

# CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

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## Tribe mourns passing of Councilwoman Berdie Steve

CHOCTAW, Miss. – It is with profound sadness that the Tribe announces the passing of Bogue Homa Councilwoman Berdie M. Steve on Saturday, March 7, 2026. Councilwoman Steve passed away at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel, Miss., surrounded by her family.

She was also a gifted artisan as a Choctaw basket weaver. Her works of art are cherished possessions to those who have them.

First elected in June 1999, Councilwoman Steve served the Bogue Homa Community for five terms, totaling over 18 years of service to the Choctaw people. Berdie was

first elected for three consecutive terms (12 years), and then two additional terms over the years. During her tenure, she served as the chair of the Housing, Judicial Affairs and Law & Order, and most recently, the Culture Committee.

see STEVE, pg. 4



**BERDIE STEVE**

December 18, 1946 - March 7, 2026

## Dr. Wallace appointed first Choctaw CMO

The Choctaw Health Center (CHC) marked another historic milestone for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians with the appointment of Dr. Christina Wallace as the first Choctaw Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

A reception was held on

Thursday, March 19, 2026, at the CHC Event Center in Choctaw. In attendance were family members, members of the Tribal leadership, Choctaw Indian Princess Lexi Camille Rodriguez, CHC personnel, and community members.

Dr. Wallace is a dedicated physician, board certified in Internal Medicine, and a leader committed to advancing quality healthcare and improving the well-being of the Choctaw people. In April 2022, she was the first MBCI Tribal member to be a physician at the Choctaw Health Center and began her tenure that August.

see DR. WALLACE, pg. 6



Pictured, from left to right, are Choctaw Health Center (CHC) Director Mary Harrison, CHC Director of Nursing Millicent Wallace, CHC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Christina Wallace, 2025-2026 Choctaw Indian Princess Lexi Rodriguez, TaRita Ben & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

*Congratulations!*



**Aleira Davis**  
EIGHTH GRADER  
UNION LADY YELLOWJACKETS  
*State Champion*  
2026 MHSAA CLASS 3A POWERLIFTING  
(132 LBS. WEIGHT CLASS)

**2026**  
**Choctaw Indian Fair Entertainment Lineup**

 <b>Natalie Grant</b> Tuesday, July 14, 2026	 <b>Princess Pageant</b> Wednesday, July 15, 2026	 <b>Clay Walker</b> Thursday, July 16, 2026	 <b>Warren Zeiders</b> Friday, July 17, 2026	 <b>Busta Rhymes</b> Saturday, July 18, 2026
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Halito!  
 Although we still have the occasional cooler days that make for some nice times to be outdoors, spring and gradually warmer temperatures have arrived on Choctaw Tribal lands. There are many upcoming events to look forward to such as spring festivals, senior nights and graduations. Also two major events we are looking forward to, along with a busy summer, is the grand opening and ribbon cutting for the new Choctaw Central cam-

pus, and of course, our 76th Choctaw Indian Fair.

**Honoring the Life and Service of Tribal Council Representative Berdie Steve**

We were all saddened by the loss of our colleague and friend, and Bogue Homa Tribal Council Representative, Ms. Berdie Steve, on March 7th. Ms. Berdie was first elected in 1999 and was proudly serving her fifth term at the time of her passing. She served during the administrations of Tribal Chiefs Phillip Martin, Beasley

Denson, Phyliss J. Anderson, and lastly, my administration, always remaining committed to the people of Bogue Homa and the sovereignty of our Tribe.

She served on numerous committees and boards, including the Choctaw Housing Authority Board and the Chahta Enterprise Board. One of her proudest achievements was helping to bring the Bok Homa Casino into existence, strengthening the Tribe's economic future. Ms. Berdie was also a gifted basket weaver whose works of art beautifully showcased and preserved our rich cultural legacy.

We were honored to host a time of reflection and remembrance for Ms. Berdie during a special call Tribal Council meeting on March 18th. A memorial wreath and flowers were placed in front of her council seat in tribute to her service. Ms. Berdie's contributions to our Tribe were immense, and we will greatly miss her. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with her family during their time of grief.

**FY 25 State of the Tribe Report**

This year marks seven years of my service to the Tribe as Tribal Chief. It is an honor I carry with deep gratitude and with a steadfast devotion to our people and future. I take great pride in reflecting on our many accomplishments and milestones made possible through the continued trust and support of our people.

As our Tribal population grows, our programs and services continue to evolve to ensure a strong and healthy future for generations to come. During uncertain times, such as federal government shutdowns and volatile economic conditions, our Tribe continues to meet adversities with Choctaw Self-Determination.

In this report, you will find a detailed overview of the activities, projects, and accomplishments from fiscal year 2025. I encourage you to explore the images and descriptions that

**continued next page**

**CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS**

The Choctaw Community News is available at no charge upon request. Donations to help cover the cost of printing, mailing are welcomed. Correspondence should be addressed to:  
**COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**  
**P.O. BOX 6010**  
**CHOCTAW, MS 39350**  
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Items of interest to the local & Native American community are welcomed. Letters to the editor should be signed; we reserve the right to edit material.



*During a special call meeting held in the Tribal Council Hall on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, a heartfelt time of reflection & remembrance honored the late Ms. Berdie Steve, Tribal Council Representative for the Bogue Homa Community, who passed away on March 7. A memorial wreath & flowers were placed in front of her seat in tribute to her service. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with members of the Tribal Council, extended their comfort & support to Ms. Berdie's family, who were present during the meeting. We are deeply grateful for Ms. Berdie's unwavering dedication & service to our Tribe & its rich cultural heritage. Her commitment will always be remembered & honored. Our thoughts & prayers are with her loved ones during this difficult time.*



## DOECE March Madness

*Congratulations to Pearl River Head Start Room 6 "Pop Power Crew" (left) as they defeated the Pearl River Head Start Room 5 "Wave Warriors" (right) 22-0 to win this year's Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE) March Madness Basketball Tournament championship on Friday, March 27, 2026, at the Pearl River*

*Community Gymnasium. The tournament, which ran from March 24-27, featured 13 teams representing DOECE Head Start rooms from the community childcare centers. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Choctaw Indian Princess Lexi Camille Rodriguez were present to congratulate the teams & present them with their trophies & medallions.*

showcase the work of YOU – our cultural leaders, employees, partners, and our people. Together, we will continue to build for a strong and healthy future for our children and grandchildren.

The 2025 State of the Tribe Report can be viewed on the Tribal website at [www.choctaw.org](http://www.choctaw.org) by clicking on the News and Documents tab.

### Historic Leadership and Wellness Milestones at Choctaw Health Center

On Thursday, March 19th, the Choctaw Health Center (CHC) hosted a special reception officially announcing the historic appointment of Dr. Christina Wallace as Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Wallace is the first Tribal Member to serve in this role. This is a huge milestone for our Tribe, and I was honored to offer remarks during the program. The Tribal Council presented Dr. Wallace with a quilt, and her family and the CHC staff honored her with flowers in celebration of her achievements and dedication to our people. Congratulations to Dr. Wallace on her well-deserved appointment, and I know she will make us proud.

Following the program for Dr. Wallace, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the newly constructed Outdoor Fitness Center in the Pearl River community, which is located on the CHC campus. The opening of this outdoor facility reflects the CHC's ongoing commitment to enhancing health and wellness across all communities. A designated section of the facility is ADA-compliant, ensuring the outdoor space is accessible and inclusive for all members of the community. Thank you to the CHC personnel and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) team for their vision, leadership, and dedication.

### Youth Shine at Annual March Madness Tournament

I would like to commend our staff from the Department of Early Childhood Education for their outstanding efforts in organizing and hosting the annual March Madness Basketball Tournament at the Pearl River community gymnasium March 24-27. It is so much fun to watch our future basketball all-stars as they compete for the gold ball.

Congratulations to Pop Power Crew (Pearl River Head

Start Room 6) on winning the championship! I also thank all parents and family members of these children for showing them the love and support they need to succeed in school and in life. I can't wait to see these young boys and girls compete one day at the Big House!

It is always a privilege to recognize our outstanding Choctaw youth in academics, sports, or other extracurricular activities. We proudly feature their stories in this edition of the Community News, such as senior nights, science fair awards, state championships, and other accomplishments. I hope you will congratulate these students on their successes when you see them throughout the community.

### Countdown to the 76th Choctaw Indian Fair

In case you haven't heard, our 76th Choctaw Indian Fair will be held this year July 14th through 18th. We have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to announce our entertainment lineup at the Main Stage.

As in years past, we will have Gospel Night on Tuesday night, featuring award-winning Christian and Gospel artist

Natalie Grant. On Wednesday evening, I will host Opening Ceremonies, where I introduce special guests who are on stage with me, followed by the ever-popular Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant, where I will crown the next goodwill ambassador for our Tribe. Country legend Clay Walker takes the stage on Thursday night to sing his hit songs. Rising country star Warren Zeiders makes his Choctaw Indian Fair debut on Friday night. Rap and hip-hop icon Busta Rhymes closes out the Fair on Saturday night, and he is sure to get us all dancing and grooving in the stands.

I have been told by our Fair coordinators that our lineup has generated much excitement. There's always something for everyone at the Choctaw Indian Fair. If you've never visited us, or it's been a good while since you've been here, then come join us this year! To keep up with the latest on our Fair, please visit [www.choctawindianfair.com](http://www.choctawindianfair.com) or like and follow us on our Choctaw Indian Fair Facebook page.

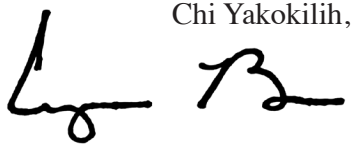
The temperatures are warming up, and so is the enthusiasm around here. Fair fever is

**LETTER ..... continued from page three**

taking hold, and the only cure for that is to let it happen and enjoy the ride, from the planning stages now to the final moments on that late Saturday night. Thank you to everyone who has a part in making the Fair a big success year after year. We truly cannot do it without our outstanding workforce and volunteers.

