

# HOWNIIKAN



Abtenibne Gises | July 2020

Top photo: *Dbekgises* (the moon) appears behind the CPN water tower.

## A LOOK INSIDE

### Page 3



Park exhibit remembers Burnett's Mound namesake

### Page 7



CPN court staff key to protecting Tribal sovereignty

### Page 12

Medtronic director's leadership helps company establish scholarship for Native Americans

### Pages 19-23

Tribal Executive and Legislative updates

### Page 24

Walking on



# Governor loses in court, federal judge still to determine auto-renewal

The question of whether the Oklahoma Model Gaming Compacts auto-renewed on Jan. 1, 2020, may be decided soon by U.S. Western District Court Chief Judge Timothy DeGiusti. Governor Kevin Stitt's attorneys recently requested that the federal court rule whether he had authority under state law to unilaterally negotiate, authorize and administer gaming compacts with tribes. On June 15, Judge DeGiusti declined to tell Governor Stitt whether he had unilateral authority to compact with two Oklahoma tribes. The court made it clear the current case in front of the Western District court is about whether the compacts have renewed.

The dispute began in July 2019 when Governor Stitt published an opinion piece in Oklahoma newspapers stating that the agreements between the state and tribes would terminate on Jan. 1, 2020. In that same letter, Stitt suggested that tribes would need to begin paying what he deemed their "fair-market" contribution in gaming exclusivity fees.

Attorneys for both sides filed motions for summary judgement on June 12, 2020, as ordered by Judge DeGiusti. All parties have filed their responses to the motions, and the court is positioned to make a ruling.

"It has been nearly a year since Governor Stitt began the dispute over the compact auto-renewal by publishing an opinion piece in the newspaper instead of meeting with tribal leaders," said Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett. "We continue to stand with the other plaintiffs in this case and maintain our position that the Nation's compact automatically renewed on Jan. 1, 2020, for a 15-year term."

Citizen Potawatomi Nation and other Oklahoma tribes assert that the compacts automatically renewed for a 15-year term, in part due to the many actions of the State to authorize racetracks and others to conduct electronic gaming. Stitt has argued that the authorization for Class III gaming at horse racing tracks occurred before the effective date of the compacts.

"This is the 'pencils down' moment for the lawyers. Barring some additional order from Judge DeGiusti, our court advocacy closes today, and the matter will be submitted for the judge's deliberation and decision," said Stephen Greetham, senior counsel for Chickasaw Nation.

During mediation and court proceedings, Stitt negotiated and signed compacts with the Otoe-Missouria and Comanche Nations, who were parties to the lawsuit against the governor until the week of the compacts' announcement. These two compacts contained controversial provisions that would authorize the tribes to conduct sports betting and construct three casinos in counties outside their traditional jurisdictions.

Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter said that the compacts are not authorized by the state Tribal Gaming Act.

"The governor has the authority to negotiate with tribes on behalf of the state," Hunter said. "However, the only gaming activities authorized by the act may be the subject of a tribal gaming compact."

Those compacts were "deemed approved" by the U.S. Department of Interior, drawing further criticism from Hunter.

"The Department of the Interior's thoughtless and irresponsible inaction on the compacts doesn't change our conclusion that the governor lacks the authority to enter into compacts that include activities not legal in Oklahoma," Hunter said, referring to sports betting and other forms of gambling currently illegal under state law.

"The tribes cannot begin operating under the terms of these compacts until the many questions that remain pending before the Oklahoma Supreme Court are resolved. I am deeply disappointed in Interior Secretary (David) Bernhardt's abdication of his responsibility to all of Oklahoma's Native American sovereigns, not just two," Hunter said.

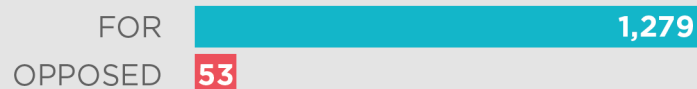
The compacts were published in the Federal Register on June 29, 2020.

Further complicating the governor's efforts to undermine the vast majority of Oklahoma's gaming tribes, state legislative leaders have now weighed in to echo the attorney general's opinion that Stitt has overstepped his authority. On June 5, Oklahoma Speaker of the House Charles McCall and President Pro Tempore Greg Treat filed an action in the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The two highest-ranking legislative leaders asked the court to "void" the governor's compacts with the Comanche Nation and Otoe-Missouria Tribe.

According to an article in *The Oklahoman* by Randy Ellis, they described the governor's actions as a "unilateral power grab" and as "serious dereliction" of the governor's duty under the Oklahoma Constitution. 🔥

## 2020 TRIBAL ELECTION RESULTS

### REAPPOINTMENT OF TRIBAL SUPREME COURT JUSTICE JENNIFER LAMIRAND



### CPN LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 9



### CPN LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 12

PAUL SCHMIDLKOFER **WINS WITH NO OPPOSITION FILING**

### ANNUAL TRIBAL BUDGET



All race results were unofficial until the protest period ended on Tuesday, June 30, 2020 at 5 p.m.

## Weld descendant named OAOP's Optometric Physician of the Year

Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member Dr. Crystal Mosteller recently accepted the 2020 Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians' Optometric Physician of the Year award. Fellow optometrists across the state cast their votes, nominating her for the OAOP's highest annual accolade.

"To be selected by my peers was a huge, huge honor," Dr. Mosteller said. "I joke that I still don't quite know why it was me over others because there are many others that do a lot of important things for the association as well. But, I appreciate it, and I am deeply honored. I feel I am just one piece of the puzzle that helps makes Oklahoma optometry the best."

Dr. Mosteller operates her practice Tuttle Family Eyecare in Tuttle, Oklahoma. She began volunteering with OAOP while in optometry school, and since 2006, has served in its congress committee and executive committee for education as well as became a member of the OAOP Leadership Class of 2008.

The organization stated, "Dr. Mosteller mentors our young (doctors of optometry), is a constant presence at OAOP functions, and is not afraid to hit the campaign trail and knock doors with political candidates who care about protecting great vision health in Oklahoma."

The close-knit nature of OAOP drives her service and dedication to the organization.

"We care about each other. There is no competition between your neighbors. When you need something, you call your fellow optometrists, and they help you. It's a wonderful profession. It is not jealousy and fighting for competition. It is truly a family that reaches out and helps each other," she said.

### Career inspiration

Before receiving her Doctor of Optometry degree in 2006 from Northeastern State University in



Dr. Mosteller accepts OAOP's Optometric Physician of the Year award in March 2020. (Photo provided)

Tahlequah, Oklahoma, she studied biology and chemistry at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. CPN tribal scholarships assisted Dr. Mosteller throughout her educational pursuits, especially during optometry school when she was unable to work due to her large course load and clinicals.

"It started out as a small amount. It was enough to help cover books and stuff, and by the time I finished optometry school, I was also getting the housing assistance, which helped a lot," Dr. Mosteller said.

STEM-related subjects have always interested Dr. Mosteller. As she began the process of deciding a field of study post high school, her science, technology, engineering and math interests helped narrow her options.

"In high school, I really kind of found my niche in science. I liked sociology and psychology and the human involvement," she said.

While a senior at Comanche High School, she toured East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, and learned about jobs in the optometric field.

The career appealed to her, and she discussed the opportunity with her guidance counselor.

"I said something about working for an optometrist, and he said, 'Crystal, if they'll pay for it, why not be an optometrist?' And it was the first time anybody had ever put that level of confidence verbally to me. I'd never thought that big for myself, and it made me open my eyes," Dr. Mosteller explained.

From that conversation, she began her undergraduate studies with the goal of attending optometry school.

### Going into practice

The process of opening and operating her own practice began immediately after graduating from NSU. As someone who grew up in rural Comanche, Oklahoma, Dr. Mosteller wanted to live in a community like her hometown but near Oklahoma City. She heard about Tuttle and decided to visit.

"I met with the mayor, who is now (Oklahoma) Senator Lonnie Paxton," she said. "He was very eager about all

the growth, and he was very passionate about the town. He got me excited.

"With a little bit of his help, I was able to get the ball rolling and get in with the bankers, get my (U.S. Small Business Administration) loan. So, once I looked at Tuttle, I never looked anywhere else."

She purchased a building and began renovations in fall 2006. By spring 2007, Tuttle Family Eyecare opened to the public.

Owning her own practice "is an equal amount of joy and stress, and I wouldn't have it any other way," Dr. Mosteller said.

For the first few years, she also held a part-time contracting position at the Fort Sill Army Base while establishing her practice.

"I am fortunate to be here, and I am glad that I can be of service to the community," she said.

Dr. Mosteller creates a slower-paced office environment by taking her time with each patient.

"I want to know who my patients are throughout the day. They're not a number to me — they're not a set of eyes; they're people to me."

Owning Tuttle Family Eyecare for more than 13 years has provided her the opportunity to see the community expand and children grow into young adults.

"I have seen kids in early elementary who have graduated high school and college," Dr. Mosteller said. "It's definitely surreal."

While balancing a small business and parenthood can present challenges for anyone, through the years, Dr. Mosteller has learned one key lesson.

"I have learned how to ask for help. That's probably one of the most challenging things I think people can do," she said.

Learn more about Dr. Mosteller and her practice Tuttle Family Eyecare on [facebook.com/tuttlefamilyeyecare](https://www.facebook.com/tuttlefamilyeyecare). ♡

## Foster families needed during the COVID-19 pandemic

By Kendra Lowden, Foster Care/Adoption Manager

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted countless individuals, communities, businesses and social services agencies across the world. Despite these recent events, FireLodge Children & Family Services continues our work in protecting and preserving Native American families. Child welfare programs do not discontinue services, even during a crisis. Our dedicated staff are working tirelessly to ensure children are safe and cared for during this trying time while also emphasizing the importance of cultural connections.

FireLodge Children & Family Services offers multiple programs designed to best serve the unique and individual needs of our clients, including those who are a part of the foster care and adoption program. This program is responsible for foster parent recruitment, completing the home study process and coordinating the placement of Citizen

**Culture MATTERS**

Help Potawatomi children stay connected.  
Apply to become a foster parent today!

Connect with us on Facebook @CPNFIRELODGE

Potawatomi foster children into culturally appropriate homes. After approval, foster parents continue to work closely with our team as they begin the journey of accepting children into their home.

FireLodge Children & Family Services continually stays in contact with foster parents and Citizen Potawatomi children during the pandemic. We have been able to assist families who have had difficulty locating resources and services. Our case managers significantly increased virtual contacts with families to offer meaningful connections while promoting safety.

Potawatomi children need Native American families to answer the call to foster and adopt. Interested families will receive detailed information about our current virtual processes while receiving one-on-one support. For more information about FireLodge Children & Family Services, call us at 405-878-4831, or visit us online at [facebook.com/CPNFireLodge](https://www.facebook.com/CPNFireLodge). ♡

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## Park exhibit remembers Burnett's Mound namesake

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department partnered to highlight the history of Burnett's Mound at Skyline Park in Topeka, Kansas. Named after 19th century Potawatomi Chief Abram Burnett, the mound is Topeka's highest elevated point. The display at its base opened spring 2020 and features three informational panels.

"The new exhibit lets people know that we were here and that we're still here," said Citizen Potawatomi Nation District 4 Legislator Jon Boursaw.

On top of serving as the District 4 Legislator, Boursaw studies Potawatomi and Kansas history. He takes every opportunity to educate others through presentations, writing and leading events. Because of this, he set out to build a partnership between CPN and the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department to showcase the role Potawatomi played in Topeka's development as well as Burnett's Mound's namesake.

"I hope it helps people have a greater appreciation for us, and at least, an acknowledgement of why it's called Burnett's Mound," he added.

"I think it's important that people know who Burnett was and that the Potawatomi did have a major presence in what is now Shawnee County prior to it becoming a county."



*Skyline Park highlights Potawatomi history and Chief Abram Burnett.*

### Chief Burnett

Abram Burnett, *Nanweshmah* (He who prays with plants), was born in Indiana near the Tippecanoe River in November 1812. After Burnett's real father, Chief *Shauquebe*, passed away, his mother's cousin, also named Abraham Burnett, adopted him, resulting in his English name: Abraham or Abram B. Burnett.

Chief Burnett studied at a Baptist mission in Fort Wayne, Indiana, under Reverend Isaac McCoy and at the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. In 1838, he and his family were forcibly removed from Indiana to present-day Kansas on the Trail of Death. During the removal, Chief Burnett utilized his skills to serve fellow Potawatomi on the long, hard 660-mile journey.

"Abram Burnett learned how to read, write and speak English while attending Choctaw Indian Academy in Kentucky, and because of his background, he served as an interpreter on the Trail of Death," Boursaw said. "But when he arrived, there was nothing here."

Although the Potawatomi are Eastern woodland people, many Tribal members succeeded on the Kansas prairies, including Chief Burnett. He settled the mound in 1848 and began taking advantage of the economic opportunities the Oregon Trail provided as travelers crossed the Potawatomi Reservation.

"Abram Burnett was a man of commerce, and he had a role in helping Shawnee County become what it is today," Boursaw said. "He was successful with

the travelers that were on the Oregon Trail. He was a prosperous livestock trader, and he was also a farmer."

He passed away in 1870 and was known as the largest man in Kansas at 450 pounds. While local rumors indicate the mound serves as Chief Burnett's final resting place, his grave is on land west of Skyline Park. Also, many in northeastern Kansas believe that Chief Burnett said no one should ever disturb the mound due to its sacredness or else face harsh repercussions because the Great Spirit looks out for its well-being.

According to the story, the mound protected the area from tornadoes. However, in the 1960s, interstate construction began, cutting into the hill's base and leveling a portion at the top to place a water tank. In 1966, a violent F5 tornado caused more than \$200 million in damages and killed 17 people.

Whether the legend holds any truth may never be determined. However, it remains clear that Chief Burnett's legacy serves as a reminder of the hardships the Potawatomi and other Native communities overcame post-removal to build their homes and businesses in unfamiliar lands.

For more information on the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, visit [potawatomi.org](http://potawatomi.org).

## Why your credit score matters

**By Belinda Collins, Vice President & Credit Analyst for First National Bank & Trust Co.**

Your credit score — whether good or bad — speaks to your responsibility and character in repaying someone who has loaned you money. As a vice president and credit analyst for First National Bank & Trust Co., I help people repair poor credit scores and build up good credit. Before we begin the process, I recommend considering why a good credit score is important.

### Loans and interest rates

Your credit score directly affects your ability to borrow money and your interest rate on that borrowed money. Loans are priced based on credit scores, and the higher your score, the lower your interest rate. A good credit score is direct proof you're financially responsible and can be trusted to pay back a loan.

I've seen people in dire situations — they desperately need to repair the roof or replace an air conditioning unit in the dead of summer — be denied loans based on poor credit scores. Scores can range from 309 to 844, depending on the credit bureau. Scores in the lower range generally reflect a poor credit history and derogatory reports, such as late payments and public record filings.

The biggest financial mistakes you can make are not saving money or failing to plan for unexpected expenses and not taking care of your credit. If you have issues with one or both of these points, you might consider credit counseling.

### Credit counseling can help

Through credit counseling, you receive advice on your money, debts and

budgeting. When I meet with someone during a credit counseling session, I ask about monthly expenses — how much they dine out, how much they're spending on entertainment, etc. — and will advise where they could cut back. For most people, the hardest part about managing money is discipline. You have to budget how much money is coming in and going out each month. Consider making a monthly savings deposit to yourself to cover unexpected expenses.

It also matters where and how a client receives a credit score. Services like Credit Karma make "soft pulls," meaning it won't count as a hit on your credit score. "Hard pulls" will show on your credit report when someone has pulled credit. If credit is pulled excessively, it can lower your score. Mortgage companies, banks, auto dealers and sometimes employers pull inquiries. Soft pulls often don't take information like public records and bankruptcies into account, so they're sometimes not as accurate.

I also ask about resources, equitable assets and collateral if a client is interested in securing a loan to help build credit.

### Loans to improve credit

Two types of loans we might recommend are cash-secured loans and debt consolidation loans. One is for people experiencing financial hardship, while the other is for people trying to get out of debt. Both help improve credit scores if always paid on time.

Maybe you had a medical issue or needed financial assistance for college, and you haven't been able to pay off loans or need higher credit. A cash-secured loan can help. With cash-secured loans, you

deposit funds with your current bank; this deposit is then used to secure the loan. If you stop making payments on the loan, your lender will keep your deposit (or a portion of it) to pay off your loan with them. You're borrowing against your savings in the bank, but the benefits over time can far outweigh the costs. I advised one of my clients to consider a cash-secured loan. Within a few years, their credit score increased to over 700, and they were able to buy a home on the secondary market.

Maybe you're in deep credit card debt, and your minimum monthly payment is only going toward interest — you're never able to chip away at the principal. A debt consolidation loan could help. These loans combine multiple balances from credit cards and other high-interest loans into a single loan with a fixed rate and term. Consolidation loans can help you save money by reducing your interest rate, pay off debt faster and possibly increase credit scores if always paid on time.

### Credit cards: a catch-22

Speaking of credit cards — in my experience, they're the top way to build or destroy your credit. Remember: a credit card is not free money. Don't charge on the card unless you're able to pay it off, and don't use more than one or two cards because the balances can increase quickly.

Credit card statements, like most account statements, are calculated and mailed monthly. Some credit card users might forget how much they've charged and find themselves unable to pay the balance at the end of the month. I recommend holding on to receipts to keep track of

credit card spending until the monthly bill is paid and continuing this practice as long as you use credit cards. This is also helpful when using debit cards, too. You should also be able to check your statement online or through an app to check spending more frequently.

At the same time, a credit card can help you build your credit. If you are comfortable, another suggestion is to set up an automatically withdrawn monthly payment from your bank account; however, you must make sure the funds are in the account when the autodraft hits, as this could cause a problem with your bank. The credit bureau will see there's a balance but that the balance is being paid. Do this for a couple of years, and your credit could improve.

### Talk to FNB, first

If you Google "credit counseling," you'll see results for all sorts of agencies and services. But that's how these businesses make their money. At FNB, you'll receive overall credit information as well as information on overhauling your budget and saving money — for free. This is the same advice I'd give my neighbors or my kids, and I want to share it with you, too.

People come to FNB because they know we're looking out for their best interest. We might have to deny someone a loan because of their poor credit score, but you can guarantee we'll also help them figure out how to right their financial ship. If you have questions about credit counseling or getting out of debt, give us a call at 888-640-8934 or visit [FNBOKla.bank](http://FNBOKla.bank). We're here for you. ♡

# Two Citizen Potawatomi high school students experience Washington “Close Up”

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Department of Education sent two Tribal members for the Close Up Foundation’s American Indian and Alaska Native Youth Summit in Washington D.C. Taylor Tade and Kylie Carter spent six days this February in the country’s capital, meeting with Native American leaders in politics, visiting historic landmarks and utilizing their knowledge to present ideas for growth in Indigenous communities.

