, 35 Stat. 781-783; 25 U.S.C. 396) as to allotted lands, and Title 25, CFR 211 (Act of May 11, 1938, 52 Stat. 347; 25 U.S.C. 398 A-F) as to the leasing of Tribal lands, with exception to 212.20(b)(3) through 212.20(b)(5) by waiver granted from the Acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs dated 5/31/2012. The specified tracts of land are being offered subject to the acceptance by the individual Indian owners of the allotted land. A separate lease will be drawn on the applicable forms for each tract of land.

The Superintendent reserves the right to withdraw, add or correct a legal description or item, and reject any bid and to disapprove any lease submitted on an accepted bid.

Subject to the foregoing, leases will be sold to the bidder who offers the highest bonus money on a per tract basis subject to a review by the Bureau of Land Management, Division of Land Management, Division of Lands & Minerals. On tracts receiving only one (1) bid, the bidder will be given one (1) opportunity to improve the bid. Conditional or alternate bids will not be considered, unless advertised as such. No drilling propositions will be considered as part of the bonus offer.

FULL PAYMENT OF BONUS, RENTAL AND FEES IS DUE IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF THE INVOICE.

Within thirty (30) days after notification of being the successful bidder, the bidder must submit the lease in completed form. The Superintendent may, for good and sufficient reasons, extend the period for completing and filing the lease. In addition to all other remedies provided by law, failure of the successful bidder to comply with the terms of the sale will render 25% of the total bonus bid paid by him forfeited for the use and benefit of the Indian owner without further action on the part of this office.

Lessee shall furnish with each lease a corporate Surety Bond, with surety acceptable to the United States, in the amount of \$2,500.00 per lease, subject to an increase should drilling commence on subject lease, or the lessee may file a Collective Bond (Form 5-5430) in the sum of \$75,000.00 for all leases of minerals in the Southern Plains Region. In lieu of the foregoing bonds, a lessee may furnish a \$150,000.00 Nationwide Oil and Gas Lease Bond (Form 5-5438) for full nationwide coverage with an acceptable company authorized to act as sole surety to cover all oil and gas leases or permits to which the lessee may become a party.

Important Notice: All successful bidders will be required to prepare their own leases and obtain signatures of the required percentage of consents of all Indian lessors of allotted lands. Pursuant to the Indian Land Consolidation Act Amendments of 2000 Sec. 219 (b)(1), as amended by the American Indian Probate Reform Act, a sliding scale is used to determine approval. If there are 5 or fewer landowners, 90% of the owner interest will be needed. More than 5 but fewer than 11 landowners, 80% of signatures are needed. If there are more than 10, but fewer than 20, the percentage is 60%. In the event there are 20 or more, only a majority of the signatures are necessary; however, we require all owners be contacted with an opportunity to sign the lease.

Leases will be drawn on the standard lease form used in the Southern Plains Region (AAO-81), which may be obtained from the Superintendent of the Concho Agency. The successful bidder assumes the responsibility of obtaining the appropriate lease forms. Unless otherwise noted in the schedule, the leases on allotted Indian lands will be drawn for a maximum term of three (3) years from the date of approval by the Superintendent, Concho Agency, El Reno, Oklahoma, and as long thereafter as oil and/or gas is produced in paying quantities. The rate of royalty is a minimum of twenty percent (20%) on all leases. The rental of \$3.00 per acre in advance for any one year is not considered as a credit on the royalty.

On those tracts listed in which an undivided restricted interest is offered for lease, bids will be accepted and interests considered for leases on the undivided restricted interest only. The prospective lessee will be responsible for arranging for payment to those owners (non-Indian) of undivided unrestricted interests.

If the lessee shall commence drilling with a rig designed to go to the total proposed depth and such drilling shall commence by midnight on the last day of the primary term of the lease and shall continue until the well is fully completed to production or abandoned, the lessee shall have the right to drill such well to completion with reasonable diligence and this lease shall continue and be in force with like effect as if such well had been completed within the primary term of said lease. All Departmental leases awarded under this advertisement contain a provision that all acreage not included in a unit and not producing or upon which drilling operations have not commenced shall be released at the expiration of the primary term, and further, that the lease(s) shall terminate as to all non-producing formations at the expiration of the primary term of the lease. Also included are provisions that address surface damages and geological or geophysical permits.

