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# A day of remembrance for MMIP: Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes host National Day of MMIP Awareness at Oklahoma State Capitol

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter



A movement rooted in community, support and endless amounts of resources, the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) was brought to the steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol on May 5, known nationally as a day of awareness to spotlight the MMIP epidemic,

honor victims and their families. While wind gusts were high and the chilling temperatures dropped low, the gloomy weather did not stop the events and activities planned out for the day at the Oklahoma State Capitol as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Missing and Mur-

dered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) Chapter held a National Day of MMIP Awareness event. Many other MMIP chapters as well as MMIP advocates, families of victims and community members were invited to participate in the event to bring awareness to the ongoing crisis of MMIP.

MMIP pg. 5

# Hicks' cold case bill advances, bringing hope to families across Oklahoma

Rosemary Stephens, Editor-in-Chief

(OKLAHOMA CITY) A measure aimed at addressing unsolved violent crimes and long-standing cold cases across Oklahoma is moving closer to becoming law, offering renewed hope to families still seeking justice.

have been waiting years and years for justice after their loved one was murdered," Hicks said. "Oklahoma also has hundreds of missing persons cases that are still unsolved. This legislation gives families a voice and a process to finally get the answers they need and bring those responsible to justice."

In March 2026, Sen. Carri Hicks, D-Oklahoma City, won unanimous Senate approval for Senate Bill 1636 after conducting an in-depth interim study on cold cases statewide. The study examined how other states have strengthened their responses to unsolved crimes.

What Senate Bill 1636 Would Do:

1. The measure creates a structured process for reviewing unsolved cases, including:
2. Allowing designated family members to formally request a case review
3. Requiring independent investigators not involved in the original case
4. Establishing accountability timelines, including confirmation within 30 days and completion of reviews within six months
5. Requiring the use of modern investigative tools,

Hicks said one of Oklahoma's most well-known cases is the 1987 murders of Cheryl Genzer and Lisa Pennington, who disappeared from the State Fair. Their bodies were later found in a shallow grave. Both of their parents died before seeing justice for their daughters.

"There are at least 1,000 Oklahoma families who

SB1636 pg. 6



Doris Quillen stands in front of the Oklahoma State Capitol on May 5 holding photos of Cheryl Genzer, Lisa Pennington on the right and their parents Rocky and Charlette on the left, after receiving news that SB1636 unanimously passed clearing the way for it to become Oklahoma state law, on the same day as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day. Cheryl Genzer and Lisa Pennington, of Cheyenne and Arapaho descent, disappeared in 1987 from the State Fair and their bodies were later found in a shallow grave. Their parents died before ever seeing justice for their daughters. (Courtesy photo)

# Oklahoma governor calls for elimination of council dedicated to Native American education

KOSU | By Sarah Liese & Thomas Pablo

Gov. Kevin Stitt vetoed a bill that would extend the sunset date of the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education for five more years, calling the council "redundant" and "dormant."

House Bill 3006, by Rep. Gerrid Kendrix, R-Altus, and Sen. Michael Bergstrom, R-Adair, would have extended the lifetime of the council until July 1, 2031. State agencies and boards often have sunset dates to ensure they remain necessary and effective.

The measure to extend its sunset date was enrolled and sent to the governor last week.

Lawmakers created the board in 2010 to advocate for Native American students and improve their educational quality by offering recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In a veto letter, Stitt wrote the council has not acted transparently or effectively, and that its work overlaps with the Office of American Indian Education.

"If the goal is smaller, more accountable government, there is no reason to keep extending a dormant, redundant advisory council that lacks transparency," Stitt wrote. "It should instead be eliminated."

Kendrix and Bergstrom did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The council's website lists four meeting dates in 2026. Its most recent meeting on April 15 was canceled, according to a list of archived meetings.

In a previous interview, the OACIE Chair and Cherokee Nation Chief of Staff Corey Bunch said the council made great strides while discussing topics such as mascots in public schools and wearing tribal regalia at graduation. He argued that the council should exist indefinitely.

"Councils like these give a voice to our Native American students and our communities," Bunch said in January. "And it's very important that we keep these voices because varying administrations have varying priorities, and we want to make sure Native American students are always at the top of the priority list."

This is the first bill Stitt has vetoed in the current legislative session, according to Legiscan. He vetoed dozens of measures in 2025, and lawmakers ultimately overrode many before the session ended.

The legislature has until the end of the session to override the veto with a two-thirds majority across both chambers.

# Circle of Support: Community Partners Collaborate on Domestic Violence Services

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(CONCHO, Okla.) Seeking resources and stronger relationships with community partners across Oklahoma offering domestic violence shelter and services, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Social Services Program held a Sheltering Circle meeting at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Tribal Justice Center located in Concho, Okla., sending an invite

to other community partners in hopes of collaboration.

Forming in a circle, all participants of the meeting introduced themselves and gave an overview of their shelters and what services are offered at their organizations and centers.

"We wanted to meet with our community partners in regard to domestic violence shelters and build better re-

lationships with them, collaborate on the services that we offer and also get insight on what we could do to possibly create our own tribal shelter," Andrea Patterson, Social Services program director said.

Patterson said it's not very often that as community partners they get to come together for meetings.

The overall goal and hope

is for the Social Service Program to one day have a shelter of their own for tribal domestic violence victims. Advocates from shelters across Oklahoma shared their services and how they were able to obtain their shelters in their communities during the meeting.

Theresa Lopez, domestic

DV SUPPORT pg. 7

# Little Feet, Strong Traditions

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(WATONGA, Okla.) Taking little steps with big meaning into the powwow circle, the fourth annual Children's Powwow was full of laughter and giggles as youth actively stomped, hopped and stepped to the beat of the drum.

Held in conjunction by Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Child Care and Head Start programs in Concho, Clinton and Canton, the Children's Powwow was held at the Watonga Emergency Response Center in Watonga, Okla., on April 24.

As youth from childcare center and head start programs along with their families and the community gathered at the powwow, the sound of the drum led them to the circle for cultural awareness and education.

The significance of the children's powwow, Megan Hart, director of Child Care said is it usually aligns during the week of the young child, a week-long event celebrating the needs of young children, their families and early childhood educators.

"We're a week off this year, the week of the young child was last week but we had conflicting schedules so we didn't want to miss out on our powwow so we scheduled it for today, not knowing that we were competing with gathering of nations," Hart said.

Although the powwow was short of the usual turnout of dancers and staff, the overall outcome was amazing, Hart said as one of their primary goals is including culture and language in their programs. Incorporating the children's powwow was one way they could come together with both programs to do the event.

"We could show children that not only in our child care centers but in the head start program where there's more diversity that maybe children who aren't exposed to our culture, our powwow, our gourd dance, our singing, our dancing, that we bring that in and we're able to introduce it to kids that are receiving services at our facilities," Hart said.

Having the children's powwow year to year, Hart said this was the first year they had all the children participate in grand entry in hopes they are educating parents and the community on cultural awareness.

"I would hope we're educating our parents enough to even have an understanding of what's going on here at the powwow, making it educational too, a lot of our kids do this on the weekends, this is where our kids are at, they're at gourd

dances, they're at powwows, why our kids have long hair, there's just all these components, so I think that's important," Hart said.

As children enjoyed the powwow, Bernice Chapel, Head Start director said the powwow helped children and parents incorporate the language and culture as well as the non-Native Americans to understand the culture.

"I think the kids really enjoyed it, I mean they all just got up and danced and enjoyed it, I think it was a great turnout," Chapel said.

Participating in the powwow and at the drum, Aizen Hartico, 11, has been dancing since he's been able to walk. As a grass dancer, Hartico attended the children's powwow to be a part of his culture, whether that's dancing or singing at the drum.

"I just wanted to show the youth at the children's powwow more about their culture and who they are and I wanted to come here and show my style so they could see," Hartico said.

While Hartico just started learning how to drum last year, he said it feels good to be a part of something and to be at the drum. He's learned northern songs and a few southern songs while learning to be a part of the drum group. And the best part for Hartico at the children's powwow was getting to sing for fellow youth at the drum.

"It felt really good because being there drumming I feel like I really helped them out a lot, rather than just having five guys, me and my friend Chris joined them, went up to eight and that felt good for being at the Children's powwow, it's just cool I got to sing in front of youth who are going to be future stars and future leaders," Hartico said.



Tribal youth participate in the drum group and sing for the Children's Powwow through various traditional songs. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

Timothy Fletcher, 11, who has been singing since he was introduced to this world said it felt good singing for the children's powwow because he is part of the youth and it also feels good to be a part of a drum group.

"It feels good because in other ways, when we sing songs these songs honor people," Timothy said.

And for Timothy, it's important to take part in powwows and be a part of his culture as he becomes more familiar around the drum. Timothy learned how to drum by his grandfather Fred Mosqueda and his father Timothy Fletcher, Sr.

"When you get near this drum you introduce yourself to this drum and you start singing a lot and you get known around and then to be a part of this drum group, to sit and sing here, it feels awesome," Timothy said.

Carrying on his traditions, Timothy said it's important for youth to engage in their culture and at powwows because it's for the elders.

"It's a good place in our soul because all they really wanted to do with these kids was to watch them grow up at powwows or at the drum," Timothy said.



