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# GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY A&P Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma November 2024

## UKB Leaders Attend Annual NCAI conference



Left to Right, UKB Advisor Bryan Shade, Assistant Secretary of Department of Interior Brian Newland, UKB Treasurer Sonja Gourd, UKB Secretary Joyce Hawk, and UKB Councilor Terry Kingfisher. Photo by Lani Hansen.

Monday, November 18, 2024

By: Troy Littledeer | @troylittledeer

LAS VEGAS — Keetoowah Chief Joe Bunch traveled to Las Vegas for the 81st National Congress of American Indians [NCAI] Conference. Making the trip with Chief Bunch was UKB Secretary Joyce Hawk, UKB Treasurer Sonja Gourd, and UKB Councilor Terry Kingfisher.

NCAI is a non-profit organization that advocates for a bright future for generations to come by taking the

lead to gain consensus on a constructive and promising vision for Indian Country. The organization's policy issues and initiatives are driven by the consensus of our it's membership, which consists of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, tribal citizens, individuals, and Native and non-Native organizations.

"Our purpose of being there was to represent the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians," Chief Joe Bunch said. "The assistant Chief and I wholly agree that if we're not at the table when some of these decisions are being made, then we'll be left out."

Chief Bunch said that a main objective of being at the conference was to strengthen government-to-government relationships, both with the United States and other tribal entities. One of the UKB Admin's goals in attending the NCAI conference is to find new federal program dollars. The UKB leaders also met with the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Interior Brian Newland and visited with IHS Director Roselyn Tso while in Las Vegas.



Left to Right, UKB Councilor Terry Kingfisher, UKB Secretary Joyce Hawk, UKB Chief Joe Bunch and Eastern Band Chief Michell Hicks. Photo by Troy Littledeer

## Wacoche wins Chief; Assistant Chief heads to runoff.

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

By Troy Littledeer | @troylittledeer

TAHLEQUAH, OKLA. — The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma have elected a new chief, according to official results from the November 4 tribal elections.

Jeff Wacoche earned 449 of the votes, with Archie Buzzard finishing with 239 votes in the race for Chief of the United Keetoowah Band. Wacoche is the current Assistant Chief on the UKB.

Current Chief, Joe Bunch, announced earlier this year he would not seek reelection.

Former Assistant Chief Jamie Thompson and Amos Ketcher were the top two vote-getters for the Assistant Chief position with 241 votes and 234 votes respectively to beat out Earnestine Berry. Berry garnered 221 votes. Thompson and Ketcher move on to a run-off election on December 2.

In the other two officers' races, current UKB Treasurer Sonja Gourd was unopposed in the race for Treasurer while Incumbent Joyce Hawk sought re-election for UKB Secretary. Hawk didn't make the runoff. It'll be Caleb Grimmitt Smith versus Susan Adair on December 2. Grimmitt received 290 votes to Adair's 229.

Clifford Wofford retained his

Cooweescoowee District seat with 67 votes to Jeannie Tidwell's 34. Charles Smoke kept his Saline District seat with a total of 50 votes over his opponent John Wayne Mouse's 36 votes. Sammy Allen won with 107 votes over Teresa Hair's 93 votes to fill the Tahlequah District seat. Terry Kingfisher did not seek the Tahlequah District after he completed his appointment to the seat following the passing of Alvin Hicks.

There will also be a runoff between William "Willie" Christie, incumbent, and Sharon Benoit. Christie had 49 to Benoit's 37 to advance to the runoff over Elmer Panther's 18 votes.

Current Council Reps Peggy Girty and Levi Catron did not seek reelection. No one challenged Janelle Adair who won the Illinois District seat, held by Girty. Donald Adair won the Sequoyah District seat, held Catron, also unopposed. Flint District kept incumbent Frankie Still. Still had no challengers. Delaware District will be represented by Tishaleta Guevara, who also had no challengers. No candidates ran for the Canadian seat and that position will be appointed.

The UKB runoff will be Dec. 2. The positions on the ballots will be for assistant chief, secretary and the Goingsnake District.