Please address all questions pertaining to this notice to the Oil & Gas section at Concho_Agency_Realty@bia.gov email.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs will not be responsible for information regarding this auction that may have been conveyed or obtained from any third party.

Jennifer D. Hill
Concho Agency Superintendent, Acting

Driving directions:



5.18 miles (6 min) N. of El Reno, Hwy 81 across from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Headquarters.

Item #	Land Area	Pref	Alot. #	Sub	Adornment Name	Legal Description	Sec	Twp	Rng	Total Ac	Net Ac	County
1	801		95		Sub-48 or Crooked Woman	Lot 3 (NW/4 SE/4), Lot 4 (NW/4 SE/4), Lot 5 (SW/4 SE/4) & Lot 6 (SE/4 SE/4) of the SE/4	11	12N	17W	139.970	139.970	Custer
2	801	M	673	-B	Stone Call or Holomah	Lot 1 (NW/4 NE/4) & Lot 2 (SW/4 NE/4) of the NE/4	11	12N	17W	36.140	36.140	Custer
3	801	M	2454	-A	Sitting Medicine	An undivided 793461735/798336000 minerals only in the N/2 NE/4	33	13N	19W	80.000	79.512	Custer
4	801		2506		Hush	SW/4 (less and except the Cherokee formation attributable of Fish Federal #1-34)	34	14N	20W	160.000	160.000	Custer
5	801	M	90	-A	Vagabond or Spotted Bird	An undivided 67207680 minerals only in the NW/4 NW/4	34	13N	16W	40.000	35.000	Custer
6	801	M	90	-B	Vagabond or Spotted Bird	An undivided 67207680 minerals only in the E/2 NW/4, SW/4 NW/4	34	13N	16W	120.000	105.000	Custer
7	8M5		3	-A	Townsite	N 40' of Lot 7 in Blk. 16 in the original townsite of Watonga, OK (less and except Mississippian formation attributable to Watonga 1-19E)	19	16N	11W	0.046	0.046	Blaine
8	8M5		4	-A	Townsite	N 40' of the W 25' of Lot 8 in Blk. 16 in the original townsite of Watonga, OK (less and except Mississippian formation attributable to Watonga 1-19E)	19	16N	11W	0.023	0.023	Blaine
9	8M5		5		Townsite	Lot 3 in Blk. 24 in the original townsite of Watonga, OK (less and except Mississippian formation attributable to Watonga 1-19E)	19	16N	11W	0.161	0.161	Blaine
10	801	M	923		Yellow Woman	An undivided 3342520 minerals only in the S/2 NW/4, Lot 3 (NE/4 NW/4) & Lot 4 (NW/4 NW/4), (less and except the Mississippian formation attributable to McKinley BIA - 1-4E)	4	13N	12W	155.538	20.737	Blaine
11	801	M	1874	-A	Ear Bob	An undivided 17921920 minerals only in the E/2 SW/4	25	17N	12W	80.000	74.667	Blaine
12	801	M	1874		Ear Bob	An undivided 472480 minerals only in the W/2 SW/4	25	17N	12W	80.000	78.667	Blaine
13	801		1875	-A	Surveyor Woman	N/2 SE/4	25	17N	12W	80.000	80.000	Blaine
14	801	M	1875	-C	Surveyor Woman	An undivided 113400226800 minerals only in the SW/4 SE/4	25	17N	12W	40.000	20.000	Blaine
15	801		1880	-B	Red Woman	E/2 NE/4 (less and except the Mississippian (less Chester) formation attributable to Bowen 1-34-24 1712MHX)	27	17N	12W	80.000	80.000	Blaine
16	801		1883		Little Bird	E/2 SW/4, Lot 5 (NW/4 SW/4)	18	17N	11W	108.790	108.790	Blaine
17	801	M	2088		Standing Bull	An undivided 172 minerals only in the N/2 NW/4, Lot 1 (SW/4 NW/4), Lot 2 (SE/4 NW/4), Lot 7 (SE/4 NW/4) & Lot 8 (SW/4 NW/4), (less and except the Springer and Mississippian formations attributable to McPherson 1-33-28 1712MHX)	28	17N	12W	146.500	73.250	Blaine