Cheyenne and Arapaho Headstart and Childcare Program Children's Powwow

# Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes begin planning for the 150th Commemoration of the Battle of the Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass

Rosemary Stephens, *Editor-in-Chief*

(CONCHO, Okla.) In June 2026, Tribal Nations from across the Northern Plains will gather in southeastern Montana to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, known to many Native people as the Battle of the Greasy Grass. Among those preparing for this historic gathering are the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, who are organizing cultural activities, educational programs, camp events, and commemorative participation alongside the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and other allied Tribal Nations.

The commemoration will take place June 24-28, 2026, near Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and surrounding camp areas located within the Crow Reservation. The event is expected to draw thousands of Native participants, riders, veterans, youth, spiritual leaders, historians, and visitors from across Indian Country.

For many tribal citizens, the gathering represents much more than a historical anniversary. It is an opportunity to honor ancestors, preserve cultural traditions, educate younger generations, and reaffirm the enduring presence of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people 150 years after the historic victory at Greasy Grass.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes are currently developing a multi-day camp schedule centered on remembrance, healing, language, wellness, and cultural preservation.

The first day of activities is being planned around the theme "Honoring the Ancestors," focusing on reflection and remembrance. Organizers hope to begin the day with ceremonies led by elders and spiritual leaders, followed by reflections spoken in English, Cheyenne and Arapaho. Plans also include readings honoring ancestors connected to Sand Creek, Washita, and Little Bighorn, as well as storytelling circles featuring oral histories, songs, poems, and personal accounts about the battle and its legacy.

Wellness activities are also expected to be part of the gathering, including camp walks, stretching activities, horseshoes, cornhole, and other family-centered activities coordinated through tribal wellness programs.

The second day of camp activities is centered around the theme "Living Traditions." Proposed programming includes language

immersion sessions, traditional skills demonstrations such as beadwork, quillwork, hide tanning, and tipi raising, as well as history trivia games designed for youth and families. Organizers are also discussing healthy traditional foods lessons and storytelling sessions connected to cultural teachings.

Evening activities throughout the commemoration are expected to include drum groups, hand games, campfire gatherings, and storytelling led by elders and community members.

Planning efforts are being coordinated closely with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, which is helping organize the larger inter-tribal gathering. Information shared during recent planning discussions emphasized that each tribe participating in the commemoration will establish its own camp area and activity schedule while contributing to larger collective events.

According to discussions with Northern Cheyenne organizers, the commemorative encampment may cover nearly 400 acres near the battlefield area. Organizers are encouraging tribes to set up traditional tipis and cultural camps that will allow visitors to experience Native history and living traditions firsthand.

The commemoration is expected to include memorial horseback rides, hand games, victory dances, youth activities, cultural presentations, and historical reenactments near the battlefield itself. Multiple memorial rides are anticipated to arrive in the area leading up to the anniversary, including rides connected to Cheyenne and Lakota communities.

Organizers also noted that the National Park Service is planning special anniversary programming June 25-27 at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Tribes have been invited to share presentations honoring historical leaders and showcasing modern tribal accomplishments, including language revitalization efforts, youth programs, and cultural preservation initiatives.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes are also considering a formal tribal resolution commemorating the 150th anniversary and supporting participation in the gathering.

Remembering Greasy Grass  
The Battle of the Little Bighorn fought June 25-26, 1876, remains one of the most



*Burial markers at the site of the "Last Stand." Custer's is the only one with a black marking on the face.*

significant events in Plains tribal history. The name on the federal monument says, "Little Bighorn." The name most known is older and more intimate to the land itself, Greasy Grass, named for the heavy morning dew that soaked the valley grasses so thoroughly it left moccasins and horse bellies slick to the touch.

It was along those banks in southeastern Montana that, on June 25, 1876, a coalition of Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors killed 268 soldiers of the United States 7th Cavalry, including its commanding officer, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer.

For many Native families, the battle is remembered not simply as a military victory, but as a defense of homeland, sovereignty, culture, and survival during a period of intense pressure against tribal nations across the Plains.

Today, 150 years later, tribal leaders say the upcoming commemoration is not only about remembering the past, but also about honoring the strength, resilience, and continued presence of Native people.

The Battle of the Greasy Grass when it is taught at all, as the last major victory of the Indian Wars, a dramatic but ultimately futile stand before the inevitable march of American expansion.

That framing does a lot of work on behalf of a particular version of history. It obscures the fact that the battle was a legal response to a broken treaty, fought by people defending their homes and their children. It obscures the century of litigation that followed.

For the Northern Cheyenne the battle connects directly to their forced removal to Oklahoma in its aftermath and the long journey back to Montana, where they eventually established their reservation. According to Cheyenne oral history, Buffalo Calf Road Woman (also known as Calf Trail Woman) is credited with striking the blow that knocked Lt. Col. Custer off his horse as she fought alongside her husband Black Coyote.

The riders who arrive at the battlefield on June 24, 2026, will not be arriving as the descendants of a people who were eventually defeated. They will be arriving as the heirs to a victory, one that took place on their land, against an army that came to take it, 150 years ago on the Greasy Grass.

As planning continues, organizers hope the 2026 gathering will serve as a place for healing, education, cultural pride, and inter-tribal unity, bringing together descendants of those who stood together at Greasy Grass and reminding future generations that their stories, languages, and traditions remain alive.

## Analysis raises new questions in long fight over Fort Reno return

Stephen Martin, *CityNews.com*

On paper, the USDA's Grazinglands Research Laboratory at Fort Reno is a place; an historic tract of land west of Oklahoma City where scientists study cattle, forage and water in the Southern Plains.

In practice, much of its research happens somewhere else.

An analysis of three years of USDA Agricultural Research Service publications associated with Fort Reno, April 2023 through March 2026, shows that only a small share of that work depends directly on the site itself. Most is conducted across a broader network of universities, laboratories and field locations spanning Oklahoma, the United States and, in some cases, the globe.

The findings suggest Fort Reno functions less as a standalone research site and more as a node in a distributed scientific system.

CityNews commissioned the analysis ahead of a US House vote that would permanently block a return of the Fort Reno property to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

Legislative leaders have said a vote on the 2026 Farm Bill, formally called the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (HR 7567), could come very soon. The bill includes a provision to keep the 6,700-acre facility from ever being declared surplus property and eligible for return.

Across roughly 190 publications reviewed, about 11% relied heavily

on Fort Reno itself, using its land, long-term datasets or experimental infrastructure as a central component of the research.

Another 28% incorporated Fort Reno as one of several contributing sites or data sources.

The majority, about 61%, involved work conducted primarily elsewhere. That includes laboratory studies, modeling projects, multi-state collaborations and international research where Fort Reno appears only as an institutional affiliation.

In some cases, Fort Reno-affiliated scientists contributed to studies conducted in places as far away as China, Brazil and Argentina.

The distinction matters because

it raises a basic question: What role does Fort Reno actually play in the research it helps produce?

The dataset also shows Fort Reno's output is deeply tied to partnerships, particularly with Oklahoma universities.

Researchers from Oklahoma State University appeared in more than 100 publications, followed by the University of Missouri and the University of Oklahoma. Other collaborators included Texas A&M University, Kansas State University and a range of international institutions.

Rather than operating as a self-contained research station, Fort Reno researchers appear to anchor a collaborative network that

extends well beyond its physical boundaries.

That structure reflects broader trends in agricultural research, where large-scale questions, from climate variability to water use to crop genetics, increasingly require multi-site data and cross-institutional teams.

The work itself is also concentrated among a relatively small group of researchers, each of whom contributed to multiple projects across different research areas.

Their work spans disciplines such as hydraulic engineering, livestock systems, climate modeling and ecosystem monitoring, fields that often rely on regional or national datasets rather than a single

**FORT RENO** pg. 4

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2020-2025 SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST/OK CHAPTER MEDIA AWARD WINNER

# El Reno resident opens community centered Jiu Jitsu business

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(EL RENO, Okla.) Bringing the combat sport of modern martial arts and discipline, family-based man and El Reno citizen, Jim Kutscher, opens El Reno Jiu Jitsu as a community centered business.

Promoting mental health in his classes, Kutscher likes to ask his participants when was the last time they have hugged 20 of their friends? Because that is what kind of camaraderie that can be found at El Reno Jiu Jitsu.

Originally born and raised in East Chicago, Ind., Kutscher left and moved to Colorado in 2015 where he met his wife and raised his two children. When his wife was laid off from her job, a job opportunity arose and Kutscher's family moved to El Reno, Okla.

What compelled Kutscher to start Jiu Jitsu was when he faced a motorcycle accident in 1998.

"I had a lot of problems doing basic things like changing laundry, mowing grass, just normal household things, without herniating a disk, and thank God, my wife she took care of me," Kutscher said.

Kutscher found that Jiu Jitsu actually helped with his pain as he was able to start doing the techniques, such as ground grappling and more.

"I didn't know much about Jiu Jitsu and it didn't hurt, I didn't have the spasms of the pain because I had a compression fracture, so I wasn't on my feet compressing my spine," Kutscher said.

Over time, Kutscher had become stronger and over the 15 years he's done Jiu Jitsu he's only recently had a disk issue for the first time in over a decade and a half.