Jeff Wacochee (file photo)

## Tribal legitimacy debates far from settled in Indian Country

Friday, November 8, 2024

By Acee Agoyo

This story comes to Giduwa Cherokee News from Acee Agoyo through reporting work with Indianz.com.

LAS VEGAS — Concerns about legitimacy continue to be a significant source of contention within the nation's largest inter-tribal organization.

At its annual convention last week, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) announced that 14 groups were not renewed for membership. According to an October 30 news release, the groups in question must submit additional information if they want to belong to an advocacy organization that was established in 1944 to defend tribal sovereignty.

"It is the responsibility of the leadership of NCAI to execute its fiduciary duties as mandated by its constitution and bylaws — which includes a faithful application of our membership criteria," NCAI President Mark Macarro said.

According to the release, the 14 groups represent the "initial findings" of a task force that Macarro established after winning the NCAI



NCAI Conference at the MGM Grand. Photo by Troy Littledeer

presidency a year ago. At the 2023 annual convention, tribes debated — and eventually rejected — proposed amendments that would have limited membership to federally-recognized Indian nations and their citizens, leaving state-recognized groups out of the fold.

But as the release indicates, the work of the Membership Integrity, Education, and Healing Task Force is far from over. The group, which consists of 10 leaders from across Indian Country, plus two co-chairs, is

continuing to review how NCAI addresses issues of legitimacy that have arisen within the ranks.

"We look forward to the task force's continued work and our further shared goals of education and healing," Macarro said in the release, which did not identify the groups whose memberships in NCAI are pending.

NCAI's commitment to integrity was in fact put to the test during the convention. A day prior, the organization issued an apology to the Lumbee

Tribe, a state-recognized group based in North Carolina, over "inflammatory materials" that were distributed at the gathering in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The October 29 statement did not describe the nature or content of the materials. But attendees said a flyer placed on tables and chairs at the convention contained a link to a tribally-developed website that opposes federal recognition for the Lumbees.

"This is a violation of the code of conduct by which all members are bound," NCAI said in the statement. "It is an unacceptable breach of the standards and spirit of community, consensus, and inclusion that NCAI works hard to promote and safeguard. We regret and apologize for the divisiveness this unethical action has caused."

"We also apologize to the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina for this insult," read the statement, which included a copy of the code of conduct.

The United Indian Nations of Oklahoma, the inter-tribal organization that developed the flyer and website, and the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association hosted a session of their own in Las Vegas that...

See NCAI, Page 2





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Clifford Wofford  
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**Flint Dist.**  
Frankie Still  
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**Goingsnake Dist.**  
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Charles Smoke  
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Junior Catron  
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**Tahlequah Dist.**  
Terry "Pete" Kingfisher  
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**By: UKB Chief Joe Bunch**  
November 18, 2024

Si yo, ni ga da! To start off, I have to say now that football season is nearing an end and my favorite team, the Dallas Cowboys, have not been having a banner season. Now, on to business...

We signed for the 76-acre deed over to the Department of Interior to get land in trust, we have Purchased and Referred care for tribal members and our local food purchase program for tribal members, with items remaining, casino operations, renewable energy, and higher education grants for our tribal members. My belief is that when we receive the M Opinion from the Department of Interior Solicitor's office in our favor, we will put to rest a self-proclaimed exclusive jurisdiction issue that has plagued us, and more doors will open for federal funding.

One of my best memories is when we were united and we showed up on May 16, 2018 for the 10th circuit court hearing in Denver Colorado. We were there to demonstrate our sup-

...focused on opposition to legislation in the U.S. Congress that would extend federal recognition to the Lumbees. The gathering took place on Tuesday morning, the day before the NCAI apology.

The two controversies indicate that last year's debate about the presence of state-level groups at NCAI is far from settled. The host of the organization's mid-year convention in June, for example, was the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, whose leadership warned before and after the event of "fake groups" that claim to be Cherokee.

"We also learned how much harder we are going to have to work to defeat fake groups identifying as Tribe and/or Tribal government," Principal Chief Michell Hicks said at the conclusion of the convention at the Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in North Carolina.

A handful of groups claiming to be Cherokee in fact are among the initial 14 whose membership was not renewed in NCAI, according to an attendee of the Las Vegas conference. A number of these groups lack formal recognition by a state government and instead are merely chartered or incorporated under state law, which goes against the organization's existing by-laws.