18	801		3001		Flint	An undivided 2128025200 in the NW/4 NW/4 (less and except the Morrow formation attributable to Chapparral Energy LLC)	27	18N	13W	40.000	33.778	Blaine
19	801		2216	-A	Little Raven Jr	An undivided 441243560 in the NW/4 NW/4	15	18N	13W	10.000	9.901	Blaine
20	801		853		Sitting Down	An undivided 374720038102400 in the E/2 SW/4, Lot 1 (NW/4 SW/4), Lot 2 (SW/4 SW/4), Lot 3 (SW/4 SW/4), & Lot 4 (SW/4 SW/4), (less and except Cherokee, Woodford and Mississippian formations attributable to WALD Ranch Federal 1-27-22301 and No. 1D Turtle With Wind)	27	14N	13W	203.640	200.258	Blaine
21	801	M	20	-C	Man on a Cloud	An undivided 5/8 minerals only in the Lot 2 (NE/4 NW/4), (less & except 1st and 2nd Bronzide, Flinton, Mississippi Solid, and Woodford formations attributable to Haley 9-12N-92-3E)	9	13N	9W	38.450	24.038	Canadian
22	8L4		1		TOWNSITE	An undivided 4044 in A STRIP OF LAND 1' OFF THE E SIDE AND RUNNING THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF LOT 22 IN BLK 6, KEITHS ADDITION IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF EL RENO, OK	8	12N	7W	0.003	0.003	Canadian
23	8L4		2		TOWNSITE	An undivided 4044 in LOT 23 IN BLK 6, KEITHS ADDITION IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF EL RENO, OK	8	12N	7W	0.071	0.065	Canadian
24	8L4		3		TOWNSITE	An undivided 4044 in LOT 24 IN BLK 6, KEITHS ADDITION IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF EL RENO, OK	8	12N	7W	0.071	0.065	Canadian
25	8L4		6		TOWNSITE	LOT 1 IN BLK 12, KEITHS ADDITION IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF EL RENO, OK	8	12N	7W	0.072	0.072	Canadian
26	8L4		7		TOWNSITE	LOT 2 IN BLK 12, KEITHS ADDITION IN THE ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF EL RENO, OK	8	12N	7W	0.072	0.072	Canadian
27	801		1247		Woman Going Ahead	W/2 SE/4 (less and except the Arkoma-Morrow formation attributable to Daugherty 31-14N-9W 3E)	31	14N	9W	80.000	80.000	Canadian
28	801	M	1504		Ben-Ho-Yea or Holding Together	An undivided 1/10 minerals only in the SW/4 NE/4, Lot 2 (NW/4 NE/4), (less and except the Woodford formation attributable to Arrow Oil & Gas Inc, Bailey #1-2)	2	13N	10W	79.600	7.966	Canadian
29	801	M	1628	-A	Jo-Sa-Ne-Ba or Singing Woman	Minerals only in the NE/4 SW/4, (less and except the Woodford formation attributable to Arrow Oil & Gas Inc, Bailey #1-2)	2	13N	10W	40.000	40.000	Canadian
30	801	M	1628	-B	Jo-Sa-Ne-Ba or Singing Woman	An undivided 956/1440 minerals only in the SE/4 SW/4	2	13N	10W	40.000	26.000	Canadian
31	801	M	1630		Jo-Sa-Ne-Ba or Yellow Paint Woman	An undivided 792/1440 minerals only in the W/2 SW/4	2	13N	10W	80.000	44.000	Canadian
32	801		1192	-C	Hedra or Woman	SE/4 NW/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	2.500	2.300	Canadian

