



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

Cherokee Nation remains blessed to have strong young leaders who annually act as role models and ambassadors on behalf of our tribe. Our Miss Cherokee, Junior Miss Cherokee and Little Cherokee Ambassador representatives always remind me that the future of the Cherokee Nation is in the right hands.

Miss Cherokee represents the Cherokee Nation as a goodwill ambassador and promotes our government, our history, our language and our culture. We recently saw former Miss Cherokee Sky Wildcat pass along her responsibilities to a new Miss Cherokee, 18-year-old Madison Whitekiller. She plans to advocate on a platform promoting the empowerment of Cherokee women.

As she travels across Oklahoma and the United States in the coming year, Madison will be a voice of the Cherokee people as she educates people of all ages and from all walks of life. Miss Cherokee traditionally reflects the best qualities of Cherokee youth, and Madison is no different. Over the past 12 months, Sky often spoke about environmental preservation. Her passion and efforts for environmental conservation left an impression, especially since we made plans to abolish the use of foam paper products like Styrofoam and lower the carbon footprint at Cherokee Nation.

The first Cherokee royalty was recognized in 1955, when Sequoyah Vocational School student Phyllis Osage was named "Queen of the Cornstalk Shoot" during the Cherokee National Holiday. Her job was to award trophies to the winners of the cornstalk shoot. Two years later, the title changed to Miss Cherokee Holiday, and in 1962, the first Miss Cherokee was crowned.

More than 60 women have now worn the Miss Cherokee crown. While they act as role models for others, the titleholders also develop their own sense of pride in the Cherokee Nation and better understand how to develop leadership skills in a highly visible role.

Another youth leader, Junior Miss Cherokee, often makes appearances alongside Miss Cherokee, also representing the Cherokee Nation at public events. She shares information and knowledge about our people and our traditions across the country. This year's Junior Miss Cherokee is 17-year-old Danya Pigeon, who's following in the footsteps of Lauryn Skye McCoy.

Six Little Cherokee Ambassadors, ages 4-12, represent us on a more local level. These children remind us that it's never too early to teach our children to value our heritage and share it with the world. Our Little Cherokee Ambassadors for 2017-2018 are 5-year-old Avery Raper, 6-year-old Dante Anguiano, 8-year-old Cooper Dorr, 9-year-old Alayna Paden, 10-year-old Leah Gardner and 10-year-old Preston Gourd.

As a grandfather, I know Cherokee youth have a unique perspective on today's world, and these young people play an integral part in preserving all that we hold so dear to our hearts. We can learn so much from them.

I'm proud of the women and men who have been a voice for the Cherokee people over the past 60 years, and I'm anxious to see what our newest ambassadors will accomplish in the coming year. Our future is bright so long as we always support and encourage our youth to be bold leaders on behalf of the Cherokee Nation and our people.

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