Tade is a junior at Bridgeland High School in Cyprus, Texas. Living a considerable distance from CPN headquarters near Shawnee, Oklahoma, she felt Close Up provided an opportunity to connect.

“I’m really interested in getting to know more about my culture and my heritage, but because I live so far away from the actual Tribal grounds, I don’t often get to meet with people or discuss it. So, I just wanted to be able to expand my knowledge on that a little more,” Tade said.

Carter, whose Potawatomi name is *Wabse* or Swan, is a freshman at Mountain Pointe High School in Phoenix, Arizona. She moved to Phoenix from Norman, Oklahoma, where she frequently took part in Tribal gatherings. Her dad is a lawyer for the Gila River Indian Community, and she often discusses Indigenous political issues over dinner at home. She was interested in spending time where national laws come to life after her parents told her about the program.

“I went into it for more of the political experience, knowing how I can affect my local government and even national government,” Carter said. “But I didn’t expect to get out more things about my Native American heritage, but I found that we focused a lot on it throughout the trip. And it made me feel very proud of my heritage.”

## Women in leadership

Tade and Carter spent time with two Native American congresswomen —

Deb Haaland, who represents New Mexico’s 1st District, and Sharice Davids, House Representatives member for Kansas’s 3rd Congressional District.

“She mainly talked about her journey in becoming a congresswoman and her beginnings and being Native American and how she came to terms with being different. But also knowing that she could still be a congresswoman, and having her differences helped her through that,” Carter said about meeting Davids.

Listening to each speak about their struggles and achieving their dreams made the outcome seem more attainable for Carter. Tade enjoyed her time with the representatives as well, particularly the chance to view how Native history affects Indigenous people politically on a national level today.

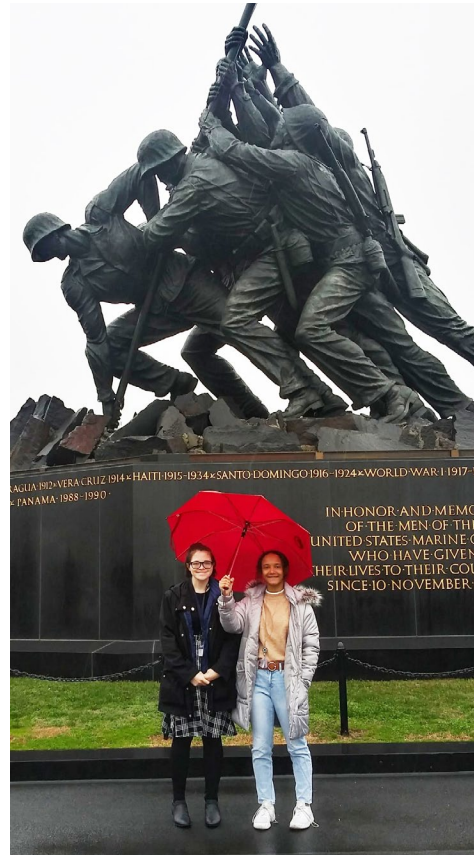
“I think people like Deb Haaland and Sharice Davids and all the people that are representing Natives now are really fighting and trying to overcome those kinds of things that have happened in the past,” Tade said.

While the program did not specifically focus on women and female empowerment, it helped both attendees’ confidence. They also saw *Silent Sky* at Ford’s Theatre, a play about the life of Henrietta Swan Leavitt, an astronomer at Harvard College Observatory in the late 1800s. She and a group of women known as “computers” set standards in their field and helped astronomer and physicist Edward Pickering map the universe.

“It’s really cool because she was a woman, and women weren’t even allowed to use the telescope back then,” Carter said.

## Group work

Both CPN members at Close Up worked with attendees representing the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes on a project to outline a potential solution for an issue facing Indian Country. They chose to focus on health, specifically diabetes and heart conditions like high blood



Carter (right) and Tade visit the Marine Corps War Memorial, one of the many historic sites on the agenda for the Close Up Foundation program. (Photo provided)

pressure that affect Native populations at a higher rate than the general population.

“We wanted to create an environment where people could learn about health issues and how to avoid these things,” Carter said. “So, we wanted to create a health center or a community center that people could join, take classes on how to make healthy choices, things like that.”

They wanted to include a place to grow fresh produce, teach cooking classes and even shop for healthier options. For Tade, working on the project taught her the value of brainstorming across communities.

“We didn’t always just disagree. On certain things, we all kind of had similar views. And we all kind of were coming from a point of, ‘I want to

learn something from you because you have a different experience than me,’ and I thought that was really, really interesting,” Tade said.

The program also split the participants into smaller groups for a mock congressional trial. In teams, they each took on different roles after being assigned an issue and their position. Carter was a lobbyist in favor of raising the federal minimum wage, which she enjoyed more than she anticipated. Thanks to Carter’s work, the raise passed.

“It was fun, actually,” she said. “I thought I was going to be nervous talking to a group of 20 people, trying to persuade them into this thing and then taking questions. But I wasn’t as nervous as I thought I was going to be once I just started talking.”

They spent much of their trip exploring the Nation’s capital and learning from museums and historic sites. Their visits included the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, White House, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, United States Air Force Memorial and more. They both appreciated the architectural beauty of the Lincoln Memorial and the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian.

Close Up inspired Tade to continue her love of political science and newfound interest in Native American issues. She looks forward to becoming more involved in her community and participate on a larger scale as she gets older.

Carter enjoys social studies, and her family’s path in law sparks a flare for becoming a congressperson. The trip to Washington laid it out in front of her, allowing her to see the day-to-day operations of the capital, if she chooses that path.

Keep an eye on opportunities with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Department of Education at [cpn.news/education](http://cpn.news/education) as well as on the Tribe’s Facebook page, @citizenpotawatominaton. ♡

## Legislative update July 2020

On May 28, Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett called to order the Citizen Potawatomi Nation legislature. All members were in attendance.

To begin, legislators approved the minutes from previous meetings before listening to a presentation from CPN Legal Department on the status of the Coronavirus Relief Funds issued to the Nation as part of the Congressional CARES Act.

Legislators approved two resolutions regarding an increase in funding for two Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s Sanitation Facilities Construction Program projects offered through the U.S. Indian Health Service. The body also approved a resolution supporting the Nation’s update of the Transportation Safety Plan in agreement with the Federal Highway Administration.

Tribal legislators approved several applications for federal funding opportunities, including through the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Victims of Crime, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s

Tribal Homeland Security Grant program, the Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Basic Library Services program and the National Park Service’s Historic Preservation Office Grant program.

Similar applications were approved for two United States Department of Health and Human Services’ programs — the 2020 Family First Prevention Services Act Transition Grant and 2020 Tribal Opioid Response Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The body approved the conditional relinquishment of citizenship for one Tribal member and confirmed the enrollment of 120 new Citizen Potawatomi.

Executives and legislators then expressed condolences to Julia Slavin, wife of District 1 Legislator Roy Slavin who walked on in April. They thanked her for her contributions to the Nation and concluded the meeting with a moment of silence in honor of Legislator Slavin. ♡

## Grand Travel Plaza manager serves Tribal patrons for more than three decades

In summer 2020, Grand Travel Plaza Manager Diana Dotson reached 35 years of employment with Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She has held many different titles throughout her time at the Tribe, but customer service remains the centerpiece of her career.

“Every day’s a new day. I never come in expecting just to have a boring day. There’s always something going on or something happening,” she said.

Dotson grew up in Moore, Oklahoma, and graduated from Moore High School. In 1985 at 21 years old, she moved with her 2-year-old son to Pottawatomie County to live closer to her parents. Not long afterward, CPN hired her as a cashier at the former Potawatomi Tribal Store.

Working for the Tribe has passed through the generations. In 1987, she had her second son, and they moved into their own home. In 1994, Dotson married her husband who has worked for CPN for 23 years. She helped raise her two stepsons and stepdaughter as well. Now, she has seven granddaughters, ages 2 to 21. All five children and one of her granddaughters have worked for CPN.

### Development

Dotson enjoys regularly meeting new people and building relationships with her friends and co-workers. Before working as a cashier, she had a reserved personality throughout school. Dotson believes working at CPN helped her become more social in adulthood.

“I think it’s kind of brought me out a little bit to be not so much shy, more outgoing and able to talk and engage with strangers ... because you have to in customer service,” she said.

Dotson has held positions at several CPN enterprises in addition to the Potawatomi Tribal Store, where she worked as a cashier, shift supervisor and assistant manager. She then became the manager at the Tribe’s smoke shop in Tecumseh. When FireLake Express Grocery replaced it, she managed the smoke shop there as well. She then worked at FireLake Discount Foods as smoke shop manager and loss prevention.

She began managing the Grand Travel Plaza in 2012 after much consideration. Dotson oversees its large staff, including six supervisors and two assistant managers who welcomed her and helped her transition into her new position.

“They’re all good people as well as professionally and personally. It’s your second home, so you’ve got to enjoy who you work with. ... It’s good to have other people who you work with that are wanting to work for the company long term also, and it’s their second home too,” Dotson said.

She grew alongside the Tribe during the last three decades. The Nation owned a few businesses and a small store in the mid-’80s; now, with two casinos, a hotel, three grocery stores and many restaurants, it is the largest employer in Pottawatomie County.

“It’s just amazing how they’ve come. I mean, when I started, there was the bingo hall, administration, and the museum and gift shop. Along with the convenience store that was about it” she said.

### Family Reunion Festival through the decades

Dotson began serving Family Reunion Festival attendees in the ‘80s when



Cherokee Nation citizen Diana Dotson continues to serve customers at Citizen Potawatomi Nation enterprises after 35 years with the Tribe.

people knew it as the Citizen Band Potawatomi Celebration and All-Nations Pow-wow. As a public event, people paid for concessions and other keepsakes while attending. The Nation renamed it the Family Reunion Festival in 1998, welcoming only Tribal members.

“We would have a small convenience store-type down at the festival grounds, and we would sell the pop and chips and candy bars,” Dotson said, describing setting up and stocking a small, wooden building for the weekend.

While the Nation no longer sells food and refreshments on powwow grounds, she still participates and serves food and drinks. She appreciates the opportunity Festival provides to meet Citizen Potawatomi from all over the country and world in her position.

Although a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, Dotson never anticipated a career at a Native American tribe. The store happened to be the first position she applied for in her new hometown, and she received the job on the same day. Her promotions and memories remind her that Tribal leadership views her as a dedicated, hard-working employee. Dotson said she owes much of her growth with CPN to FireLake Discount Foods Director Richard Driskell.

“It’s a good place to work, and I never felt that I needed to go anywhere else. Didn’t have any desire to, I guess. I felt at home and welcomed here — and appreciated,” she said.

To look at a full list of CPN businesses, visit [potawatomi.org/enterprises](http://potawatomi.org/enterprises). ♡

## Veterans report



Bozho  
(Hello),

An issue that is of interest to many veterans is the filing a claim for disability benefits. The Veterans Benefits Administration is still accepting claims for disability compensation, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 28, VBA resumed in-person compensation and pension exams in some locations and plans to make them available in more locations when possible. If an in-person exam is not available yet, you can still submit private treatment records or request that VBA obtain those records on your behalf. You can always seek accredited assistance in completing claims and get more information assistance online.

### Are you eligible for VA disability compensation?

You may be able to get VA disability compensation if you have a current illness or injury that affects your body

or mind and you meet at least one of the requirements listed below:

Both of these must be true. You:

- Served on active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training
- Have a disability rating for your service-connected condition

And at least one of these must be true. You:

- Got sick or injured while serving in the military — and can link this condition to your illness or injury (called an in-service disability claim)
- Had an illness or injury before you joined the military — and serving made it worse (called a pre-service disability claim)
- Have a disability related to your active-duty service that did not appear until after you ended your service (called a post-service claim)

Presumed disabilities:

- A chronic illness that appears within one year after discharge
- An illness caused by your time spent as a prisoner of war (POW)
- An illness caused by contact with chemicals (toxic chemicals) or other hazardous materials

### Who is covered?

- Veterans
- Qualified dependents

### What if you received an other than honorable, bad conduct or dishonorable discharge?

If you received one of these discharge statuses, you may be eligible for VA disability benefits.

There are two ways you can try to qualify:

- Find out how to apply for a discharge upgrade
- Learn about the VA Character of Discharge review process

### What conditions are covered by these benefits?

- Chronic back pain resulting in current diagnosed back disability
- Breathing problems resulting from a current lung condition or lung disease
- Severe hearing loss
- Scar tissue
- Traumatic brain injury
- Loss of range of motion (problems moving your body)
- Ulcers

- Cancers caused by contact with toxic chemicals or other dangers
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety

We thank all of our veterans, Native or not, male and female, for their service to this great nation, the United States of America! *Migwetch* (Thanks!)

Until further notice, our Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization has suspended our meetings and other activities until this pandemic crisis has passed. Be well, and God bless!

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

Daryl Talbot, Commander  
[talbotok@sbcglobal.net](mailto:talbotok@sbcglobal.net)  
405-275-1054

CPN VA Representative:  
Andrew Whitham

CPN Office Hours: 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month  
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

918-397-2566 ♡

# Tami Fleeman finds career opportunities caring for elders

Tami Fleeman's nearly three decades as a nurse has allowed her to see the career from every angle — intensive care units, labor and delivery, and elderly patients. During her time as coordinator of Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Title VI and senior care program, Fleeman has become a leader in her field. She offers guidance to several organizations in an effort to improve elder care across Oklahoma and Indian Country.

CPN initially hired Fleeman as coordinator of public health and community health representatives in 2011. Six months later, she received an additional title as coordinator of clinical nursing. Shortly after, the Tribe then offered her the unique opportunity to manage Title VI while still overseeing the CHRs, also known as "senior support." Previously separate, the two programs combined under Fleeman's leadership.

"They blend really well together because a lot of the people we have come eat (at the Elder Center) are also people that the community health representatives visit in their home," Fleeman said. "And if we don't visit them, I know when they're not coming; they're having some illness, or they're having some issues. And then I can get the community health representatives to check with them."

CHRs visit elders who need some assistance with certain tasks or keeping their medications in order but not full-time care.

"We do everything we can to assist them. The department's mission is to keep people in their homes as long as they are safely able to stay there. And a lot of



After nearly 30 years as a nurse, Title VI Director Tami Fleeman continues her career with Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

times, we have to implement changes to keep them there," Fleeman said.

Title VI has expanded in the last decade, welcoming more elders for lunch and interaction on weekdays, thanks to Fleeman and other CHRs' efforts to spread the word about the activities and services available to their clients.

## CHR conference

For the last several years, Fleeman has attended and helped organize the annual weeklong conference for the Oklahoma Area Association of CHRs. The only local conference of its kind, it regularly attracts between 100 and 125 attendees who work for tribes across the country, including New Mexico, Arizona and Montana.

"Meeting people that do the same thing you do and having fun with them. You know, there's always a lot of talk of, 'what we've done in this tribe' and 'that hasn't worked for us, so we did this,'" Fleeman said. "It's an honor to be part of that because I know how important the conference is."

Fleeman is currently running unopposed for the position of vice president of the organization. She views the leadership role as a chance for networking and a special look into how other tribes run their CHR departments. Each one focuses on different populations or goals, depending on their community's needs. Elders with decades of experience in the field make up the majority of the Oklahoma association. While Fleeman's experience is in health care, she began working with CHRs only eight years ago.

"You're just coming into a situation and learning about what it is they do," she said. "I always think that elders give a lot back, and they're a wealth of knowledge. There's a lot of question and answer."

## Dementia training development

Caring for and ensuring the safety of patients with Alzheimer's and dementia presents unique challenges in geriatrics. The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center received a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant in summer 2019. Part of it funds developing training available nationwide for primary caregivers on how to better treat and interact with dementia patients. The OHSC welcomed Fleeman to give her recommendations and

opinions on the curriculum as part of a group of professionals, including CHRs.

"They really listen to the suggestions we give them because we're actually doing that job," she said. "I've been impressed that a lot of the things we suggest, they take and make those changes. And I feel like they're really trying to listen to the frontline workers and fit the education to what they need."

The program also sought tribal caregivers in particular due to their regard for elders and the use of CHRs. Although she is not Indigenous, Fleeman enjoys working for the Nation and developing the curriculum given her personal history with the condition. Her mother was diagnosed with dementia, and Fleeman admires how Natives prioritize and respect older relatives.

"I've seen people quit their job and move from out of state to come live with dad when he started failing or getting dementia, and it just wasn't safe anymore or moved them to where they are," she said. "They take care of their elders much better than the general population."

After decades in ICUs and labor and delivery in several hospitals, she never anticipated making elder care a career niche.

"It wasn't something that I really thought about doing, and I love it. I absolutely love it," Fleeman said. "I feel like I'm really able to help people stay in their homes as long as possible or get the care that they really need. It's very rewarding."

Find out more about CPN's Title VI program at [cpn.news/elders](http://cpn.news/elders). ♡

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## Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Take the opportunity to work on the language during our quarantine time. Take part in one of the many online language-learning opportunities we offer. Find more information at [potawatomi.org/language](http://potawatomi.org/language).

This month, check out some fun phrases that I got from Jim Thunder, one of our last first language speakers from Wisconsin. Enjoy!

**Gégo bye bidgekén. Gde bogtheshkwewzede!** Don't come in. Your feet are muddy!

**Pegdowshen i pkwakwet.** Throw the ball to me.

**Pegdow i pkwakwet.** Throw him/her the ball.

**Bokdonenwi o ndanes.** My daughter is pouting.

**Megwetsownekeni** – Octopus

**Wgi thagzedzo o ngwes dbekok.** My son burned himself last night.

**Nekwsegwedejen.** I have a splinter in my foot.

**Wdenwan ni wdedeymen.** He takes after his dad.

**Wdenwan ni wneneymen.** She takes after her mom.

**Mikwnebwamshen.** Remind me.

**Wdapkadebzo.** He/she is having a Charlie horse.

**Ngi-mikwnebwama.** I reminded him/her.

**Anmikwa** – to take someone to task for something

**Cho ngeshktosin ewi mbayan.** I am unable to sleep.

**Nbakwnemak** – he/she opens it for me

**Kenandep** – skull/bonehead (Some use this jokingly to say "bonehead.")

**Ni je etsegongezet o penojes?** How many days old is that baby?

**Boniken!** Leave it alone. (singular)

**Bonikmok!** You all leave it alone. (plural)

**Ngi-bonikan.** I left it alone.

**Dapneshen.** Pick me up.

**Mbagnek shgeshem o penoje.** Put the baby on the bed.

**Ngi-pamse'a o ndeish.** I am walking the dog.

**Mbemse shi myewesek.** I am walking on the path.

**I shna ewi jakgishgewat nijansekwipi nishwabdekpomgek.** In 20 years, my kids will be all grown up.

**Gégo jinewsekén.** Don't be greedy.

**Gégo kwansegekén.** Don't be stingy!

**Anodze** – another word for greedy

**Metawgak** – sandy area

**Ngi-nkweshkak.** He met me.

**Nmokjane.** I have a pimple on my nose. ♡

## CPN court staff key to protecting Tribal sovereignty

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation District Court serves to enforce CPN tribal laws, uphold justice and guard Tribal sovereignty. The court oversees criminal, civil, Indian Child Welfare and juvenile proceedings under the direction of Chief District Judge Philip Lujan and Associate District Judges Robert Wiley and William Davis. A small group of talented behind-the-scenes staff members ensure the court carries out its duties. The *Hownikan* spoke with each court employee, and their responses have been lightly edited for clarity.