"We're not reinventing the wheel here. We're executing previous policy that's been voted on by the executive council," NCAI President Macarro said when asked about the developments at a lengthy tribal caucus in Las Vegas, during which both the membership renewals and the Lumbee apology were discussed.

But some tribal leaders were taken aback by the membership renewals issue. One representative of a Southeast Region tribe that gained federal recognition after being state-recognized said the issue has caused considerable controversy among his peers.

"It's not good for us, it's not good for our caucus," the tribal leader told Macarro. "It's not good for NCAI."

Representatives from the Northeast Region also voiced concerns about the membership renewals and how it affects the larger debate about state recognition. Nearly every tribe from the region — notably those in Connecticut, Maine and Massachusetts — didn't gain federal recognition until the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, but all had long been recognized by state governments, even going back to colonial times.

One prominent leader from the Northeast told Indianz.Com that the ongoing debate has "equated state recognition with fake tribes." "That's despicable," the person said.

During the tribal caucus, which lasted about three hours, Geoffrey Blackwell, NCAI's general counsel and chief of staff, said that the Membership Integrity, Education, and Healing Task Force has reviewed as many as



**Chief's Corner**

**JOE BUNCH**  
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port for our land in trust application; it was standing room only, and all Keetoowahs on the bus ride home were all chirpy and excited. Then, after a few hours, we were able to listen to the argument on laptops, and with the decision on September 5, 2019, in our favor, we held a news conference where we had four former chiefs and myself present for that presentation. We were ALL united. I believe this set in motion a deeper understanding that Keetoowahs, as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, are eligible for federal funding.

As we go forward, be sure to ask and work with your district representative for news with the Keetoowahs, also use our social media pages and newspaper for district news. In one month, we will welcome a new ad-

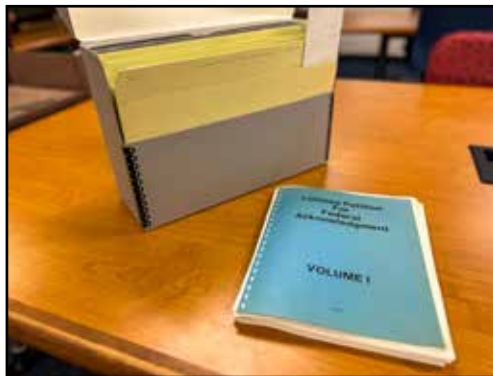
ministration along with new district representatives to carry out the functions of Keetoowah tribal government; please welcome them, as the stage is set for growth.

It has been my privilege and honor to be able to represent Keetoowah People as Chief. It has not been easy, with nothing being handed to us. And yes, there has been a fight every step of the way. We see our sovereignty being attacked daily by local threats, state-recognized tribes, and the theft of our identity and culture. I remember what Chief Wickliffe would say: get our name and who we are out there, visit with Congress, tell them our story, to think Congress or agency leaders will come to our grounds; we may wait a long time.

It has truly been my pleasure working with our UKB staff, council, and learning from council and our tribal members. It's been a great feeling to display that full bloods can do this and will continue to do this.

Wa do, do da go hv I, and God bless us all.

**NCAI**



**A copy of the Lumbee Tribe Petition for Federal Acknowledgment, submitted in 1987, is seen at the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives in Suitland, Maryland.**

Photo by Indianz.Com (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

27 applicants. He indicated that the groups hail from "multiple regions" of the United States, after some at the meeting questioned whether the Northeast and the Southeast were being singled out.

"The effort here is not to try to expel or kick out," said Blackwell, contrasting it with last year's debate, which would have resulted in state-level groups being outright denied membership in NCAI.

Macarro also pointed out that NCAI's existing by-laws do not appear to allow for the organization to "expel" any members. He said every member must renew its application every year — which typically happens right before the annual convention.

And while Macarro, during the debate last year, supported the proposal to restrict membership in NCAI to federally-recognized tribes, he was adamant that the organization does not "determine who's an Indian, who's not an Indian."