I think it goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway: these days, with our lives being so fast-paced and busy, and with much uncertainty going on in the world, we must hold on to our faith, family, and friends. Even in the busiest moments, I hope you will take a breath, relax, and spend some time with your loved ones.

I am honored to serve as your Tribal Chief, and together, we will continue to accomplish many great things for our Tribe.

Chi Yakokilih,  
  
Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief

# Choctaw Indian Fair set for July 14-18

CHOCTAW, Miss. - The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians celebrates 76 years of the Choctaw Indian Fair on July 14-18, 2026, with a multi-genre professional entertainment line-up. In addition to concerts, fairgoers will enjoy authentic Choctaw social celebrations, cultural activities, Tribal arts and crafts, competitions, demonstrations and exhibits, and the thrilling action of World Series Stickball.

Beginning Tuesday, Gospel Night at Ayipa Village will showcase uplifting praise and worship music performed by talented local singers and groups. On the Main Stage, award-winning Christian and Gospel artist Natalie Grant will deliver a powerful headline performance. Wednesday evening, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben will host a special stage ceremony ahead of the 71st Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant.

Country legend Clay Walker takes the spotlight on Thursday, followed Friday night by one of Country music's fastest-rising stars, Warren Zeiders. The Fair's Main Stage concert series will conclude in high-energy fashion on Saturday with Rap and Hip-Hop icon and multi-Grammy-nominated artist Busta Rhymes.

Make plans now to celebrate 76 years of the Choctaw Indian Fair, July 14-18, 2026. Follow and like Choctaw Indian Fair on Facebook for updates or visit [www.ChoctawIndianFair.com](http://www.ChoctawIndianFair.com).



**Office of the Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben**  
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Phone: (601) 656-5251 • Fax: (601) 650-1606

**Letter from the Office of the Tribal Chief**

**April 14, 2026**

Dear Tribal Members,

I am writing to provide an update regarding the proposed amendments to the Tribal Enrollment Code. Over the past several weeks, the Enrollment Office, Enrollment Committee, and the Attorney General's Office, Tribal Council and I have conducted informational community meetings to share these updates, and we have had some really great discussions. We have listened to your questions, your concerns, and your perspectives. I sincerely thank those who took the time to attend these meetings.

After careful deliberation and discussion during today's Pre-Council meeting, the Tribal Council has decided to delay consideration of this item from the April Regular Call meeting and move it to the next Regular Call meeting in July due to the vacancy of the Bogue Homa seat.

This decision was not made lightly. It reflects both respect for the recent passing of a Tribal Council member and a shared understanding of the importance of full representation for the Bogue Homa community in a matter that carries long-term impact for our Tribe.

We want to be clear, this is not a change in direction, nor is it a step back from the work that has been done. As Tribal Chief, and together with the Tribal Council, we remain committed to this process and to ensuring that any decision reflects both thoughtful consideration and full participation. This pause allows us to move forward in a way that honors both.

As we continue, final clarification are being made to the proposed code to ensure it is as clear and effective as possible. Action on this matter will be taken at a future Tribal Council meeting. We will continue to keep you informed about next steps and any updates moving forward.

Thank you for your continued engagement and for being part of this important conversation for our Tribe.

Yakoki,  
  
Cyrus Ben  
Tribal Chief

"Choctaw Self-Determination"

**STEVE ..... continued from page one**

Councilwoman Steve had the honor of serving as a representative under the last four Tribal Chiefs: Phillip Martin (1999-2007), Beasley Denson (2007-2011), Phyliss Anderson (2015-2019), and Cyrus Ben (2023-until her passing).

A 1966 graduate of Choctaw Central High School, Berdie began working for the Tribe in 1974 as the Community Health Technician for the Bogue Homa Community for almost nine years before moving to the Choctaw Health Center in 1983 as the Community Service Counselor. She left employment with the Tribe in 1984, until she was elected to the Tribal Council

in 1999.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of Bogue Homa Councilwoman Berdie Steve, a respected colleague, devoted public servant, and friend. A proud Chahta Ohoyo, Berdie was a strong and unwavering voice for her community and our Tribe," said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

"She carried her responsibilities with purpose and conviction, always striving to create meaningful and lasting progress for our people. It was an honor to serve alongside Berdie. I valued our conversations, her insight,

**continued next page**

# Tribal election for Bogue Homa seat set for Tuesday, May 5

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Tribal Election Committee has set a date for a Special Tribal Council Election for the Bogue Homa community on Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

Due to the passing of the late Councilwoman Berdie Steve on Saturday, March 7, the election is to fill the vacancy on the Tribal Council and served out the remainder of the four-year term, set to expire in 2027.

Four residents of the Bogue Homa community submitted proper nominating petitions to qualify as candidates. They include Micheal Briscoe, Vernandall L. Nickey, Lemuel H. Sol-

omon, and Talia Celeste Steve.

Tribal members who are registered to vote in Bogue Homa will cast their ballots at the community CERF Building from the hours of 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. The Local Community Election Committee will conduct the election, and voters may be asked to show a form of identification.

Tribal members 18 years of age or older who did not register to vote on or before Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 p.m., cannot vote in the May 5, 2026, election. If you have already registered to vote, you do not need to register again unless you have moved to another

community since the day of your registration.

Any qualified registered voter who is age 57 or older, or who is physically unable to appear at the poll on election date, or who resides 50 miles or more distance from the community in which he or she is registered to vote, shall be entitled to vote by absentee ballot. Requests for mailed absentee ballots must be submitted in writing to the Tribal Election Committee at the Tribal Election Office not later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Requests for mailed absentee ballots received after this date and time will not be honored.

Walk-in absentee ballot requests shall be submitted in writing to the Tribal Election Committee starting on Thursday, April 16, 2026, through Monday, May 4, 2026, at 12:00 noon. Document of proof supporting the walk-in absentee ballot request is mandatory.

Mailed and walk-in requests for absentee ballots can be only

for the person making the request; the request cannot be made on behalf of others. The deadline to return absentee ballots to the TEC is Monday, May 4, 2026, at 12:00 noon.

For further information, please contact the Tribal Election Committee (Berdie John, Chairperson; Amy Pauls, Member; and Wonda McMillan, Member) at one of the following numbers: (601) 650-7475, (601) 650-7468, (601) 650-1507 or by FAX, (601) 389-2252.

You may also contact the Committee by writing to:

Office of Tribal Election, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, P.O. Box 6052, Choctaw, MS 39350.

The Chairperson of the Local Community Election Committee, who is officially appointed to conduct elections in your respective community, may also be contacted. The Choctaw Tribal Election Code is available at the MBCI website at [www.choctaw.org](http://www.choctaw.org).



## IN MEMORY OF GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER BERDIE STEVE

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Berdie Steve of the Bogue Homa community, a valued member of the Choctaw Health Center Governing Board.

Ms. Steve served our health system and community with dedication and a sincere commitment to improving the health and well-being of the Choctaw people. During her time on the Governing Board, Ms. Steve provided thoughtful leadership, guidance, and advocacy in support of the mission of Choctaw Health Center.

As a representative of the Bogue Homa community, Ms. Steve carried forward the voices and perspectives of her community while helping guide the broader work of the Choctaw Health Center in service to all Choctaw people.

Through her service, Ms. Steve helped strengthen the foundation of healthcare for our community and demonstrated a deep care for the patients, families, and team members who make up our health system.

On behalf of the Choctaw Health Center administration and team, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Ms. Steve. Her service and commitment to the health and well-being of the Choctaw people will be remembered with gratitude and respect.

Her service will remain part of the lasting legacy of care and commitment to the Choctaw people.

We ask that you keep the family of Ms. Steve, as well as the Bogue Homa community, in your thoughts and prayers during this time of loss.

- MARY HARRISON, CHOCTAW HEALTH CENTER DIRECTOR

and her steadfast commitment to working together for the betterment of our Tribe. Her leadership was grounded in service, integrity, and a genuine love for the Choctaw people.”

According to Article VI, Sec. 2 of the Tribal Constitution, the Tribal Chief shall call for a special election, within sixty (60) days, for the purpose of filling the vacancy.

## IHS honors CHC programs

The Choctaw Health Center (CHC) had two programs recently honored by the Indian Health Service (IHS) for their exceptional service to the Choctaw people.

The CHC Oracle Health Implementation Team & the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) Team were recipients of the prestigious IHS Director’s Awards for 2024. The ceremony was held on Friday, March 27, 2026, in Rockville, MD.

This ceremony serves as a powerful reminder of the strength, dedication, & talent across the IHS. In recognition

of exceptional work during calendar year 2024, more than 300 individuals & teams were recognized. These nominations came from all parts of the Indian health system, reflecting a shared commitment to excellence & a deep respect for the work done together in service to American Indians & Alaska Natives.

The Oracle Health Implementation Team worked tirelessly behind the scenes to successfully transition from RPMS to Oracle - modernizing systems & strengthening how

see **IHS HONORS** pg. 8

**DR. WALLACE** ..... continued from page one

“It’s a great honor that I step into a role of Chief Medical Officer for the Choctaw Health Center. It’s very personal for me because I worked very hard and served in various career paths,” said Dr. Wallace. “I’m originally from the Tucker community and have always intended to return home to serve our community. This means so much, especially in the setting of healthcare as we continue to promote health education, our youth, and to advance career development, not only in the healthcare setting but within our Tribal organization.”

Dr. Wallace said it’s a privilege working at CHC because they are family and she’s grateful for everyone working to serve the Choctaw community. “We have an amazing staff, and we look forward to future growth and opportunities within this community and also with our healthcare partners.”