33	801		1192	-D	Hedra or Woman	SW/4 NE/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	2.500	2.500	Canadian
34	801		1192	-E	Hedra or Woman	E/2 SW/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	5.000	5.000	Canadian
35	801		1192	-F	Hedra or Woman	NW/4 NW/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	2.500	2.500	Canadian
36	801		1192	-G	Hedra or Woman	52 acres acres in the N/2 NE/4 of cultivated land only (less & except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	52.000	32.000	Canadian
37	801		1192	-H	Hedra or Woman	NW/4 NE/4 LEISS & EXCEPT 5 TRACTS DESCRIBED AS: 1) SE1/4NW1/4, 2) SW1/4NW1/4, 3) SE1/4NW1/4, 4) NW1/4NW1/4, 5) E2 ACRES IN THE FAR ENW/4, LEAVING AFTER SAID EXCEPTED 15.50 ACRES AC.- (less & except the Woodford and the Mississippian formations attributable to Smith 29-14N-9W 3E)	29	14N	9W	15.500	15.500	Canadian
38	801	M	1195	-B	Woman Warrior	An undivided 2197124354560 minerals only in the S/2 NW/4	29	14N	9W	80.000	13.222	Canadian
39	801	M	2529		Tachina	Minerals only in the NW/4 NE/4 NE/4, NW/4 NE/4 NE/4, S/2 NE/4 NE/4, S/2 NE/4 NE/4, S/2 NE/4 NE/4 NE/4 (less and except the Mississippian Line and Mississippian formations attributable to Fonds Fed 1915 11-14C)	14	19N	15W	118.750	118.750	Dewey
40	801		2529	-A	Tachina	E/2 NW/4 NE/4, SE/4 NW/4 NW/4 NE/4, SW/4 NW/4 NE/4, W/2 NE/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Mississippian Line and Mississippian formations attributable to Fonds Fed 1915 11-14C)	14	19N	15W	38.750	38.750	Dewey
41	801		2529	-B	Tachina	E/2 NE/4 NW/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Mississippian Line and Mississippian formations attributable to Fonds Fed 1915 11-14C)	14	19N	15W	1.250	1.250	Dewey
42	801		2529	-C	Tachina	E/2 NE/4 NW/4 NW/4 NE/4 (less and except the Mississippian Line and Mississippian formations attributable to Fonds Fed 1915 11-14C)	14	19N	15W	1.250	1.250	Dewey
43	801		2793		Red Nail	NW/4	14	18N	15W	160.000	160.000	Dewey
44	801		2784		Star	SE/4	23	18N	15W	160.000	160.000	Dewey
45	801	M	2797		Big Nose	An undivided 1/2 minerals only in the SE/4	26	18N	15W	160.000	80.000	Dewey
46	801		1829		Clothing Woman	SW/4	8	19N	14W	160.000	160.000	Dewey

PG-2026-0013

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

In the Matter of the Guardianship of:
ALEXANDER SAMPSON MORRIS
DOB: 08/24/1989

An Alleged Incapacitated Person,

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: ANY INTERESTED PARTIES

TAKE NOTICE that Tracie Morris, has filed in this Court a Petition for Guardianship, and is hereby set

for a Hearing to be heard by the Cheyenne-Arapaho Trial Court of Concho, Oklahoma in the Courthouse located at

100 W. Black Kettle Boulevard, P.O. Box 102, Concho, Oklahoma, on the 13th day of MAY, 2026 at 10:00 AM,

at which time you may appear and show cause, if any you have, why said relief should not be granted.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR on the above date and time indicated for the

presentation of your case before the above-entitled Trial Court. You have the option to appear in person or

through Zoom. To appear via Zoom, you will need a smart device such as a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or

smartphone. Your smart device will need a camera, microphone, and a stable internet connection. If you do not

have access to a smart device, you can use a non-smartphone or traditional telephone.

Parties must use the following in order to log in or join the meeting.

- Video conferencing for smart device users:
 - o Zoom link:
<https://us22.zoom.us/j/4524251444?pwd=SRRCZlZlWDV0OFMzMlQ3Rkx1dDh0OT99> or
<https://zoom.us/join>
 - o Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
 - o Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
 - o Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
 - o Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
 - o Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 31st day of March, 2026.

Amelency
Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy 4th Birthday Serenity Bates April 19 We love you so much and you are a great Blessing to us! You are so beautiful! Love, Nonna & Papa



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Congratulations to Norman Smith of Fonda, Oklahoma FCCLA tribal youth Acelyn Snow serves more than 28,000 members in over 400 local chapters in junior and senior high schools and on technology center campuses. Known as the "ultimate leadership experience," FCCLA national programs and chapter activities help members become strong leaders in their families, careers and communities.

Acelyn is a junior at Seiling High School.

Acelyn is the daughter of Katrina Smith and Dallas Wagner of Canton, Okla., and Kerry Snow of Taloga. Granddaughter of Tami Smith & the late Richard Smith. Great Granddaughter of the late Melvin &

FCCLA is one of seven CareerTech student organizations affiliated with CareerTech career areas.