"That is outside the provenance of NCAI," said Macarro, who has served as chair of his tribe, the Pechanga Band of Indians in southern California, for more than 28 years.

He further noted that NCAI does not take on "issues that are tribe versus tribe." That's why he said the organization issued the apology to the Lumbee Tribe for the materials that were distributed at the convention in Las Vegas.

The rebuke from NCAI, however, is not stopping the efforts of tribes who oppose legislative recognition for the Lumbees. As Congress returns to work following the November 5 election, they will be lobbying lawmakers against the bill, known as the Lumbee Fairness Act. [S.521 | H.R.1101]

"The Eastern Band of Cherokee has repeatedly stated that federal acknowledgment of groups claiming to be tribes is a serious matter," Principal Chief Hicks said in a November 1 statement in support of the research conducted by the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma.

According to Hicks, the Lumbees should seek federal recognition through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, rather than going to Congress. In 1987, the Lumbees attempted to do

just that, submitting a petition that outlined their claims of descent from the Cheraw people that were historically based in North and South Carolina.

But the lengthy petition — copies of which are available at the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives — was never processed by the BIA. In 1989, the Department of the Interior concluded that a federal law known as the Lumbee Act of 1956 precluded its consideration. The law has been viewed as "terminating" or "forbidding" a federal relationship with the "Lumbee Indians of North Carolina."

The Barack Obama administration reversed course and issued a legal opinion in 2016 that opened the door for the Lumbees to pursue recognition through the BIA, a process that can take decades to complete. However, the tribe has continued its push for an act of Congress, attracting support from president-elect Donald Trump, who has promised to "take care of it" once he enters the White House in January 2025.

"We'll take care of it right at the beginning," Trump said at a rally in North Carolina, one of the battleground states he won as part of his successful presidential campaign.

Even vice president-elect, Sen. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio), who derided Indigenous Peoples Day as a "fake holiday" joined the effort. Though he will soon be leaving his legislative office for the executive branch, he signed onto the Senate version of the Lumbee Fairness Act on September 25 — just a few days after Trump made his promise to the Lumbees.

The Lumbee Tribe has spotlighted the attention. A month after Trump's pledge, Chairman John L. Lowery welcomed former Democratic president Bill Clinton to Lumbee territory in North Carolina. He also took a phone call from Vice President Kamala Harris, who vowed her support for federal recognition as the Democratic nominee for president before she lost the race.

"It is time that both parties uphold their promises to us, and it's time to put action behind their words," Lowery said in an October 23 news release.

So far, neither the U.S. Senate nor the U.S. House of Representatives have advanced the Lumbee Fairness Act. No hearings have been held in either chamber since the bills were introduced in February 2023, near the start of the 118th Congress, which is the current session.

But Sen. Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina) has attempted to include the Lumbee Fairness Act in other legislative packages. In July, he submitted a proposed amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which is considered a "must pass" bill, in order to recognize the tribe.



## NCAI Cont.

He attempted the same during the 117th Congress but was unable to get the language into the prior version of the NDAA.

According to multiple advocates who work on Indian issues on Capitol Hill, Tillis has even put holds on other tribal bills, preventing them from passing unless he sees action on the Lumbee Fairness Act. When asked about such tactics, which have occurred in the 117th and 118th sessions of Congress, his office did not respond.

The Lumbee Tribe also has not responded to inquiries about its legislative strategy. But in his recent message, Chairman Lowery reiterated his support for Tillis and other sponsors of the federal recognition bill.

“Senator Tillis and other NC Lawmakers are working hard on the Lumbee Fairness Act,” said Lowery.

In pursuing legislative recognition, the Lumbees have not publicly discussed the petition that was submitted on their behalf in 1987. The document consists of three volumes outlining the ways in which the group believes it meets the mandatory criteria for federal acknowledgment as an Indian tribe — from its identification as an “Indian entity” by outsiders to its claims of descent from a “historical” Indian tribe, or tribes.

“In summary, the present-day Lumbee tribe is descended from an Indian community composed largely of Cheraw Indians and related Siouan-speaking people who were known to have inhabited the area of what is now Robeson County since the eighteenth century,” the petition asserts.