Chenice Ben, CHC Marketing and Communications Manager, served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the event. Prior to the ceremony, brightly colored pieces of ribbons were distributed to attendees as a gesture of support and appreciation to Dr. Wallace.

“In Choctaw tradition, a ribbon represents connection, honor and community. Today, we prepared ribbons as a symbol of our collective support for Dr. Christina Wallace,” said Ben. “We invite you to show her a sign of friendship, encouragement and unity in celebrating her achievement. May these ribbons serve as a reminder that she is supported, not only as a leader, but as one of our very own.”

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben held a green ribbon in his hand as he spoke of milestones the Choctaw Health Center has celebrated, from its opening in March 2015 to now the appointment of Dr. Wallace as Chief Medical Officer.

“You see a green ribbon. For some, this may be for St. Patrick’s Day or it may represent money, but I see it as part of life. As we celebrate the coming of the spring season, green represents nature evolving,” said Chief Ben. “It is my pleasure to offer this green ribbon because it is the meaning of life, and to have life, you must have health. I applaud Dr. Wallace for her passion for the Chahta people that she put forth a lot of sacrifices, of being a mother and a wife, and to be able to attain a personal goal. Yet,



**ABOVE**, Dr. Wallace with her family. **BELOW LEFT**, Dr. Wallace receives flowers from her mother, Barbara Willis. **BELOW RIGHT**, Pearl River Tribal Council Member Kent Wesley presented, on behalf of the Choctaw Tribal Council, a beautiful starburst quilt to Dr. Wesley in recognition of being named CHC’s first Choctaw CMO.

we share as family members, friends, and a Tribe, this great milestone and achievement.”

Chief Ben acknowledged Dr. Wallace as a leader and trailblazer for all Tribal members, especially for the Chahta Ohoyo (women).

“Many of the women here have attained goals and are role models to our community. The young people have seen you, and I thank you. We are here to celebrate Dr. Wallace, and this is a trend that I’m very grateful to see continue. We are thankful you all are here today to celebrate with your fellow Ohoyo.”

Mary Harrison, Choctaw Health Center Health Director, said although her and Dr. Wallace began in different capacities at CHC, they knew they had a mission and one day they would help shape the quality of healthcare for the Choctaw people.

“In this historic moment, we are glad you are our first female Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Chief Medical Officer. This is a milestone, not only for that, but for the Tribe itself because we are a self-governing tribe and we exercise our sovereignty and our ability to design and manage our own healthcare system. This moment reflects the self-determination to

our action and ability to lead, heal and care for our people from within.”

Director Harrison added, “Dr. Wallace, your appointment represents the strength of that system we built for our Tribe. This is a significant appointment and we’re really proud of this moment too. I send my deepest appreciation and my yakoki (thank you) as you go forth.”

Dr. Wallace earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Chemistry from the University of Mississippi in Oxford in 2004, Master’s Degree in Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Florida in Gainesville in 2011, Master’s Degree in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) in Jackson in 2014, and a Doctor of Medicine Degree from UMMC in 2019.

Her honors and awards include being a recipient of the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award, James E. Griffith Pulmonary Award, and Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS), Jeanette D. Pullen Chapter member.

Prior to medical school, Dr. Wallace served in the biomonitoring and chemical terrorism section of the Mississippi State

**continued next page**

# SDPI hosts 20<sup>th</sup> Spring into Fitness Walk/Run

The 20th Annual Spring into Fitness Walk/Run was held on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, in the Pearl River community. Dozens of participants took advantage of a cool spring morning to walk or run the two mile route, beginning at the Geyser Falls Water Park entrance and traveling up Blackjack Road to the Choctaw Sportsplex parking lot and returning to Geyser Falls.

At the conclusion of the event, several participants were awarded 1st or 2nd place trophies or plaques for their best times in their respective age divisions. Overall winners were: (female) Zayna Hudson & (male) Gavine Frazier.

7-Under Division - (male) 1st, Keasen Willis; 2nd, Kamden Fireplace; (female) 1st, Drayslee Clemmons; 2nd, Nyla



Willis.

8-10 Division - (male) 1st, Imayya Alex; 2nd, Alston Meely; (female) 1st, Carly Baker; 2nd, Kylis Thompson.

11-15 Division - (male) 1st, Aleric Thomas; 2nd, Alistar King; (female) 1st, Dalyndan King; 2nd, Amhyleigh Fireplace.

16-19 Division - (male) 1st, Josiah Wishork; 2nd, Desean Bell; (female) 1st, Desiny Hickman; 2nd, Naomi King.

20-29 Division - (male) 1st,

Ethan King; 2nd, Dreggen Joe; (female) 1st, Alanna Billie; 2nd, TJ Redhouse.

30-39 Division - (male) 1st, Jerry John; 2nd, Joshua King; (female) 1st, Jasmine Comby; 2nd, Ashley Edwards.

40-49 Division - (male) 1st, Randy Tangle; 2nd, Kyle Thompson; (female) 1st, Dyranda Jimmie; 2nd, Tamara Round.

50-59 Division - (male) 1st, Robert Sam; 2nd, Scott Round; (female) 1st, Gloria T Willis;

2nd, Dava Meely.

60-64 Division - (male) 1st, Alan Meely; (female) 1st, Carol Willis; 2nd, Marilyn York.

65-Over Division - (male) Ricky Thompson, Sr.; (female) Josephine Morris.

The event, hosted by the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, sponsors events throughout the year to promote healthy lifestyles for members of our Tribal Community.

Department of Health, Public Health Laboratory from 2005-2008, MBCI Office of Environmental Protection Manager/Specialist from 2008-2013, Community/Patient Liason Specialist at CHC from 2014-2015, and interim Chief Medical Officer at CHC from 2022-2026.

Dr. Wallace resides in the Edinburg community with her husband, Wes, and children, Ansley and Jake. She is the daughter of Barbara Willis and the granddaughter of the late Russell and Corine Henry Willis.

A reception and fellowship was held afterwards. Invocation was presented by Pastor Samuel Dixon, CHC Environmental Services Director.



## Outdoor Fitness Center opened at CHC

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with several members of the Tribal Council & Choctaw Indian Princess Lexi Camille Rodriguez, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly constructed Outdoor Fitness Center in the Pearl River community, located at the Choctaw Health Center (CHC), on Thursday, March 19, 2026. The event, hosted by CHC, marked an exciting step forward in promoting health & wellness. Notably, a designated section of the facility is ADA-compliant, ensuring the outdoor space is accessible & inclusive for all members of the community, regardless of physical ability. This meaningful development reflects the Tribe & Choctaw Health Center's continued commitment to enhancing health, wellness, & inclusivity across all communities. Special thanks are extended to Chief Ben & the Choctaw Health Center for their vision, leadership, & dedication in bringing this important project to life.

IHS HONORS ..... continued from page five

care is delivered to the community. This was no small task, & their dedication, long hours & commitment truly paid off.

The SDPI Team continues to make a powerful impact by hosting engaging

programs, challenges, & events that promote healthier lifestyles for Tribal members. From encouraging physical activity to supporting wellness journeys, their work is changing lives everyday.

The IHS Director's Awards Ceremony is an annual event recognizing IHS individuals & teams whose accomplishments go beyond regular duties & make a meaningful impact on the IHS mission & the communities we serve. The ceremony honors exceptional

contributions that advance IHS priorities & strengthen programs & services across the agency.

CHC officials say these awards represent more than achievements—they reflect the heart, passion, & commitment of their staff who work every day to serve Tribal members. Yakoki to every team member who played a role in these accomplishments.

"Your hard work does not go unnoticed, & we celebrate YOU today!"



Several members of the SDPI staff were in attendance for the awards ceremony as they accepted the honors for their program & on behalf of the Oracle Implementation Team. Dressed in their traditional Choctaw attire were, from left to right, Teegan Clemmons, Sharon Thompson, Crystal Lewis, & Will Solomon, Jr.

# CTS District Lower Science, Engineering Fair results

Bogue Chitto Elementary School hosted the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Lower Science & Engineering Fair on Monday, March 30, 2026. Eighty-three projects were entered from students representing Red Water (RWES), Conehatta (CES), Pearl River (PRES), Tucker (TES), Bogue Chitto (BCES), & Standing Pine Elementary Schools (SPES).

Students who placed 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> advanced to the Region V Lower Science & Engineering Fair, to be held at Mississippi State University in Starkville on Tuesday, April 14. The following students who placed in their respective grade & category are listed below.

### GRADE K

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Vanida Pablo-Lewis (PRES).

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Amari Willis (CES).

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, Peyton McBeath (PRES).

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Presley Shumake, (RWES); 2nd

place, Goku Mitch (PRES).

Plant Sciences - 1st place, Ellie Jenkins (TES).

### FIRST GRADE

Biochemistry - 1st place, Ja'Vaughn Jefferson (SPES).

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Tritan Willis (RWES).

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, James Farmer, Jr.

Biomedicine & Health Sciences - 1st place, Talaina Kessinger (RWES).

### SECOND GRADE

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Aria Jenkins (TES).

Microbiology - 1st place, Ja'Kyrie Lewis (RWES).

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Sydus Willis (CES).

Engineering Mechanics - 1st place, Jacaia Willis (TES).

Plant Sciences - 1st place, Ava Gibson (TES).

### THIRD GRADE

Biochemistry - 1st place, Jaysa Gibson (PRES); 2nd place, Elijah Holifield (PRES).

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Sydney Isaac (PRES); 2nd place, Julysa Willis (TES); 3rd place, Torrence Farmer (PRES); Honorable Mention, Lillian Farve (RWES).

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Kamilla Pablo-Lewis (PRES).

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, Juana Pablo-Lewis (PRES).

continued next page

Brought to you by: Choctaw Community Youth Alliance - Choctaw Behavioral Health

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER: MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**  
BE THE CHANGE.  
UNITY STARTS WITH YOU!