"So it's been a really great thing to kind of help, that's why I fell in love with it. It just helped me physically be able to do things I couldn't do anymore," Kutscher said.

Starting out at an academy years prior, Kutscher obtained his black belt three years ago, mastering exceptional dedication to Jiu Jitsu. Although, growing up Kutscher didn't consider himself the sports type of person that would eventually get into Jiu Jitsu.

"I was kind of the kid that got bullied and picked on, I was a bigger kid, when you're a bigger kid growing up you're always told to be really careful, which I think kind of made me too timid sometimes, I got picked on a lot," Kutscher said.

It wasn't until his early 30's that Kutscher found Jiu Jitsu and understood the deeper meaning of the sport, realizing not only the physical aspects of getting healthier and taking care of himself, but also how to defend himself.

"I know we have this pre-notion of we would do this and we would do that or we'd black out in a bar and it just doesn't really work out that way and that was a big eye opener for me," Kutscher said.

Realizing that's not really how the world works, Kutscher dove into the world of Jiu Jitsu and that has been his life ever since.

"It's what really saved my life, it's really what made me the person I am today," Kutscher said.

Moving to the El Reno community with his family and getting to know the area, Kutscher met a group of young adults that were training at the local gym, learning Jiu Jitsu with no one to lead them. When the group realized Kutscher had a black belt, they were amazed.

"They were just excited that a black belt was here and they were like we should probably open something. I'm like, well that's always been the goal, I've been teaching for about 10 years now," Kutscher said.

Kutscher has two daughters that have been training since he started Jiu Jitsu and he has had experience helping with older brown belts and children's classes. An opportunity came for Kutscher to begin a small class for Jiu Jitsu in downtown El Reno in April of 2025, officially opening his El Reno Jiu Jitsu business.

"The lady who owns Everglow here on Bickford, she had a little storage room in the back and she was like, I'm using it for storage but if you can make it a small gym, let's do it and I was like, let's do it," Kutscher said.

So Kutscher opened up his first Jiu Jitsu class and over time, his class began to grow with children and adults enjoying it. Almost to his year mark, Kutscher started looking at other venues to move to as his classes grew bigger, until he eventually found a bigger space. El Reno Jiu Jitsu moved to the newer venue in March, one month before celebrating its one-year anniversary.

"This place has been closed for a long time, even when I first moved to this place, this place was closed down so I just kept looking, talking a couple of times, looking at it and it worked out. We ended up getting enough people that it was almost too crowded in our last place, we kind of almost had to move," Kutscher said.

With the size and capacity of El Reno and it's surrounding communities, Kutscher believes the town is more than big enough to have a Jiu Jitsu academy and it should have had one a long time ago. This was an opportunity for Kutscher that he couldn't pass up in bringing a Jiu Jitsu business to the community.

"There's towns with 4,000 people that have two academies, this place has 17,000 there should have been one and it's just Oklahoma doesn't have a big concentration of high level Jiu Jitsu practitioners. There are, but they're also in the city, like in Tulsa, OKC, not really in the outskirts so much," Kutscher said.

Offering classes for children to adults,



Jim Kutscher, owner of El Reno Jiu Jitsu hopes to bring more realization and understanding of Jiu Jitsu and self-defense to the community of El Reno through his community led business.

with children as young as five years old, Kutscher aims to provide various activities throughout his classes while focusing on what the community wants, such as providing yoga, HIIT and self-defense classes for the community.

"As long as we can get the people involved, I'll open up the doors. I live two miles from this place, I have no problem opening up the doors for any classes we need to do to keep El Reno fit and healthy for sure," Kutscher said.

Incorporating fun activities in his classes, Kutscher encourages his participants to enjoy themselves instead of focusing on the competing aspect of Jiu Jitsu.

"I'm just not a school that pushes my kids or my adults to compete. If you want to compete, let's go get it, we'll get as many medals as we can, but I just don't push it, some schools and martial arts they tend to push competition to make their school look good. I don't want that, I don't need that, I'd much rather just have you here having fun and enjoying yourself," Kutscher said.

The kids classes involve warm-ups, 15 minutes of Jiu Jitsu, then 15 minutes of fun, which could be grappling type games or could be exercise type games, sparring games or some kind of entertainment for them to work hard and try their best. Big kids classes involve 10 minutes of warmups and 10 minutes of takedowns, 15 minutes of class and 15 minutes of sparring afterwards.

"I just want to be a community gym, I want this to stick around, even if I'm not here five to 10 years and I'm who knows where, I still want El Reno Jiu Jitsu to be a thing

for El Reno, that's kind of my biggest goal," Kutscher said.

With participants also attracting others from surrounding communities such as Geary, Hinton and Weatherford, El Reno Jiu Jitsu's classes have 30-40 paying participants monthly.

Promoting mental health in his classes, Kutscher asks his participants when was the last time they have hugged 20 of their friends? Because that is what it's like coming into his Jiu Jitsu class.

"And everybody smiles and smirks ... if you go to a family reunion, you feel way better hugging all your aunties, when's the last time you hugged 20 of your friends? You feel amazing. Even though we're literally trying to choke each other unconscious, put each other in arm bars and leg locks, and up until the point of the break ... at the end of day, we hug each other, we're the best of friends," Kutscher said.

Celebrating his one-year anniversary of El Reno Jiu Jitsu, Kutscher looks forward to spreading overall knowledge Jiu Jitsu to the community and the realization of self-defense. Kutscher looks forwards to possible plans with working with police departments in the future to offer Jiu Jitsu training for officers.

"There are some cities that are making mandatory Jiu Jitsu to be able to go on the streets and be a patrolman, that looks amazing, so I'm hoping that's the other big thing they have, hoping to get the police involved," Kutscher said.

## OSU Recognizes Native Women Leaders Alison Black and Gena Timberman

Alison Black and Gena Timberman honored as the 2025-2026 American Indian Alumni Society Distinguished Alumni during a reception held April 18 at the Student Union Ballroom at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla.

Black, Cheyenne, is an enrolled citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and is a descendent of the Ponca Tribe, Osage Nation (Gray Horse district), and Prairie Band Potawatomi people.

She dedicated nearly 10 years to the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education (OCIE) board of directors, where she previously served as the elected board president.

While on the board, she established the advocacy committee, which played a critical role in the passage of Oklahoma Senate Bill 429 in 2023. In February 2022, she was elected as the at-large board member for the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) board of directors. During her term on the NIEA board, she held the position of second

vice-president on the executive committee and chaired the advocacy committee, championing national Native educator initiatives.

A strong advocate for community building and education, she is regularly involved in public speaking against the use of Native mascots and educates school districts and other groups about Indian education. She recently joined PFLAG's Inaugural Indigenous Parents and Families Advisory Council.

Personally, she maintains an active lifestyle as an avid athlete and has been featured in the 'Oklahoma Tribal Engagement Partner's Diabetes is Not Our Destiny' campaign. In 2013, she joined Delta Pi, the professional chapter of Alpha Pi Omega and is a member of Matriarch of Oklahoma.

Black currently serves as the youth leadership and training coordinator for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) overseeing the Youth Commission, Wilma Mankiller Fellowship, and Empow-



Alison Black

ering Leaders Program.

She has earned an AS from Northern Oklahoma College, a BS in Applied Sociology and an MS in Curriculum Studies, both from Oklahoma State University. Also, she has also earned professional certificates from the Indigenous Leadership Academy at Arizona State University and the Executive Education program at Harvard Business School.

In 2019 she was selected as 40 Under 40 by the National Center for American Enterprise Development (NCAIED) and was recog-

**WOMEN LEADERS** pg. 6

## FORT RENO

continued from pg. 3

site.

Even within a distributed system, Fort Reno still plays a distinct role.

The site supports long-term watershed and grazing studies, including work tied to the USDA's Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) network. These projects track changes in soil, water and vegetation over time.

Those efforts make up a relatively small share of total publications, but they represent some of the most place-dependent work in the portfolio.

At the same time, much of the broader research — particularly modeling and lab-based studies — could be conducted without direct reliance on the site.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes have long maintained the facility should have been returned to them once it stopped being used by the US Army. The post was established in 1874 and served as a base for cavalry troops and later was a remount station where horses were bred and trained. As diesel engines replaced horses in the military, the government turned it over to the USDA in 1948.

US Rep Toby Morris

sponsored legislation in 1949 to return the land, less a portion that had been turned over to the Bureau of Prisons for the Federal Correctional Institution at El Reno in 1937. The measure passed in the House but failed in the Senate.

A 1994 Congressional Research Service report recommended closing the Fort Reno facility, citing lower research productivity compared with other sites and suggesting similar work could be conducted elsewhere at lower cost.

The report noted that average annual funding in 1992 for the El Reno facility amounted to \$1.7 million. A congressional appropriation of \$180,000 for wheat pasture research at an Oklahoma State University facility in Marshall, Oklahoma, in fiscal year 1995 appears to support similar work. Critics cited the contrast in past policy discussions about whether similar research could be done elsewhere at a lower cost.