The petition was examined for the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma by Jean M. Kelley, a genealogist, researcher and expert in federal recognition. Her 19-page report can be found on the website that appeared on the flyers disseminated at the NCAI convention last month.

The copy at the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives is an original donated to the institution by the late Lumbee attorney Julian Pierce, one of the authors of the petition, according to staff at the facility in Suitland, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. The copy at the Library of Congress consists of the same materials bound together in

book form, with one book for each of the three volumes.

Lumbee Tribe Petition for Federal Acknowledgment

Both copies include several charts purporting to depict family trees of several Lumbee families, including those that trace their heritage to the Lumbees who signed a petition asking Congress for federal assistance in 1888. The trees lack identifying information about the people listed, such as birth and death dates, although common Lumbee surnames such as Hammond, Locklear, Lowery/Lowry and Oxendine can be found throughout.

Besides Pierce, the petition is attributed to Cynthia Hunt-Locklear, another Lumbee who was on staff at the Lumbee River Legal Services, Inc., a legal aid group in North Carolina. Additionally, two consultants are credited: Jack Campisi, an anthropologist, and Wesley White, a researcher.

Campisi has testified before Congress in support of federal recognition for the Lumbees. Both he and Arlinda Locklear, a prominent Lumbee attorney who has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, have told lawmakers that the tribe descends from the Cheraw people.

At a hearing in 2003, Campisi stood behind the petition’s claim of a “compelling” connection to the historic Cheraw tribe without overtly citing the 1987 document. At the same hearing, Locklear blamed the Department of the Interior for preventing the Lumbees from gaining federal recognition.

“We have had this experience with the Department of Interior for more than 100 years now, and I dare say that this tribe would be recognized today had it not been for the department’s longstanding opposition to recognition of the tribe,” Locklear said, well before the federal agency opened the door for review of a Lumbee petition by the BIA.

According to the authors of the Lumbee petition, the third volume explains the group’s descent from the historic Cheraw tribe — written to satisfy one of the key criteria for federal recognition. Consisting of just six pages, the volume happens to be the shortest and the one with the least information.

## Councilor Wofford moonlights in Hollywood blockbusters

COOWEESCOOWEE DISTRICT, OKLA. — UKB Tribal Council Clifford Wofford, has been busy over the past few months attending the Tulsa Premieres for blockbusters like ‘Twisters’ and ‘Killers of the Flower Moon.’

Wofford played as a law enforcement role that you can see in ‘Twister’ and an Osage councilman in ‘Killers.’ He’s also worked on films like ‘Last Rodeo’ and ‘Fancy Dance.’

Wofford has also worked alongside Lily Gladstone. Gladstone has already won the Screen Actor’s Guild’s “Best Female Actor in a Leading Role” for her portrayal of Mollie Burkart in the film.

“I was able to see Lily’s dedication and how she researched her part to tell this important historical story that’s so important to the Osage Nation,” Wofford said. “[Gladstone] also did research on her own elders to understand them.”

Killers of the Flower Moon is nominated for 10 Academy Awards, including Gladstone, who is up for the Best Actress award.

“Moving forward, Lily will be remembered for telling this story and how she provided an opportunity for people to see and understand Indian



UKB Councilor Clifford Wofford with Lily Gladstone on the location for “Fancy Dance.” (courtesy photos).

Country,” Wofford said.

Wofford also mentioned that he believes Gladstone is deserving of the award for her dedicated work ethic alone. It was the second time Wofford had worked with Gladstone.

Stay tuned to Keetoowah social media and Giduwa Cherokee News to follow the future roles of Councilor Wofford.



Wofford with Irene Bedard working on “Last Rodeo.”



Wofford in wardrobe with Lily Gladstone in “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

## Elders' Circle

Welcome to the new Keetoowah Elders’ Circle! This is a designated space for sharing information about the wisdom, knowledge, and experiences of our tribal elders. Please send us your elder family member highlights. We can recognize elder members’ birthdays, anniversaries, share funny family stories about the old days and favorite recipes, post family reunion announcements or new additions to the family. Send Elder stories and announcements to: [media@ukb-nsn.gov](mailto:media@ukb-nsn.gov).