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**FREE EVENT**

**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 16TH-18TH, 2026**

Educational Sessions | Opioid Bingo | Breakfast and Lunch Provided | Games & Prizes | T-Shirts | DJ Music & Dancing | Cultural Activities | Leadership Opportunities & more!

ALL NATIVE YOUTH 13-18 YEARS OF AGE ARE WELCOMED TO ATTEND!

For more info email: natisha.isaac@choctaw.org or brianna.parkman@choctaw.org

Animal Sciences - 1st place, De'Andre Tubby (PRES).

Biomedicine & Health Sciences - 1st place, Lakobe Thomas (RWES).

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Asylem Jefferson (TES).

Robotics & Intelligent Machines - 1st place, Kelise Perry (TES).

Plant Sciences - 1st place, Adonai York (PRES); 2nd place, Maegan Hernandez (PRES).

**FOURTH GRADE**

Biochemistry - 1st place, Necie Charlie (TES); 2nd place, Ayden Jim (RWES).

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Lai'anna Willis

(RWES); 2nd place, Cliff Willis (TES); 3rd place, Blaise Willis (RWES).

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Landry Wilson (RWES); 2nd place, Khalauny Carter (RWES).

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, Josie Wallace (PRES).

Animal Sciences - 1st place, Mila Isom (TES); 2nd place, D'Janae Willis (RWES).

Microbiology - 1st place, Ja'Shayen Bell (SPES).

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Emerald Runnels (BCES); 2nd place, Abr'yanna Anderson (RWES); 3rd place,

Lila Lewis (RWES); Honor-

able Mention, Ja'Kazien Solomon (RWES).

Engineering Mechanics - 1st place, Bresaya Isaac (TES); 2nd place, Everly Bell (RWES).

Robotics & Intelligent Machines - 1st place, Cheri Hicks (CES).

Plant Sciences - 1st place, Kyson Gibson (RWES).

**FIFTH GRADE**

Biochemistry - 1st place, Kalessi Carter (RWES).

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Faithlyn Mingo (TES); 2nd place, Mylee Ben (PRES); 3rd place, Zaenillah Lopez (RWES); Honorable Mention, Caiden Sampson (RWES).

Organic Chemistry - 1st

place, Cayelea Frazier (PRES).

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, Kari Hicks (CES).

Biomedicine & Health - 1st place, Hawk Steve (RWES).

Microbiology - 1st place, Isabelle Flint (RWES).

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Miley Dixon (RWES).

Engineering Mechanics - 1st place, Riley Isaac (PRES); 2nd place, Janice Wilson (CES).

Mathematics & Systems Software - 1st place, McKenzie Dixon (RWES).

Robotics & Intelligent Machines - 1st place, Ellynn Grisham (RWES).



Kindergarten award recipients.



Third grade award recipients.



First grade award recipients.



Fourth grade award recipients.



Second grade award recipients.



Fifth grade award recipients.

# Schools release 3rd nine-weeks honor rolls

Several schools within the Choctaw Tribal Schools system recently recognized students named to the 1st nine-weeks honor roll for the 2025-2026 school year. Students recognized on the Chief's List (all A's), Principal's List (all A's & B's), Perfect Attendance & Attendance Excellence at their respective schools are listed below.

## CONEHATTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Chief's List

First Grade - Jalayah Anderson, Honor Bell, Noah Bell, Axle McMillan, Denaysia Shoemake, Tyree Shoemake, Dylan Thomas, Paxyn Thomas, Shanae Thomas, & De-gand Williamson.

Second Grade - Aiden Chickaway.

Third Grade - Jalayah Lewis, J'Rayus Wesley, Caprih Williamson, & Ava Willis.

Fourth Grade - Danario Bell, Hannah Crosby & Caysuri Williamson.

Fifth Grade - Janice Wilson.

Eighth Grade - Kinsley King & Ty'Lah Williamson.

## Principal's List

First Grade - Landraia Anderson, Mari'Ann Anderson, Bailey Chapman, Jay'Kamry Evans, Aldrae Farmer, Aiden Frazier, Amathan Gonzalez, Jaxon Jim, Iree King, Kycen McMillan, Keani Morris, Chasetin Thomas, & Sa'Miah Thomas.

Second Grade - Alandria Anderson, Jessie Bell, Ansley Billy, Casen Charlie, Em-malyn Chickaway, Micah Crosby, Justice Hall, Charles Jefferson, Jaylynn Jim, Bella Jimmie, Luke LaSarge, Ivory Sockey, I'Zyus Thomas, Messiah Thomas, Sha-vaeh Thomas, Taio Tubby, Verron Tubby, & Zathan Wallace.

Third Grade - Malayah Anderson, Jessie Bell, Steven Bell, Zellar Dixon, Jaychel'le Evans, Dykylie Hickman, Deshanalie Isaac, Paisley Jefferson, Kyrie Jim, Bonnie Orellana, La'Deindra Orellana, Maizuri Phillips, Nyri Phillips, Aiden Shoemake, & Nylesden Yazzie.

Fourth Grade - Da'Nylie Ben, Ettalyn Chickaway, Kysen Dixon, Cheri Hicks, Desanaye Isaac, Tobias John, April Lewis, Gracelyn McMillan, Jaycee Shoemake, & Gracie Wilson.

Fifth Grade - Davaeya Christie, Langston Logan, Ka'Draizlyn Williams, Kelane Wil-lis, & Zoe Wallace.

Sixth Grade - Teyshoni Farmer, Jacelyn

Lewis, Ori Stephens, & Kayden Thomas.

Seventh Grade - Jay Shoemake, Jr.

Eighth Grade - Kaelynn Chickaway.

## PEARL RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Chief's List

First Grade - Aubree Allen, Saige Bell, Za'Daylia Denson, Cayseri Lilly, Lilyn Thomas, Logan Vaughn, Aubreigh Bell, Saint Bell, Aysen Jim, Madilyn Jim, T'Lhanko Thompson, Kamea Wilson, Danilynn York, Hennalaya Sam, Ja' Kyrie Jim, Brighton McMillan, Tacorey Shell, Adaleigh Willis, Makaylinn Wilson, Addison Comby, Braylee Farmer, Noah Jim, Adalynn Joe, Nevaeh McMillan, Christian Reed, Carter Savage, Keantray Thomas, & Kaceleigh Thompson.

Second Grade - Zailey Davis, Harmony Dixon, Izabella Isaac, Landon Johnson, Kheita Samuel, Elanna Tubby, Dylan Clemons, Blakelyn Deon, Ella Hickman, Kayleigh Isaac, Koi Morris, Ky'Emri Bell, Otter Shore, J'than Cotton, Honoree Lewis, Armani Tubby, & Simeon Willis.

Third Grade - Zoey Jim, Adonai York, Imayya Alex, Anilah Tubby, Khyon Wil-liams, Alaire Ketcher, Emma Johnson, & Kazyon Willis.

Fourth Grade - Hayden Dixon, Ashma-riah McMillan, Calvin Willis, Remington Isaac, Cadence Meely, Kaison Thomas, Aceton Willis, Zayvier Wesley-Gamarra, Carly Baker, & Knoxx Bell.

Fifth Grade - Mylee Ben, Padmae Bil-lie, Riley Isaac, Kashay Charlie, Hamaya Morris, Jaylon Williams, Tamatoa Bald Eagle, Dakaizlee Clemons, Jayce Isaac, & Kylus John.

Sixth Grade - Rainee Billy, Andrew Blickenstaff, Neyalih Dixon, Shohmalali Dixon, & Mi'Kel Osceola.

## Principal's List

First Grade - Sunserae Charlie, Kaylynn McMillan, Owen Morris, Ellianna Tubby, Liam Willis, Javeyan Dixon, Jakaylee Jef-ferson, J'Bryson Smith, Benjamin Young, Meilani Ben, Nayely Farmer, Andrea Lopez, Errol Stephens, Anahleigh Farmer, & Jaybee Bell.

Second Grade - Armoni Anderson, Kay-dreus Gibson, Arrow McMillan, Jakobi Williams, Zayvian Denson, Madelynn Fra-zier, Emmarie Tubby, Esther Wilson, Kroy Anderson, Aamaya Ben, Paistyn Dixon, Z'

Davion Frazier, Jay' leigh Henry, Zavion Hickman, Amarah Isaac, Sylas Jefferson, Qeyahli Grant, Bentley Hernandez, Janaya Jim, Malakai McMillan, Creighton Thom-as, Aivlyn Tubby, & Sa'Marion Wilson.

Third Grade - Majesty Isaac, Kelcedi John, Traiy'tin John, Zaraylie Tubby, Mae-leianna Williams, Marcin Billy, Kiiyon Cuellar, Jaysa Gibson, Na'Tyiah Gibson, Sydney Isaac, Natalie Jim, Aeston Mar-tin, Danayeli Sam, Leigha Solomon, Koi Bell, Koti Briscoe, Shantel Clemons, Jua-na Pablo-Lewis, Nita Osi Rains, Kohen Routh, Ivyona Tubby, Liam Willis, Gabri-el Brown, Chloe Dixon, Zabdiel Felipe, Maegan Hernandez, Kamila Pablo-Lewis, Daylen Rodriguez, Telayli Smith, De' An-dre Tubby, Karalane Willis, & Rayen Wil-lis.

Fourth Grade - Kaleyah Denson, Shel-naliya Frazier, Javian John, Za' Liyah Mon-criease, Keyon Willis, Im'Unique Allen, Kleilali Dixon, Ayame Jim, Zyrus John, Braydon Johnson, Beth Lewis, Crimson Robinson, Denaje Bell, Piper Isaac, Hush-toposhik McMillan, Alston Meely, Taurasi Sardina, Taten Stephens, Jayden Anderson, Ethan Hickman, Tayzlynn Hickman, Khal-ani Isaac, Aviona Tubby, Josie Wallace, & William Wilson.