**Andrea Gabel, court clerk**

Andrea Gabel has served as a court clerk for both the CPN District and CPN Supreme Court for the past four years. As a Cherokee Nation citizen, she appreciates the opportunity her job provides to serve fellow Native Americans.

**What does a day at work look like for you?**

“The first thing I do is to prepare for court, then afterwards, work on the necessary documents that need to be filed, reviewed and scanned. I process the mail that comes in, and most of all, assist Tribal members that come to the administration building for information or to process documents and answer the phones.”

**What are your key roles?**

“I prepare for court, take notes during court, process the necessary documents from court and provide customer service to those who contact us for information.”

**What does your work mean to you?**

“It means everything, not just a livelihood, but pride, a sense of heritage and knowing that how far Natives have come and how far we can excel in future generations.

“It’s hard to describe how good it feels to be able to assist Potawatomi Tribal members and other Natives that live within the court’s jurisdiction. It brings more pride to the work that I do. It is just not providing customer service to someone; it has a family feel to it.”

**What is something others may not know about your department?**

“We go to specific trainings to better assist the Tribal members when the need arises. Both court clerks have achieved the Tribal Court Clerk II status from the National American Indian Court Judges Association and have received Certificates of Court Management for Tribal Judges and Personnel trainings from the National Judicial College. Those trainings are difficult — a lot to take in a short amount of time and then come back to implement our training.”

**Describe the hardest part of your job.**

“Seeing cases that involve children who are in a bad situation.”

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

“Witnessing a great outcome of a bad situation, like an adoption.”



**Toni R. Sears, court clerk**

Toni R. Sears, a court clerk within the CPN court, celebrated her sixth anniversary with CPN this spring. The Anderson descendant is thankful and proud of her work for the Nation.

**What does a day at work look like for you?**

“My day consists of checking emails for any required actions, answering questions over the phone and in-person, typing court documents, pulling files, working on court dockets, prepping the court room for court, witnessing and documenting each court session.”

**What are your key roles?**

“My key roles are all aspects of the day-to-day efficiency and documentation of the court.”

**What is something others may not know about your department?**

“Others may not know we do marriages and adoptions.”

**Describe the hardest part of your job.**

“The hardest part of my job is not being able to help someone.”

**What does your work mean to you?**

“It is rewarding to watch the actual court procedures and process in action and knowing I am a part of the court.”



**Lisa B. Otipoby-Herbert, juvenile prosecutor**

Lisa Otipoby-Herbert began working for CPN in October 2010 and currently serves as the children’s (juvenile deprived) prosecutor for the Nation’s court. She’s a citizen of the Comanche Nation and finds her career at CPN rewarding.

“It is an honor to work for a Tribe that demonstrates stability and accountability to the Tribal membership.”

**What does a day at work look like for you?**

“Generally, I have telephone calls or texts from FireLodge Children & Family Services workers to respond to while I’m travelling to the office. Once in the door, I meet with the FireLodge Children & Family Service’s director and/or caseworkers for updates on the open cases or to staff new cases requiring the attention of either that department or the court. I meet with the court staff to see if there are any matters requiring my attention. I then return to my office to draft pleadings or responses based on the staffings.

“Often I am preparing for court, or walking directly into court upon my arrival. On court days, I present, as necessary, before the court. Following court, I generally draft proposed orders for the judge’s approval based upon what happened in court that morning. I prepare responses for FireLodge Children & Family Services in certain guardianship cases and other state court proceedings, wherein the Nation has been noticed. There is never a dull moment and never down time when it comes to serving as the juvenile prosecutor.”

**What are your key roles?**

“Key roles include advising FireLodge Children & Family Services and preparing for court proceedings and presenting in court on behalf of the Nation.”

**What is something that others may not know about the CPN court?**

“Although the perception is that FireLodge Children & Family Services is about removing children from their homes, their ultimate goal is to reunify families by helping them gain parenting and life skills so children can be safe and thrive in their homes.”

**If you had to pick only one aspect of your job that is your favorite, what would that be?**

“It would be the day that a child safely reunifies with their family or a child finds their ‘forever’ home through adoption.”

**Describe the hardest part of your job.**

“Recognizing that a family will not likely be able to have a child returned to them because the home is not a safe environment. The decision will come after offering every service and reasonable opportunity to the family to be safe and provide for their child.”

**What does your work mean to you?**

“I serve the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Everything that I do is a reflection upon the Nation and how it cares for its children and families. My work is important because it has the potential to impact the lives of our Tribal citizens for generations. I take that responsibility very seriously, and I intend that my work reflects that commitment.”



**Kelley D. Harris, criminal prosecutor**

Kelley Harris began working at the Nation in October 2009 as a criminal prosecutor. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and Harris assists with prosecuting criminal defendants who have committed crimes in CPN’s jurisdiction.

**What does a day at work look like for you?**

“I am usually here two days a week for criminal court and Healing to Wellness Court. We usually have criminal court dockets on Monday and Wednesday and Healing to Wellness Court on Wednesday afternoons. Our office receives police reports from Citizen Potawatomi Nation Police Department, and we review those reports. And if charges are warranted, we will file criminal complaints against the suspects. On criminal dockets, we can have arraignments, dispositions, reviews or trials depending on what stage the criminal case is at against the defendant who is charged with a criminal offense.”

**What is something that others may not know about the CPN court?**

“The Citizen Potawatomi Nation district court has a Healing to Wellness Court program for defendants that are charged with drug or alcohol related offenses to try and help those individuals address their addictions and get free of illegal substances, or alcohol addiction, so that they can have a positive impact in the community.”

**If you had to pick only one aspect of your job that is your favorite, what would that be?**

“Working with court personnel and the interactions with Citizen Potawatomi Nation law enforcement officers in trying to help those who have been victims of a crime.”

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

“Seeing so many young people with addictions to alcohol or illegal drugs and the impact that those addictions have on their lives now and into the future.”

**What does your work mean to you?**

“I have always enjoyed working with criminal law and have done so for over 20 years both as a prosecutor and representing criminal defendants as a public defender. I think I am fortunate to work for a Tribe that has many services for individuals charged with criminal offenses; through not only the Healing to Wellness Court program for illegal drug and alcohol addictions, but

*Continued on page 12*

# HR generalist proves hard work and dedication are important to success

Many children dream of earning a spot on Team USA. For most, the vision never manifests, but Citizen Potawatomi Nation Human Resource Generalist Fero Williams overcame the barriers. He earned a spot on USA's Bowling Team from 2006 to 2008. Williams brings the same level of dedication required to reach such a prestigious milestone to his position at the Nation.

"I tell everyone I was born in the bowling center, and I was raised in the bowling center," he said, then laughed. "Those were my stomping grounds that I grew up in. It was a great thing, and it opened doors for me."

## "King of 60 Feet"

During his youth, Williams enjoyed the variety of activities and cultures found throughout Gardena, California.

"You had many different avenues of education and sports," he said. "I had a great childhood and a lot of friends. You got to know all different races and how everybody was raised different."

His parents relocated from the southern United States to California before having Williams and his two older sisters. As they explored hobbies in their new state, bowling became a staple in their lives and eventually, their children's as well. Time spent at the bowling alley with his parents as a kid inspires Williams today.

"My parents are who I look up to most because everything they learned about bowling, they learned from the book *The Fundamentals of Bowling*," he explained. "They were self-taught, and for them to start where they started — both of them were really good bowlers in the city of Los Angeles."

Williams continued the family tradition of hard work, putting in tremendous



*Fero Williams' experience on Team USA pushes him to strive for excellence in everything he does. (Photo provided)*

time and effort to hone his craft. He learned new shots by building muscle memory through repetition before focusing on precision.

"After I learned how to hook the ball and be able to get the ball to do what I wanted it to do, I then had to relearn how to be accurate and learn how to spare," he said. "And once that happened, I started learning from the great local bowlers that I looked up to since I was a kid."

Due to his talents, Williams eventually earned the nickname "King of 60 Feet" from fellow bowlers in Ohio, but he also had success in other sports. He played basketball and became an All-American cornerback and wide receiver in high school. Yet, bowling remained at the forefront. He received a scholarship to play the sport at El Camino College in Torrance, California.

"I started focusing more on bowling to make scholarship money, and

football and basketball kind of went to the backside," he said.

After five semesters at El Camino College, Williams transferred to the University of Southern California where he earned a bachelor's in computer engineering.

## Achieving goals

Williams began working to earn a spot on Team USA at 14, and he kept trying to achieve the goal as an adult. However, when his dad passed away in 2005, he had a renewed sense of purpose.

"I feel as though he was pushing me spiritually because that was one of his dreams for me was to make the team," Williams said.

He had not qualified for the United States Bowling Congress Team USA Trials in more than five years, but he set out to make the 2006 competition.

Williams played 24 qualifying games and 24 games of match play before moving onto the top five, which allowed him to vie for the 2006 National Amateur Championship title.

Although Williams lost the top award, he broke a few records and held second place throughout the week.

"Once I made it up the step ladder, and I was No. 2, I broke down because it was for (my dad)," he said. "I wish I would have been able to see his face once they announced my name."

Williams attributes his success to his parents' constant support and dedication.

"All of the work they put in — taking you to tournaments, spending money for you to go to tournaments, practicing equipment — it all leads up to that one point where you say, 'I have arrived,'" he said.

## Today

As an HR generalist, Williams enjoys learning about Tribal operations and recruiting and keeping talented employees, but he has not forgotten his roots. He participates in several bowling leagues across central Oklahoma in his free time.

"Bowling is still my first love, and I'll never, ever walk away from it because I've made a lot of friends, and it's taken me places I've never been before," Williams said.

Becoming a Team USA member is a highlight of his life, and he hopes to inspire bowlers for generations to come.

"The way I look at things, it's not about how good I am on the lane; it's my legacy that's more important — what I have given back and done in the sport," Williams said. ♠

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## Tribal members meet nearly 7,000 miles from home

Mary Yox noticed another tourist wearing a Citizen Potawatomi Nation T-shirt while walking down the hall of The Sea of Galilee Hotel in Migdal, Israel. Yox stopped the individual, who happened to be fellow CPN member Jeannie Wamego Van Veen, in disbelief. After joking with her about the uncanniness of the situation, Yox wanted proof.

“She said, ‘Well, let me see your Tribal ID.’ Well, I still had my purse on me, and I just whipped that baby out,” Van Veen said and laughed.

She jokingly told Yox she wanted to see hers as well, and they stood in amazement after Yox returned from her room with the CPN seal next to her Tribal ID number. After talking a little more, they both found it ironic how much closer they lived to one another in northeast Oklahoma but ran into each other in the Middle East.

“We laughed out loud because we went halfway around the world to meet another Tribal member that we are not related to,” Van Veen said.

As a member of the Bruno, Rhodd, Vieux and Wamego families, Van Veen had only met Potawatomi family members. Her Potawatomi name is *Dche Deakwe*, Big Heart Woman. She and Yox began comparing genealogy webs and found no connections. Yox is a descendant of Mary Ellen Johnson Scott, who lived on a CPN allotment in present-day Oklahoma. She had never met another Tribal member she wasn't related to either.

“It was so unusual, such a coincidence that we would meet at that place, at that



*Tribal members Jeannie Wamego Van Veen (left) and Mary Yox explore Israel together after meeting on their trip. (Photo provided)*

time,” Yox said. “And I’m one of these people to think that things don’t always happen by circumstance; it happens because somebody is watching out for us.”

They have both traveled extensively throughout their lives. Van Veen enjoys cruises and exploring Europe in addition to her and her husband’s trips throughout the United States. As an army nurse, Yox lived in Germany, Washington state, Texas, Philadelphia and many other places. However, this trip was the first time to Israel for both of them.

### On a mission

Van Veen and Yox both belong to churches that are part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa. Yox, 78 years old, and Van Veen, 68, as a way to strengthen their faith, both decided to travel with their husbands to Israel through Nativity Pilgrimage in October 2019. The trip consisted of a group of 60 church members from eastern Oklahoma, all looking for firsthand connections to biblical times.

“Your emotions are just right on the edge,” Van Veen said. “You’re seeing the gospels, where the gospels took place. You’re hearing the gospels. We had mass every day. We said the rosary every day.”

They met early on at their first hotel and spent time together throughout the rest of their journey overseas. Van Veen and Yox told everyone what they discovered and ended up meeting several other Native people with them as well, including a Cherokee Nation citizen.

They celebrated their Catholicism with one another as well as their ancestry. Van Veen and Yox bought each other dinners and renewed their wedding vows with their husbands at the Wedding Church at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine recorded in the Gospel of John. They also took turns in groups of three or four carrying the cross up the Via Dolorosa, the same path Jesus took on his way to crucifixion.

“I guess it’s an indescribable feeling that you get when you’re walking in the same places that Christ walked, and it was just marvelous,” Yox said. “A lot of

walking. It’s a lot of uphill for an old 78-year-old woman, but I made it.”

They ended their trip with each other as well. Van Veen, Yox and their husbands sat together during the last mass of their travels at Emmaus. Jesus appeared to his two disciples there after his resurrection, according to the Gospel of Luke.

“You’re just moved,” Van Veen said. “I want to go back. I would definitely go back.”

They both found it particularly special to share their faith and the experience with another Tribal member.

“It was so exciting. Because it was like meeting a sister, and it’s the bond. You knew you had something in common. And the fact that she was Catholic too,” Van Veen said.

Less than 100 miles away from each other in Oklahoma, they now keep in touch and eat lunch together occasionally. The meeting encouraged Yox to continue building her stock of knowledge about the Johnson family on her Potawatomi side.

“My dad and my grandma always told us, ‘This is who you are related to; this is who you are. You’re Potawatomi.’ Always,” Van Veen said. “And then when I find people who don’t know that — they don’t know their heritage and their families — I always say, ‘You need to go back and find that out.’ That’s very important.”

Learn more about Potawatomi heritage and history through the CPN’s Cultural Heritage Center at [potawatomiheritage.com](http://potawatomiheritage.com). ♡

## Riggle named Gates Scholarship recipient

Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Skyler Riggle is an exemplary student from Asher High School. He spent four years of rigorous attention to coursework and many extracurricular activities as well as put additional focus on his future during his senior year. In April 2020, Riggle received the news that The Gates Scholarship organization selected him as one of 300 minority students from across the country for the prestigious program.

Aside from funding for tuition and other college costs, it also provides opportunities for networking, mentoring and guidance while entering the workforce. The intense application process includes a thorough look at test scores, academic background, additional activities, essays and an interview. Riggle worked on his submission for the majority of his senior year.

“I tried to exhibit who I am, really,” Riggle said. “I try to be a hard worker and dependable. I have a very genuine interest in my career within the Marine Corps but with computer science as well. I hoped that what grabbed their attention is my personality and attitude.”

### Debt and aspirations

At the beginning of 2020, approximately 45 million borrowers owed more than a record \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt. Receiving the Gates Scholarship provides relief from the stress of owing money, and Riggle appreciates the opportunities that flourish without the added pressure.

“Being named a Gates Scholar allows me and my family to be worry-free as far as my college debt goes, which in turn helps me to focus in on learning and my life after college,” he said.

He plans to attend the University of Oklahoma in Norman and participate in its Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program. He wants to major in computer science. However, Riggle also aspires to attend the United States Naval Academy and become a member of the Marine Corps. His older brother Ashley served in the Army and retired as a sergeant. Riggle always looked up to him and his selflessness. Riggle also admires the “gung-ho, go get ‘em attitude” of the Marines.

“The mindset of ‘First to Fight’ is awe-inspiring, and it’s this bias for action that draws me to the Marines more than any other branch,” he said. “That, and their proud history of heroism, selfless sacrifice and war-fighting excellence makes the Marine Corps a clear choice for me.”

### Passions and projects

Riggle’s many extracurricular activities and enthusiasm for a breadth of subjects helped his Gates Scholarship application stand out.

His interest in computer science and programming developed throughout high school. Riggle joined Asher High School’s first robotics competition team, where he discovered the intersection of the physical world and applied mathematics.



*Riggle eagerly awaits beginning college in fall 2020 as a Gates Scholarship recipient. (Photo provided)*

“I also really enjoyed the hands-on portions because it allowed me to become more intimate with the design of the robot. ... For me, the greatest moment was driving the bot for the first time. Seeing all of the systems that I helped design and put together work perfectly with the code I put together was honestly one of the greatest feelings ever,” Riggle said.

Technology and problem solving also fuel his interest in modern history. It

helps Riggle imagine the possibilities of his career and contributions to society.

“My favor for more recent history comes from the clear correlation between it and the world today,” Riggle said. “The incredible advancements in society, and even more so technology, have opened the doors to so many wonderful possibilities. It excites me to know that there might be so much more to discover.”

Riggle also participated in the National Honor Society, Asher High School Student Council, Gordon Cooper’s Leadership Academy, the quiz bowl team and Asher’s Business Professionals of America chapter during high school. He volunteered at the Special Olympics as part of the BPA for a couple of years, which he calls “an experience unlike any other.”

“Seeing the athletes persevere and have a great time despite their individual circumstances was very inspiring. It really goes to show you that no matter what happens to you, so long as you’re not dead, you can always keep moving forward,” Riggle said.

He holds the experiences dear to his heart, and he is anxious to keep adding to them as a Gates scholar. Riggle feels confident it will allow him to continue volunteering and work with other admirable organizations.

Find out more about The Gates Scholarship at [thegatesscholarship.org](http://thegatesscholarship.org). ♡

# Fiddling ‘Haystack’ Foster builds music career on bluegrass roots

For Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Kevin “Haystack” Foster, music is a way of life. His love began at an early age, fueled by his musically talented dad and grandfather. At 10 years old, Foster heard a J.D. Crowe & The New South record, which inspired him to learn the fiddle. He has since expanded his skillset to also include the mandolin, guitar, banjo, Dobro, keyboard and bass.

“You know, more tools in your toolbox, the more jobs you can do,” Foster said, then laughed.

He grew up in the tight-knit community of Bridge Creek, Oklahoma, where he attended bluegrass events with family, competing, jamming and sharing the stage every chance he could.

After high school, he became involved in the Norman music scene and performed regularly at The Deli on Campus Corner near the University of Oklahoma, where he connected with Bryon White and Gabe Marshall of the Red Dirt band The Damn Quails.

“I first joined The Damn Quails when I was fresh off the farm. I think I was only 20,” Foster said. The group brought him under their wings, showing the ins and outs of being a full-time musician.

