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**Mills to Speak at 2010 Choctaw Central Graduation**

CHOCTAW, Miss. – Billy Mills, an Oglala Sioux distance runner who pulled one of the greatest upsets in Olympic history, will serve as the keynote speaker at the 2010 Choctaw Central High School Graduation ceremony.

Mills was born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, one of the poorest communities in America. He was orphaned by the age of 12 and sent to boarding schools. He graduated from high school at Haskell Indian School. Mills became involved in distance running and earned an athletic scholarship to the University of Kansas. Upon graduation from the University of Kansas, Mills was commissioned an officer in the United States Marine Corps and continued training for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. He made the Olympic team in two events, the marathon and the 10,000 meter run. During the 10,000 meter run, he ran past the two well-known contenders to win the gold. Mills is the second Native American to win an Olympic gold medal and the only American to win a gold medal in the 10,000 meter run.

Today Mills is an accomplished businessman, author, and National Spokesperson for Christian Relief Services. He has helped raise over 500 million dollars in cash and in-kind for charities worldwide. He has received five honorary doctorates, and is the recipient of the Distinguished Service Citation, the highest honor that the University of Kansas Alumni Association can bestow. A 1983 major motion picture, "Running Brave," was made about Mills. Mills was recognized on several end-of-the-millennium lists, including being chosen as Sports Illustrated's Athlete of the Century for the state of South Dakota.

The 2010 Choctaw Central High School Graduation ceremony will be on Tuesday, May 25, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the Silver Star Convention Center.

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*The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, under the esteemed leadership of Miko Beasley Denson, has an enrolled membership of over 10,000 and is the only federally recognized tribe in the State of Mississippi. Headquartered in the Pearl River community, near Philadelphia, Mississippi, the Tribe has emerged as a leader in economic development. The Tribe provides a range of governmental services for its members including schools, a hospital, medical clinics, police and fire protection, courts, an elderly center, among many others.*