



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

A stunning new coffee table book profiling Cherokee National Treasures, the prestigious citizens who actively work to preserve and revive Cherokee cultural practices, has been beautifully designed and produced and will soon be available for Cherokees, historians and cultural enthusiasts to add to their personal collection.

The keepsake book, entitled "Cherokee National Treasures: In Their Own Words," is a project that was coordinated by Roger Cain and Shawna Morton Cain, who also edited the book with Pamela Jumper Thurman. They ensured each profile was depicted exactly as the subject desired. Gayle Parnell-Samuels served as lead copy editor and applied integrity to each and every story. The project was managed by Cherokee Nation staff member Bryan Shade. The commitment of this team is evident in each profile of our tribe's National Treasures, the citizens who represent the very best values of the Cherokee Nation.

Beautiful and historic photographs accompany each profile, and each of the almost 100 narratives are truly intimate and deeply personal. The stories are told by the artists themselves "in their own words and for those Treasures who have left us, loving remembrances by family and friends are featured. These Cherokee artists share the story of themselves, their family, their influences and how their respective expertise reflects who they are as Cherokee people.

These powerful stories, coupled with the compelling photographs, are simply captivating. Reading them makes you feel like you just sat down with the Treasure and had a personal conversation. The stories will leave a lasting impression on readers of Cherokee life, values, the artistic traditions today and how those traditions have evolved for our people through time.

I also want to thank all the National Treasures who consulted on this publication and operated as a review board: Kathryn Kelley, Betty Jo Smith, Lorene Drywater, Dorothy Ice, Al Herrin, Bessie Rackleff Russel, Edith Catcher Knight, Thelma Vann Forrest, Durbin Feeling, Donald Vann and Betty Christie

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Currently, we are planning a celebratory event to honor each of these National Treasures and present them with a copy of the book.

The Cherokee National Treasure Award was established in 1988 by the Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee National Historical Society. The award is given annually to a select few during the Cherokee National Holiday to honor citizens who have been recognized for their artistic and preservation work. The recipients have preserved and perpetuated traditional and contemporary artistic methods and practices, ensuring traditional arts and skills are not lost. Each is committed to education, cultural preservation and the continuation of Cherokee heritage.

They have all been recognized not only for their roles as artisans, but also for their roles as teachers, mentors, and advocates. These cultural icons continue to practice ancient customs and bring them into the 21st century. Because of their love and commitment to their respective discipline, the spirit of the Cherokee Nation remains as vibrant today as ever. These individuals exemplify the values that we hold dear as a people, and as a sovereign government. I admire them all and respect their talents.

As readers flip through the pages of this new publication, which will soon be available in our Cherokee Nation gift shops as well as online, they are taken on a journey of Cherokee culture. The people in this book and the stories they tell reflect our Cherokee history and heritage and how they are seamlessly woven into the tapestry of who we are today, as a people and as a tribe. Each of these Treasures possesses a true gift and those talents help shape the Cherokee Nation today, while protecting our unique Cherokee culture and lifeways for the future.

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