However, the structure of agricultural research has shifted significantly in the decades since, with greater emphasis on multi-institutional collaboration, long-term data networks and

modeling that often extends beyond a single site. The recent analysis suggests that shift is reflected in Fort Reno's current output, where much of the work is conducted across a distributed network of universities and research partners rather than at a single physical location.

Language to prevent the Fort Reno site from becoming subject to disposal under surplus property provisions was first inserted into legislation in 2008, when it was added to that year's farm bill. Subsequent measures have extended the temporary measure.

This year's Farm Bill, which passed out of committee by a 34-17 vote earlier this year, would make permanent what had been temporary blocks on transfer to the tribes. If the measure passes in the full House, it would move on to the Senate for approval there.

The analysis reviewed 189 USDA Agricultural Research Service publications associated with Fort Reno between April 2023 and March 2026, categorizing each based on whether the research relied on the Fort Reno site, incorporated it as part of a broader system or was conducted elsewhere.

# MMIP

continued from pg. 1

Various booths were set up at the event, offering resources and their services, as well as many tables decorated with photographs of loved ones that have been affected by the MMIP crisis, with each individual photo telling a different story.

Dressed in red, visitors and advocates wore red ribbon skirts, shirts, scarves or some fashion of red garments for the event, signifying their stance in solidarity of honoring and remembering the lives impacted by the MMIP crisis.

Standing next to a table decorated with photos of her mother, Shirley Ahhaitty Gokey, of Kiowa and Comanche descent, who was murdered in 1978, after nearly 48 years, Kay Mopope hasn't stopped spreading awareness and continues sharing her mother's story to hopefully one day receive justice. Her family has taken her story as far as to other states, such as New York, Washington, D.C., South Dakota, Iowa and New Mexico.

Coming every year to participate in awareness day at the state capitol has become important to Mopope, as her mother was a victim.

"Because my mom was a victim and it also not only victimizes her but our whole family feels it, our whole family is so supportive of all our endeavors and our advocacy for her and because we're not the only one in this boat, she's probably the oldest female MMIW in the state of Oklahoma right now, because she was murdered in 1978," Mopope said.

While their family doesn't yet have closure, coming to the awareness day event, Mopope said gives her family some relief as they want to tell her mother's story.

"Maybe from what we're experiencing, somebody else might experience the same thing and MMIW families are just one whole big family, we all lean on each other for support, we all support each other, we know each other whenever we see each other, and we all have each other's t-shirts," Mopope said.

Other families took to the podium to share their loved one's story, hoping to gain answers and support from the community.

Holding his cousin's poster board in his hand, Francisco Ponce, from Shawnee, Okla., attended the awareness day event to spread awareness and justice for his cousin and relative Brandon Kaseca. Kaseca, of Sac and Fox, Kiowa and Pottawatomie tribes,

was murdered on Jan. 30, 2022 and the family is seeking answers.

"If you know anything, say something and it'll help us out. In the Shawnee area, there's a \$15,000 reward, you can find that on Justice for Brandon Kaseca," Ponce said.

Remembering what kind of person Kaseca was, Ponce described him as funny and comical.

"He could put a smile on your face, never see him down., he always had a positive outlook in life, made the best of it, didn't have much, but he made a lot with it. He was good," Ponce said.

Having attended the MMIP awareness day event at the state capitol for the past five years, Ponce said he's noticed the many cases that continue to show up each time.

"Which is sad, but it's good at the same time because everybody's coming where they need to come and then we could all figure it out and help each other," Ponce said.

A sad but meaningful day of remembrance, many families of victims affected by the MMIP crisis lean on each other for support. As a day of awareness, Ponce said participating in the day's event made his family feel good as their loved one is not forgotten.

"They're not forgotten, they may be gone, but they're not forgot, it makes us feel better as a whole because we could share that feeling with everybody else, we're not alone so everybody can come together, that's what I like," Ponce said.

Throughout the event, various speakers spoke at the podium bringing awareness to MMIP, from tribal to state representatives.

Speakers for the event included Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Legislators A2 Kendrick Sleeper and C2 Milan Roman Nose, Oklahoma State Treasurer Todd Russ, Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond, Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit, the Chahta MMIP Chapter and the reading of Cheyenne and Arapaho MMIP names by Angela Plumley, executive director of Transportation. Updates of Ida's Law, Senate Bill 172 named after Cheyenne and Arapaho citizen Ida Beard who went missing in 2015, was given by special agent Dale Fine with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. Ida's Law created an Office of Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons within the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI).



From left, dressed in red, Tatum Escott, Theda Moreno and Casandra Fraser stand in solidarity red handprints on their mouths during Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

After Ida's Law was passed in 2021, Fine said there has been two agents assigned full time to OSBI to work specifically on MMIP cases, working with tribal, state and federal partners. Working together, Fine said it takes community opportunity with education and training, which is what they do with Ida's Law.

"We work well with tribal partners, state partners, federal partners, and we all work together trying to resolve some of the missing person cases so it really is a team effort, we've got a lot of work still to do, but I feel like we're going in the right direction to get these cases solved," Fine said.

Fine said Oklahoma currently has roughly over 600 missing person cases as it fluctuates daily, including long term person cases. Of that 600, those classified as Native American or American Indian, Fine said are typically estimated to be around 84-85 missing persons and that number also changes.

Wanting a database for Oklahoma for the public to access along with law enforcement for real time and accurate information, Fine said they are in the process of developing this database and will be releasing the database in the coming weeks.

"It's another tool for law enforcement but it's also a resource for families, they can look on that and see the missing persons but it's

going to be very updated, very real time, as far as missing persons, and the person will get the information, they can see who's investigating the case. But also, we'll have a tab in there that's going to help families and law enforcement, they can click that tab and it creates a flyer, a missing person flyer" Fine said.

Chair of the Cheyenne and Arapaho MMIP Chapter and Governmental Affairs Officer, LaRenda Morgan said what made this year's event most significant was that it was hosted by the Tribes as well as Senate Bill 1636 vote being passed to coincide with MMIP National Day of Awareness. After a reading of the MMIP citation from the house floor, Morgan said they voted on Senate Bill 1636, which would give families of cold case victims the ability to request reinvestigations.

"Senate Bill, 1636, was inspired by the Lisa Pennington and Cheryl Genzer murder case, so the bill is an OSBI cold case bill, and it will help address cold cases like theirs," Morgan said.

The sisters were of Cheyenne and Arapaho descent, as their mother Charlette Pennington was Cheyenne and Arapaho. Cheryl and Lisa were murdered after being last seen at the Oklahoma State Fair in 1987. Their case went cold after their killer was never found.

MMIP pg. 6

**6TH ANNUAL MMIP HONOR WALK & PARADE**  
**"PROTECT OUR FUTURE"**  
**MAY 8, 2026 - CONCHO, OKLA.**

# MMIP

continued from pg. 5



Kay Mopope stands next to her table decorated with photos of her mother, Shirley Ahhaitty Gokey, who was murdered in 1978. Mopope continues to share her mother's story in hopes of finding justice and spreading awareness.

With the day about remembrance and awareness, Morgan said the event at the state capitol made others well aware of the MMIP crisis, especially with the speakers and advocates that participated in the event.

"With A.G. Drummond coming in, speaking and supporting and working to address the cases, to do prevention and work with law enforcement to make sure that law enforcement is doing better on their part," Morgan said is important as that is something that the chapter hears from a lot of families, is the lack of investigation or issues with law enforcement.

"Now we have A.G. Drummond, who's the state director of law enforcement in his role as A.G., here to address these issues. So I think that with all the reels that we've done with the OSBI and then OSBI addressing the cases and the data, the training and the liaising to families, then the state A.G., addressing the law enforcement side, I think that we're moving in a pretty good direction to address these," Morgan said.

Feeling like the agencies are covered as far as working within the tribal jurisdiction, Morgan said the chapter is going to focus working more on educating the youth and tribal community on safety and human trafficking, domestic violence and factors that contribute to MMIP.

Currently the Cheyenne and Arapaho MMIP Chapter have close to 40 names on their MMIP list, Morgan said with names still coming in recently from domestic violence situations.

"People, I think are realizing and looking at some of their family members who passed away and said, 'well that was wrong or this shouldn't have been done, or that should have been done.' When someone is killed from their domestic violence injuries and they die because of those injuries, according to law enforcement, that's homicide," Morgan said.

Looking at domestic violence situations are part of the process what the chapter hope to educate tribal citizens about and what MMIP entails, Morgan said.

"The most important thing, moving forward, is educating the tribe," Morgan said.

The awareness event at the state capitol ended with a talking circle led by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Office of Recovery (TOR) Program for families to share stories, bring awareness and promote healing.



## WOMEN LEADERS

continued from pg. 4

nized as the 2025 – 2026 OSU American Indian Alumni Society Distinguished Alumni.

She resides in Red Rock, Okla., with two of her four children and her husband James, of 26 years.

She is a proud mother of a U.S. Army Ranger, two public school teachers, and a middle schooler. She is also the grandmother of a beautiful granddaughter.

Gena Timberman was instrumental in the building of the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum, now known as the First Americans Museum (FAM) in Oklahoma City. For over 25 years Timberman has committed her professional career to the pursuit of guiding cultural projects in Indian Country toward successful completion.