Fifth Grade - Baylan Buffalomeat, Chris-topher Barojas, J'Hazlyn Bell, Ashlynn McMillan, Cainen Reynolds, T'Menawa Thompson, Thomasina Wickson, Kyler Willis, Cecin Anderson, John Luke Billy, Teyana Clemons, Tyson Gibson, Ahlaric Hernandez, Kason Isaac, Eriisa Jefferson, Kaylee McMillan, Krymsen McMillan, Shariadon Peters, & Jkerion Williams.

Sixth Grade - Zaine Bell, Hayes Gordon, Madalynn Jimmie, Buford Smith, Jr., Nei-lani Thompson, Anna' Laiya Tubby, Raijen Willis, Okshomichi Bell, Adelyn Daniel, Alleigh Dixon, Brody Dixon, Elliana Joe, Brydan Lewis, Onna Morris, Myree Tub-by, Drew Williams, Marin Williams, Au-brey Willis, Mahaylie Clemons, Alice Fer-ris, Hazelin Joe, Mariah McBeath, Elilee Steve, Stormie Willis, Kawhi York, Nais-ali Cuellar, Kolvin Isaac, Saniyah Nickey, Cordellia Rush, Lyla Tubby, Jordan Wil-liams, Eva Willis, & Jaylee Willis.

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**TUCKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Chief's List**

First Grade - Natalynn Chapman, Drea Comby, Benicio Mingo, Tamari Taylor, & Colby Wishork.

Second Grade - Ava Gibson, Caroline Sikes, Jacaiya Willis, Vyla Willis, & Xavier Wishork.

Third Grade - Asylem Jefferson, Matayah Stokes & Noah Tubby,

Fifth Grade - Eve Lewis.

Seventh Grade - Paycen Comby.

**Principal's List**

First Grade - Grayse'Lynn McMillan, Kaya McMillan & Ty'Keyvion Willis.

Second Grade - Aria Jenkins, Tamia Taylor, Bri'Naylin Thomas, & Trevor Tubby.

Third Grade - Easley Charlie, Carter Dixon, Koide Isaac, Kelise Perry, Bryncess Thomas, & Julyssa Willis.

Fourth Grade - Necie Charlie, Bresaya Isaac, Mila Isom, Kasey Nickey, & Cliff Willis, Jr.

Fifth Grade - Kennedi Fields, Keilani Gibson & Cooper Jefferson.

Sixth Grade - Arialyn Henry, Ja'Sia Henry, Savion King, Liam Thomas, & Carter York.

Seventh Grade - Gabriel Hilario.

Eighth Grade - Taylee Charlie, Madelynn Henry, Lindraya King, Damari Thomas, Elliana Tubby, & C. Claire Willis.

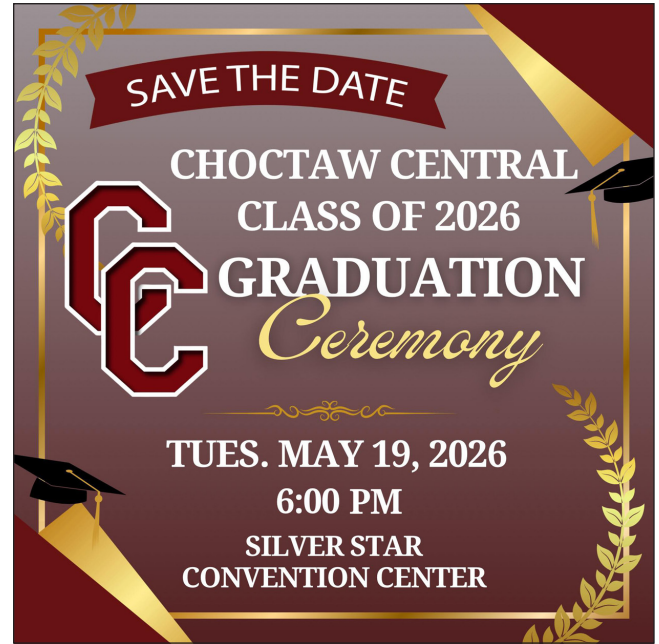
**Perfect Attendance**

Ava Gibson, Trevor Tubby & Julyssa Willis.

**Attendance Excellence**

Jacori Willis, Cassius Clegg, Irvin Isom, Jorah Martin, Tiahna Willis, Kayden Billy, Aria Jenkins, Cobain Martin, Tamia Taylor, Jacaiya Willis, Vyla Willis, Asylem Jefferson, Matayah Stokes, Mila Isom, Cliff Willis, Jr., Grayson Billy, Keilani Gib-

son, Taylia Henry, Cooper Jefferson, Eve Lewis, Keianna Lewis, James Polk, Jacaius Willis, Madelynn Henry, Kadem Wallace, & C. Claire Willis.



# Choctaw youth learn about their culture

*By Jalen Willis*

The Cultural Affairs Program of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted the 13th Annual Princess & Warrior Survival Week, March 9-13, 2026, at the Pearl River Community Center and CERF Building. The event brought together Choctaw youths for a week of hands-on learning focusing on tradition and culture.

Held annually during spring break week for the Choctaw Tribal Schools, the program gives participants a chance to learn skills that have been passed down for generations. They took part in daily activities that highlighted cultural knowledge and skills in a fun and practical way.

Each day, hands-on lessons and video presentations helped explain the meaning behind the activities. Princesses and warriors explored various traditional practices, including stickball, blowgun use, and making pottery.

Participants worked on sewing projects, such as making handkerchiefs with diamond designs, quilt pieces and pillows. They also created diamond-shaped necklaces inspired by traditional patterns.

Along with cultural activities, the program focused on survival skills as the youths prepared Indian tacos, chopped firewood, and building and keeping a fire going. These lessons helped them understand skills that were a part of daily life are still valued today.

The week also gave the participants a chance to connect with one another. By working together, they shared experiences and built a stronger sense of community.

Organizers continue to stress the importance of teaching these skills to the younger generation. Programs like Princess & Warrior Survival Week help keep Choctaw traditions alive by giving the youth a chance to learn by doing.

As the week came to a close,

participants left with new skills, hands-on experiences, and a deeper understanding of their

culture. The program remains an important facet to make sure Choctaw traditions continue for future generations.



# Tribal powerlifters compete for state championships

Several Tribal student-athletes competed in the 2026 MHSAA State Powerlifting Championships, held at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson on Friday, March 27 (girls) and Saturday, March 28 (boys).

Union eight grader Aleira Davis claimed the state championship in the girls Class 3A (132-pound weight class) for the Union High School Lady Yellowjackets. Her best lifts included 290-pound squat, 85-pound bench press, and 270-pound deadlift for a total of 645-pounds. Lady Yellowjackets

placed eighth overall in the 3A team standings.

Choctaw Central had three Lady Warriors to advance to the Class 4A championship. Senior Delianna Wilson placed fifth in the 132-pound weight class with her best lifts of 220-pound squat, 100-pound bench press, and 305-pound deadlift for a total of 625-pounds. Eighth grader Aymeri McMillan placed sixth in the 181-pound weight class with her best lifts of 185-pound squat, 100-pound bench press, and 250-pound deadlift for a total of 535-pounds. Junior Jazmyn Bohannon placed fifth in the 220-pound weight class with her best lifts of 185-pound squat, 105-pound bench press, and 305-pound deadlift for a total of 595-pounds. Lady Warriors placed 17th overall in the 4A team standings.

In Class 6A, Neshoba Central junior Callie Tubby placed sixth in the 114-pound weight class. Her best lifts included

**continued next page**



**TOP ROW**, from left to right, Aleira Davis of Union, Delianna Wilson, Aymeri McMillan & Jazmyn Bohannon, all of Choctaw Central. **BOTTOM ROW**, from left to right, Callie Tubby of Neshoba Central, Kenzariah Chickaway & Aaden Amos, both of Choctaw Central, & CJ Farmer of Neshoba Central.



## First Pitch at USM

Bok Homa Casino, located in Sandersville, Miss., served as game sponsor for the contest between the Southern Miss Golden Eagles & the Ole Miss Rebels baseball team at Hill Denson Field at Pete Taylor Park on the USM campus at Hattiesburg on Tuesday evening, March 10, 2026. As part of the evening's pre-game festivities, Tribal Chief & Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise Board Chairman Cyrus Ben, along with new USM Head Football Coach Blake Anderson, delivered the ceremonial first pitches. Fans in attendance had the opportunity to receive special giveaways provided by Bok Homa Casino, a proud sponsor & supporter of Southern Miss Athletics.

Photo Credit: Ross White/Jamie Martin, USM



## First pitch at Ole Miss

Tribal Chief & Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise Board Chairman Cyrus Ben delivered the ceremonial first pitch on Saturday, March 21, 2026, during pre-game festivities prior to the Ole Miss Lady Rebels-Oklahoma Lady Sooners softball series March 21-23 at the Ole Miss Softball Complex in Oxford. Tribal members & other fans in attendance showed their pride & support for Tribal Member Tenly Grisham, a member of the Lady Rebels. Pearl River Resort of Choctaw served as sponsor for the weekend series & is a proud sponsor of Ole Miss Athletics.



235-pound squat. She did not complete lifts in the bench press and deadlift. Lady Rockets placed eighth overall in the 6A team standings.

In the boys championship, two members of Choctaw Central's team advanced to the Class 4A championship. Senior Kenzariah Chickaway placed fourth in the 148-pound weight class with his best

lifts of 335-pound squat, 210-pound bench press, and 415-pound deadlift for a total of 960-pounds. Junior Aaden Amos placed third in the 308-pound weight class as his best lifts included 550-pound squat, 320-pound bench press, and 500-pound deadlift for a total of 1370-pounds. Warriors placed 14th overall in the 4A team standings.