Other Elder News:

Next Elder Committee Meeting will be held at UKB Title VI-Jim Proctor Elder Nutrition Center Tahlequah, OK  
January 13 | 12:00 PM  
Everyone Welcome!

## Museum Volunteers Make a Difference

### Museum Staff Reports

This month we are featuring the Keetoowah Museum Volunteer Program’s Keetoowah Culture Keepers, (KCKs), who just happened to all be elders. These elder volunteers have assisted the museum staff with putting together hundreds of cultural craft kits for schools and groups to purchase. All sales go right back into the gift shop to support Keetoowah artists.

Volunteers help with specialized cleaning of the museum galleries; they help with special events and even did some lawn care this past summer. They are each very dedicated to helping create and maintain a friendly and inviting experience to the museum. They help their fellow tribal members, serve their communities, and provide their expertise. No matter what kind of volunteer work they do, they contribute in invaluable ways.

The Independent Sector, with the Do-Good Institute at the University of Maryland, announced on April 23, 2024, that the estimate for the value of a volunteer hour was \$33.49. They also stated that putting a dollar

value on volunteer hours will never do justice to their true value, but it is just one way for us to show the contributions they have made in our communities. The estimate helps acknowledge the millions of individuals who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference. So far this year, our museum volunteers have provided the museum with over one thousand hours of volunteer service. That is like a \$33,000 donation!

“We are so fortunate to have these volunteers, and we appreciate all they do for our museum and our tribe, said Barbara Girty Foster, assistant museum director. The museum volunteer appreciation lunch was held in Pawhuska, OK. Volunteers went roaming the Osage, they visited the oldest Native Museum in the United States, the Osage Nation Museum and surrounding area, and they stopped at Pioneer Woman Lodge and had lunch at Joe’s Place.

Volunteer recruitment for 2025 starts in January with orientation scheduled for March 1, 2025. Contact Barbara Girty Foster at the museum if you would like to become a volunteer. (918) 871-2794.



Keetoowah Museum Staff and Volunteers visited the Osage Museum. (Front Row, L to R) Raelie Grayson, Sammy Still, Carolyn Swimmer, Dama Still.(Back Row, L to R) Kyn-dal Aimeron, Norma Jimerson, Herman Jimerson and Pete Kingfisher. Not pictured is Luanna Taylor.



# ★ THANK YOU VETERANS ★



Tahlequah Veterans Parade, UKB Vets take a moment to get a photo together.



Chief Joe Bunch visits with veterans before the parade.



UKB Veteran Hominy Littledave hangs the branches flag.



Chief Bunch visits among with few veterans before lunch.



Assistant Chief Wacoche recognizes a veteran.



UKB Veteran shows off the Keetoowah Veteran vest.



Chief Joe Bunch and Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche takes a group picture with all the veterans in attendance for the UKB Veterans Lunch.



# Kenwood Softball makes an unforgettable return

The Kenwood Lady Indians went undefeated for first time in years.

By: Lani Hansen

KENWOOD, Okla- After so many years without a program, Kenwood Schools was able to bring back softball with the newest addition to the community the Woody Hair Community Center.

When the Woody Hair Community Center was built near the school, it also came with a softball field. This field is what the team utilized for this season, and future games.

Kenwood Softball Head Coach Tracie Cochran said, "When Mr. Phillips started talking about bringing back the softball program, and this opportunity came up for us to help with the program because the previous coach retired, we told him we were all in."

Head Coach Tracie Cochran and Assistant Coach Tricia Nichols are sisters who grew up in the community



The Kenwood Lady Indians Softball Team

and have a passion for working with Native American students, but also have a heart for softball. For their

first year back on the field, the Lady Indians softball team was made up by 14 girls who enjoyed the game.

"We had a great group of girls, who worked hard and some of them came on without any softball experience," the coaches said. "From the beginning we told these girls our goal was to prepare them for the next step, which is high school and get them ready for the next level."

Coach Cochran and Coach Nichols guided their team to an undefeated season this year, with a record of 16-2. Their only two losses were at the ORES state softball tournament. Throughout the season, the coaches did what they could to encourage their players and when it came to state tournament the competition was tougher.