## SB1636

continued from pg. 1

including updated forensic testing and witness re-interviews

6. Mandating regular communication with families and a final meeting to explain findings

7 If a review determines no further investigation is warranted, the case cannot be reconsidered for at least five years.

"This legislation does not burden law enforcement, it strengthens it and improves public safety," Hicks said. "Without this legislation, Oklahoma families have no guaranteed process for review. SB 1636 ensures accountability, transparency, and the use of modern tools for solving crimes."

For advocates like Doris Quillen, the bill represents years of persistence. Quillen has championed the legislation in honor of Genzer and Pennington, as well as their parents, Rocky and Charlette, who passed away without answers.

On May 5, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Awareness Day, Quillen learned the bill had passed unanimously off the House floor, clearing a major hurdle toward becoming Oklahoma state law.

Supporters across the state also recognized the milestone. Maggie Zingman, founder of the Brittany Phillips Memorial Foundation, credited a coalition of advocates and investigators for advancing the effort, including Quillen, LaRenda Morgan, Ross Ford, Carrie Hicks and the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations team.

The push for reform comes as families like Zingman's continue to wait for justice.

It has been 20 years since Zingman's daughter, Brittany Phillips, a Tulsa college student, was raped and murdered in her apartment just days before her 19th birthday. No arrests have been made.

"It's going to be the first



Maggie Zingman celebrates with State Representative Ross Ford after the passing of SB 1636.

anniversary where she's been dead longer than she's been alive," Zingman said in a recent interview.

Despite thousands of DNA tests and numerous leads, investigators have not identified a suspect. In 2019, a DNA-based composite sketch led to a potential match, but the individual had an alibi.

Zingman has traveled more than 300,000 miles across the country in what she calls her "Caravan to Catch a Killer," sharing her daughter's story in hopes of generating new leads.

"I miss her every day. Every day I cry, but every day I live my life to the fullest," she said. "I don't know what to do with it other than live in honor of her."

She also expressed frustration with the lack of communication in the case.

"I say this to Tulsa Police, just reach out," Zingman said. "We can meet once a month, or once every two months, every three months."

When enacted, Senate Bill 1636 would establish a formal pathway for families like Zingman's to request reviews and receive consistent updates, something advocates say is long overdue.

For many Oklahoma families, the legislation represents more than policy. It is a step toward answers, accountability, and long-awaited justice.

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lap@cheyenneandarapahotribes.gov

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# OBITUARIES

## Joan Carol Swallow

Joan Carol Swallow was born Aug. 2, 1944, in Clinton, Okla. She was raised by Henry William Fielder and her mother Monan Bobtail (Morning Killer) Bent. Joan passed away May 3, 2026, at her home in Geary, Okla., at the age of 81. Joan attended Concho Schools. At a young age, she developed a love for her family and enjoyed simple things like embroidering with her sister Pat. She was known for always taking care of her siblings and those around her.

On May 5, 1960, Joan was united in marriage to James Walter "Jay" Swallow in California. Together they built a life centered on faith, family and ministry. Jay preceded her in death on March 2, 2015, in Oklahoma City. Throughout their marriage, they lived in several places including California, Colorado, and Oklahoma, before settling back in Geary. Together they were deeply involved in ministry work for many years, traveling and serving in churches and communities across the

United States and beyond. Joan had a deep and abiding faith. She loved the Lord and dedicated much of her life to serving Him. She was a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and was active in her church community, including Rock of Restoration Church and the Impact Center. Joan loved speaking in the Cheyenne language, singing, sharing stories, and witnessing to others about Jesus. She also took pride in teaching the Cheyenne language and culture to others. Joan will be remembered for her kindness, her strong faith, her love of music, and her passion for people. She had a special way of connecting with others and was a spiritual mother to many. Survivors include her children, Dennis Wilson and wife Fran of Geary, Michael Swallow of Geary and Dolly Swallow of Oklahoma City, one sister, Patricia Fielder Jim of Chickasha, Okla., her spiritual children, Ray and Richille Garcia of Lawton, Okla., as well as 34 grandchildren, 18 great-grand-



children, and many other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband James Walter "Jay" Swallow, infant son James "Baby Jay" Swallow, son Jonathan Swallow, grandsons, Adrian and Jordan Wilson, great-grandson Trevor Wilson and two brothers, Delos Prairie Chief and Clayton Prairie Chief.

An all-night wake service was held May 7 at the Rock of Restoration Church in Calumet, Okla. Funeral services were held May 8, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Turner Funeral Home.

Obituaries cont'd. pg. 9

## Nathaniel Lynn Whiteman

Nathaniel Lynn Whiteman, Cheyenne name Ó'kóhómóhtameóhtséstse "Walking Coyote", began his earthly walk on March 12, 1947, in Seiling, Okla., when his parents George Whiteman Sr. and Ida Mae (Bullcoming) Whiteman welcomed him into their family. He was part of a large family with 12 siblings. Nathaniel became known by his nickname, Sanskie. He left this earth on May 4, 2026.

He spent his childhood in the Seiling area, then went to Flagstaff, Ariz., to attend Southwest School of Admissions Bible College. Sanskie worked for Northwestern Flagstaff College as a janitor and worked for local farmers in the area. This is where he met the love of his life, Patricia Sue Grass. In 1974, the couple were married, then in 1978 they moved to Seiling where they were blessed with seven children, Ernestine, Funston, Rosalie, Patricia Mae, Stephanie, Bobbie Jo and Daniel.

Sanskie's greatest love was the Lord Jesus Christ, he was a true "Preacher" of the holy word. He wanted others to become believers so they could join him in the King-

dom of Heaven. He lived his life with the Holy Spirit in his heart.

Sanskie worked at the pig farms in the Mooreland area, he also worked in a mental health facility caring for patients. He also worked as a heavy equipment operator and a transport driver with a CDL.

Sanskie was known as "Boss man" to all the local teens in the Cheyenne Arapahoe JTPA program. He was the Fonda Community Hall caretaker for many years. He had a deep love for the Cheyenne Tribe and participated in the Arrow Ceremony.

Sanskie had many hobbies including origami, building with sticks, and repairing things. He loved to tinker. He enjoyed watching westerns, football, especially OSU Cowboys and the Dallas Cowboys, and wrestling. He was also very fond of the Golden Oldies on KOMA radio.

Sanskie was preceded in death by his parents, George Sr. and Ida Mae, siblings, Meredith Whiteman, Joyce Quick, Hattie Ann Whiteman, Sally Webster, Mitchell Wayne Whiteman, twins Mitchel add Hel-



en Whiteman, and Gordon Whiteman. Also, his daughters, Ernestine Draper and Stephanie Whiteman.

Those left to cherish his memory are his loving wife Patricia, children; Funston Whiteman of Oklahoma City, Rosalie Whiteman of Seiling, Patricia Mae Whiteman of Seiling, Bobbie Jo Whiteman-Toppah and husband Matthew of Seiling, and Daniel Whiteman; Sisters Betty Dennison of Woodward, and Florence Smith of Duluth, Minn., and brother George Whiteman of Corn, Okla. His legacy will live on through his 23 grandchildren, two great-grandkids, his many relatives, especially his nieces and nephews who he loved to tease, and the many friends who were blessed to have known him.

# DV SUPPORT

continued from pg. 1

violence sexual assault prevention specialist for the Comanche Nation Family Assistant Center attended the sheltering circle meeting to give information about their shelter located in Lawton, Okla.

"We do provide a lot of services to our clients that come in the shelters, we are equipped to hold probably about 15 clients, we have different services, counseling, help to get their medical needs met, we help advocacy for the children and the legal advocacy for the clients that come in," Lopez said.

Attending the meeting, Lopez said she's received a lot of resources that will help with her clients who come in, never referring to her clients as victims as she always wants to empower them.

"We want them to empower themselves, lift themselves up and with the resources I'm receiving here I have places I can call and say hey I have someone here that needs help and with their resources they'll be able to help us so that client does not go without a place to go or a place to find other information and resources too," Lopez said.

Rebecca Link, program manager and victim advocate with Action Associates shelter in Clinton, Okla., said their shelter provides crisis services for victims in need of shelter. They provide basic needs, safety planning, service planning, referrals, support groups for women and children and help people with transportation.

Finding her resources via Google, Link found the in person meeting imperative to be updated and know how other programs and shelters are doing and be able to collaborate among services.

"It was very informative coming together with different organizations to kind of figure out kind of what extra resources there are and come together and kind of share with each other does and get a feel for whats out there so we can better serve victims," Link said.

Link said there is a need for more shelters, as she has seen a need for a homeless shelter in her community as they had removed the homeless shelter in her area.

"I would like to see more services for a homeless shelter, substance abuse, and things like that, different resources in the community, a food pantry, daycares are always good, that I would like to see for our area," Link said.

Carmen Harvie, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes victims services advocate said the meeting was really good for the Social Services Program as their goal is to look into getting a shelter. Meeting with agencies that have shelters would help them better understand how it all works to be able to provide services that are needed for clients that need shelters that are in domestic violence situations and have nowhere to go.

"We would be able to provide the services of shelter and other services that are needed to assist them and be safe, so I'm very happy that a lot of the different agencies have come and shared their knowledge how they have their shelters run and it's very important to be able to provide that service to all Native American woman, men and children that are fleeing domestic violence situations," Harvie said.