In Class 6A, senior CJ Farmer represented Neshoba Central as he placed fifth in the 308-pound weight class. His best lifts included 485-pound squat, 240-pound bench press, and 500-pound deadlift for a total of 1225-pounds. Rockets placed fourth overall in the 6A team standings.

## CCHS hosts Senior Night

Choctaw Central High School hosted Senior Night for Powerlifting, Bowling, & Baseball on Friday, March 20, 2026, at Warrior Field. Nine seniors were recognized for their dedication & contributions as Warriors & Lady Warriors. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was in attendance alongside family members & coaches to present the seniors a special gift to commemorate their time at CCHS. Senior honorees included, top row, from left to right: (bowling, powerlifting) Zoe Bell; (bowling) Seth Lewis; (powerlifting) Delianna Wilson; middle row, (powerlifting) Anniston Billy; (powerlifting) Kenzariah Chickaway & Slater Jim; bottom row, (baseball) Albert Isaac & Adarius Lewis; (baseball/bowling) Hayden Willis. Not pictured was Aiden Alex, powerlifting. Congratulations to these seniors & we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!



## Neshoba softball holds Senior Night

Neshoba Central High School held Senior Night for Softball on Monday evening, March 30, 2026. Choctaw youth Lacie Morris (#14), Miley Thomas (#10) & Tahlyea Denson (#22) were amongst the Lady Rocket seniors honored. Family members, friends, teammates, & coaches celebrated with these outstanding young ladies. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented gifts to express his pride in their achievements. Congratulations also to Miley as she was named to the Clarion Ledger's High School Softball Dandy Dozen, recognizing the top softball players in Mississippi. Congratulations & best wishes in your future endeavors.



## Davis signs with SCU

MBCI Tribal member & Riverside Indian School senior Landon Davis has signed to continue his educational & athletic career at Southwestern Christian University in Bethany, OK. Landon has proudly represented the Braves in both baseball & basketball, showing dedication, hard work, & leadership on & off the field & court. The Riverside Indian School community is proud of you & excited to see you take the next step in your journey. Once a Brave, always a Brave!



## Jimmie signs with Andrew College

Neshoba Central High School senior Connor Jimmie signed his letter of intent on Thursday, March 26, 2026, to continue his education & soccer career at Andrew College in Cuthbert, Georgia, where he will join the Fighting Tigers Soccer team. In attendance were his mother, Meloni Johnson, along with family, friends, & his soccer teammates. We wish you the very best in your future endeavors.



### HCC hosts Sophomore Day

Holmes Community College (HCC) in Goodman, Miss., hosted Sophomore Day on Saturday, March 21, 2026, as the Bulldogs faced the Southwest Mississippi Community College Bears in a softball double-header. Prior to the contest, a ceremony was held as Choctaw student-athlete Miley Billie was among the sophomores honored. Family & supporters gathered to celebrate this special occasion with her. Congratulations & best wishes for future success in your endeavors.



### Champions again

Congratulations to the Cherokee Lady Braves as they dominated Pamlico County 76-15 to captured their third consecutive NCHSAA Class 2A Women's Basketball Championship on Thursday, March 12 in Winston-Salem, NC! MBCI Tribal members on the team included freshman Nazari "Lolo" Bell & Assistant Coach Jason McMillan.

*Congratulations to the following Tribal student-athletes who achieved success during the 2025-2026 basketball season at their respective high school, community college or university!*

### Belhaven Blazers

The Belhaven University Blazers women's basketball team advanced to the Collegiate Conference of the South (CCS) title game on Saturday, February 28 in LaGrange, GA. The Blazers (19-7) were defeated by LaGrange College 69-62. Choctaw student-athletes on the team included Kyla Farmer (left) & Veronica Williams. Congratulations to Veronica as she was named to the CCS All-Tournament team.



### Athletes compete in All-Star games

Congratulations to the following Tribal student-athletes who participated in post-season high school basketball all-star games. Neshoba Central Lady Rocket senior Kyli Truss competed in the Mississippi Association of Coaches' 2026 Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Girls' Basketball Game, held at the A.E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton on Saturday, March 14. Kyli was a member of Team Mississippi as they faced the top prospects from Alabama. The following week, Mississippi Sports Medicine hosted the 2026 Mississippi North/South All-Star Basketball Games at A.E. Wood Coliseum. The games featured the top high school junior prospects in Mississippi. Choctaw Central Lady Warrior junior Kailynn Perry & Leake Central Gator junior Jer'Michael Stewart competed in the 1A/2A/3A/4A games on Friday, March 20. Both Perry & Stewart played on the South Teams in their respective games. On Saturday, March 21, Neshoba Central Lady Rocket juniors Iley Denson & Shastyn Lewis participated in the 5A/6A/7A girls basketball game as they played on the North Team. Congratulations to Shastyn as she was named recipient of the North Team MVP Award.

### MCC Lady Eagles

The Meridian Community College (MCC) Lady Eagles basketball team (24-6) ended their season in the quarterfinals of the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament with a loss to Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College 79-58 on Saturday, March 7 in Perkinston, MS. Team members included Choctaw student-athletes Ashlynn Stephens (left) & Nataysia Willis. Congratulations to Nataysia as she was named All-MACCC (Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference) Honorable Mention. She averaged 14.1 points per game & totaled 422 points this season, finishing her MCC career with 642 points, also securing her place in the 500-point club. She shot 35.7% from three-point range for her career.



### ECCC Lady Warriors

The East Central Community College (ECCC) Lady Warriors basketball team (10-16) concluded their season in the first round of the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament with a loss to Coahoma Community College 50-49 on Thursday, March 5 in Clarksdale, MS. Team members included Choctaw student-athletes Jakaylin York (left) & Raiyleigh Perry. Congratulations to Raiyleigh as she was named All-MACCC (Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference) Honorable Mention. She averaged 10.3 points per game, had 83 steals & 5.4 rebounds per game.



## Crownpoint Lady Eagles

Choctaw student-athlete Miley McMillan & the Crownpoint Lady Eagles advanced to the quarterfinals of the 2026 NMAA Girls 3A State Tournament in Rio Rancho, NM. The Lady Eagles (22-8) ended their season with a loss to Robertson 40-36 on Tuesday, March 10.



## Hartshorne Miners

Choctaw student-athletes Chazzen McMillan & Cooper McMillan (manager) & the Hartshorne High School Miners advanced to the quarterfinals of the 2026 OSSAA Boys 2A State Tournament in Oklahoma City, OK. The Miners (18-7) concluded their season with a loss to Wewoka 68-63 on Thursday, March 12.



## Riverside Indian School

Congratulations to the Riverside Indian School Lady Braves & Braves basketball teams as they captured regional championships & advanced to the quarterfinals of the OSSAA Girls & Boys 2A State Tournament on Thursday, March 12 in Oklahoma City, OK. The Lady Braves (20-7) concluded their season with a 64-55 loss to Howe & the Braves (17-9) fell to Fairland 44-42. Choctaw student-athletes on the teams included: (Lady Braves) Arianna Cotton, KaLeaina Rush & Cassius Williamson; (Braves) Landon Davis, Tayden Wesley, Eric Shumake, & Aady King.

## PRCC Wildcats

Congratulations to Pearl River Community College sophomore Mattison Bell & the Wildcats women's basketball team as they claimed the 2026 MACCC Championship over Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College 61-45 on Monday, March 2. They secured back-to-back titles & the fifth championship in program history. They advanced to the NJCAA Region 23 Tournament championship game, but were defeated 60-55 by Northwest Mississippi Community College on Friday, March 13 in Poplarville, MS. The Wildcats finished the season with a 22-6 record.



## Sequoyah Lady Indians

Choctaw student-athlete Melyssa Williams & the Sequoyah High School Lady Indians advanced to the semifinals of the 2026 OSSAA Girls 3A State Tournament in Oklahoma City, OK. The Lady Indians (19-9) concluded their season with a loss to Adair 49-39 on Friday, March 13.

## Co-Lin Wolves

The Copiah-Lincoln Community College Wolves basketball teams advanced to the NJCAA Women's & Men's Region 23 Tournament. The women's team (15-12) advanced to the quarterfinals & ended their season with a 71-44 loss to Itawamba on Saturday, March 7 in Fulton, Miss. The men's team (14-14) concluded their season with a first round loss to Pearl River Community College 80-56 on Thursday, March 5. Choctaw student-athletes on the teams included Kylinn Bell (left) & Koie Williams.



## HINU Fightin' Indians

Congratulations to Choctaw student-athlete Jocelyn Bell & the Haskell Indian Nations University Fightin' Indians basketball team as they claimed their second consecutive Continental Athletic Conference Championship & advanced to the NAIA National Women's Basketball Tournament. They faced #1 ranked Marian University on Friday, March 13 in Indianapolis, IN. Haskell (13-17) concluded their season with a 96-67 loss to the Knights in the opening round.

A partnership with the MBCI Tribal Scholarship program.

# PEARL RIVER RESORT 2026 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

TRIBAL COLLEGE STUDENTS, GAIN PAID WORK EXPERIENCE IN

- HUMAN RESOURCES
- FINANCE
- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- & MORE

MUST BE A RECIPIENT OF A MBCI TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP  
 MUST BE AN ENROLLED MEMBER OF MBCI  
 MUST BE ENROLLED IN A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY  
 MUST HAVE COMPLETED THEIR SOPHOMORE YEAR – ENROLLED IN THEIR JUNIOR/SENIOR YEAR  
 MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE FOR CULINARY  
 MINIMUM GPA OF 2.5  
 INTERNSHIP WILL NOT EXCEED 8 WEEKS

**DEADLINE IS MAY 4!**

E-MAIL Oretta Conrad (oretta.conrad@pearlriverresort.com) or Lisa Paul (lisa.paul@pearlriverresort.com)

**HUMAN RESOURCES** *We're about people*



**CLAUDIA BELL THOMPSON**

John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Funeral services for Claudia Bell Thompson, 90, was held on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.



