

—TOGETHER—
COMMUNITY · FAMILY · CULTURE

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73RD ANNUAL

CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY



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GADUGI

UNITY THROUGH GENERATIONS

73RD ANNUAL CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY AWARDEES

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CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY PARADE MARSHAL

The Cherokee National Holiday Parade Marshal honor is given in recognition of professional, civic or personal accomplishments.



TOMMY WILDCAT

Honored with the distinction of Cherokee National Treasure in 2013, Tommy Wildcat has performed traditional flute music worldwide, including the U.S. Capitol, Machu Picchu and the Great Pyramids. He was recognized for distinguished service in the inaugural Congressional Forum for Native American and Alaska Native Tribal Leaders and Tribal College Presidents. A master maker of river cane flutes and blowguns, he is a NAMA Flutist of the Year and longtime Cherokee Nation cultural educator.

CHEROKEE NATIONAL MEDAL OF PATRIOTISM AWARD

The Cherokee National Medal of Patriotism Award is given in recognition of those who answered the call of duty, made great sacrifices and risked their lives in service to Cherokee Nation and the United States of America, tirelessly defending and promoting freedom and liberty for Cherokees and all mankind.



FRANKLIN R. PARKER

Having served twice as U.S. assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs, the Honorable Franklin R. Parker oversaw policies for Sailors, Marines, civilians and their families. An attorney and former BAE Systems senior counsel, Parker also held senior roles at the Maritime Administration. He is a recipient of the Navy’s Meritorious Public Service Award and three Distinguished Public Service Awards.

CHEROKEE NATIONAL STATESMANSHIP AWARD

The Cherokee National Statesmanship Award is given in recognition of those who, as public servants, epitomize the servant leader ideal, exemplifying Cherokee values and acting with respect, dignity and graciousness while working for the betterment of Cherokee Nation and its citizens.



DR. ROBERT MARTIN

Serving as the president of the Institute of American Indian Arts from 2007 to 2024, Dr. Robert Martin oversaw major campus expansion, enrollment growth and a successful capital campaign. He previously led three tribal colleges and earned multiple honors, including the 2024 National Humanities Medal and a “Dr. Robert Martin Day” recognition in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

SAMUEL WORCESTER AWARD

The Samuel Worcester Award is given to a non-Cherokee who has made substantial contributions to the preservation of Cherokee heritage, culture, community and sovereignty.



DR. DANIEL F. LITTLEFIELD JR.

A co-founder and director of the Sequoyah National Research Center since 2006, Dr. Daniel F. Littlefield Jr. has authored numerous works on Indian Territory and taught for more than 40 years. His honors include induction into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame, the Arkansas Historical Society’s Lifetime Achievement Award, Phi Beta Kappa, Arkansan of the Day and the Key to the City of Eufaula.

73RD ANNUAL CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY AWARDEES

CHEROKEE NATIONAL TREASURE AWARD

The Cherokee National Treasure Award is given in recognition of Cherokee artisans who have exhibited exceptional skill and knowledge in traditional Cherokee arts and crafts by creating unique Cherokee works through graphic art, contemporary art, music, storytelling and other art forms, as well as perpetuating and preserving the Cherokee language, embodying Cherokee values and bequeathing their knowledge to younger generations.



MARY (RECTOR) AITSON

Weaving baskets and creating natural dyes for more than 28 years, Mary (Rector) Aitson, 93, has shown her work at the Santa Fe Indian Market, Red Earth and events across Oklahoma. A retired educator, Aitson continues to teach basketry to Native youth and college student organizations. Her baskets — crafted with traditional materials and dyes — are held in collections worldwide.



RONALD MITCHELL

A professional Native American artist for more than 50 years, Ronald Mitchell has earned numerous awards and is a nine-time finalist for the Indian Arts & Crafts Association’s Indian Artist of the Year. Mitchell’s work, which heavily reflects tribal culture and traditions, appears in galleries, museums and collections around the world. He has mentored countless emerging artists with guidance and demonstrations.

CHEROKEE NATIONAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INDIVIDUAL AWARD

The Cherokee National Community Leadership Individual Award is given in recognition of Cherokee Nation citizens who, without hesitation, have tirelessly given their time and effort to make their communities more vibrant, livable places. Their example of servant leadership embodies Cherokee values, and is held in high esteem by their peers for strengthening the bonds of Cherokee Nation citizens.