With the information and resources that were shared during the meeting, Harvie said they will be added to their goals in their strategic plan and be able to go out to different shelters and see what they look like and how they are run to get a better understanding once they are able to get a shelter for their program.

"I'm excited to be here and to learn and be able to provide that service to our Indian pop-



Forming in a circle for the meeting, each advocate and program representative introduced themselves and the program services they currently offer. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

ulation because it's a need, not only within our tribes but all over Oklahoma and probably nationally because there's just not enough shelters available," Harvie said.

From the discussions and feedback of the meeting, Bernice Armstrong, tribal family advocate and prevention social worker said the overall goal from the sheltering circles meeting was to gain direction on what they need to continue doing in their services. Armstrong has been working with other service providers since the early 90s and knows it makes a difference when making those interactions and networking.

"I pretty much know who's who, a lot of them have gone on but it makes a big difference to see people eyeball each other and talk, just like the old way, we do a lot of things by email, but I really believe in face-to-face contact," Armstrong said.

Armstrong said the program is hoping to start holding more meetings on a regular basis in the future as they see a need for shelters and the importance behind collaborations and sharing resources.

"It's just the importance of coordinating and collaboration with other external agencies and trying to bring them here, so hopefully their tribal community can see these people in person especially within the area of domestic violence and victim services and that was the intent of this meeting to get that across," Armstrong said.



Bernice Armstrong, tribal family advocate and prevention social worker with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes social services program led discussions during the sheltering circle meeting.

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JFD-2012-2007

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
FILED APR 06 2026  
IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES CONCHO, OKLAHOMA

IN THE TRIAL COURT  
PAGE  
IMAGE  
COURT CLERK DEPUTY

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, ) Case No: JFD-2012-2007  
EX. REL., )  
HANNAH SISSOM, ) RUBEN WATAN:  
 ) OBLIGOR  
 PETITIONER, )  
 ) HANNAH SISSOM:  
 ) CUSTODIAN  
 vs. )  
 RUBEN WATAN, )  
 )  
 RESPONDENT, )

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: RUBEN WATAN / HANNAH SISSOM

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Motion to Modify Child Support by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Amelinos*  
COURT CLERK  
District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
Tribal Child Support Services  
1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
El Reno, OK 73036  
Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
Facsimile: 405-262-1125

CIV-2018-0041

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
FILED APR 06 2026  
IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES CONCHO, OKLAHOMA

IN THE TRIAL COURT  
PAGE  
IMAGE  
COURT CLERK DEPUTY

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, ) Case No: CIV-2018-0041  
EX. REL., )  
MATTHEW RUSSELL, ) RONNIE CARPITCHER JR.:  
 ) OBLIGOR  
 PETITIONER, )  
 ) MATTHEW RUSSELL:  
 ) CUSTODIAN  
 vs. )  
 RONNIE CARPITCHER JR., )  
 )  
 RESPONDENT, )

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: RONNIE CARPITCHER JR.

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Application for Indirect Contempt Citation by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Amelinos*  
COURT CLERK  
District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
Tribal Child Support Services  
1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
El Reno, OK 73036  
Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
Facsimile: 405-262-1125

# Thank you

We would like to thank the God, our Creator for this day of honor, this day of homecoming, this day of family.

Matavito and Giles, we will never know what you went through, to be so far away from all you knew, trying to live in a strange place, speak a strange language, get used to strange customs and strange people. Matavito we have learned of how you cared for your new brothers and sisters in this different environment, keeping them warm by attending to the fires, showing that while you were learning a new way of life, you continued with our tradition of caring for those that may not be able to care for themselves.

Giles we have learned of your gift for tailoring, of making items of use and showing that though you were away from what was familiar to you. You accepted the challenge and proved yourself capable of facing all that came your way.

We want to say thank you. Thank you to Meredith Trautt and the U.S. Army for caring for these children for so long and for also realizing the importance of returning them to their homes. Thank you to Dr. Amanda Ceromiah and the

Center for the Future of Natie Peoples for providing the information for these children and keeping their memories alive so that we can have this day.

And we want to say thank you to these two children. Matavito, your blood still runs in us and we are grateful for the opportunity to know you. We believe your spirit, though already happy to be with your family in the next life, is happier now to be home and is smiling down on all of us. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to come together as one, in the home that you once knew to honor your memory and provide you with the final resting place you deserved.

Giles, we are honored to have you as part of our family and to see you returned to the place of your ancestors and to know that you are no longer alone. You are with your people and you are home.

While such an occasion as this would normally be somber, in so many ways we feel joy for the opportunity to bring these children back to their homeland their spiritual center. And we want to express our profound gratitude to the spirits of Matavito and Giles for they have touched our lives and our hearts from so far away, bringing together our family in ways we could not have imagined. We are so very joyful and grateful. Nea'ese!



Bart Howlingcrane Williams and Family

## CIV-2025-0057

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED APR 30 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 MARY BETH BRAVO )  
 Petitioner, )  
 VS. )  
 MAURICIO BRAVO ZARAGOZA )  
 Respondent, )

Case No. CIV-2025-0057

**NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION**

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: MAURICIO BRAVO ZARAGOZA  
 UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE 2026, at 10:00 A.M., in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

**YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR**, on the above date and time indicated for 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:
  - Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCentUWdVQ0FMc0MlSOjRkXzE0T0R099>
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
  - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

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

## CIV-2026-0028

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED MAY 01 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

BARBARA A. SANKEY )  
 Plaintiff, )  
 VS. )  
 FRANCIS D. SANKEY )  
 Defendant, )

Case No. CIV-2026-0028

**NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION**

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: FRANCIS D. SANKEY  
 UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE 2026, at 10:00 A.M., in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

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

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  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
  - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 1<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2026.

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

## PG-2019-0021

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED MAY 08 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

In the Matter of the Guardianship of: )  
 E.L.S. )  
 Minor Child, )

Case No. PG-2019-0021

**NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION**

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: DONOVAN SMITH  
 UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE 2026, at 10:00 A.M., in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

**YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR**, on the above date and time indicated for 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:
  - Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCentUWdVQ0FMc0MlSOjRkXzE0T0R099>
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
  - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.

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

## PG-2026-0001

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED MAY 08 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

In the Matter of the Guardianship of: )  
 G.C.T. )  
 L.A.T. )  
 Minor Children, )

Case No. PG-2026-0001

**NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION**

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: DYLAN SWEETZ  
 UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE 2026, at 10:00 A.M., in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

**YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR**, on the above date and time indicated for 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:
  - Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCentUWdVQ0FMc0MlSOjRkXzE0T0R099>
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
  - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.

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

## PG-2026-0004

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED MAY 08 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

In the Matter of the Guardianship of: )  
 T.T. )  
 E.T. )  
 W.B. )  
 Minor Children, )

Case No. PG-2026-0004

**NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION**

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: TAYLOR TOAHTY  
 UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of JUNE 2026, at 10:00 A.M., in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

**YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR**, on the above date and time indicated for 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:
  - Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCentUWdVQ0FMc0MlSOjRkXzE0T0R099>
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
  - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
  - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
  - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.

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

## CIV-2021-0068

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED APR 06 2026  
 IN THE TRIAL COURT  
 CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 P.O. BOX 102  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, )  
 EX. REL., )  
 STELLA BLACKBEAR, )  
 PETITIONER, )  
 VS. )  
 WILLIAM WHITLOW, )  
 RESPONDENT, )

Case No: CIV-2021-0068

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: WILLIAM WHITLOW / STELLA BLACKBEAR

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Motion to Reduce Arrears to Judgment by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Tawny Melendez*  
 COURT CLERK  
 District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
 Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
 Tribal Child Support Services  
 1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
 El Reno, OK 73036  
 Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
 Facsimile: 405-262-1125

## CIV-2014-0011

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED APR 06 2026  
 IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, )  
 EX. REL., )  
 SHIRLEY HARRISON, )  
 PETITIONER, )  
 VS. )  
 VIRGIL CURTIS, )  
 RESPONDENT, )

Case No: CIV-2014-0011

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: VIRGIL CURTIS

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Motion to Modify Child Support by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Tawny Melendez*  
 COURT CLERK  
 District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
 Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
 Tribal Child Support Services  
 1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
 El Reno, OK 73036  
 Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
 Facsimile: 405-262-1125

## CIV-2024-0045

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED APR 06 2026  
 IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, )  
 EX. REL., )  
 BRIANNAH BIRDSHEAD, )  
 PETITIONER, )  
 VS. )  
 DELFRED WHITECROW, )  
 RESPONDENT, )

Case No: CIV-2024-0045

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: DELFRED WHITECROW

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Application for Indirect Contempt Citation by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Tawny Melendez*  
 COURT CLERK  
 District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
 Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
 Tribal Child Support Services  
 1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
 El Reno, OK 73036  
 Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
 Facsimile: 405-262-1125

## CIV-2026-0008

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA  
 FILED APR 06 2026  
 IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES  
 CONCHO, OKLAHOMA

TRIBAL CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, )  
 EX. REL., )  
 DEREK CINTRON, )  
 PETITIONER, )  
 VS. )  
 JUANITA MADBULL, )  
 RESPONDENT, )

Case No: CIV-2026-0008

**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

TO: JUANITA MADBULL

TAKE NOTICE that you are a named party in the Petition to Establish Child Support by Tribal Child Support Services. You are ordered to appear in the District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF JUNE 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. Your failure to appear may result in a bench warrant for your arrest and/or may result in a default judgment against you.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 2026.

