



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

Cherokee National Treasures are prestigious citizens who actively work to preserve and revive Cherokee cultural practices that might otherwise be lost from one generation to the next. They exemplify the very best values of our tribe, and their efforts collectively make us better, stronger and more beautiful.

The Cherokee National Treasure Award was created in 1988 and is given each year to a select few during our annual Cherokee National Holiday. Since its inception, about 100 Cherokee Nation citizens have been recognized for their work. Each awardee possesses a true gift, and those talents help shape the Cherokee Nation and preserve our heritage. Recently we added three more:

- Richard Fields, a master bow maker from Tahlequah, has been crafting traditional Cherokee long bows for more than two decades.
- Demos Glass is an artist with more than 20 years of experience in contemporary, mixed media and metalsmithing.
- Vyrll Keeter has 40 years of experience in flint knapping and is dedicated to teaching others the traditional art of flint knapping through classes and demonstrations.

As Cherokee people, we are taught to leave the world a better place for the generations to come, and I can tell you all three of these men in their own, humble way have done that.

Honorees are selected based on their skill and cultural and historical knowledge, and each of them is committed to education and cultural preservation. They are all actively involved with the preservation and continuation of traditional cultural practices.

These men and women preserve different aspects of our unique Cherokee culture for future

generations, including craft-making, language, graphic arts, contemporary arts, storytelling, music and other art forms.

Because of their love and commitment to their respective discipline, the spirit and heritage of the Cherokee Nation remain as vibrant today as ever.

I believe it speaks volumes about our tribal government that we strive to honor the people who are keeping our traditional ways alive. These individuals exemplify the values that we hold dear as a people and sovereign government.

Our community, our culture and our commitment as Cherokees have taught us to leave the world a better place for today, tomorrow and the generations ahead.

I am honored to know our Cherokee National Treasures. I thoroughly admire them all and respect their talents. They all deserve our deepest respect and gratitude because they are role models for young and old alike, and their positive influence propels us all, as Cherokee people, forward.

To each of them I say a heartfelt Wado.



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