The Damn Quails’ front man, White, also gave Foster the nickname “Haystack,” inspired by Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment wrestler Haystack Calhoun. The nickname quickly spread across the Oklahoma music scene and beyond.

“I had nothing to do with it, but it has just taken off,” he said. “I’ll meet people, tell them, ‘Hi, my name is Kevin.’ Then someone will come up and say, ‘Oh Haystack, we need you over here,’ and they’ll be like, ‘Oh my gosh! You’re



*Nothing relieves stress of life on the road like picking up an instrument for Wilmette descendant Kevin Foster.*

Haystack? So, it’s turned into a thing now. It’s definitely caught fire — I don’t think I could get rid of it if I wanted to.”

Although Foster no longer performs with The Damn Quails, he currently plays and sings background vocals in country musician Sunny Sweeney’s band. In early spring 2020, he completed a tour across the Midwest with Courtney Patton. Before the tour, he played in Jason Eady’s band — who is also Patton’s husband — for several years. And most recently, Foster formed a bluegrass group called The Turnbacks with his friend and fellow Oklahoma musician Dillion Sampson.

## Life as a troubadour

Foster’s music allows him to travel and see more of the world than most other 26-year-olds. Although he is

often gone from his home and family in Oklahoma for weeks or months at a time, the passion remains.

“Just the love for doing it — that keeps me going in a big way. I can still just pick up a guitar and sit at home and play, and it not feel like work,” he said.

Sweeney’s music style varies greatly from the Red Dirt and Texas country groups Foster has played with in the past, but he enjoys the opportunity to broaden his horizons.

“It’s less singer-songwriter and more honky-tonk kind of country music,” Foster said. “It’s definitely a transition, but it’s getting me back to playing more straight-up country and western, Nashville fiddle. I needed something new — something a little different.”

## Potawatomi heritage

Foster is a Wilmette family descendant, and learning about his Native heritage began years before music.

“I was probably 7 or 8 when I started going to the powwow and everything,” he said.

Living life on the road can make it difficult for Foster to attend CPN events like Family Reunion Festival, but he has interest to learn more about his Potawatomi heritage and the musical roots of Potawatomi culture.

“I’ve felt like I’ve been pulled away from it a little bit, but I’d like to get back into it,” he said. “It feels good to be active again and possibly lead to more things.

“Music — it’s one of the greatest things on the planet. It can really help people out. I mean, as far as expressing themselves, having an outlet to go

to. It’s a good distraction from the world for a lot of people these days.”

## Foster’s legacy

“I really want to be the best that’s ever done this, as far as a sidemen go,” he said. “I wouldn’t say its competition necessarily, but I definitely have a goal to be the best at whatever instrument I play.”

Foster hopes he can find a connection between his Potawatomi heritage and musical talents as well as create lasting change.

“I’d like to help to somehow further music education and make an impact somehow. Do something different that no one’s done, or find a way to separate myself from other players that have come before me,” he said.

While he prefers performing live, Foster wants to eventually retire from the stage and focus more attention on working the studio circuit, putting his mark on every record he can.

“I’ve always thought people who talk about immortality and people searching for immortality all throughout history, what better way to immortalize yourself than through art?” Foster said. “I guess that’s a little extreme, but that’s probably the ultimate goal.”

Check out “Haystack” on the following albums: *Out of the Birdcage* by The Damn Quails, *I Travel On* by Jason Eady, *Fairplay Hotel* by Buffalo Rogers, Kyle Nix’s *Lightning on the Mountain & Other Short Stories* and Zach Aaron’s record set to release sometime this year called *Fill Dirt Wanted*. Find information on Sunny Sweeney at [sunnysweeney.com](http://sunnysweeney.com), and stay up to date on Foster by following his Instagram [@haystackfoster56](https://www.instagram.com/haystackfoster56). ♡

## Bacone needs funds for historical tribal art program

Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, holds a reputation as one of the best higher-educational institutions for Native American artists to attend. Today, Bacone College seeks to raise funds to properly house its vast art collections and restore buildings as well as honor key collegiate leaders who have left a permanent impression on its legacy, including Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member Woody Crumbo.

The institution kicked off its fundraising efforts on March 12 with the Bacone College Art Gala and Fundraiser in Oklahoma City.

“I am just honored that the Oklahoma History Center is hosting this event,” said Minisa Crumbo Halsey, Crumbo’s daughter and volunteer advocate for Bacone College.

“I am expecting the gala to be very supportive of Oklahoma art and artists as well as Bacone College.”

Halsey and other artists completed 12 by 12-inch paintings to auction at the event, and speakers addressed the various projects across campus the funds would support, including building



*Minisa Crumbo Halsey holds her painting titled Circle of Life for the raffle auction to benefit Bacone College. (Photo provided)*

renovations and art conservation as well as Bacone’s future goals.

## Crumbo

“Woody, just like everybody else, he had learned different styles and different techniques that he brought to the school,” said Bacone College of Art Director Gerald Cournoyer.

“Specifically, Woody came in, and his contribution was stained glass windows.”

Crumbo was also known for etchings, paintings, jewelry and more. While Bacone’s art program director from 1938 to 1941, he worked and taught in McCombs Hall. However, the building’s current condition is less than optimal for creating and storing art.

Funds will assist “furnishing with state-of-the-art equipment, general refurbish as well as renewing and restoring this historical building,” Halsey said.

“We will break ground on the process as soon as possible. Funds and support will be immediately applied.”

Plans include restoring Crumbo’s studio inside the building, conserving the college’s immense art collection, providing adequate storage facilities as well as setting aside additional support for student scholarships and recruitment.

## Future

Bacone College is working toward becoming an official tribal college, which requires tremendous oversight.

“We’re dotting the i’s and crossing our t’s as we send all of this paperwork not only to the American Indian Higher Education personnel but also to the Bureau of Indian Education,” Cournoyer said.

Staff are also working to educate potential students across Indian Country about Bacone’s programs and degree options.

“Oklahoma has 39 tribes, and some students don’t want to leave their tribal community, so we’re doing outreach programs,” Cournoyer said.

Halsey is optimistic about the positive changes occurring at Bacone College, and she hopes to help foster opportunities for Citizen Potawatomi students to follow in her father’s footsteps.

“Woody Crumbo paved the way so many years ago, and he’d be so happy to see Potawatomi attending,” she said.

Although the gala is over, Bacone College continues to raise funds, helping the institution return to its former glory. For information on how to assist, visit [bacone.edu](http://bacone.edu). ♡

## Zook novel inspired by small towns, close friends

Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Linda Kasparek Zook always wanted to be an author. She earned her bachelor's degree in English from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, Oklahoma, and studied Spanish and French as well. After three decades of teaching middle and high school in small towns across the state, she retired in 2011. Her love of languages burgeoned during childhood.

"I've always been an avid reader. My mother was an avid reader, and I think she's the one who actually planted the seed in my head that I could be a writer. It is something that has been with me my entire life," Zook said.

About 10 years before she retired, she began writing short stories under the pen name Kitra Kaspar and submitted several to magazines and other publications. She won the 2005 Oklahoma Writers' Federation Crème de la Crème award for her story *Face to Face with a Rattlesnake*, inspired by rattlesnake hunts held on the desert-like land near Waynoka, Oklahoma, where she has lived for more than 25 years.

"That was a wonderful thing," Zook said. "That told me that, yes, I can write. I can do it. I have the ability to tell a story."

Her aspirations grew, and she began working on a book following her retirement. After four to five months of hard work writing and editing, Zook completed *The Greatest is Love*, later published in August 2014.

### Methods and inspirations

The Bourassa family descendant has always read romances, drawn in by "a good-looking guy, a beautiful girl and a happy ending." She occasionally dips into detective novels or reads authors like Mitch Albom; however,

romances remain her favorite, whether reading or watching movies.

"I'm a sucker for chick flicks. Honestly, if I'm going to go watch a movie, I would rather do a chick flick," Zook said. "I don't like anything violent because a lot of times, they're too graphic for me."

She forms a compelling piece of work by writing what she knows; her leading heroes show a bit of her husband, Larry, and her heroines show some of her personality as well. She also takes inspiration from her friends and surroundings. Zook calls herself "a people watcher."

"I'm not terribly outgoing. I'm actually very shy, and you put me in a room full of people, and I tend to go find a corner," she said.

"I used to carry a notebook, and if I saw something interesting, I would write that down. So, I always tell my friends, 'You just be careful because I take inspiration from everything. If you have a little quirk or some idiosyncrasy, it may show up in a book.'"

While Zook wrote romances prior to *The Greatest is Love*, the novel was her first attempt adding a Christian element. It felt more fluid than working in the broader genre, and she knew the style and lessons of the books served a bigger purpose.

"It's my witness. It's my way of telling people about God's love and God's grace. The theme throughout these books is there's no hurt that God can't heal," she said.

Zook pairs the romantic portions of her plots with more serious themes such as sexual abuse and drugs. The characters struggle with internal dialogues that expand beyond the "will they or won't they" of the potential



*The Greatest is Love* by Kitra Kaspar

relationship in front of them, helping her work stand out in the genre.

"There has to be a conflict, or you don't have a story, but Christian authors don't deal with some of those harder issues. And we live in a world where those issues happen all the time," Zook said. "I felt it was important to tackle some of the problems not typically addressed."

### *The Greatest is Love*

As part of a trilogy, Zook's first novel tells the story of young doctor Joey Winters. Raised in Oklahoma City, she moves to rural Freeman, Oklahoma, after receiving her medical license to work for two years as part of the fictional Doctors for Rural Oklahoma Program. In exchange for her time, the town covers some of Winters' medical school debts. She tries to convince herself two years will pass quickly.

Throughout the novel, she meets Brad Freeman, a Potawatomi lawyer, his

friends and family, as well as the rest of her neighbors. Zook has always enjoyed living in small towns and pieced the fictional Freeman together from everywhere she's lived.

"I love small towns because everybody takes care of everybody else," Zook said. "And yes, there are drawbacks because everybody knows everybody else's business. ... Small towns are wonderful. They really are. They can be aggravating, but they're wonderful."

Winters' experience unravels her preconceived notions of small towns, and the other characters help her heal from painful experiences. Zook felt a natural connection while developing the doctor.

"Sometimes you have an idea, and you start writing it, and then that character reveals himself or herself to you as you write," she said. "In other words, you don't have all of the details worked out. But as you write, you learn about your character."

Zook intentionally included a well-rounded Potawatomi, Brad Freeman, to assist the lead character while growing and learning about life and themselves.

"I just feel like it's important to spotlight Natives and portray them in a positive light," Zook said. "But my characters will always be caring, loving and giving people. If I can help change negative Native stereotypes, I want to do my part."

Currently, she continues to craft her second novel with the same passion for her ideas.

"I just have a strong belief that this is what I'm supposed to do, and God made it happen," Zook said. "That's my belief."

*The Greatest is Love* is available on Amazon as both an e-book and a paperback at [cpn.news/zookbook](http://cpn.news/zookbook). ♡

## Citizen Potawatomi Nation land management and sovereignty

As the director of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Real Estate Services Department, Charles Meloy oversees the day-to-day management of Tribal land. He sat down with the *Hownikan* to discuss how CPN uses its land today and how the department functions.

### How has the amount of land CPN owns changed from the 1800s to now?

"When the land was owned in common, we had approximately 500,000 acres. After allotment, the Tribe wound up, through individual ownerships, with about 250,000 acres. Over the 120 year period, through six generations, the ownership of those allotments have been divided down to where currently there are only about 77 allotments left, and some of those allotments may have as many as 100 or 150 undivided owners in the allotment."

### How does CPN manage its land today?

"The land today is managed depending on the ownership of the land. And when I say ownership, it's the way the land is deeded. The original allotments are held in trust, and the (Bureau of Indian Affairs) has trust responsibility toward those allotments. When the

ownership got down to where it was unmanageable in the ownership, then the bureau took over the responsibility for the management of the land, and then CPN subsequently compacted that management responsibility from the bureau. Historically, CPN had jurisdiction over all of the 500,000 acres. Now, our jurisdictional area where we have total sovereignty — total authority — is on those parcels of land that are in trust for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. And today, that totals about 14,000 acres."

### What does putting land into trust mean, and why would the Nation want to do that?

"Putting land into trust changes the ownership status from 'owned by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation' to 'owned by the United States of America in trust for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.' The first and most immediate thing that happens is that that strips away all local and state control, and this is why we're able to game and do a variety of things on that land. Secondly, once it goes into trust, it becomes part of the land over which we have total jurisdiction and total sovereignty. Now, the important reasons for doing this is number one — it's an expression of our sovereignty. It's an expression of our

self-governance. ... And it puts the land in an ownership status that it would be very difficult for a future short-sighted administration to dispose of it. It's difficult to sell once it's put into trust."

### What are some main ways CPN uses its land today?

"Of the total land base that we're responsible for, part of that land is given over to governmental uses, administration, the reunion grounds and those kinds of things. Part of the land is given over to our enterprises — the grocery store, the golf course, the casinos. Part of the land, which hasn't been developed as such with a building and roads, etc., still is in agricultural use. We row crop, and a lot of it is in hay production. When we buy a new parcel of land, first thing we do is solve any problems that may be on that land. (If) there are environmental issues, we take care of those. (If) fences are in the wrong place, we have dilapidated buildings and so forth, we take care of those. And then we try to get the land into some type of economic production."

### How does the Real Estate Services Department divide work?

"The department is basically divided into two gross categories. One part of

the department, all of their activities relate to that trust responsibility that we have compacted from the bureau. And we oversee and manage all of those trust lands that would fall under that trust responsibility of the bureau. And this relates not only to the individual allotments that are left from the 1887 allotments, but it relates to the land that we put into trust now. Then, the other half of the department relates to the non-trust lands, which as we purchase new properties, they're purchased in fee. ... And we start that process of putting them into trust. And when we decide what it's going to be used for, typically the management of that piece of land is turned over to whatever department is going to occupy it. And they take over and are responsible from that point. We're also expanding our ownership into those original trust allotments, and any individual Tribal member who owns in an allotment and who is interested in selling their undivided ownership, the Tribe will buy it. We always pay more than appraised value. And that way, it's added to the Tribal land base, and it's more easily managed."

For more information about the Real Estate Services Department, visit [cpn.news/realestate](http://cpn.news/realestate). ♡

# Medtronic director's leadership helps company establish scholarship for Native Americans

Ryan Thompson felt inspired one morning in late spring 2018. While driving to work at Medtronic in Boulder, Colorado, the local NPR radio station covered a story about Colorado State University police that removed two Mohawk teenagers from a campus tour. Another student's mother had called the authorities, alleging the Mohawk teens were acting suspicious due to their appearance.

"That was the moment that I said, 'What am I doing today is probably not enough, and is there something I could do within our company?'" Thompson asked.

Thompson serves as Medtronic's senior director of clinical therapy training and oversees the company's minimally invasive therapies group in North and South America. He knew Medtronic had internal employee organizations for a variety of backgrounds, but he realized nothing existed for Native Americans.

Looking for solutions, he spoke with co-workers and garnered enough interest to establish the American Indian Employee Resource Group. Its main mission is to foster community and awareness.

"What we are trying to go out and achieve is decreasing the disparity in higher education for high-potential Native American students," Thompson said.

The organization focuses on ways Medtronic can recruit younger Native students.

"If there's not a lot of highly-qualified (Native American) candidates to come into a medical device world, then you're not going to have a lot of American Indians in that space," he said. "If we can help educate them in the sciences, providing the education that they need to be successful ... we can increase that pool of candidates with a targeted approach."

As a medical device company, Medtronic specializes in creating technological solutions for many conditions like diabetes and heart disease that impact Native Americans at much higher rates than non-Native counterparts. The employee



2020 Medtronic scholarship recipient Lilly Lewis visits the CPN Eagle Aviary.

group also seeks to increase awareness of certain diseases that disproportionately impact Native American populations.

Based on these ideals, participants created an annual scholarship program that is open to Native Americans pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and math as well as business.

The Medtronic American Indian Employee Resource Group has awarded several scholarships to deserving students, including Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member and 2019 Potawatomi Leadership Program participant Lilly Lewis.

## Scholarship recipient

Lewis learned about the Medtronic scholarship through the CPN Department of Education. After reading the criteria, she decided to apply. Lewis is a junior studying neuroscience at the University of Texas at Dallas. The health care sector and Medtronic's impact on her family inspired her desire to become a physician's assistant. Her father is a cancer survivor, and her younger brother Tate Lewis has hypoplastic left heart syndrome.

"I definitely found a lot — even as a kid — of comfort from the nurses and doctors that would just do so much for

the family, and I saw firsthand how big of a difference having someone who knows how to show empathy and care for patients can make," Lewis said. "So from a young age, I knew that would be something that I wanted to do."

To apply for the scholarship, Lewis sent in letters of recommendation and wrote an essay on how she related to the company's mission statement.

"Medtronic is about taking away pain and restoring health and extending life of people who are using their products, so that was a pretty easy one for me because of my little brother," she explained.

Lewis' brother has a pacemaker manufactured by Medtronic. She appreciates the company's dedication to advancement, especially after an experience in California last year.

"His pacemaker wasn't working properly, and from San Francisco, his doctors at Medical City in Dallas were able to work on his pacemaker in San Francisco from here (in Texas), which I think it's so incredible that when you have proper technology like that. My parents didn't have to come home immediately. No one even stressed too much," Lewis said.

The Medtronic pacemaker also automatically adjusts to Tate's needs, which provides the Lewis family peace of mind.

"I know it means so much to my mom that she's not having to constantly make sure his lips aren't turning blue like she did before he got the pacemaker," she said.

## Connections

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has required Medtronic employees to put in even more time and effort as one of the leading ventilator manufacturers worldwide, the company's American Indian Employee Resource Group participants remained dedicated to their mission.

"We had to execute on the scholarship," Thompson said. "We committed to these individuals, and we couldn't back out on that. We can't say, 'Hey, because of COVID-19, we can't pay you,' or 'We don't have the bandwidth for this.'"

The moment Thompson called Lewis to inform her she received the scholarship had special significance. The employee group met its first long-term goal despite the pandemic, and the news relieved some of Lewis' stress so she could focus on finishing the spring 2020 semester strong.

"I just felt like a weight was lifted off my shoulders immediately for financing the rest of undergrad," she said.

While on the phone, Thompson and Lewis also learned they are related through Potawatomi Chief Abram Burnett.

"Not sure where in the family tree she is, but it's pretty cool that a connection had been made," Thompson said.

## 2021 application

To inform Native American students nationwide of the 2021 scholarship opportunity, Medtronic established a partnership with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society. Find the 2021 Medtronic scholarship qualifications and application on the AISES website at [aises.org](https://aises.org). ♠

## Court continued...

also through the CPN re-integration program to help defendants with employment and community sentencing options. All of these are important to reduce criminal recidivism rates and help the Tribal and local community."