Ms. Thompson passed away on Wednesday, March 4, at Magnolia Creek Nursing & Rehabilitation in Covington, TN.

She received her early education in Mississippi, completing the first grade. Though her formal schooling was brief, life experience shaped her into

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery.

**continued next page**

**Amos graduates from USIPA**

*Congratulations to Liliana Amos of the Choctaw Police Department as she graduated from the Indian Country Police Officer Training Program at the United States Indian Police Academy (USIPA) of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Artesia, New Mexico. She attended the training from November 17, 2025, to March 31, 2026.*

Photo Credit: Shaleah Amos



## APPLYING FOR THE TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

2026 Fall Applications are currently being accepted.  
**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION IS SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026.**  
 FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW TO APPLY

**Select ONE of the following websites:**

- **TSP Website:** [Scholarship.choctaw.org](https://scholarship.choctaw.org)
- **Application Website:** <https://tribalscholarshipprogram.secure-platform.com/>

- Applicant must have an active email address.
- Choose TSP website or Application website.
- Read and follow instructions carefully on application Home page.
- Complete application and make note of information required.
- Submit application.
- Applicant will receive an email confirmation.
- Applicant must submit all transcripts as needed.
- Applicant will receive a follow-up email from assigned assistant.
- Files are complete after all documents are received.
- Applicant will receive confirmation email by assistant of file completion.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL THE TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE AT 601.650.7409**

**EMAIL US:** [Scholarship.Program@choctaw.org](mailto:Scholarship.Program@choctaw.org)  
**FOLLOW US** Tribal Scholarship Program

**MBCI Dept. of Public Safety launches website**

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Department of Public Safety has announced the launch of its public WebJail website - <https://mbci-webjail.ptsapps.com>

The site provides access to Choctaw Adult Detention Center booking photos for individuals incarcerated at the time of inquiry. This report is provided for informational purposes only. It is subject to change and may be updated periodically.

While every effort is made to ensure that the posted information is accurate, it may contain factual or other errors. Inmate information changes quickly, and the reported information may not reflect the current information.

An arrest does not mean that inmate has been convicted of a crime. The information on this report should not be relied upon for any type of legal action. Unauthorized or illegal use of this information is strictly prohibited.

For emergencies, contact Choctaw Police at 911. For non-emergencies, call 601-656-5711.

an intelligent, resilient, & independently strong Chahta Ohoyo. She & her family later moved to Lauderdale County, Tenn., & worked as sharecroppers in the Goldust community. In the late 1980s, she worked at the Tupperware Plant in Halls, Tenn., & later retired. She was one of the first members of First Indian Baptist Church (founded in April 1961). She & her sisters—known in the community as the “Golden Girls”—were often seen at social gatherings & church functions, helping prepare meals to serve.

She was a strong cultural influencer as she shared Choctaw traditions by participating in demonstrations showcasing Choctaw dancing, cooking & beadwork at many festivals, including the Pinson Mound Archaeological Festival, Moundville Native American Festival, Chucalissa Festival, & the Choctaw Indian Fair.

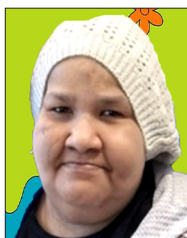
She loved being outdoors & playing volleyball & softball in her younger years. Her hobbies included beadwork, cooking, fishing, dressmaking, gardening, traveling, & taking family & friends to enjoy meals at Olympic Steakhouse. In her later years, she spoke of longing to go to Heaven & being at peace with the Lord. She is remembered for her strength, generosity, cultural pride, & love shared with her family, church, & community.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Jamus Bell & Winnie Thompson; daughter, Patsy Marie Thompson; sisters, Ronnie Bell, Minnie “Mintimah” Bell & Jessie Bell; brothers, Wood Bell, George Bell, Edmund Bell, & Stribling Bell.

Survivors include a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, friends, & her best friend, Nellie Billy.

**LAKETTA NANETTE STEVENS**

Funeral services for Laketta Nanette Stevens, 48, was held on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at the Red Water CERF Building. Deacon Ricky Edwards, Sr. & Rev. Carl Wilson officiated.



Burial was in the Red Water Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Stevens passed away on Thursday, March 5, at her residence.

She lived most of her life in Jackson, but made Red Water her home for the last 10 years. She graduated from Murrah High School in 1996 & attended Mt. Zion Choctaw Baptist Church. She enjoyed coloring, doing puzzles, watching Scooby Doo cartoons, listening to music, dancing to Michael Jackson songs, & going on car rides with her mother.

She is preceded in death by her grandmothers, Hattie Lee Burnside & Cora Dixon Wilson; sister, Lawanda Dixon; brother, Linberg Stevens; & a nephew, Craig Dixon.

Survivors include her parents, Willie Stevens, Jr. & Virginia Dixon Stevens; sister, Kimberly Stevens; several aunts, uncles & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**BERDIE MAE STEVE**

Funeral services for Berdie Mae Steve, 79, was held on Friday, March 13, 2026, at the Bogue Homa Community Gymnasium. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated.



Burial was in the Bogue Homa Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Steve passed away on Saturday, March 7, at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel, Miss.

She was born December 18, 1946, in Philadelphia, Miss., to Riley & Zonie (Nickey) Thomas. She served the Choctaw people as Tribal Council Representative for the Bogue Homa community. First elected in 1999, she was recently re-elected & was serving her fifth term. During her tenure, she served under the administrations of Chief Phillip Martin, Miko Beasley Denson, Chief Phyliss Anderson, & current Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. She was also a skilled basket weaver known for her distinct style & craftsmanship.

She is preceded in death by her parents; sisters Imogene Thompson, Bernice Frazier & Vernita Thomas; & brothers, Dorsey Thomas, Billy Wayne Thomas, & Olen Thomas.

Survivors include her children Kevin Steve, Cherie Steve, Cheryl Steve, & Kimberly Steve; 13 grandchildren; & 6 great-grandchildren.

**BOBBY LEE WILLIAMS, SR.**

Funeral services for Bobby Lee Williams, Sr., 76, was held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Conehatta Community Gymnasium. Deacon Billy Smith & Rev. Mark Patrick officiated.



Burial was in the Conehatta Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Williams passed away on

Saturday, March 14, at his residence.

He was a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran & was honorably discharged in 1974. He was employed at the Conehatta Facility Building from 1996 until his retirement in May 2022. He enjoyed fishing, playing spades, dominoes, washers, & being with family. He was a fan of Conehatta Stickball Teams during the Choctaw Indian Fair.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Pauline Morris Williams; parents, Coy & Leona Shoemaker Williams; sisters, Sina Willis & Irene King; brothers, Alvin Williams, Raymond Williams, Steve Williams, & Welford Williams; granddaughter, Alayjian Williams; great-grandson, Baby Boy Cotton.

Survivors include daughters, Sylestina Cotton & Serena Stoliby; sons, Bobby Williams, Jr. & Delvin Ray Williams; sister, Laurene Chapman; aunt, Juanita Shoemaker; 9 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**TRINA ROSE SOCKEY**

Funeral services for Trina Rose Sockey, 53, was held on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Bro. Curtis Willis officiated.



Burial was in the Standing Pine Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Sockey passed away on Sunday, March 15, at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She enjoyed being with her

see OBITUARIES, pg. 18

OBITUARIES ..... continued from page seventeen

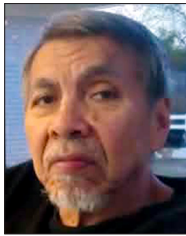
grandkids, scrolling Facebook & traveling.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Billy Joe Sockey, Sr. & Geneva Denson Frazier; grandparents, Enoch Sockey, Lessie Sockey; aunt, Nevalena Billy; & uncle, George Denson.

Survivors include her daughters, Latisha Arreola, Audrey Sockey & Kalseia King; son, Nickolus Johnson; brothers, Marcus Sockey, Sr. & Billy Sockey, Jr.; 12 grandchildren; aunts, Kaffie Isaac & Mary Ann Solomon; 4 nieces, 6 nephews, 2 great-nieces, 3 great-nephews, & a special friend, Jerry Lewis.

MARTIN WILLIS, SR.

Funeral services for Martin Willis, Sr., 69, was held on Monday, March 23, 2026, at



the residence of Dan & Dave Willis, 320 Goat Ranch Road in the Pearl River community. Bro. Ben Farve & Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.

Burial was in the New Canaan Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Willis passed away on Monday, March 16 at the Choctaw Residential Center in Choctaw.

He lived most of his life in the Pearl River community. After graduating from Choctaw Central High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was employed with Chahta Enterprise, Choctaw Electronics, MBCI Recreation, Choctaw Housing Authority, & Pearl River Resort where he was a Blackjack Dealer. He enjoyed fishing, playing stickball & other sports, & spending simple moments with those he loved.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Martin & Julia Faye Isaac Willis; daughters, Siqcourney Willis & Tamara Willis; sister, Stephanie J. Farmer; brothers, Ronald Willis & James Byrd Willis; & grandsons, Bryson Willis & Latin Willis.

Survivors include his daughters, LaTasha Willis & Shavna Jefferson; sons, Martin Willis, Jr., Joshua Willis & Brett Hickman; brothers, Dave Willis, Dan Willis, Terry Willis, & Jerry Willis; 35 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, several aunts, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

SEBACIE DEQUOIA REED

Funeral services for Sebacie Dequoia Reed, 39, was held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, at Hope Indian Baptist Church. Rev. Mark Patrick officiated.



Burial was in the Old Canaan Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Reed passed away on Saturday, March 21 at Pine Forest Health and Rehabilitation in Jackson.

He was a resident of the Pearl River community & enjoyed listening to Rap & R&B music, being with family, playing basketball, traveling, & telling jokes.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Allene Hickman, Jeanette Williamson Shumake & Feldon Shumake; great-grandfather, Benjamin Gilmore Mitch, Sr.