Drivers Needed

Full-Time / Perm, 40 hours per week; provide safe, courteous & efficient transport of clients while operating a transit bus. Perform pre & post inspection of vehicle and securement of wheelchair in a safe manner. Able to complete driver logs and submit reports.

Minimum Requirements: must be 21 years or older, high school diploma or G.E.D., w/valid Oklahoma Class D driver's license. Must be insurable & pass a pre-hire drug screen. \$16/hour; benefits include health, dental and vision insurance, vacation and sick leave and 401K retirement plan.

Apply at www.cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov/careers. For more information or questions email CATT at transit@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov or call 580-331-2600.

PG-2025-0088

Legal document for PG-2025-0088, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice of hearing by publication.

PG-2024-0047

Legal document for PG-2024-0047, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice of hearing by publication.

CIV-2022-0120

Legal document for CIV-2022-0120, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice of hearing by publication.

CIV-2025-0070

Legal document for CIV-2025-0070, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice of hearing by publication.

PG-2018-0052

Legal document for PG-2018-0052, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice of hearing by publication.

CIV-2026-0023

Legal document for CIV-2026-0023, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a notice by publication.

CIV-2026-0028

Legal document for CIV-2026-0028, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a civil summons by publication.

JFD-2026-0005

Legal document for JFD-2026-0005, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, IN THE TRIAL COURT, CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA, P.O. BOX 102, CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022. Includes a civil summons by publication.

OBITUARIES

Alan Dale Akeen

Alan Dale Akeen, affectionately known to all as "Mookie," began his journey to the Creator on March 24, 2026, in Oklahoma City, surrounded by the love of his family. He was 39 years old.

Born on Dec. 15, 1986, in Lawton, Okla., to George Akeen Jr. and Thelma Little Charley, Mookie carried with him a spirit that was as vibrant as the beadwork he so meticulously crafted. A proud member of the Native American Church, he lived a life rooted in faith, tradition, and a deep-seated kindness that extended to every living creature.

A Life of Laughter and Legacy

Mookie was a man who understood that the best things in life weren't things, but moments. He was happiest when he was:

By the Water: Some of his most cherished memories were made at the lake with his wife, where the days were spent fishing and the evenings were filled with peace.

A Master Storyteller: Known for his "big fish stories," Mookie could command a room with his humor. His laughter was infectious,

and he made it his mission to ensure everyone around him was having a good time.

An Artist: His talent for beadwork was a reflection of his patience and his connection to his heritage, creating pieces that will be cherished for generations.

A Protector of Animals: Mookie had a heart for all animals, often showing a gentle compassion for any creature that crossed his path.

Family and Faith

Above all his hobbies and talents, Mookie's greatest pride was his family. He was a devoted father to his two daughters, who were the light of his life. He found his greatest joy in the simple presence of his kin, reminding us all that family is the anchor that holds us through every storm.

He was preceded in death by his father George Clay Akeen Jr., stepmother Eleanor Masbull, brother Clarence Akeen, sister Patricia Akeen, nephew Clarence Black and nieces, Rileigh Akeen, Joella Cychers and Carmella Cychers.

He is survived by his beloved wife Peighton Perry, daughters, Gertrude Sara



Akeen and Cedar Woman Akeen, mother Thelma Little Charley, brother Anthony Akeen, sisters, Joanna Akeen, Jenny Bigfoot, twin Ella Akeen and Samatha Creek, and a large circle of extended family and friends who will miss his jokes, his artistry and his unwavering warmth.

"He has gone to a place where the waters are always still and the fish are always biting."

Wake services were held March 29 at the Huber Benson Funeral Home. Funeral services were held March 30, at the same venue. With Rev. Gerald Panana, Rev. Edwina Horsechief and Rev. Joe McCoy officiating, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

Daniel Rogers Haag Jr.

Daniel Rogers Haag Jr., 65, of Oklahoma City, passed away on March 28, 2026. He was born on Sept. 1, 1960, in Lawton, Okla., to Daniel Rogers Haag Sr. and Thelma Louise Haag.

Daniel lived a life rooted in love, faith and service. He proudly answered his country's call and served honorably in the United States Marine Corps, receiving an honorable discharge for his dedication and service.