Mary Powell, court scanning clerk

Mary Powell is a Melott descendant, and prior to working with the court, she was the greeter and receptionist at the Cultural Heritage Center for seven years. Since the 1970s, she also held positions at FireLake Corner Store and oversaw the Nation's first federally funded community health representative program. Although Powell tried her hand at retirement in 2014, the fellowship provided by working at the Nation inspired her to enter the workforce once more, and in 2018, she accepted her current position as the court scanning clerk.

## What does a day at work look like for you?

"After the judge signs off, I take the (documents) and scan them. There's a file for everybody that's gone through our court system. But I scan that document and save what the document is about. I'll put the date and court minute. It copies everything, and sometimes, there can be a lot of them. Especially when they have civil cases and juvenile or custody. It gets pretty busy."

## What are your key roles?

"My key role is to be here every day and keep those documents scanned and organized and getting the work done so that everybody else can do theirs. It takes all of us."

## What is your favorite part of your job?

"My favorite aspect is just getting up and being thankful that the good Lord let me wake up and gave me the ability to come to work. He saw fit to let me wake up this day to let me do my job."

"I feel a lot of pride. Because when I went to take the community health representative training back then, I had to go to Tuscan, Arizona, to be trained. I knew nothing really about the Tribe, although I served on the business committee. I went to the library and looked it up, and the only thing that I could tell the class in Tuscan was our (CPN's) famous artist Woody Crumbo. I got up and talked about Crumbo. That's all we had. We didn't have anything. We didn't even have the little white trailer. I worked out of my home."

"As far as the court here, I am very appreciative. I am very thankful. The two court clerks, and the Tribe has got two of the best court clerks; you can't get any better. But of course, I think they have a good scanner, too," she chuckled.

## What is the hardest part of your job?

"I can't really say that I've got a hard part. I am always afraid I'm going to be behind and not keep up, but I am comfortable in my skin. When you're comfortable in your own skin, you don't have those kinds of fears. You just let them go."

## What does your work mean to you?

"My work means a lot to me. Not only does it help with my livelihood, it gets me out amongst people. Although when I'm scanning, I am not a chatty Cathy, but it means a lot to me. It really does, and the opportunity to learn something new. My piece of advice is always be learning. Always learn something new and never feel that you can't do it because can't never could do anything." ♠

## Dockry moves from the forest to the classroom

Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Michael Dockry has spent his career in the forest — teaching about them, planning them, sustaining them and interviewing people about them. After nearly 20 years with the U.S. Forest Service, the Slavin family descendant accepted his current position as assistant professor in the Forest Resources Department at the University of Minnesota for the 2019-20 academic year.

“I thought, ‘Look, if I can go and educate the forestry and natural resource students before they get their professional jobs, that’s going to have a way bigger impact than me out there trying to work with single offices or groups of people,’” he said.

Dockry became interested in forestry as a freshman in high school. He loved the outdoors and canoeing, but he learned about forestry as a profession when he participated in a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources program for students. He later graduated with his doctorate in forestry from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 2012.

“I feel connected to the forest, and I’m learning to understand my relationship with trees and other beings in the forest,” he said. “I think that’s what I’ve been kind of going through my whole life, and when I’m working with different tribal communities and understanding different understandings of their relation to the forest, that just renews my interest.”

### Native knowledge and voices

A large portion of Dockry’s job with the Forest Service, and one personally significant to him as a CPN member, involved him teaching other foresters about the federal government’s trust responsibility to work with tribes when surveying and planning for work on Native American land. That process begins by building relationships with Indigenous nations and considering their experiences from the start.

“That was a hard thing because not a lot of people learn that in forestry school. For the past 20 years, it’s me trying to teach people. And finally, an opportunity came up here at the university to start a tribal natural resource management program,” Dockry said.

Having cultural and historical knowledge of a piece of land makes it easier to create Indigenous partnerships when planning use and preservation; however, forestry workers often lack information.



*Tribal member Michael Dockry leads a tour of the Menominee Indian Reservation and explains the tribe’s approaches to sustainable forestry. (Photo by DKakkak)*

“I think we move the conversations forward and vice versa. When we have foresters talking that aren’t understanding where the land came from. Which treaty was signed, what were the tribes that signed, what are those tribes today, what are the rights that were retained in these treaties, what are our obligations when we’re managing this land — that typically isn’t talked about,” Dockry said.

His experience shows that a diverse group is more likely to make well-informed decisions benefiting everyone involved. That includes not only discussions about forestry but related subjects such as inequality, environmental justice, climate change and more.

“We need tribal voices in those discussions because we have been excluded from those conversations. ... At a minimum, we have the tribes engaged in our land management decisions because we need them to formulate solutions because these problems are too hard for just, let’s say, foresters to handle,” Dockry said.

More than once in his career, fellow Forest Service employees described learning from tribes as a “transformational” experience.

### Ecological mimicry

Dockry suggested ecological mimicry as one of the most environmentally friendly and effective ways to maintain forest habitats as well as harvesting resources. Many Indigenous agricultural methods emulate nature in a symbiotic relationship between the earth and humans, and Dockry

spent his time as part of the Forest Service learning those values.

“I got to know and understand how they think about forestry and sustainability ... where we’re incorporating human beings as part of the environment, we’re thinking about relationships with all the different beings that are held in the forest, we’re thinking about a spiritual relationship,” he said.

As a member of the Forest Service, Dockry worked with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission in 2009. The groups developed new data points and observation sets when collecting information on birch bark trees aside from height, diameter and other conventional measurements. The new sets included moss growth, trunk shape and bend, and flakiness of the bark.

“Just looking at the forest differently helped us develop data sampling that now we can use in order to help maintain birch, help manage birch trees, so that tribal gatherers are going to be able to gather different types of birch trees for their own reasons,” such as canoe building, Dockry said.

Mimicry done in the right way redirects and manages harm placed on these ecosystems by human interaction, such as controlling wildfires, mass harvesting and more. The Forest Service, working with tribes and other organizations, creates solutions that implement age diversity, clear grasslands for seedlings and allow Native Americans to care for the land in traditional ways passed down for generations.

“Forestry or cutting trees to make lumber isn’t necessarily a bad thing. I want people to understand that,” Dockry said. “It has to be done in a good way, and it has to be grounded in making sure that what we’re doing helps the forests become healthier, helps the forest regenerate, and that we’re not just abusing the forest to get the wood out.”

### Next generation of foresters

As a career path, forestry includes everything from interviewing people and learning culture, biology, geographic planning, maintenance, data collection and analysis, and computer science. Dockry wishes more people knew about the wide breadth of opportunities available.

He started a collaboration with the American Indian studies program at the University of Minnesota after accepting his current position. As an unexplored avenue of academia, Dockry believes the combination of forestry and Native American studies holds practicality and significance for the workforce.

“Everything that we’re doing in natural resources has implications for American Indian studies, and a lot of the scholarship that they do has ecological land relationships with natural resources at the core,” he said.

“There’s a huge desire for the non-Native students because they realize, too, they’re going to get a job — if it’s a state job or federal job, maybe a tribal job in natural resources — if they don’t know anything about tribal treaty rights and natural resource management, they’re at a disadvantage.”

Dockry currently teaches seven students in his graduate-level program. Native students seek him out on campus as a professor to understand their thoughts and creative ideas with an Indigenous background and experience. Ultimately, he hopes to prepare the next generation of foresters to include Tribes throughout their careers.

“I’m sort of thinking, if I have 80 students per year for 10 years, that’s 800 students that are going to know how to work with tribes. And so I got really excited about that aspect of it,” he said.

“They really keep me on my toes and make me want to do it because I’m doing it for them.”

To read more of Michael Dockry’s work, visit [mikedockry.net](http://mikedockry.net). 🔥

## Hownikan

1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, Oklahoma

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1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, OK 74801

# Legislator organizes USDA Farmers to Families program for Citizen Potawatomi members in Kansas

While Americans quarantined this spring due to the coronavirus, agricultural producers found themselves with enormous surpluses of food typically used by restaurants, event venues and other closed businesses.

The United States Department of Agriculture began the \$1.4 billion Farmers to Families Food Box Program in April as part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program to get some of those surpluses to citizens. Citizen Potawatomi Nation District 4 Legislator Jon Boursaw organized the Tribe's participation as a local branch to help distribute that food to Potawatomi throughout northeastern Kansas.

"We've all seen the news reports and the pictures of farmers dumping milk and plowing the vegetable farms under and all of that. That's what this program is all about, is helping those farmers and individuals out, plus helping our Tribal members out. It's just a big program for all of America," Tracey Kinderknecht said. She is the CPN Senior Support Network RN in Rossville with experience on these types of projects and greatly assisted Boursaw with planning and organizing the distribution.

Each week, 300 distribution centers across the country distribute boxes filled with produce, dairy and meat to nonprofits and other community entities to give to citizens. Boursaw, CPN staff

and volunteers handed them out for the first time at the beginning of June.

"In the produce box, there was like three potatoes, three apples, two tomatoes, as well as a couple of oranges, zucchini, and a bag of carrots and two onions. It was an assortment, but as you know, it's a staple that people need," Boursaw said.

## Community

The broader Rossville community came together to make District 4's participation possible. On Saturday, May 30, the Director of Food Services at the Topeka Rescue Mission Mike Shinkle contacted Boursaw and asked if the Tribe would participate. On the following Monday morning, the Tribal legislator met with Kinderknecht, CPN Rossville housing manager Lyman Boursaw and housing maintenance technician Mike Martin to ask their opinion on the Nation's involvement. They all supported the idea and prepared for a trial run in less than a week. They rented a refrigerated truck to haul the food from Topeka to Rossville, which remains the single cost of the operation.

"We bring that food out here to Rossville, which is about 25 miles from the rescue mission, to our parking lot. And we will start distributing that to the Tribal members and whoever has signed up for it. They'll be coming to the parking lot to pick up their boxes," Boursaw said.



CPN employees (left to right) Mike Martin, Sharron Long and Tracy Kinderknecht work to unload a refrigerated truck and distribute food to Tribal citizens. (Photo provided)

Lynette Hudson, wife of Tribal member Kevin Hudson, gathered a dozen local 4-H'ers to volunteer for the first distribution day. The team handed out 76 produce boxes, and the number quickly rose by word of mouth to more than 100 by the end of the week. The program serves seven counties around Topeka, home to an estimated 400 to 500 CPN families. Kinderknecht, and her co-worker CNA Sharron Long, also

take boxes to the elders in Tribal housing in Rossville and deliver to those they see during home care visits.

"I think that with this pandemic, they're finding out that we need to provide for our own people with the food that is produced here in the United States," Kinderknecht said. "We just have to get it distributed out to the people somehow, so that we don't have to buy internationally or ship out. We can sustain ourselves here if we want to."

The Farmers to Families program is free and open to all CPN members in the Topeka and Rossville areas with no eligibility requirements. The program will continue through the end of August with pick up on Thursdays at the CPN Community Center, 806 Nishnabe Trail, Rossville, KS 66533. Boxes must be requested by Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. each week by calling 785-584-6171 or emailing [tkinderknecht@potawatomi.org](mailto:tkinderknecht@potawatomi.org).

## CPN cancels 2020 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival and Outdoor Nation Expo

Out of an abundance of caution and concern for public safety, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation has announced the cancellation of the 2020 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival and Outdoor Nation Expo. The event was scheduled for Aug. 7-8, 2020, in Shawnee. The event will return Aug. 13-14, 2021.

The festival was canceled on counsel from CPN Health Services Chief Medical Officer George A. Vascellaro, D.O.

"CPNHS medical leadership continues to advise CPN officials, including event organizers, on implementing mitigation strategies to protect the public," Dr. Vascellaro said. "We feel hosting a large public gathering like the Balloon Festival, which typically draws thousands of people, many from out of state, is not in the community's best interest. While this was a difficult decision, we know it is the right one to make."

People registered for the 5K Fun Run or balloon rides can receive a refund by emailing [balloonfestival@potawatomi.org](mailto:balloonfestival@potawatomi.org).

"Our public health team has been providing expert advice since late February, before Oklahoma even had its first confirmed COVID-19 case," said Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett. "Canceling a beloved community event is disappointing, but we trust their guidance and direction on keeping everyone safe. We're already looking forward to next year."

The Outdoor Nation Expo, which is held in conjunction with the balloon festival, is also canceled.

"We are deeply disappointed that we have to cancel the Outdoor Nation Expo due to COVID-19, but we believe it is in the best interest for the safety of our community," said Rick Gage, owner, Outdoor Nation Expo. "We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021 and hope that everyone will continue to enjoy the outdoors." 🍂



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## Anderson family history

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Cultural Heritage Center provides resources to keep CPN history safe and accessible for generations to come. One key way the Nation does this is through the CHC's archives. To highlight some of the CHC's archival holdings, the *Hownikan* is featuring photographs and family history for every founding Citizen Potawatomi family. If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, please contact the CHC at 405-878- 5830.

### Anderson

The Anderson family's Potawatomi roots began in 18th century Peoria, Illinois, when a Potawatomi woman named Mary C. Tremblay married a blacksmith named John Anderson. They had three children: John Charles, Mary Ann and Peter. John Anderson's family settled in downtown Peoria, where he partnered with William Tobey to establish a plow manufacturing facility. The duo perfected plows specific to tilling prairie soil. Their product's popularity prompted Anderson and Tobey to change from making them by hand to constructing them with steam machinery. John passed before the business reached its highest success.



Elizabeth Hardin and grandson John Anderson.

After becoming a widow, Mary Anderson and their three children relocated to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to join other removed Potawatomi. Once President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the government began forcibly removing Potawatomi and other Native Americans west.

Mary passed away in 1848, and her and John Anderson's children moved to Silver Lake, Kansas, in 1851 along with their grandmother, Archange Tremblay. John Anderson Jr. attended school in Westport, Missouri, but the desire to continue the family's blacksmithing traditions inspired him to learn the trade. John Anderson Jr. returned to Silver Lake in 1862 and married fellow Potawatomi Elizabeth Hardin. He worked as a blacksmith, and during the Civil War, cared for military mules.

Elizabeth (Hardin) Anderson's younger sister Julia married Peter (Pete) Anderson, and Pete's sister, Mary Ann, married Antoine Bourbonnais. In 1863, they received allotted land in Kansas through the Treaty of 1861.

In 1871, they were part of the first caravan of Potawatomi to settle the new Potawatomi lands in Indian Territory. Three Andersons, including Pete, John and Mary Anderson Bourbonnais, established a settlement called Pleasant Prairie in present-day southern Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma. Mary Anderson Bourbonnais was very involved with the Shawnee Mission. She became the first Sunday school superintendent in the county and often wrote letters campaigning to Congress and the federal government on behalf of the Tribe.

Pete and Julia (Hardin) Anderson eventually settled near Wanette, Oklahoma. They had seven children, but Julia passed away after birthing their youngest in 1886. Pete then moved and farmed his allotment in the northwestern part of the Potawatomi reservation near present-day Choctaw.

Before statehood, Indian Territory was a haven for cattle rustlers and outlaws,



Mary Anderson Bourbonnais' Tribal leadership legacy continues today in the Nation's tenacity to serve its citizens.

including the notorious John Bly. He held a reputation for stealing horses and highway robbery and eluded conviction. To end the Bly Gang's spree, a judge issued arrest warrants for the Bly Gang on Christmas Day 1890 for stealing cattle and selling whiskey.

Sherriff DeFord deputized Pete's friend Frank Gault, and Gault swore Pete in as a deputy to help arrest the Bly Gang. Christmas 1890, Pete and Gault's party set out on horses to find Bly, and they came upon the outlaws butchering cattle in a field. Gunfire quickly ensued, and the officers dismounted and moved toward the source. A bullet struck Pete Anderson, killing him instantly. Pete's children then lived at the Sacred Heart Mission until a fire destroyed it in 1901, and a local attorney married to Mary Anderson Daniels, John and Elizabeth Anderson's daughter, and her husband became legal guardians over Pete's children.

John and Elizabeth Anderson's oldest son, Charles D. Anderson, was born in 1863. In 1889, Charles married German-born Anna Marie Mueller, and they

had seven children together. That same year, Anna Marie's sister, Sophie Mueller, moved from Germany to America, and four years later, Sophie married Charles's younger brother, John Anderson Jr.

John Jr. represented the Tribe, working with Congress and the federal government to get Potawatomi allotments in fee simple, which gave Tribal members ownership and allowed Citizen Potawatomi to sell their properties without approval of U.S. governmental entities. Although difficult, he persisted, and most Citizen Potawatomi received titles to their land. John Jr. and his children took allotments near Shawnee where he resided for the remainder of his life.

The Anderson family and descendants spread to various cities and towns across the United States and world at-large. However, their influence and legacy remains as one of the largest Citizen Potawatomi families today.

If interested in helping preserve Citizen Potawatomi history and culture by providing copies of family photographs, documents and more, contact the Cultural Heritage Center at 405-878- 5830. ♡



Pete Anderson's wife Julia Anderson.

## Buying a home?

All Citizen Potawatomi tribal members are eligible for this grant one time only. The maximum amount is \$2,125 and does not have to be repaid. The grant cannot be used for any type of mobile home, and the home being purchased must be their primary residence. The Tribal member's name must be on the loan. Convicted felons or other household member felons are ineligible.

The application and support information is required in our office at least two to three weeks prior to the closing date. This gives our office enough time to get the paperwork processed and the check mailed back to the Tribal member by the specified date.

Please contact Sherry Byers, homeownership manager at 405-273-2833 or at sbyers@potawatomi.org.

This grant may also be done after closing. The required paperwork must be in our office at least 30 days from the loan closing date. Please contact our office if applying after closing.

For more regarding loan products and lending requirements at First National Bank & Trust, please contact Jeff Scroggins, mortgage loan officer at (405) 275-8830 or at 1-800-227-8362.

## Complete the application and send us the following:

- 🏠 Copy of borrower's CPN membership card
- 🏠 Copy of Social Security cards for household member without Tribal cards
- 🏠 Copy of the "Loan Estimate" from lender
- 🏠 Income verification for all household members (last 3 to 4 pay stubs or if same employer for years, the last two years of tax returns, first page and signature page only)
- 🏠 Name of the closing entity (Title Co., Escrow Co., Attorney, etc.)
- 🏠 Completed W-9 form
- 🏠 Copy of appraisal



## FAQ — Citizen Potawatomi Nation COVID-19 Assistance Program Phase 1

### What can these funds be used for?

The CARES Act requires that the payments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund only be used to cover expenses that:

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on Dec. 30, 2020.

The CARES Act provides that payments from the Fund may only be used to cover costs that:

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

[potawatomi.org/wp-content/uploads/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund.pdf](https://potawatomi.org/wp-content/uploads/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund.pdf) P. 1

### How was the money allotted?

The U.S. Department of the Treasury determined that it is reasonable and appropriate to allocate payments based on a formula that considers population data, employment data and expenditure data. For purposes of the payments based on Tribal population, the Treasury used the CPN population data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in connection with the Indian Housing Block Grant program. The HUD formula used a population of 17,700 for CPN's distribution. The Nation's current Tribal member population is more than 35,000. You can read the full statements from U.S. Treasury on allocations methods at [cpn.news/crft](https://cpn.news/crft) and [cpn.news/tamd](https://cpn.news/tamd).