DR. CHARLOTTE WILSON HETH

An accomplished ethnomusicologist, Dr. Charlotte Wilson Heth served 20 years as a UCLA professor and was the director of the university’s American Indian Studies Center for 11 years. She has curated Smithsonian exhibits and published extensively on Cherokee music. Her honors include a Lifetime Academic Achievement Award from the American Folklore Society and a Life Membership Award from the Society for Ethnomusicology.

CHEROKEE NATIONAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION AWARD

The Cherokee National Community Leadership Organization Award is given in recognition of Cherokee communities that have demonstrated the spirit of working together through servant leadership, applying Cherokee values to make their communities a better place for Cherokee Nation citizens.

CHEROKEE NATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The new Cherokee National Historical Society was established under the Cherokee Heritage Center Act of 2020. The historic legislation created the seven-member advisory board, comprised of Cherokee Nation citizens, to provide critical oversight and guidance for the Cherokee Heritage Center during its new chapter of stewardship. Since 2020, eight individuals have served in this capacity—with seven members currently serving and one member who has already completed their term of service. Its members have worked diligently on organizational strategy and master site plans for the new Cherokee Heritage Center.



MATT ANDERSON



JACK D. BAKER



BILL DAVIS



CHRISTINE NEUHOFF



BRENDA PARTIAN



SUSAN PLUMB



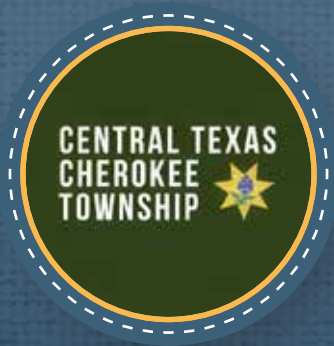
CALVIN ROCK



MILDRED TAYLOR

73RD ANNUAL CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY AWARDEES

CHEROKEE NATIONAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION AWARD (CONTINUED)



CENTRAL TEXAS CHEROKEE TOWNSHIP

Established in 2010, the Central Texas Cherokee Township now has 46 household members with general meetings held in Austin, Texas. Its goal is to teach local Cherokees about Cherokee culture, history and language. The township has recently established partnerships with local indigenous groups and seven community gardens. To teach families how to grow fresh vegetables, it has developed a local seed bank as well as a home garden.



KANSAS CHEROKEE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Founded in June 2022 in the town of Kansas, Oklahoma, the Kansas Cherokee Community Organization promotes Cherokee culture through cultural events, education programs and wellness initiatives. KCCO has been recognized with numerous awards from Cherokee Nation Community & Cultural Outreach. Moving into 2025, it remains steadfast in its mission: to work alongside our partners, honor our heritage and continue strengthening our community.

GADUGI - UNITY THROUGH GENERATIONS

This is a special award in keeping with the theme of the 73rd Cherokee National Holiday. It is given to recognize the spirit of working together for the betterment of the Cherokee Nation.

The skill, dedication and perseverance of this remarkable team allowed us to pursue justice after a longstanding breach of trust by the United States was brought to light. An \$80 million settlement — the largest in our tribe's history — will be invested into our judicial system so that we may protect our people, fight for victims and promote public safety on the Cherokee Nation Reservation.

THE TRUST LITIGATION TEAM



JASON AAMODT
Attorney



MATTHEW ALISON
Attorney



DAVE ASKMAN
Attorney



MARK BERKMAN
Expert



MICHAEL FRANDINA
Attorney



KALYN FREE
Attorney



DUSTIN GEASLAND
Archivist



CHARLIE GIBBONS
Expert



MICHAEL GOODSTEIN
Attorney



KEITH HARPER
Attorney



CHAD HARSHA
Attorney General



TODD HEMBREE
Attorney General



KIRSTI HOLLAND
Archivist



BRIAN HOSMAN
Expert



LOGAN LEWIS
Archivist



ANNE LYNCH
Attorney



JIM PARRIS
Expert



TOM PERELLI
Attorney



KRYSTINA PHILLIPS
Attorney



JOE PRICE
Archivist



JENNIFER STEVENS
Expert



DALLAS STRIMPLE
Attorney



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CHEROKEE NATION®

**VISIT OUR MOBILE SITE FOR
EVENTS, LOCATIONS & MORE**