He attended high school in Mustang and Mountain View, Okla., and later furthered his education at Okmulgee Tech, where he developed a passion for working on computers. Throughout much of his life Daniel worked as a skilled handyman and was known for his strong work ethic. He also spent many years working at the Oklahoma State Fair, where he enjoyed being part of the community.

Daniel found joy in life's simple pleasures. He loved fishing, camping, and hiking, and was an avid music lover who especially enjoyed attending concerts. A dedi-

cated sports fan, he cheered proudly for the Oklahoma Sooners and the Washington Redskins. He also enjoyed attending horse races and spending time dining out, with favorite spots including Shipman's, Cattlemen's Steakhouse, and Robert's Grill in El Reno, where he never passed up a good onion burger.

A man of deep faith, Daniel loved attending First Indian Church and found peace in listening to Native American music and cooking for family gatherings, especially during powwows. His greatest joy in life was spending time with his family, whom he loved deeply.

Daniel will be remembered as a kind, gentle, and generous man. He was quick to make friends and always willing to lend a helping hand. His love for God and for others left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him.

He is survived by his children: son Randy Majors; daughters Tivolee Haag and Ananda Majors; seven grandchildren; three broth-



ers, Harry Haag, Andrew Haag, and Roy Haag; and two sisters, Oneida Falls and Clarice Garza.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Daniel Roger Haag Sr. and Thelma Louise Haag; three brothers, Wesley Meeks, Calvin Meeks, and Bryan Haag; and four sisters, Gloria Rivers, Wilma Meeks, Enid Haag, and Edwina Haag.

A traditional all-night wake service was held April 3 at the First Indian Baptist Church in Moore, Okla. Funeral services were held April 4, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Rainy Mountain Cemetery under the direction of John Ireland Funeral Home.

Jerrie Zelda Warden White Buffalo

On Dec. 7, 1944, a proud full blooded Arapaho Jerrie Zelda Warden-White Buffalo was born to James (Jim) Warden and Daisy Alice Whiteman-Warden at their home place in Carlton, Okla. She was a baptized member of the Zion Arapaho (Indian) Mennonite Mission Church, Canton, Okla.

Jerrie attended school at Concho Indian Boarding School, Fort Sill Indian School and Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

Throughout Jerrie's adulthood she worked as a carpenter, Lucky Star cashier, and custodian, all for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. She also was a truck driver for ODOT and helped rebuild the current Highway 81.

Jerrie loved and lived life to the fullest. She carried a spirit that was vibrant, strong, and full of love. Jerrie was an inspirational singer who brought life to pow-

wows and ceremonies, when she sang, you could feel it. Her voice was a blessing to all who heard it, and she carried those songs with pride and purpose. Jerrie cherished and loved these moments as they reminded her of her father, mother, sisters and friends.

She is survived by children Terri Fletcher, Milford Fletcher, Janice Warden, Tracy White Buffalo, Jodi White Buffalo, and Dustin White Buffalo all of El Reno, Okla., and Tia White Buffalo of Brownsville, Texas. Also, numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces and many adopted grandsons. Extended family, and extended children, Minnie and Charlie of the home.

She is preceded in death by her father James Warden, mother Daisy Whiteman-Warden, siblings Nadine Warden, Cecilla War-



den, Robert Warden, June Black, Georgia Siemens, Joyce Maritnez and nephew Mervin Warden. Husband Milford Fletcher Sr. and husband Joseph White Buffalo. Extended children Bruce Allen, Skeeter and Missy.

An all night wake service was held April 6 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held April 7, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

Winona June Goodbear Blossom

Winona June Goodbear Blossom passed away at her home in Red Rock on March 31, 2026, surrounded by her children and loved ones.

Born on March 13, 1959, at Clinton Indian Hospital to Chief Leonard Frank Goodbear and June Whiteplume Goodbear, Winona was a graduate of Duncan Brothers College of Hair Design and also completed truck driving school. Throughout her life, she remained dedicated to her family and her community.

Winona was preceded in death by her parents; siblings, Barbara Jean Goodbear, Sonny Leonard Goodbear Jr., Ralph Robert Goodbear, Gail Ann Whitebird, Brian Keith Goodbear, Jacqueline Sue Goodbear, and Raymond Lindsey Paddyaker.