### Am I eligible for the program if I've already received other financial assistance?

This fund will assist CPN tribal members with financial relief of up to \$1,200 per eligible individual, and Tribal member-owned businesses can receive financial relief of up to \$5,000 per eligible business.

The funds are meant to cover losses that have not already been supplemented in some other way. For example, financial support received by the Tribal member from the following must be considered according to federal guidance when evaluating need:

- Paycheck Protection Program • 2020 federal stimulus payment • Unemployment benefits • CPN Workforce & Social Services assistance • Other income •

However, as noted below, recipients may not use payments from the Fund to cover expenditures for which they will receive reimbursement.

[home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf) P. 2

Recipients will need to consider the applicable restrictions and limitations of such other sources of funding. In addition, expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program, such as the reimbursement by the federal government pursuant to the CARES Act of contributions by States to State unemployment funds, are not eligible uses of Fund payments.

[home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf) P. 2

### Can I apply for support both as an individual and as a business?

Yes, you may apply as an individual and a business, unless your business is your sole source of income. If your business income is your sole source of income, then you should apply as a business only.

### What if I incurred new/additional expenses because of COVID-19?

The program is only for qualifying Tribal members and Tribal member-owned business that have lost income as a result of COVID-19. Loss of income must be verified and must be attributable to COVID-19. Individuals and businesses will be required to supply supporting documentation to substantiate validity.

Federal guidance does not allow for distributions for increased expenses, only for a loss of income.

### May recipients use Fund payments to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Yes, if a government determines such assistance to be a necessary expenditure. Such assistance could include, for example, a program to assist individuals with payment of overdue rent or mortgage payments to avoid eviction or foreclosure or unforeseen financial costs for funerals and other emergency individual needs. Such assistance should be structured in a manner to ensure as much as possible, within the realm of what is administratively feasible, that such assistance is necessary.

[home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf) P. 5

### How quickly will I receive the money?

After your application is reviewed and approved you can expect to receive a check in about two weeks.

### What is the application deadline?

Funds are only available through December 2020 and are likely to be distributed quickly. Applications are processed as they're received, and funds are only available on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Do all citizens automatically receive a check? Why can't we issue per capita or stimulus payments?

This is not a per capita or stimulus payment, and it is not available to all CPN tribal members. These funds are meant to help individuals and businesses financially impacted by COVID-19 who can demonstrate unmet losses. Guidelines from the U.S. Treasury state that payments can provide emergency assistance for a loss of income "due to" COVID-19.

### Must a State, local, or tribal government require applications to be submitted by businesses or individuals before providing assistance using payments from the Fund?

Governments have discretion to determine how to tailor assistance programs they establish in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, such a program should be structured in such a manner as will ensure that such assistance is determined to be necessary in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and otherwise satisfies the requirements of the CARES Act and other applicable law. For example, a per capita payment to residents of a particular jurisdiction without an assessment of individual need would not be an appropriate use of payments from the Fund.

[home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf) P. 8

If U.S. Treasury believes tribal governments distributed funds in violation of this guidance, it can conduct inspector general investigations into the tribal government's CRVF processes. If violations are determined to have occurred, the tribal government will be forced to pay back all funds, with interest, to the federal government. Tribal officials may also face investigations and federal prosecutions for illegal use of federal funds. Tribal members who received funds that Treasury determines were in violation of their guidance may also face audits from the Internal Revenue Service and recoupment of funds.

### If a government has transferred funds to another entity, from which entity would the Treasury Department seek to recoup the funds if they have not been used in a manner consistent with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act?

The Treasury Department would seek to recoup the funds from the government that received the payment directly from the Treasury Department. State, territorial, local and Tribal governments receiving funds from Treasury should ensure that funds transferred to other entities, whether pursuant to a grant program or otherwise, are used in accordance with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act as implemented in the Guidance.

[home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf) P. 10

### How can I apply?

You can find the application online at [potawatomi.org/cares](https://potawatomi.org/cares) or you may call 405-275-3121 to be mailed an application. ♡



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# Acton family history

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## Acton

Some records indicate the Acton Potawatomi family connection begins with Chief *Ashkum* (More and More) — Christian name James Acton Sr. — and his two marriages to first wife Madeline Ocum and second, Angeline Bellaire, *Azhnick*.

He was born in the late 1700s and served the Tribe as an important headman and orator during the 1800s, addressing crowds about the negative repercussions the Potawatomi faced losing their homelands in the Great Lakes. Every speech *Ashkum* made included historical references and stories of prior Potawatomi encounters with the federal government. He had six children with Madeline: Mary Ann, Susan, Harrison, Cassie, John J. and Joseph Acton; and four children with Angeline: Helen, Zoa, and twins, Mary Louise and Julia.

Chief *Ashkum* established a village along the Eel River in northern Indiana and

signed the 1821 Treaty of Chicago. The treaty ceded almost all Potawatomi land in southwestern Michigan. In 1826, *Ashkum* signed the Treaty of Mississinewa, and in 1832, the Treaty of Tippecanoe. This established an official reservation for *Ashkum* and his band, but his name later appeared on several treaties that revoked Potawatomi land rights without his knowledge, including the Treaty of Potawatomi Mills. While getting annuity payments, Chief *Ashkum* and other Potawatomi leaders learned that their land ownership status changed.

The Tribal leaders and *Ashkum* appealed the treaties to federal agents, stating that they did not agree to cede more land and that the president would not approve. Sadly, their pleas fell on deaf ears. In 1838, hundreds of Potawatomi, including *Ashkum*, were forced to leave their homelands on the Trail of Death.

English artist George Winter captured sketches of Potawatomi like *Ashkum* and other Native Americans living in the Great Lakes region, and he chronicled the beginning of the Trail of Death through his artwork. Winter's sketches remain the only known first-hand visual representation of any forced removal.

## *Ashkum's* descendants

The Acton children experienced a time of great change and upheaval. While their parents survived forced relocation, the Kansas reservation along the Oregon and California Trails made it desirable to developers. To open the



Mary Louise Acton O'Marra, twin sister to Mary Louise O'Marra, daughter of James Acton Jr.

Potawatomi land for commerce and the railroad, the federal government crafted the Treaty of 1861 that allowed the Tribe an opportunity to own land individually through allotments rather than communally. The treaty offered Tribal members the chance to become U.S. citizens, and numerous Acton family members chose to receive allotments.

Several of *Ashkum's* children married other Potawatomi, including daughter Mary Ann. She wed Wezo Burnett, and after her passing, he married her sister Susan. Together they had two children, Cora and Agnes.

On Nov. 2, 1872, Helen married Charles Richard Rhodd in Rossville, Kansas, and they had seven children together: Viola Alice, Ida Florence, Noah J., David C., Maggie, Thomas and Charles Daniel.

John J.'s first wife was *Pekeshmoquah* and second, Mary Vasser. Harrison and his wife Mary had one daughter, Madeline, and Cassie and her husband Alex Leonard had two daughters, Lucretia and Lizzie.

Zora had three children with Evanes Doud: Grace, Leroy and Ernest. Mary Louise married Cornelius O'Marra, and they had four kids together: James, Patrick, Katie and John. Mary Louise's twin sister Julia had three children with her husband: George, Maggie and Laura Davis.

The allotment process proved unsuccessful for most Potawatomi due to multiple factors, including the federal government's failure to uphold all the treaty's agreements. In 1867, the Tribe signed a new treaty and purchased land in present-day Oklahoma. Numerous Acton descendants moved from Kansas to the new reservation and established homesteads in southern Pottawatomie County near Sacred Heart where many still live today.

If interested in helping preserve Citizen Potawatomi history and culture by providing copies of family photographs, documents and more, contact the Cultural Heritage Center at 405-878- 5830. ♡

# COVID-19 TIPS

CPN Chief Medical Officer Dr. Adam Vascellaro offered some tips to adhere to as the United States begins to reopen.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

Maintain at least 6 feet between you and others, especially if masks are not being worn.

## WEAR A MASK

Donning one of these is the simplest and most important way to prevent COVID-19 as communities begin to reopen. A basic surgical or cloth mask will prevent the person wearing it from spreading the disease to others and can also help the person wearing one from contracting it.

## PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

Wash your hands, and use hand sanitizer often. A combination of soap and water is the most effective, followed by alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## CLEAN

Regularly clean and disinfect your home and work areas.

If an infection or exposure has occurred, then be sure to call your clinic, physician or other medical provider for testing and instructions. If directed to quarantine, it is important to follow those instructions.

## Tribal Chairman – John “Rocky” Barrett



*Bozho nikan*  
(Hello, my friend),

The demonstrations following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis have once again brought our national conversation on race relations to the forefront.

For those of us of a certain age, this is another long chapter in the same book Americans have yet to finish. Watching the protests across the U.S. and Europe in recent weeks reminded me of

the time immediately following the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I arrived in Memphis two days before his assassination, and the warehouse where I worked was within sight of the motel where he was murdered. The outpouring of grief and rage on the streets now reminds me of what I witnessed then. The shock, outrage and sadness that I felt has never left my memory.

The unconscionable death of Mr. Floyd under the knee of a policeman duty bound to serve and protect him shows we still have a way to go in search of, as Dr. King said, a “society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience.”

As Native Americans, we know too well the alternate reality that African Americans experience in interactions with law enforcement. In our town, the next people on the list are Indians. As recently as the late 1950s in my hometown of Shawnee,

there was a sign on a Main Street business saying, “No Dogs or Indians.” The relationship between our Tribal government and city government has been litigious, strained and adversarial for over 20 years. The only Native Americans ever elected to the Shawnee City Commission in my tenure as Tribal Chairman, Michael Dykstra and Lisa Shaw, were abused and excluded from active participation for their entire terms of office.

We have put many responsibilities on our police. Speaking as a formerly deputized member of our Tribal police and the County Sheriff’s office, and the grandson and father of former law enforcement officers, I understand well the issues they deal with. Our society finds it simpler to use them as the first tool to address all societal ills. For those impacted by mental illness, addiction or poverty, a police interaction can be a death sentence. Instead of truly investing in social service and mental health support

systems, America decided long ago to just let the police deal with it while decreasing public funding for mental health care.

Our 40-plus Tribal police officers, administrative staff and emergency dispatchers operate under a community-based policing approach. Tribal officers approach each situation under Police Chief Jim Collard’s principles of engagement, regardless of who they interact with. These guiding principles emphasize the humanity and respect that everyone they encounter deserves.

For anyone who watched the video of Mr. Floyd’s death, the actions of that officer and incomprehensible inactions of his fellow police demonstrated a distinct lack of empathy for a fellow man. It seems at times that the line between “peace officers” and “combat soldiers” has been breached. The mentality of some police departments and officers who feel besieged and outnumbered has hardened many of

them toward their true mission. This hardened environment has a disabling peer effect on other officers who do not agree with that mentality. Truly, we need to rethink our police methods and training in our country.

I believe that the events we’re witnessing now will lead to many necessary discussions about racism and the systems put in place to keep it thriving across America. I encourage everyone to treat each other with decency and respect and feel empathy and mercy toward your fellow Americans.

As always, it is an honor to serve as your Tribal Chairman.

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

John “Rocky” Barrett  
*Keweoge*  
(He Leads Them Home)  
Tribal Chairman

## Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps



*Bozho*  
(Hello),

In the face of the pandemic across the United States and the world, life must go on with everyday living. Perhaps our surroundings change, but life continues. A lesson that my family learned when I was a child is that even the most important people in your life will die someday. My father was killed in a work-related accident when I was a toddler; therefore, dying has been a part of my family’s entire life. I must say that even though death is painful for those left behind, it is a touch easier if you have experienced that chapter of your life.

To those who loved and cherished Roy Slavin, his death made the tragic pandemic even worse. Not to say that he was a victim of the virus, because

he was not. Rather to say that his passing occurred shortly after a stay in the hospital. A hospital stay during the pandemic is an unfortunate time because loved ones cannot stay with the patient there. With that said, we all know what a brave person Roy Slavin was. We know that his endurance surpassed most people’s and that his uplifting attitude was one of his finest attributes.

A beloved family man, Roy was married to his lovely wife for 67 years. He has two sons and a daughter — all devoted to their father. He also has eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. These family members portray an impressive legacy from an honorable man. I want to zero in on Roy and Julia as a team for this article. They were a notable team when Roy became a CPN legislator in 2008. That relationship grew, as Julia was determined to be Roy’s helpmate in his endeavor to be an excellent legislator. She was right by his side in assisting him to keep in contact with his constituents and in helping him plan legislative meetings in District 1 territory. Their teamwork paid off as the Tribal members of District 1 flourished in coming together to celebrate their heritage.

Roy and Julia showed inspiring interaction with other legislators, especially those closer



*Roy and Julia Slavin (Photo by Sharon Hoogstraten)*

to their district, like Legislator Jon Boursaw, District 4, and Legislator Eva Marie Carney, District 2. They even traveled to Legislator Bob Whistler’s meetings in District 3 several times. They came to Oklahoma often and were close to the

Oklahoma legislators, namely Secretary-Treasurer D. Wayne Trousdale and legislators Bobbi Bowden, David Barrett, Lisa Kraft, Paul Schmidlkofer and Paul Wesselhöft. Of course, I cannot leave out the other four because Roy and Julia were very

fond of all CPN elected officials, including Legislators Gene Lambert, Dave Carney, Mark Johnson and Rande Payne.

Last, but not least, the Chairman was a longtime friend of Roy Slavin. He drove to Gladstone, Missouri, to officiate Roy’s funeral. The COVID pandemic reared its ugly head again to keep the Slavin family from having a traditional service. Only family members could attend Roy’s funeral service. Burial was at Leavenworth National Cemetery. Roy Slavin was a military hero as well as a hero to the many Citizen Potawatomi Nation members that he served so well. He will be greatly missed.

I have obtained permission for the *Hownikan* to print this beautiful photo by the lovely and talented CPN member Sharon Hoogstraten.

Hoogstraten Photography  
3071 W. Palmer Square  
Chicago, IL 60647

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

Linda Capps  
*Segenakwe*  
(Black Bird Woman)  
Vice-Chairman  
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**FOLLOW US!  
ONLINE**



## District 2 – Eva Marie Carney



*Bozho nikanek*  
(Hello friends),

### 2020 is gaining on us

I'm not sure how it got to be mid-summer already. This has been such a challenging year for so many. The only constant, it seems, has been disruption. I think we're all far too ready to turn the page on 2020. So many of us have been suffering, facing serious illnesses, unexpected deaths of family and friends, job losses or reductions in work hours. All of us have been confronted with the unspeakable murders of Black citizens that have taken place across the country and the following protests, rioting, threats of military response, disruptive politics and distrust. Yet during this same period, many of us have celebrated the births of children, the enrollments of new CPN citizens (the legislature approved enrollment for more than 100 Tribal members at the end of May), and maybe the adoption of a rescue pup. We've hosted and attended (virtual) graduation ceremonies, posted on social media about marriage proposals and family birthdays, and attended far too many Zoom or Google Hangout or What's App meetings. And we're just halfway into the year. My line of attack for getting through it is to pray more, laugh more, listen to

more music (I highly recommend Citizen Potawatomi member Elexa Dawson's *Music is Medicine* at [alexadawson.com](http://alexadawson.com) and Marcia Bendo Watson's *Woodland Moons* at [marciawatsonbendo.com](http://marciawatsonbendo.com)), tend the seedlings of vegetables and flowers I got from our Citizen Potawatomi Community Garden, and make it a point to help someone in a tangible way, every day.

This year we did not have the opportunity to come together for summer visiting during our Family Reunion Festival, as the in-person, three-day event was canceled. And there will be no Gathering of the Potawatomi Nations this year either; the Hannahville Indian Community has announced July 26 to Aug. 7, 2021, as the dates for the 2021 Gathering. I've added this date to my website at [evamariocarney.com/calendar.php](http://evamariocarney.com/calendar.php). I've included here some past Gathering photos filled with friendly Potawatomi faces.

While it wasn't a replacement, there was a "virtual" CPN Festival that everyone could participate in from home. CPN staff offered virtual tours of our Eagle Aviary and of the new series of exhibits in the Cultural Heritage Center. They also taught cultural classes, including beading demonstrations, moccasin making and cooking demonstrations for fry bread and corn soup, and language and history classes. There also were informative presentations by some of our CPN departments, including the education department and the children and family services department.

If you missed the virtual Festival, you can still view many of the presentations and demonstrations on YouTube. For those of you who have not had the option of traveling to Shawnee in the summer, this is



*Eva Marie Carney and others dance during Grand Entry at the Potawatomi Gathering.*

your silver-lining opportunity to see our eagle aviary and majestic eagles up close, be treated to explanations of Tribal history and culture from the Cultural Heritage Center, and maybe even make a pair of moccasins or beaded earrings, if you can pull together the needed supplies. *Chi migwetch* (many thanks) to the CPN staff who conceived of and executed the virtual Festival.

### Honored Families update

For future planning, the families that were to be honored during the Festival this year will be honored in 2021: Bruno, Darling, Hardin, Higbee, Lewis, Nadeau, Slavin and Smith.

Through 2026, the honored families will be as follows:

**2022:** Acton, Bergeron, Curley, DeLonais, Greemore, Levier, Negahnquet and Pambogo

**2023:** Clardy, Frapp, Kahdot, Juneau, Pappan, Crumbo and Muller

**2024:** Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Willmet and Vieux

**2025:** Andersen, Beaubin, Bertrand, Bourbonnais, Ogee, Pettifer, Toupin, Wano and Yott

**2026:** Johnson, Laframboise, LeReau, LeClaire, Melott, Rhodd, Tescier, Weld and Young

This listing is always available, and I'll keep it updated on my

website, [evamariocarney.com](http://evamariocarney.com). You can find it on the "Heritage" page on the site. Please contact me if you need a reminder about the password to access what's behind the "Heritage" page.

### Feather requests made to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Many of you may already know this, but I didn't realize until a few weeks ago that the federal government has a new feather request form. You can access it at [cpn.news/fws](http://cpn.news/fws). You'll know you have the correct form if there is a "7/2019" revised date in the top-left corner. Perhaps they'd accept the old form, but I wouldn't risk it. I waited two and a half years to get my feather order filled, and I think it happened only because Sarah *Yabwekwe* Dalton and I were visiting about naming, and she shared a follow-up email address from which she'd gotten a recent response — [repository@fws.gov](mailto:repository@fws.gov). Official wait time for 10 feathers is listed as six months on [fws.gov](http://fws.gov), but, as noted above, my wait time (I'd asked for 10 feathers) was five times that long.