*Tawny Melendez*  
 COURT CLERK  
 District Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Prepared by:  
 Krista Blackwolf, Office Manager/Legal Assistant  
 Tribal Child Support Services  
 1621G East U.S. Highway 66 / P.O. Box 37  
 El Reno, OK 73036  
 Telephone: 405-262-1119 Ext. 304  
 Facsimile: 405-262-1125

## OBITUARIES

## OBITUARIES

### Geneva Ann Stonecalf Cramer

Geneva Ann (Stonecalf) Cramer was born on Aug. 28, 1980 in Lawton, Okla. Geneva was a loving mother, daughter, gigi to her grandchildren, sister, cousin and niece. She left this world on May 3, 2026. She was a devoted mother and a proud gigi, whose grandbabies were truly her pride and joy. There was nothing she loved more than spending time with them, whether watching cartoons, doing puzzles, or obsessing over their little toes! Her personality could light up any room and could never go unnoticed. Her vibrant spirit, contagious smile, and unmistakable "AYEEEEEEEE!" could be heard across any room. She was confident, bold, and full of life. She loved to laugh and make others laugh even more, playfully "terrorizing" those she loved and filling every space with joy. Even through her battle with cancer, her spirit never dimmed. She remained strong, refusing to let anything take away her light. Her strength, resilience, and courage were an inspiration to everyone who witnessed her journey. She enjoyed life's simple

and creative pleasures, coloring, crafts, decorating her home with plants and bold prints, and expressing herself through fashion, jewelry, and makeup. She loved music, dancing, and would travel near and far just to be with the people she loved. She would always find a way to be with her family! She loved everyone so deeply and she loved God wholeheartedly all of her life. To know her was to love her.

Geneva is survived by her parents Natalie Kim Whiteshield and Constano and Gaynell Stonecalf. Her children, Sarah Contreras and husband Jordan, Jason Cramer Jr, Reece Loving, Natalia Cramer and Michael Cramer. Her siblings, Sheena Stonecalf, Danna Stonecalf, Raquel Stonecalf, Agatha Satepauhoodle, Anthony Stonecalf, John Espinoza, and Montana Stonecalf. Her grandchildren Roman, Ulises, Ariel and Julius. Her grandmother Ruby DeCorah, LaDora Nimsey, Lisa LookingGlass and grandfather Lucien Jim LookingGlass. Aunts, Sheryl Whiteshield, Elaine Whiteshield, Daphne Lacquement, Randy Beartrack, Wendy Whitesh-



ield, LaDonna Narcomey, Aurelia Chaney and uncle Shawn Silverhorn. Preceded in death by her maternal grandfather Randolph R. Whiteshield; her sister Charlene Stonecalf Aguilar; her aunts Pamela A. Whiteshield and Tewanna Whiteshield; her niece NAHVOON-NEY Stonecalf; her paternal grandparents, Whitecow Lefthand and Gertrude Lefthand, her aunt Mario Voros Stonecalf and her nephew Julian Delgado.

A viewing was held May 6 at the Smith Funeral Home Chapel in Anadarko, Okla. Funeral services were held May 7 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day, followed by an interment at the Memory Lane Cemetery under the direction of Smith Funeral Home.

### Minnie Elizabeth Goodbear

Minnie Elizabeth Goodbear was born on March 11, 1951, in Qkmulgee to Chief Leonard Frank Goodbear Sr. and June Whiteplume Goodbear. She was raised in Watonga by her grandparents, Chief Richard and Winona Goodbear. Minnie went to rest on May 1, 2026, at the age of 75 in Albuquerque, N.M.

In 1969, Minnie graduated from Watonga High School and continued her studies at Haskell University. While attending Haskell she met Bill Paddyaker. They would later marry and have two sons. After graduating from Haskell with a degree in Business Administration, she moved to El Reno and began working for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Following a sad divorce, she met Jeffrey Whiteskunk. They were married and another son was born.

After she left her long employment with the tribes, her career took her to the Indian Health Service where she was a billing clerk. She retired in 1999.

She eventually met Sidney Moore Jr. who would be her companion until his death in 2023. Minnie was

also preceded in death by her parents, Cheyenne Chief Leonard Frank Goodbear Sr., and June Whiteplume Goodbear; paternal grandparents, Cheyenne Chief Richard and Winona Goodbear; maternal grandparent, James Whiteplume and Lena Beard; five brothers, Leonard F. Goodbear Jr., Ralph Goodbear, Brian Goodbear, J.B. Beard and Donnie Beard; four sisters, Barbara Lone Elk, Gail Whitebird, Jackie Goodbear, and Winona Goodbear Blossom; and granddaughter, Haylee Whiteplume Paddyaker.

Minnie is survived by sons Mark Paddyaker, Mike Paddyaker and Jared Whiteskunk all of Albuquerque, three adopted sons, Emmett Redbird, James "Alf" Redbird, and George Woods all of El Reno, brother Richard Goodbear of Okmulgee, four sisters, Paula Jo Jackson of Wichita, Kansas, Shelly Goodbear of Mustang, Helen Botone of Moore, and Wilma Dyer of Clinton. Other survivors include four cousins, Charles Goodbear of Wichita, Felicia Goodbear of Houston, Texas, Eddie Wilson of Oklahoma City and Lisha Jury of Oklahoma



City, and three grandkids, Lindsey Paddyaker, Mike Paddyaker Jr., and Anna Gail Paddyaker; goddaughter Toya Harragarra along with many nieces and nephews whom she loved.

She also loved going to powwows and dancing, serving as head lady dancer many, many times. She had the biggest heart and loved all her family. It comforts her family to know she is reunited with her companion Sidney Moore, and her granddaughter Haylee Whiteplume.

An all-night wake service was held May 8 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held May 9, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

### Thomas Dean Lunsford

Thomas Dean Lunsford, age 39, of Albuquerque, N.M., was born March 9, 1987, in Clinton, Okla., to Thomas Leonard and Dawn (Franklin) Lunsford. He passed away unexpectedly on April 28, 2026, in Oklahoma City.

Thomas was raised in Calumet, Okla. and the Albuquerque area. He attended elementary school in Lamar, Colo., and later attended schools in Calumet, Riverside Indian School, and Tahlequah, where he completed his education. After school, Thomas enjoyed traveling and living in different places, always seeking new experiences, but he ultimately called Albuquerque home.

He had a love for life and enjoyed playing basketball, dominoes and video games.

Thomas also loved music, especially rapping and singing, and was known for his positive attitude and vibrant personality. During high school he was a member of a traveling church Bible team that competed successfully in various events. He was a member of the Indian Baptist Church.

Thomas was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Leonard and Dawn Lunsford, and his grandparents.

He is survived by his adopted mother, Sue Ann Lunsford, the mother of his children; his sons, Kaiden Lunsford, Thomas Luther Lunsford, and Carter Dean Lunsford; his daughter Tocara Lunsford, Baby Tommi Lunsford and his brothers, Matthew Franklin Lunsford of South Carolina, Clifton



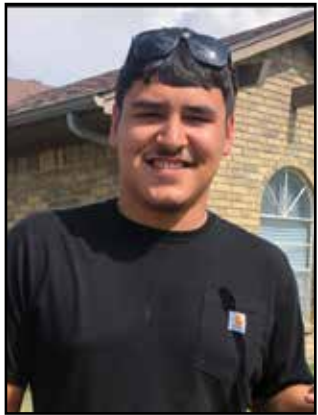
Lunsford of Alabama, and Stephan Lunsford of Oklahoma City.