She is survived by her children, Toya Harragarra, Tonya Paddyaker, Tashine-nia Guardipee, and Cherokee Leonard Goodbear Blossom;

and siblings, Minnie Elizabeth Goodbear-Moore, Paula Jo Jackson, Richard Goodbear III, and Shelly Marie Goodbear.

A traditional all-night wake service was held April 2 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held April 3 at the same venue, officiated by Rev. Waylon Upchego and Robert Little Bird Jr, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

The Heaven Ceremony was performed by James Allen and Emmitt Redbird. Pallbearers included Cherokee Leonard Goodbear Blossom, Jalen Goodbear, Louis Harragarra, Donovan Harragarra, Derrick Redbird, Alex Yellow Eagle. Those serving as honorary pallbearers are Brandon Goodbear, Melvin Harragarra, Zachary Harragarra, James White-



tail, Duyen Goodbear, James Goodbear, and Sydney Derrall Coffey.

As Cheyenne People, we carry the knowledge that this Earth was never our permanent home. Our language and way of life speak of a journey through this world. Though life begins as a tiny seed, it returns in death to the place of our relatives who have gone before us. We return to a place of quietness, where the rivers are calm and the grass is tall. There is no loneliness there, only laughter and peace among our kin. The battles and pains of life have now come to an end.

William Dennis Johnson

William Dennis Johnson was born on Jan. 29, 1985, in Clinton, Okla., to Christopher Johnson and Terry Whiteman. He passed away March 26, 2026. He was raised in both Hammon, Okla., and Towaoc, Colo.

He was a proud of his Indian Heritage and a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

William was employed at a manufacturing company in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and worked for Ute Casinos. In his spare time, he enjoyed drawing and specialized in graffiti art. He loved music and was an avid Dallas Cow-

boys fan.

He was preceded in death by his father Christopher Johnson.

He is survived by his mother Terri Whiteman, his son Cinaan Johnson, his four daughters, Leah Johnson, Aubri' Lyn Johnson, Allison Johnson, and X'Zavalee Johnson, his sister Chrystal Johnson of Towaoc, his brother Christian Johnson of Durango, Colo., and his maternal grandmother Emily Whiteman of Towaoc, Colo.

A traditional all-night wake service was held April 1 at the Hammon Emergency Response Center in Ham-



mon, Okla. Funeral services were held April 2, at the same venue, officiated by Darwin Whiteman, followed by an interment at the Hammon Mennonite Cemetery under the direction of Lee Home-Town Funeral Home.

Mary Sue Smith

Mary Sue Smith was born on April 13, 1961, in Walla-walla, Wash., to Clifford and Nora Birdshead. She went to her heavenly home March 30, 2026, at the age of 64. She went to high school in Anadarko, Okla., graduated from Southwestern State University in 1984, and went to work for Oklahoma Peer Review.

In the spring of 1986, she married the love of her life, Justin Smith. She worked in the medical records field at Anadarko Hospital and Comanche Memorial in Lawton for eight years. In 1994, she decided to pursue a career in education. While working part-time at Anadarko Nursing Home, she graduated from University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in 1996. She taught at East Elementary in Anadarko until they relocated to Seminole, Texas, in the fall of 2004. She completed her Texas education licensing requirements in a year at Midland College in Midland, Texas. She taught in Denver City,

Texas, from 2006 to 2011.

In 2011, she moved back to be closer to her family and taught in Anadarko for the next 15 years. Her calling in life was to teach. Even in her time of sickness, she drew strength from her students, who always remained her inspiration and priority. She cherished time with friends and family. Whether it was hosting a cookout or swimming in the pool, she always made sure everyone was included. She will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, and the love she shared with everyone around her.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Nora Birdshead, brother Eddie Birdshead, and his wife Penny Birdshead, and son Jonathan Smith.

She is survived by husband Justin Smith, son Ricky Smith and wife Kelly Smith, daughter Tina Davis and husband John Davis, daughter Whitney Smith and fiancé Brandon Ataddeley, daughter Makayah Brooks and fian-



cé Justin Hernandez, father Clifford Birdshead, brother Jack Gomez, sister Debbie Pletcher, numerous grand-kids, and two great-grand-kids.

We would like to take this time to mention persons that were more like sisters to Mary than friends, Diana Nation, Marletta Marleeta, Shorna Coffee, Shelly Isenberg and Darla Stewart.