### District 2 survey

A reminder to District 2 citizens to take the survey posted [cpn.news/dist2](http://cpn.news/dist2). The information you provide is for my use as your legislator in understanding constituent priorities. I will

do my best to share and be responsive to the needs/priorities you identify. I will not share your personal information. If you don't like completing surveys, you can send me an email or give me a call with your thoughts. Upon request, I can send you a copy of the survey questions by email, if that would be helpful.

Please complete the survey or provide your feedback on the survey questions by the end of July. Thank you for your time in doing so!

### The Kwek Society in the news

Unfortunately, The Kwek Society did not win the Give A Brand! contest for rebranding services, for which voting ended on June 11. So many Potawatomi and *Anishnabe* family and friends cast their votes for us — and many others contributed voting messages that we posted to social media. I am so touched by the interest you have shown and your support. One nice outcome of all the work involved in getting out the vote is the article published by *Native News Online*. Read the article at [cpn.news/branding](http://cpn.news/branding). *Chi migwetch* (many thanks) to everyone who has helped us and will continue to help us with the work to end period poverty among North American Native communities. Please send me a note with your email address if you want to start receiving our quarterly newsletter.

Thank you for the honor of representing you.

Eva Marie Carney  
*Ojindiskwe* (Blue Bird Woman)  
Representative, District 2  
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## District 3 – Bob Whistler



*Bozho nikan*  
(Hello friend),

### CPN Shawnee

I had the opportunity to speak with one of our Tribal members who moved from District 3 last year and now lives in Shawnee. He advised me that he was very impressed and proud of the way CPN staff in Shawnee handled their jobs during the COVID-19 impact. He cited the fact that

FireLake grocery employees were constantly cleaning everything to keep it all very clean and sanitary. He talked about the medical staff setting up a kiosk to check our citizens for possible contact with the virus. He was very happy to see that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and staff in all departments, including the medical areas, immediately created policies that worked and were in compliance with what the state and federal government desired. As legislators, we must rely upon Rocky, Linda and staff to do the best job possible. From the feedback I received, I would conclude that they met the challenge and took care of our citizens and staff to the highest degree possible. My personal thanks go out to them all.

### Facebook

In early June, there was a post on Facebook by a Tribal member asking what the citizens

expected from their elected Tribal legislators. The question asked about what we do to stay engaged with our district members and the community we live in. I responded to the inquiry to answer the questions that I could. This is not a very easy question to answer because no two districts are exactly alike. For example, District 4 encompasses a single state. District 3 covers only two-thirds of a state. Districts 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 cover very large areas. Our districts that are outside Oklahoma are setup so the largest one is no more than about 30 percent larger in population than the smallest. As a result, due to the layout of our population in the U.S., some districts include many complete states as well as parts of other states. Moreover, resources vary from area to area. In District 3, we basically have one tribe in the very southeastern part of the state that wishes to be left alone.

They have their own medical facility, but it is restricted to their own tribal members. So, trying to pair up with other nations in Texas to have them jointly present crafts is really nonexistent. However, we have Native Americans from over 150 federally recognized tribes living in District 3. District 8 it is exactly the opposite. That district has many tribes that have participated in joint craft-making classes. District 5 also has multiple tribes to potentially work with. District 2, I believe, may have one or two tribes, with one being the Seminoles, some of whose members reside in the Florida Everglades. However, District 2 includes Washington D.C. as well as the National Museum of the American Indian whose warehouse in Maryland has been receptive to giving tours to our Nations' members. These comments are not meant to make excuses but to explain that each legislator tries to use

what resources are available in their district. In addition, each district legislator gets engaged in the community wherever there is a fit. For example, Eva Marie Carney in District 2 created the Kwek Society, a nonprofit group to provide menstrual supplies to Native American females who do not have access to these goods on their own. In my district, I am actively involved by participating in Native American programs. For example, I'm an ambassador for the American Indian Heritage Day of Texas group where we support various powwows and Santa Fe Days. Each year on the last Saturday of September, we hold an all-day powwow-type meeting at Lone Star Park where we cover various cultural areas as well as recognize a specific tribal nation. As a member of that group, I attend monthly meetings with a racial equality group working towards truth and racial healing

to bring transformation to the city of Dallas. I have also been active with the Grand Prairie Schools in creating a high school elective course on Native American history. I am working on that program as part of the government committee. I will be giving a PowerPoint presentation at the Allen, Texas, library in September on where CPN came from and where we are many centuries later. Where possible, I interface with different Tribal members as the opportunities arise. If all goes well, I do plan to hold at least one district meeting before the end of the year in both the north and south areas of District 3.

## Communication

One response on the Facebook item that I attempted to answer had to do with communication. The person was asking why we don't get more information out to the members in our district. The reason for that deals with not having everyone's email contact. When we became legislators in 2008, we were advised by staff that due to privacy rules, they do not divulge CPN contact information of the members in each district to that legislator. During the last ten years, District 1 advised members almost monthly that the legislators do not have email contact information. More than 120 times, Roy Slavin asked members to send him their email address so he could

forward information out to the District 1 Tribal members. I have made that same request at least half a dozen times, and I know I have seen the same request made by other legislators in the *Hownikan*. Currently, the Tribal Rolls Department says I have over 2,800 Tribal members in District 3. Over the last eleven years, I have collected email addresses on less than 10 percent of the members in my district. Moreover, from the last email I sent out several weeks ago, over 40 came back as invalid. In the last two years, I have only had four or five members in District 3 send me their email contacts. I was able to garner and add several others by getting their email address when they attended a district meeting, which is how I secured most of the email addresses that I have. So at this point, my primary means of reaching most of you is through my monthly article. There have been times that I had some information that may have been of interest to you, and it was sent by email to the few that I have. I have occasionally emailed information that was not included in my column because the article deadline had passed and the item would take place before the next *Hownikan* edition would get out. So I am again asking on behalf of all the legislators for you to send the legislator in your district your email address. To complement this, I have set up a private Facebook page for District 3. It will be titled CPN District

Three. So, you will need to send a request to me advising you are a member of District 3 and wish to be added to the group. Hopefully, I will be able to get information out to more of you.

## COVID-19 impact

Because of COVID-19, most states and many cities are having a tremendous shortfall in sales tax revenue. They need to pay their employees and provide for infrastructure needs. The need for funds cannot simply be made up with the slow startup process we will be going through. As a result, we need to be on the alert for some new bills showing up on the November ballot aimed at getting the state more revenue. In some cases, because many city governments annual budget run from October to the end of September, we may find that property taxes may increase substantially based upon the city council vote. While it does not impact us here in Texas, California attempted to rescind their proposition 13 law in their last election and now their attorney general is supposedly initiating a special school and government funding resolution that has been buried within the repeal of proposition 13. Currently, Proposition 13 sets your property tax based upon the purchase price of your property rather than market value. This proposition was passed to protect the homeowners from massive property tax increases due to extraordinary land value increases in California in the 1970s and

1980s. The elderly and citizens who had bought their property 10 or 20 years earlier found that because of skyrocketing home sales, they received tax bills they could not afford, and many lost their homes. For example, a \$17,000 home purchase made 10 years before could be valued and taxed at \$217,000 or more because the house next door sold for \$230,000. To protect themselves from excessive property tax that they could not pay and the potential loss of their homes, Proposition 13 was created. I have heard rumors that local communities in Texas are looking for some rather large property tax increases in November. If this happens in Texas, we can petition that the increase is more than our state law allows — I believe it is eight percent — and call for a special election to have our city property tax frozen for one year at the same rate we paid last year. I am a small business owner, and each quarter, I submit my sales tax report and forward the sales tax collected to the state, who in turn gives the city its share. Since March 12, I have had no sales, and this is normally the second busiest quarter for me due to sales for the summer. At this time, I will be submitting a report showing zero sales tax collected. I know from talking to peers and looking at other businesses, there will be many, many businesses advising the Texas Comptroller they have had no sales and there is no sales tax revenue to report or submit. So be guarded accordingly, and watch for any

ballot items that are designed to increase or generate tax revenue that you were not subjected to in the past. I am not saying we don't want to provide funding for our city governments. They need to find ways to cut their costs just as a great many citizens have had to do for lost wages resulting from the COVID-19 impact.

In closing, if I have offended anyone in any area in this month's article, please accept my apology. I tend to speak my mind and try to present the facts as they are, even if rather a bit direct. I am honored to serve as you representative and am here to serve you. Do keep in mind, I do not control or oversee the daily operation of the Nation. Where you have a question or need information, I can direct you on where to go or who to contact. As a legislator, I cannot go to individual departments for you. I must go through the executive branch. If you have an issue with a particular rule or with anything, I will take it to the executive committee for their action and resolution.

*Bama mine*  
(Later),

Bob Whistler  
*Bmashi* (He Soars)  
Representative, District 3  
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## District 4 – Jon Boursaw



*Bozho*  
(Hello),

## Commodities distribution program

As many of you know, we have been involved in this program since mid-June. The article on page 14 describes this in detail. But first, I want to express my thanks and appreciation to the CPN Senior Support Network staff in Rossville: Tracy Kinderknecht, RN and Sharron Long, CNA. They willingly took on this additional responsibility and made it happen. Simply said, they are the reason why the program has been successful. We pick up the commodities every Thursday at the Topeka Rescue Mission Distribution Center and return to Rossville where they are issued directly to CPN members to take home, or in a few cases,

delivered to those who are unable to come to Rossville. Normally, the commodities consist of three boxes: produce items, dairy products and meat. Several CPN members have volunteered to assist us in disbursing the boxes, which is greatly appreciated, and we have been thankfully assisted by several members of the local 4-H club. This program is part of a nationwide effort to distribute commodities to individuals at no cost as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers to Families program. I've been told that the program is expected to continue through the month of August.

## July Elders Potluck in Rossville

The potlucks are back! The July Elders Potluck will be held on Friday, July 10, at noon in the CPN Community Center in Rossville. I've heard that Tracy and Sharon have planned an outdoor cookout consisting of hamburgers and hot dogs for the main course. They have asked that you RSVP if you plan on attending. Their number is 785-584-6171. You are asked to bring a side dish or dessert.

## Kansas Potawatomi Youth Program

I am postponing this program scheduled for July 23 as a result

of the uncertainty of COVID-19 and my involvement in the distribution program. I consider the Potawatomi Youth Program to be extremely important, and I will do my best to have it rescheduled to possibly a Saturday in the fall.

## Ground penetrating radar survey of the Uniontown Cemetery

As you can imagine, the GPR survey activities were put on hold at the same time the University of Kansas closed its campus and suspended all activities. I have been in contact with Dr. Schneider, and she told me that she has been allowed back on campus and expects to resume surveying the cemetery by the end of July.

## Pakistani Fulbright Scholars

You may recall in last month's *Hownikan*, I mentioned I had been asked to give my CPN history presentation to this group of 150 students at a conference hosted by Kansas State University. I have recently been informed that because of COVID-19, the conference will now be held on Zoom, and my presentation has been deleted from the agenda.

## Honored to serve you

It is an honor to serve you as your District 4 legislative



## CITIZEN POTAWATOMI DISTRICT 4 COMMODITIES DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

District 4 and the Topeka Rescue Mission offer free food commodities to CPN members on a weekly basis through the USDA Farmers to Families Program.

**Who:** Any enrolled CPN member  
**When:** Each Thursday through August at 11:30am  
**Where:** CPN Community Center  
806 Nishnabe Trail, Rossville, KS 66533  
**What:** Packages of fresh produce, dairy products and meats

To ensure adequate supplies, **you must make a reservation** by calling 785-584-6171 or emailing [tracy.kinderknecht@potawatomi.org](mailto:tracy.kinderknecht@potawatomi.org) by 4:30pm on the Tuesday prior to distribution.

**Volunteers are needed to help with distribution, please reach out to Tracy or Jon at [jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org](mailto:jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org) or at 785-608-1982.**

representative. I appreciate hearing from CPN members in Kansas, whether in the form of a letter, email, phone call or visit to my office. Please let me know how I can be of assistance to you. If you are not receiving emails from me, it is because I do not have your current email address or what I have is incorrect. All you need to do is simply send me an email, and I will enter the email address into my District 4 information file. My contact information is listed below.

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

Jon Boursaw,  
*Wetase Mkoh* (Brave Bear)  
Representative, District 4  
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Office hours:  
9-11 a.m. Tuesdays  
3-5 p.m. Thursdays  
Other times: please call

## District 5 – Gene Lambert



*Bozho*  
(Hello),

I hope this article finds everyone in good physical and mental health. You have been on my mind, and I have heard from many of you trying to figure out what all this means personally. The Creator knows you have been through the ringer with all the activity going on in the world. Hang in there, as this too shall pass.

These times create confusion, doubt, frustration, anger and all the feelings we fight to keep under wraps. Fear sets in when we cannot predict tomorrow.

We were never really guaranteed that anyway. However, we like to think so.

This is July 2020, which marks the first half of the year. I continue to marvel at how fast it flies as the years progress. Make your days count.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is not alone in the difficulties we have survived these past few months. As I have said often, while these are trying times, we will survive it even though it will not be without some sacrifices. We know about that, don't we?

While this is true, there is always something great going on in the

world if we can take a moment to look at the adventurous, creative and new progressive things happening as well.

For instance, we have the 4th of July and celebrating the independence of our country. Additionally, a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket was launched last month. This was the first time in nine years we had astronauts launched from the USA. They were headed to the space station to do repairs, as I understand it. This is exciting.

The day it happened reminded me of a Snoopy story I had in the late '90s. I was taking a class on public speaking at a local community college, and I normally gave very in-depth speeches on religion or spirituality. The decision was made this time to do something totally unexpected. You want to keep your audience guessing.

Remembering my son growing up in an all-female household (I was a single parent), at 4 years old, he did not understand why he could not have a doll like everybody else. Concerned about how others might treat him on the playground, I decided he needed something a little more masculine and decided to buy him a Snoopy doll. He was special because you could remove his red sweatshirt and Levi's so he would feel like he now has a doll of his own and not risk ridicule.

I remembered Snoopy as a child as well as the *Peanuts* newspaper comics that showed he and Charlie Brown every day. Adults and children alike loved Snoopy.

Now, with that little backstory, I wanted all the information I could acquire for my speech and remembered that Snoopy was a mascot for NASA. Having worked with NASA in the past, I recalled how helpful their public information department

was and decided to call them for accurate information.

The call was answered by a very young person who admitted he was not up on all the history behind the mascot, but he said, "I know someone who loves to talk about Snoopy," and he transferred the call.

Seriously, the next voice I heard was from the director of operations at NASA. He took the time as I introduced myself as a "student" looking for historical information. That was all I had to say.

He was definitely excited to talk about Snoopy.

"We were trying to figure out what it would take to connect the public and make the rocket to the moon acceptable to the public," he said. This was something feared at the time and a little out of science fiction to them.

Snoopy and Charlie Brown were always trying to learn how to fly. There is the connection, and the comics brought the masses along as they introduced new science to the people.

As he continued to share his beginning and continued support of Snoopy, you could hear the admiration he had for the comic character. We have had times when it was suggested they make him appear more aggressive, but that has declined as the years have gone by because Snoopy is not a warmonger.

Other countries we partner with have attempted to promote their mascot unsuccessfully, so everyone has simply adopted Snoopy as their own. He is world famous and accepted in the world of science.

Snoopy flew with the astronauts successfully and was one of the first items placed at the origination of the space station.

"Through all this," he said, "the 'Snoopy pin' is the highest honor you can receive now from NASA. We have committees who vote on who should receive this pin. One has never been given to a President, for instance. That isn't the point. They must be directly related to a specific flight in which they contributed above and beyond to its success. An astronaut is the only person who can award a 'Snoopy pin.'"

"Can you tell me a funny story that I could share in my speech?" I asked.

"Oh yes," he affirmed. "You know what an astronaut has to go through and the years it take for training, right? It was during a graduation speech I was giving to a group of astronauts that suddenly one stood up and said, 'What I want to know is when do I get to give the Snoopy pins?' So, the honor is there for NASA, the recipient and the astronaut who presents the pin only after having been approved by their committee. The pin must leave the atmosphere and return before it is considered authentic."

It is a pretty big deal.

He gave me the phone number to call Charles Schulz, the creator of Snoopy, as he too loved to talk about this little guy. I was embarrassed saying, "Oh, I can't call him with my little speech questions."

"He would love to talk to you, I can assure you," he continued.

I regret today I did not call Schulz and use the director of operations at NASA's name and continue the interview. I really felt I was imposing on some very busy and important people.

The director then shared that in September of that year, a new person was taking over his position at NASA.

"Does he love Snoopy like you do"? I asked. He said it was a requirement in the interviews.

A few days later, I received a poster of Snoopy on a rocket.

If you're interested in learning more, search for "Snoopy and NASA" online. You will find more articles to read than you can believe.

So in the midst of trials and tribulations, miracles do happen. Sometimes there are miracles in our lives we don't even acknowledge as such. There are stories about times of financial stress where people decide to write that book, start a new business and do so quite successfully. Put your mind and prayers to the answer, not the problem. The Lord already knows. Say what you want or need, not what you don't have.

Thinking of you,

Eunice Imogene Lambert  
Butterfly Woman  
Representative, District 5  
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San Tan Valley, AZ 85143  
480-228-6569  
[euniceilambert@gmail.com](mailto:euniceilambert@gmail.com)

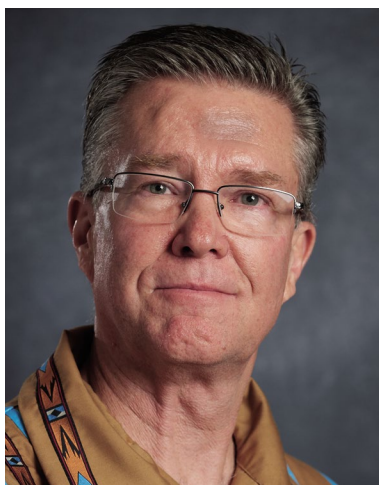
Congratulation to the following 2020 graduates!

Alfred Neves  
Family: Rhodd  
San Marcos High School  
High School Diploma

Maxihikio (Makee) Neves  
Family: Rhodd  
Westfield High School  
High School Diploma

Grace Neves  
Family: Rhodd  
San Marcos Middle School  
Middle School Diploma

## District 6 – Rande K. Payne



*Bozho nikanek*  
(Hello friends),

As I look back over the course of my life, I cannot recall any event that has had such widespread effect on humanity as the coronavirus. There is the disease itself that is reason enough for concern. But will the collateral damage be even greater than the disease? Time will tell.

I believe the Citizen Potawatomi Nation has done a fantastic job navigating the challenges associated with COVID-19. *Chi migwetch* (many thanks) to our health care staff for being there day in and day out, providing health care services for our members and the Shawnee area community. CPN Chief Medical Officer Dr. Adam Vascellaro and his team took a proactive approach in setting up protocols necessary for continued safe and reliable health care services.

Some of the victims of the collateral damage from COVID-19 that I am most concerned about are our youth and our elders. For many children, their time away from home while at school is time away from environments of alcoholism, substance abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse and so on. Sadly, for some children,

school is the only place they feel safe. Many school districts are calling upon parents to assist with distance learning. This is not a recipe for success in many cases.