Survivors include his parents, Lannie Reed & Tina Shumake Reed; sons, Trenton Frazier, Trevor Frazier, Cameron

Frazier, & Bishop Frazier; sisters, Lantanna Farve, Beautiful Reed & Lany Reed; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

TRACY LYNN BILLY

Private family-only visitation for Tracy Lynn Billy, 52, was held from 9:00 a.m. Saturday, March 28, 2026, through 9:00 a.m. Monday, March 30, 2026, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Cremation was held afterwards. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.



Ms. Billy passed away on Monday, March 23 at her residence in Philadelphia.

She resided in the Pearl River community & retired from Pearl River Resort, where she worked many years faithfully as a banquet planner. She took pride in her work & enjoyed sharing laughter with others, telling funny stories & giving her coworkers nicknames. Her greatest joy was being with her grandchildren & caring for her family. She enjoyed arts & crafts, playing Keno at the casino, watching TV & movies, listening to stories on YouTube, music, taking photos, & writing in her notebooks.

She is preceded in death by her mother, Marilyn Billy; sisters, Trisalena Billy Kelly & Tessa Steve Sanders; & a nephew, Tristan Brice Labatte.

Survivors include her sons, Joshua Leon King, Christopher Anthony Evans, Jr. (Crystal John), Matthew Holden Evans, & John Keith Evans (Sharisha Evans); brother, Malachi Steve; thirteen grandchildren; nieces, Marylin Tubby, Kalyan Gibson & Miya Steve; & nephews, Jer-

mica Tubby & Brian Labatte.

JONATHAN RAY WILLIS

Funeral services for Jonathan Ray Willis, 35, was held on Friday, March 27, 2026, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Rev. Tim Tubby officiated.



Burial was in the Hope Indian Baptist Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Willis passed away on Tuesday, March 24 at Baptist Anderson Hospital in Meridian.

He was a proud resident of the Pearl River community & loved being with family & friends, skateboarding, playing video games, especially car racing games, playing practical jokes on his sisters, & eating spicy dishes.

He is preceded in death by his mother, Jennie Roa; godparents, Mary & Hulon Willis; & grandparents, Gladys Willis, Claude Willis, & James Thomas, Sr.

Survivors include his father, James Thomas, Jr.; daughter, Aubrey Willis; sisters, Robyn Tubby, Alesia Roa, Anissa Thomas, & Kalyn Thomas; & brother, Elijah Thomas.

EARLIANNA NECOLE MARIE FARMER

Funeral services for Earlianna Necole Marie Farmer, 15, was held on Friday, April 3, 2026, at Freetrade Church



continued next page

of God. Bro. Mark Gill & Bro. Dean Sikes officiated.

Burial was in Pine Bluff Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Miss Farmer passed away on Tuesday, March 24 at her residence.

She was a freshman at Neshoba Central High School & attended Freetrade Church of God in Carthage. Her favorite color was pink & enjoyed playing basketball, volleyball, & riding horses. She had a gentle & caring heart & was always helping others. Her smile could brighten the darkest day, & her presence brought comfort & happiness to those around her. She is remembered for her joyful spirit, kindness, & the little things that made her unique, like her love for hot chips & Dr Pepper.

She is preceded in death by her father, Earl Farmer, Jr.; sister, Janielle Farmer; & grandfathers, Danny Wilcher and Earl Farmer, Sr.

Survivors include mother, Leslie Wilcher Farmer; sisters, Shaylon Farmer, Nequita Farmer & Jayden Wilcher; brothers, Deshaune Farmer, Dakota Farmer, Cameron Farmer, & Quincy Farmer; grandmothers, Iva Nelle Wilcher & Mary Jane Dixon; & a host of relatives & friends.

**DAVID LEE BELL**

Funeral services for David Lee Bell, 45, was held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.



Burial was in the Dancing Rabbit Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of

arrangements.

Mr. Bell passed away on Thursday, March 26 at Oasis Health & Rehab of Yazoo City.

He was a member of Sandy Hill Baptist Church & enjoyed being with family & friends, watching his favorite team, the New Orleans Saints, fishing, playing softball, basketball, washers, & watching wrestling.

He is preceded in death by his mother & step-father, Robert & Lillie Bell Wallace; & grandparents, Homer & Zula Joe Bell.

Survivors include several cousins, family members & friends.

**BABY JIREH BLAYZE CUMBERLAND**

Funeral service for Baby Jireh Blayze Cumberland was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 119 Odie Jim Road in the Bogue Chitto community. Deacon Randy Jim & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Baby Cumberland was born on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at Ochsner Rush Hospital in Meridian. Though his time on this earth was short, he was deeply loved by his family. He passed away on March 28, 2026, at 11:04 a.m., leaving precious memories that will forever be held close in the hearts of those who love him.

Survivors include his mother, Raziya Cumberland; grandparents, Janie Cumberland & Vincent Jefferson; aunts, Seriah Cumberland & Gabriella Cumberland; uncle, BJ McMillan; & a special cousin, River Ben.

**WINNIE CLEMMONS ISAAC**

Funeral service for Winnie Clemons Isaac, 83, was held on Saturday, April 4, 2026, at the Pearl River Baptist Church. Rev. Leonard Jimmie & Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.



Burial was in Isaac Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Isaac passed away on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at the Choctaw Residential Center in Choctaw.


She spent her life in the Pearl River community. She was Baptist by faith & a devoted wife, homemaker & caregiver. She was a seamstress, often making dresses for Choctaw

Indian Princess pageant contestants, & making beadwork. She loved being outdoors, playing softball in her younger years, fishing, playing washers, & cooking outdoors.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Charles Isaac; parents, Jim Clemmons & Besie Frazier Tubby; sons, Robert Layton Isaac, Sr., Mack Charles Isaac, Albert Isaac, & Baby Boy Isaac; sisters, Rosie Hickman, Louisa Bell & Patsy Robinson; brothers, Lewisman Dixon & Cecil Dixon; grandchildren, Patricia Ann Willis, Julius Lee Willis, Robert Layton Isaac, Jr., Eric Isaac, & Shane Kyle Isaac.

Survivors include her daughters, Sally Mae Willis, Wendy Sue Dixon & April Isaac; 14 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren, 5 great-great-grandchildren, & extended family members & friends.

**LIVING WATER**  
UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH



**LOCATED IN THE TUCKER COMMUNITY**  
*(Adjacent up the hill from Tucker Elementary School)*

*We invite you and your family to join our family for services.*

**SUNDAY SERVICES - 2:00 pm**  
**TUESDAY EVENINGS - 6:00 pm**

*Come & Worship with us*



**MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**  
130 Campus Drive  
Conehatta, MS 39057

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

10:00 a.m. Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
5:00 p.m. Evening Service

1st Sunday Service 4:00 p.m.  
Pastor: Rev. Samuel Dixon

**WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE**

6:00 p.m. Pray Meeting  
6:30 p.m. Discipleship/  
Family Ministry Class


*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."  
- John 8:31-32*

**Welcome To**



**10341 Road 789**  
**Philadelphia, MS 39350**  
Sunday Service: 10:00 a.m.

*Come Join Us...*



**Spirit of Life**

SUNDAY: 10:00 a.m. WEDNESDAY: 6:30 p.m.

**278 Black Jack Road**  
**Choctaw, MS 39350**  
**601-389-5446**  
Pastor Thomas Ben



**4TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY**

# GOLF Tournament

*Choctaw Veterans Association*



**Dancing Rabbit 'The Oaks'**  
13541 MS-16, Philadelphia, MS



**Monday, May 25, 2026**  
Shotgun Start: 10 AM

**Entry Fee:**

- \$350 - 3-Man Team
- \$400 - Team + Hole Sponsor
- \$500 - Team + DR or PG Sponsor

**Prizes & Awards**

- 3 Flight Payouts
- Prizes on All Par 3s & Par 5s
- Door Prizes
- Raffle Drawing Prizes

**Sponsorship Opportunities:**

- **Hole Sponsor-\$100**  
18" X 24" Signage on Hole
- **Driving Range or Putting Green Sponsor-\$300**  
4' X 4' Double Sided Signage
- **Food Sponsor (1)-\$2000**  
2 Team Entry + Signages & Logos on Lunch Boxes
- **Beverage Sponsor (2)-\$1000**  
1 Team Entry + Signages on Beverage Carts

CHAHTA TUSHKA SIAH OKIHI

For more info, contact:  
[kevin.grisham@choctaw.org](mailto:kevin.grisham@choctaw.org)  
Contact Number:  
**601 622 4018**

Payments made by:  
**Cash, Card, or Check**  
Payroll Deduction Available for Tribal Employees



**Tourney Open to the Public!**  
Come out and Enjoy a Great Time with the CVA!




## CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

### MARCH 2026

© 2026 MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

# 19TH ANNUAL UNITY WALK




**SATURDAY • JUNE 27, 2026**

TEAM MEET UP 10:15 AM	FINAL WALK 10:30 AM	PROGRAM BEGINS 11:00 AM
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CCHS SOFTBALL/BASEBALL PARKING LOT | CHOCTAW, MS

**Hosted by: SDPI Diabetes Prevention Program**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION: (601) 380-4370





## MBCI CAREER & TECHNICAL PROGRAM

**DEADLINE FOR FALL 2026 IS: MAY 30, 2026**

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be accepted by the training institution that you plan to attend.
- Must be an eligible, enrolled member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.
- Must have a high school diploma or a G.E.D. equivalent.
- Must be between the ages of 18 and up.
- Must fill out necessary applications AND provide any and all documentation before consideration.

Located At Manpower Building

Contact Us: **601-650-1749**  
Email Us: [bhdixon@choctaw.org](mailto:bhdixon@choctaw.org)

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