Visitation was held April 3 at the Smith Funeral Home in Anadarko, Okla. Funeral services were held April 4 at the First Baptist Church in Anadarko, followed by an interment at the Memory Lane Cemetery under the direction of Smith Funeral Home.

Jason Calvin McKeaigg

Jason Calvin McKeaigg Sr., was born Dec. 31, 1959. He passed from this earth on March 20, 2026.

Funeral services were

held March 29 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla., under the direction of Wilson Funeral Home.



ATHLETES SPOTLIGHT

By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

Eryn Roman Nose, El Reno High School

With a love for winning and a heart for the game, tribal youth Eryn Roman Nose, 18, puts her all into her senior year of basketball and leaves it all on the court.

Born and raised in the El Reno, Okla., community, Roman Nose grew up playing basketball for most of her life as she started playing in the second grade when she wanted to be more like her older siblings.

“What made me start playing was just watching my older siblings and being at their games all the time. I just wanted to be like them,” Roman Nose said.

Basketball has become more of a family tradition and a household name. Making a name for herself, Roman Nose is part of a

two-time state champion team.

Standing 6-foot tall, Roman Nose played forward for the El Reno High School Lady Indians.

What Roman Nose has come to love the most about basketball are the winning moments she’s shared with her teammates.

“I just love being able to play and winning, I love winning, but also just love the moments that I make with my teammates on the court, it’s just fun, I love playing,” Roman Nose said.

Coming from a basketball family, her biggest motivation for continuing to play comes directly from her family. Looking back on the season, what Roman Nose looked forward to the most in her senior year were making memories and becoming a leader on and off the court.

“Wanting to fill that leadership role and become more of a scorer on the court,” Roman Nose said.

Roman Nose believes the team had a better season than what others expected after having won two consecutive state championships and losing their former seniors.

“We did pretty good, better than what everybody else expected since we lost all our starters, except one, just me, and we proved we could still hang in there with the bigger teams,” Roman Nose said.

Going through the motions of her final season playing basketball, Roman Nose felt the emotions however was very grateful through it all.

“It’s definitely sad, but I was very grateful to have a good senior season and have really good teammates this year,” Roman Nose said.

What Roman Nose had hoped to accomplish was to score 10 points each game, which she succeeded by the end

of the season. The best way to improve one’s game, Roman Nose believes is by getting in the gym every day.

What Roman Nose was working on the most to get better at was her shooting.

“I was working always working on my shooting, I wasn’t a very good shooter, so I always worked and I became better,” Roman Nose said.

Over the years playing basketball, Roman Nose has grown the most by building up her confidence as a player and not being scared.

“Freshman year I was definitely scared and my confidence grew over the years to now and shooting the ball and not scared to make mistakes, which I was definitely my first two years of playing,” Roman Nose said.

Maintaining a 3.5 GPA, Roman Nose best manages her schoolwork and basketball by getting her work done in school.

“If I’m behind, I just go to my teachers and ask what I need to do and finish and then I get it done and I’m never really behind because I get it done in class,” Roman Nose said.

As a basketball player, Roman Nose believes it’s important to have effort and attitude, as you don’t have to be the best player on the team but just having to give full effort.

“And having the best attitude, even if you’re not getting the playing time, just supporting your teammates from the bench and then whenever you’re getting in, you give full effort into what you do,” Roman Nose said.

Ending her senior season on the basketball court, Roman Nose hopes to be remembered as somebody who did the little things on her



team. “And being a good teammate,” Roman Nose said.

Overall, basketball has taught Roman Nose a lot of things but what it’s taught her the most is patience.

“Making mistakes is okay in anything you do, you won’t be good at something new that you try and you just have to keep breaking on it and you’ll be better at it, Roman Nose said.

After graduation, Roman Nose plans to further her education and attend college to study nursing while playing collegiate basketball. She has offers to play college basketball, however, has not accepted any at this time.

Eryn’s parents are Parry and Stephanie Roman Nose. Her grandparents are Quinton Roman Nose and LaDonna Roman Nose, Dara Franklin and the late Billy Whitlow. Her great grandmother is Ruth Brooks. Eryn’s siblings include Rachelle, Evan and Carter Roman Nose.

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Earn entries starting Monday, March 30!

5x

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With five times entries on Fridays!

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• Ten (10) points equals one entry

• Winner may only win once per Saturday

• See Players Club for full details