"Next year, we hope to make it back to state but most importantly we plan on working on their development," the coaches said. "This team is young, a lot of them are 4th and 5th graders. We are very proud of them."

# Tradition Keeper shares Keetoowah heritage with Arkansas Razorbacks

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

By Staff Reports

FAYETTEVILLE, AR. – Arkansas women's basketball hosted Oral Roberts for the team's Native American Heritage Appreciation Month game on Thursday, Nov. 21. In honor of NAHM night, the Razorbacks donned the N7 jerseys for the second consecutive year as the jerseys made their debut last season against Central Arkansas.

It was also the second consecutive year that Illinois District Representative Elect Janelle Adair was invited to give a story-telling presentation leading up to the game. Adair is also a Keetoowah Tradition Keeper.

UKB Media Director, Troy Littledeer, also presented to the team a brief history of Keetoowah Cherokee people and their origins in the Southeast in 'preparation' for the Razorbacks trip to Cherokee, North Carolina. Arkansas will compete in the 3rd Annual Cherokee Invitation at the Harrah's Casino and Resort in Cherokee on December 18 – 19.

Jr. Miss Keetoowah Grayci Spradlin attended the game to represent the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma along with other tribal representatives.

"I sincerely appreciate the efforts that the Arkansas Women's basketball team and their entire staff are putting out to make sure they honor the Native Americans in the best and proper way," UKB Media Director Troy Littledeer said. "I could touch on that

enough when I spoke to them. I hope they understand that events like this are all building blocks that support us in letting the world know who we in Indian Country are and that we are still here."

The NAHM game was a near perfect match-up for Native American Heritage Night with the Arkansas roster featuring two Native American athletes, Carly Keats of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Comanche Kiki Smith in addition to Tyla Heard (Seneca Cayuga), Taleyah Jones (Cherokee), Emily Robinson (Choctaw) and Assistant Coach/Director of Operations Wayne Anderson (Creek) for Oral Roberts.



Jr. Miss Keetoowah Grayci Spradlin at Bud Walton Arena for NAHM game (Photo by Troy Littledeer).




The Arkansas Razorbacks with Janelle Adair and Troy and Tobias Littledeer (Photo courtesy of the University of Arkansas Athletics).



Janelle Adair presents to the Arkansas Razorbacks (Photo courtesy of the University of Arkansas Athletics).



Troy Littledeer presents to the Arkansas Razorbacks (Photo courtesy of the University of Arkansas Athletics).



Statement from the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians:

Our Lighthorse Police Department, along with all its officers, is CLEET and BIA certified. We have consistently, and will continue to, assist local police, sheriff departments, and the Cherokee Nation Marshalls.

In one recent case, a Lighthorse Police Officer stopped an alleged drunk driver and coordinated with local authorities, resulting in the safe removal of the DUI driver from the public road – protecting both the public and the individual. This has sparked a broader question regarding whether the two Tribes share jurisdiction within the Cherokee Territory, an issue that will ultimately be addressed by the Federal Courts. But as a precursor to that court case, both Tribes await Interior's answer to the question.

Until then, we will continue to ensure that our Lighthorse Police Officers adhere to CLEET and BIA Special Law Enforcement Commission standards to serve our local communities and protect public safety.

If you are sick of reading statements defending our well-documented legitimacy, imagine how sick of writing them we are. And imagine how awful it is to read misinformation attempt put out by another federally recognized Cherokee Tribe. As we have done in the past we will do so again, inviting the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to the table, to work directly with each other to ensure the safety, wellbeing and property for the whole of the Cherokee people in Oklahoma.



Welcome our newest

**FUNERAL ASSISTANT**

Jason Gann








**2024 NATIVE ART SHOW & SALE**  
 FEATURING

**KEETOOWAH TRADITION KEEPERS**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13-14, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

**THE JOHN HAIR CULTURAL CENTER  
 & KEETOOWAH MUSEUM**

18280 W. KEETOOWAH CIRCLE, TAHLEQUAH, OK 74464

MORE INFORMATION: 918-871-2766 • [www.ukb-nsn.gov/john-hair-cultural-center-museum](http://www.ukb-nsn.gov/john-hair-cultural-center-museum)