Wake services were held May 1 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla. Funeral services were held May 2, at the same venue, officiated by Rev. Gerald Panana and Rev. Susan Hart, followed by an interment at the Clinton Indian Cemetery under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

### Langston Alan Pratt

Langston Alan Pratt was born Nov. 15, 2006, in Yukon, Okla., to Sidney Alan Pratt and Kimberly Nichole Kenne. He passed away April 25, 2026, in Hydro, Okla., at the age of 19. Langston was raised in Geary, Okla., where he was surrounded by a large and loving family. He began wrestling at the age of 3 and carried a deep love for the sport throughout his life. While he was dedicated on the mat, he was also known as "the world's worst" at cutting weight, often keeping snacks hidden nearby. He also played football during his school years. He graduated from Hinton High School and was currently working as an electrician for Lewis Electric. Langston loved the outdoors, especially fishing and shooting. He enjoyed wrestling around with family and friends and had a natural ability to make people laugh. As a child, he had a playful spirit, famously carrying raw eggs in his pockets to surprise people. He loved picking on his mom and always had a smile on his face. Family meant everything to Langston. He was raised by both sides of his family and carried himself with kindness, strength, and positivity. He was a leader to his siblings, Bentlee, Taylan, Steele, Seth and Addaley, who looked up to him as their rock. He is survived by his fiancé

Katie Baker of Geary, his daughter Rory of Geary, his parents Kimberly Kenne of Geary and Sidney and Taryn Pratt of El Reno, Okla., his siblings, Bentlee, Taylan, Steele, Seth, and Addaley and his grandparents, Alicia Pratt of Woodward, Okla., Shelly Wigington of El Reno, Shelly Yates of Geary and Rodney Candyfire of El Reno. He is also survived by his aunts and uncles, Erika Rogers and Adolfo Venegas of Oklahoma City, Rebecca and John Russell of Watonga, Okla., Jason and Sharissa Arnold of Watonga, Christopher Yates of Florence, Colo., Brittany Yates of Oklahoma City, O.J. Birdshead Jr. of Geary, Briannah Birdshead of Oklahoma City, Rich Candyfire Jr. of Mineola, Texas, Cecil and Tatum Harrall of Geary, Stacey Pratt of Geary, Valentine and Lynen Pena of Gage, Okla., Lindsey Pena and John Myers of Woodward, Rocky Ortiz of El Reno, Oscar Pratt, Steven Pratt Sr., Patricia Waysepap, Sandra Pratt Thunderbull, Leah Pratt, Gayle Pratt, Julia Pratt, and Regina Pratt Buffalomeat. He is also survived by his cousins, Alexander Thunderbull and wife Kenzie, Tucker, Makenzie, Saydie, and Alexis Thunderbull, Brian Graham, Austin, Makayla, Gregory, Sandra, and Braden, Hollis Harrall, Elliott Harrall, Kyle Harrall,



Karver Harrall, Vaeda Pena Vaylen Pena, Laina and Mila Dorman, and Jaylah Myers. Langston was preceded in death by his great-grandparents, Samuel and Angeline Pratt, Joan Candyfire Pawnee, Wilby Pennington, and Donnie and Charlene Wright; his grandparents, Jacquelyn and Tony Ahl and William Richard Candyfire, and Bob Pena; his aunts and uncles, Wilby Candyfire, Kayla Yates, Seth Wigington, Ducky, David and Gloria Spottedcorn, Susie Gilbert, Curtis Pratt, Mary Jefferis, and Adam Pratt; and his cousin, Valor Pena. An all-night wake service was held May 1 at the Gib Miles Emergency Response Center in Geary, Okla. Funeral services were held May 2 at the Jenks-Simmons Field House in El Reno, Okla., with Rev. Waylan Upchego officiating, followed by an interment at the Sunset Cemetery under the direction of Turner Funeral Home.

### Ryan Alexander Redbird

Ryan Alexander Redbird (Ma'ev'e'ho'a'e), age 37, former resident of Thomas, Okla., was born on May 29, 1988, in Clinton, Okla., to James Redbird and Eleanor Jo "Jody" Youngbear. He passed away on April 24, 2026, in Seattle, Wash.

Ryan was raised in Thomas and attended both Thomas High School and Riverside Indian School, where he formed lifelong friendships and memories. He was known for his easygoing nature and kind spirit from a young age.

While living in Oklahoma, Ryan worked at Bar-S and Wal-Mart, where he was appreciated for his strong work ethic and friendly personality. In September 2024, Ryan made the decision to start a new chapter in his life. With a sense of adventure, he traveled throughout the United States and parts of Canada, embracing new experiences and meeting people along the way. His journey eventually led him to Seattle, Washington, where he chose to make his home. There, he worked as a stock clerk at Home Depot and quickly became part of his new community.

Ryan had a deep love for life and the people around him. In high school, he enjoyed playing football, and

throughout his life he remained a devoted fan of OU football and the Seattle Seahawks. He had a passion for music, he loved singing karaoke, playing his guitar, and creating his own songs, often sharing them with his mother, whom he cherished deeply. He also enjoyed cooking and grilling for family and friends, bringing people together with his generous heart.

Ryan was proud of his Native heritage and carried that pride with him always. He was a descendant of the Dog Soldier Clan, and his great-grandfather was among the Original 44 Cheyenne Chiefs, a legacy he honored throughout his life.

Those who knew Ryan will remember him for his kindness, compassion, and willingness to help others. He loved animals and had a giving spirit, once even offering to donate a kidney to a family member in need. His gentle nature and big heart left a lasting impression on everyone he met.

He was preceded in death by his sister Vanessa Youngbear, nephew Jalen Youngbear, brothers, Phillip K. Lamebull and Steven Howlingwater, grandparents, Herman and Jessica Youngbear, great-grandparents, Chief Jacob and Sage Woman All-



Runner, his namesake grandfather, Lyle Redbird and his aunt Della French.

Ryan is survived by his parents, Jody Youngbear of Clinton and James Redbird of Oklahoma City; his sisters, Jessica Redbird of Clinton and Jennifer LameBull of Oklahoma City, as well as numerous aunts, uncles, extended family members, and friends who will continue to cherish his memory. Among them are Sharon AllRunner, Delores Howlingwater, Barbara Benally, Charles Howlingwater, Don AllRunner, and Kenneth Beartrack.

Wake services were held May 6 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla. Funeral services were held May 7, at the same venue, with Rev. Gerald Panana officiating, followed by an interment at the Mound Valley Cemetery under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

### Tyrique Jarome Rhodes

Tyrique Jarome Rhodes was born April 14, 2009. He left this earth on April 23, 2026.

An all-night wake service was held May 6 at the Concho Emergency Response Cen-

ter in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held May 7, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huiber Benson Funeral Home.



# ATHLETES SPOTLIGHT

By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

## Gianna Burns, Clinton High School

(CLINTON, Okla.) Led by passion on the soccer field, tribal citizen Gianna Burns, 18, has built up her high school soccer career for a memorable season she hopes to never forget her senior year.

Standing 5'6 tall, Burns plays center back for the Clinton High School girls soccer team, based out of Clinton, Okla.

Born in Weatherford, Okla., and raised in Clinton, Okla., Burns began playing soccer before starting primary school at the age of three for a little league soccer team in Weatherford, Okla., where her mother signed her and her sister up to play.

Playing soccer for as long as she can remember, Burns has tried playing other sports, but had since focused her attention solely on soccer

leading up to her senior year of high school.

What Burns loves the most about playing soccer is the adrenaline rush it gives her.

"I get to be a different person whenever I play," Burns said.

Burns passion for the sport has been her motivation for continuing to play on the field year after year.

"There's many things that I've done, like sports wise, but I've never been as passionate about soccer as I've been with anything else in my life," Burns said.

In her senior year of soccer, what Burns looked forward to the most was spending more time with her teammates. Which had changed her view from the beginning of the season.

"At the beginning, I was

just so goal driven to win state but the more that I got to spend with my teammates and especially the newer ones, like the upcoming freshman, I kind of just wanted to have a good, memorable, fun season before I have to go play in college," Burns said.

Burns had recently signed to play college soccer at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kan.

Goals that Burns set for herself for the season were to hold herself more accountable as that has become her whole foundation.

"To just allow myself to have more fun because that's kind of the whole foundation that I've had for soccer was just playing it because I enjoyed it," Burns said.

Knowing this is her last season to play alongside her teammates in high school, Burns can't help but to feel somewhat nostalgic, as these are teammates she's been playing with for many years.

"It's really the last couple months I had to play with my teammates, especially the ones that I've been playing with for longer than my high school season, the ones that I've been playing with since I was like eight and I just want to give them my all and not regret anything when we walk off the field for the last time together," Burns said.

Maintaining a 3.7 GPA, Burns manages sports and

academics pretty easily by holding herself accountable in the classroom and that has become her priority to make good grades.

"If you're not at school, you're not allowed to play and if you're not eligible with your grades, if they're not kept up, you can't play, so it's given me a lot of motivation and reason to make school a priority," Burns said.

Overall, what Burns hopes to accomplish in soccer is to keep herself motivated on and off the soccer field.

"Soccer is a big part of my identity and who I am, and I owe a lot of my accomplishments towards soccer. So I just want to continue that on," Burns said.

Practicing on the field Monday through Friday, while also doing personal training sessions outside of school practices, Burns is working on getting better at her foundational skills and being comfortable with the ball.

As a soccer player, Burns believes it's important to have passion for soccer, to have drive and determination for the sport.

"You can tell the difference between somebody who's just out there on the pitch and someone who wants to be out there. Everything else in soccer is taught that, the hunger for soccer



isn't, it's just something you have," Burns said.

Ending her senior year of high school soccer, Burns hopes to be remembered as the passionate player and the one that encouraged others to follow her lead in a positive light.

While a sport teaches many life lessons, what soccer had taught Burns the most is acceptance.

"No matter how hard you try, you can't change the outcome of some things and at the end of the day, you have to let go," Burns said.

After graduation, Burns plans to get on a summer regiment to get ready for college soccer and pick up more personal training sessions. What she looks forward to the most playing at the college level is the culture and the new vibes.

"It's a lot different from over here, It's very unfamil-



iar but not so much as to be scared of it, I think I'll really enjoy it and I think it matches what I've been looking for," Burns said.

Gianna's parents are William and Mary Burns, her grandparents are Roman Mendoza and Charlene Mendoza. Her siblings include Ciela Burns, Taeryk Burns and Kraivern Burns and her uncle is Victor Mendoza.





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