Here in my community, the elderly in some assisted living facilities were severely impacted by COVID-19. We have all seen the videos of elder abuse in assisted living or elder care facilities. I think perhaps there are other abuses that go unnoticed. Poor sanitation and a lack of facility maintenance are problems that ultimately have a direct, negative effect on residents living in poorly run facilities. Due to the coronavirus, no visitor policies were put in place, and the potential for abuse has gone largely unchecked as there is no one to advocate on behalf of their loved ones. I am so grateful that we have FireLodge Children & Family

Services, Indian Child Welfare, Foster Care/Adoption and Family Preservation that all operate under the umbrella of FireLodge Children & Family Services. Ashlee May is the director. We also have Adult Protective Services programs that operate under the direction of Janet Draper. Assistance is available to all Citizen Potawatomi. However, keep in mind, resources are limited and can be more difficult to provide in districts outside of Oklahoma. You can reach FireLodge Children & Family Services at 405-878-4831.

Our District 6 event scheduled for July 25 in Temecula has been canceled. As of this writing, the Ronald H. Roberts Public Library remains closed due to COVID-19. I am hoping to plan an event when we can gather safely. I am

sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Potawatomi Phrase of the Month: *Nishokmowa* – help someone, he/she does

Wisdom from the Word:  
"The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him." Psalm 103:13

*Migwetch!*  
(Thank you!)

Rande K. Payne  
*Mnedo Gabo*  
Representative, District 6  
31150 Road 180  
Visalia, CA 93292-9585  
559-999-3525 office  
559-999-5411 cell  
[rande.payne@potawatomi.org](mailto:rande.payne@potawatomi.org)

## District 7 – Mark Johnson



*Bozho nikanek*  
(Hello friends),

I hope that you had a chance to attend the virtual 2020

Family Reunion Festival. In this strange new world that we seem to be living in, virtual seems to be the new normal. It is just a lot harder to shake hands, and it will never take the place of being there in person. Hopefully, the pandemic can work itself out or a vaccine is developed and widely available before next year's Festival. It is tragic how these diseases still adversely impact the Native American communities at a much higher rate than the rest of the country, as evidenced by the tragic loss of so many of our Navajo and Hopi brothers and sisters. As advanced as this country is, there are still such glaring

examples of how little progress has been made in certain areas.

If your family has unmet needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please take advantage to the Coronavirus Relief Fund that is available to our members nationwide from the CARES Act funding made available to the tribes. Information is available through the Tribal website at [potawatomi.org/cares](http://potawatomi.org/cares), or by following the information available in this issue of the *Hownikan*. This includes a maximum of \$1,200 per qualified Tribal member or \$5,000 per qualified Tribal member-owned business. It is anticipated that the current

funding will not be enough, but we are hopeful that a second round of funding will be provided once the initial round is disbursed. Do not wait to apply. Should you need further information, feel free to call myself or Tribal headquarters.

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 representative. As always, give me a call. I will be happy to work with you on any questions you may have, or provide you with additional information you may need to access Tribal benefits that may be available to you. Please also take the time to give me a call or send me an email with

your contact information so that I can keep you informed of the happenings within the Nation and District 7.

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

Mark Johnson,  
*Wisk Mtek* (Strong as a Tree)  
Representative, District 7  
1565 Shaw Ave., Suite 202  
Clovis, CA 93611  
559-351-0078 cell  
[mark.johnson@potawatomi.org](mailto:mark.johnson@potawatomi.org)

## District 8 – Dave Carney



*Bobzo nikan*  
(Hello friend),

Here we are, months into the pandemic, and life looks very different for all of us. Some people are suffering financially, others emotionally and still others, spiritually. There will be businesses that never open again and some that will have a large part of their workforce working from home. The economy will certainly change

from its pre-pandemic status. With the advent of Amazon, major retailers like Sears and JCPenney have been on life support, and the nation's retail malls have been in an evolving mode. This pandemic will effectively be pulling the plug.

Churches have gone 100 percent online, and the majority have had their collections drop drastically. Again, some of these institutions that were barely getting by will likely shut their doors permanently. Others will thrive as they adapt to new ways of serving their members.

As some of you know, I am a real estate agent working in the Olympia, Washington, area. I have been working for a major traditional brokerage for many years. In mid-March, my office closed its doors in response to the state lockdown mandated by the governor. In the following weeks, I continued

to support my customers who were buying homes and selling homes in the area toward the successful conclusion of their transactions. Most deals closed; others did not, but I found that I could work effectively without driving to an office. I have since changed companies and am working for a firm that is 100 percent online. One of the most fascinating elements of this new model is called "The World." I have created an avatar that looks like me, and I walk through this virtual world, attending trainings, meeting other agents and meeting with various administrative staff to resolve issues.

At our last legislative meeting, the Nation's elected officials received a briefing on the legal ramifications around the guidelines of how to utilize the CARES Act funds received from the U.S. Treasury Department. A large sum of money often

creates hard feelings and discontent — however it may be distributed. By now, you have seen in several forums, including the *Hownikan*, on how funds will be spent for expenses directly related to COVID at the Tribe, to Tribal members and Tribal member-owned businesses that apply and can show documented need not mitigated by other COVID related funds, like the stimulus. If you are in need of these funds and the need meets this requirement, please apply at [potawatomi.org/cares](http://potawatomi.org/cares).

There are some tribes, like the Sac and Fox Nation, who utilized some funds per the guidelines. However, they took the remainder and distributed them in a "per cap" manner. While that may be popular, it clearly does not follow the Treasury's guidelines, and it is likely those funds will need to be repaid.

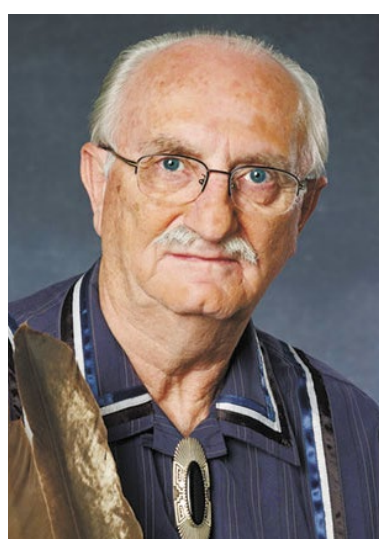
In the legislature's executive session where details were hashed out, I offered a proposal that no member of the legislature or a business owned by a legislator can receive any of these COVID funds.

I am looking forward to being able to meet in person with District 8 members. We are in the planning stages of the Fall Feast still. The date has been set for Oct. 24, and it will be a mid-day meal and gathering held at the Great Spirit Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon.

It is my honor to serve as your legislator,

Dave Carney  
*Kagasghi* (Raven)  
Representative, District 8  
520 Lilly Road, Building 1  
Olympia, WA 98506  
360-259-4027  
[dcarney@potawatomi.org](mailto:dcarney@potawatomi.org)

## District 9 – Paul Wesselhöft



*Bozho nikan*  
(Hello friend),

### America in crises

The first half of 2020 included perhaps the worst and most challenging months of the 21st century. For many young people, these months have been the worst in their lifetime. It is the most troubling time since Sept. 11.

Somewhere in the middle of a terrible viral pandemic killing

thousands and destroying thousands of businesses, we were hit with the most challenging racial crises since the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s.

For weaker nations, such a double crises would bring down their civilization, but not America. We not only survive, we thrive. It is in our DNA as Potawatomi to survive and thrive. We have

done so since we were forced to walk our Trail of Death.

"I can't breathe," is a clarion cry to reform our law enforcement, especially when they arrest minorities. And all black lives matter, including the elder black officer murdered protecting someone's business.

America is such a greater nation having been tutored by the Civil Rights Movement, and America will be a greater

nation as we survive and thrive from a disease of the body and a disease of the soul.

*Migwetch*  
(Thank you),

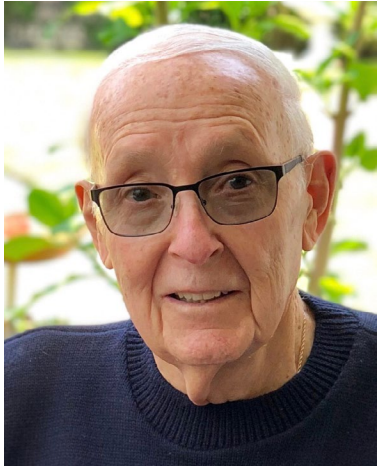
Paul Wesselhöft  
*Naganit* (Leader)  
Representative, District 9  
[pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org](mailto:pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org)



# FALL SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE

**OPENS JULY 15 AT 8AM CT CLOSSES SEPTEMBER 15 AT 5PM CT**

Apply at [portal.potawatomi.org](http://portal.potawatomi.org)

**Warren Vene Morris**

Warren Morris died in Longview, Washington, of natural causes. He was born in Elmwood, Oklahoma, to Mabel and Lorrin Morris. In 1937, they moved to Washington state. Warren attended schools locally, graduating from R.A. Long High School in 1949. He played basketball and was admitted to the hall of fame.

As a youth, he was employed with Longview Fibre Co. and Quality Bakery. In 1950, he started working for Long-Bell Lumber Co. He became purchasing manager, and his work took him to many places in the U.S., Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Taiwan. When International Paper closed, he opened his own successful lumber sales business before becoming president-manager of Ross Simmons Lumber Co. He retired in 1996.

Warren and Anna Jeanne (DePriest) were married June 10, 1950. They had three children: Karen, Lora and Kirk. He spent time with each of them, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren in their endeavors in school and sports activities.

After retirement, he and AJ spent time travelling in their RV to Arizona and toured many state capitals. They visited Washington D.C., New York and cruised to Alaska. He enjoyed bowling, golfing, hunting, fishing and casinos. He was a member of the Early Edition Rotary. He took pleasure volunteering at St. Vincent De Paul.

Warren was a proud member of Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and he attended several powwows. At numerous regional meetings, he received the elder award.

Warren is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Anna Jeanne, of 69 years; three children, Karen (Fred) Bruechert, Lora Leedy and Kirk (Ellie) Morris; granddaughters, Allison (John) Milhorn, Melissa (John Price) Bruechert, Emma Leedy and Kory (Josh) Fischer; great-granddaughters, Maddie, Haleigh, Deidre, Kelsey, and Avery; great-great grandchildren, Demetrius and Peyton; and two sisters, Odetta Yeager and Rhonda Pfingsten.

**William Wayne Southall**

William (Bill) Wayne Southall passed away at home on April 10, 2020, at the age of 58 after giving all his love and life to his family and loved ones. He was the son of Pat and Wayne Southall. Bill attended OSU. He was a truck driver and farmer. Bill enjoyed cars and his family. He was also a part-time mechanic. He was a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

He is survived by two sisters, Kay Parks of Allen, Texas, and Sharon Jahn of Fairview, Texas. He has one niece and four nephews: Noah Jahn, Joshua Jahn, Kioko Jahn, Brandon Parks and Cody Parks.

Bill rests in peace at the Lawnview Cemetery in Cordell, Oklahoma. Bill was known for his great sense of humor and telling great stories. He will be missed dearly.

**William Joseph Pearce**

William (Bill) Joseph Pearce walked on May 9, 2020, in Rochester, New York, at the age of 95. He is survived by his sister Marijean Wade and brother David; children, Laura Stone, Alex Stone, Margaret, Daniel, Tyler and Ryder; grandchildren, Eli Atkins and Garrett Atkins; and life partner Mary Taylor.

Bill was born in Ponca City, Oklahoma, on Jan. 15, 1925, son of William Pearce and Mary Fitzgerald and grandson of William Pearce and Carrie Wickens. He grew up in South Buffalo, New York, and enlisted in the Navy at age 16, serving four years in the Pacific aboard the USS Windsor. After the war, he earned a B.A. in English at Miami University and returned to Tokyo to teach En-

glish for four years. He then came back to the U.S. to earn an M.S. in radio and television from Syracuse University. He directed radio and television for Brown University, led WLIW-TV on Long Island, then moved to Rochester to grow the PBS station WXXI, where he was president for 26 years 1969-1995.

Bill was a proud CPN member and Burnett descendant. In 2008, he ran for District 1 Tribal legislator and lost by one vote. He served for many years on the Board of Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT). A dedicated student of Native history, he spent his retirement giving talks on Indian boarding schools and the Native roots of democracy. He also loved staying active with skiing, tennis, squash and Pilates and was a voracious reader of the daily newspapers.

The family would like to thank Heather Heights, The Friendly Home and Nick VanStaalduinen of Senior's Choice Care Management for their love and devotion to him for the last seven years. Condolences and memories may be shared at [millerfuneralandcremationservices.com](http://millerfuneralandcremationservices.com). Memorial contributions may be made to Friends of Ganondagan.

**Richard Soelter**

Richard (Dick) Soelter passed away April 11, 2020, at the age of 87. He was born to Herman and LaVera Soelter on May 4, 1932, in Belvue, Kansas.

He served in the Army from October 1953 until July 1954 in Korea. He was honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant. He was awarded the Korean Service Medal with two Bronze Star Medals. He also received the United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge and a Purple Heart.

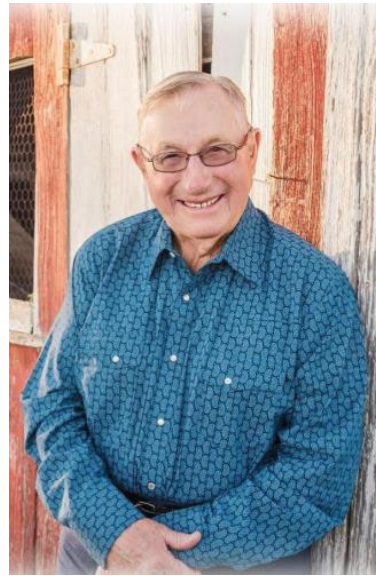
Dick was employed with Foster and Kleiser Outdoor Advertising Company from 1954 to 1965. He farmed from 1965 to 1975 and was employed with the Quincy School District from 1969 until 1994.

He was an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Shawnee, Oklahoma, and was named *Naganit*, meaning "Leader."

Dick is survived by his wife, Rae; son, Rusty and daughter-in-law, Julie; and grandchildren, Hannah and Addison (Dylan) Pearl. His siblings include Erma (Sam, deceased) Pozzobon; Newell (Mary) Soelter (both deceased); Donna (Ken) Williams (both deceased); Donald Soelter (deceased); Will (deceased) (Dee) Soelter; James (Nancy) Soelter; Margie (Pete) Overgaauw; and Lester Soelter (deceased).

His wife said, "Your last words to me will always be in my heart, and the love I have for you will never die." They would have been married 60 years this May.

Memorials may be made to the Quincy Senior Center, and a celebration of life service will be held at a later date.

**Gerald T. (Jerry) Pearl**

Gerald T. (Jerry) Pearl, 88, died June 11, 2020, at his home with his loving family at his bedside. He was born May 14, 1932, on a farm near St. Marys, referred to as the "Sandy Hook" community. He was the youngest of six children born to Thomas M. and Florence G. Doyle Pearl. Mr. Pearl attended James Grade School in rural Shawnee County. He graduated from St. Marys High School in 1950. He served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956 in the post Korean War era and was honorably discharged in 1962. He was nicknamed "Muscles" in high school and "Gates" in the military, referring to the "Pearly Gates." When he returned from the service, he continued to work on the family farm. Jerry never knew a stranger and gave a helping hand to those in need. Besides a firm handshake, you would know him from his signature wink and thumbs up.

Jerry was a lifetime member of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church; he was a faithful adorer, an Honorary Life Member of Knights of Columbus Council #657 and the Thomas A. McNeive Fourth Degree Assembly. For many years, he served as a member of the Honor Guard for deceased members of both the Knights of Columbus and the

American Legion. On Memorial Day weekend, he traveled with the American Legion Firing Squad to the area cemeteries to honor the deceased veterans. In 2015, Jerry and other chosen veterans traveled to Washington, D.C. on the Wamego Honor Flight.

He was a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the CPN Veteran Association. Jerry and his wife Hildegard would make an annual trip to Shawnee, Oklahoma, to the Family Reunion Festival and also were part of the Trail of Death caravan. They coordinated a naming ceremony for 28 family members to receive their Indian names. They owned and operated G & H Pearl Farms and Pearl Trucking. He was a member of the Tri-County Drainage board for many years. Jerry also enjoyed his family, farming, ranching, traveling and woodworking. He was a jack-of-all-trades.

Jerry was an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous for 43 years and was a mentor to many in recovery up until his death.

Jerry was united in marriage to Hildegard J. Taphorn, on April 12, 1958, at St. Gregory's Catholic Church in Marysville, Kansas. They met through the CYO and loved to dance. Hildegard preceded him in death in 2014. Mr. Pearl was also preceded in death by their infant son, Johnny; his brother, J.B. Pearl; his sisters, Marjorie Guerich and Maureen Harris; and his great-granddaughter, Parker Monhollon.

He is survived by his eight daughters he called his "String of Pearls": Colleen Monhollon (Jim Meyer), Rossville; Cathy Pearl, Manhattan; Christy (Dave) Ronsse; Gerry Lou (Dan) Marstall, St. Marys; Mary (James) Wurtz; Ginger (Jerry) Flach, Paxico; Angie Leuthold (John Burns) Wamego; and Michelle (Ryan) Martin, St. Marys; his brother, Bob Pearl of Parma Heights, Ohio; sister, Sr. Virginia Pearl, CSJ, of Concordia; sister-in-law, Eileen Pearl, formerly of St. Marys; and the entire Taphorn family. Mr. Pearl has 18 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews and many great friends, including Jerry's fiancé, Betty Napolis, Topeka, and her daughters, Laura McVay and Georgianne Crow. He loved to joke and tell stories and was very ornery with all. His smile was his greatest feature. He loved his pie first, followed by his cheeseburger, and shared these meals with his grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Topeka Midland Hospice, Immaculate Conception Church Food Bank, the St. Marys Historical Society or charity of choice and sent in care of Piper Funeral Home, 714 Maple Street, St. Marys, Kansas 66536. Online condolences may be sent to [piperfuneralhome.com](http://piperfuneralhome.com).

**Submitting obituaries**

To submit an obituary, please send a word document with **no more than 300 words**, a 300dpi photo and a contact phone number to

[hownikan@potawatomi.org](mailto:hownikan@potawatomi.org)

**CPN burial assistance through Tribal Rolls**

The \$2,000 CPN Burial Assistance Fund is automatically available to all enrolled CPN members. You may fill out a burial assistance fund form if you would like for us to keep it on file in case of any change in resolutions.

**Please note:** Once a CPN tribal member has passed, the Tribal Rolls office must be notified in order for CPN to provide burial funding. Information and instructions for the burial process will be sent to the next of kin and will be discussed then.

For more information, please call Tribal Rolls at 405-878-5835 or email [cclark@potawatomi.org](mailto:cclark@potawatomi.org).